

THE SEEDS OF THE CRISIS

'The woke virus has spread so rapidly because of the shrinking influence of religion and with it the Judeo-Christian principles that shaped the once-unchallenged social conventions. In a religious society, a common faith is the basis for a common moral understanding of the world, our obligations to one another, and the measure by which to judge good or bad character.

The absence of religion leads not to enlightenment, but to moral confusion and uncertainty. In this sociological sense, [the virus] is a religion, a set of unquestioned truths and sacred objects that form the framework for an internally coherent world view.

This is true though [it] is avowedly secular, and its adherents would bristle at any comparison between Social Justice Theory and a religious creed.

Nick Cater, *Pandemic Wokeness*¹

In any number of places one may read commentaries on the collapse of the spirit of egalitarianism and right thinking that has befallen the Australian people over the reaction by her cognoscenti and her governing classes to the Corona virus.² What has concerned the objective observer is the extent to which disordered reasoning and the lack of any sense of political prudence is at work not just among the delirious few (whom one may find in any society) but by a vocal majority of the populace in elevating a relative value, public and private health, to the level of a supreme good. This has involved conduct that may rightly be regarded as irrational, but it has been accompanied by the engagement of public figures in the promotion of systematic misinformation.

It seems the following influences (at least) have been at work.

- *Subjectivism*, the philosophical disease Descartes formulated in the 17th century which has bemused intellectuals ever since. Long since this has filtered into the popular psyche. It received a boost in the 1960s with the irrational behaviour of the bishops of the Catholic Church. It has now grown to the point where it dominates popular thinking. The device on its banner? *That is true which the majority think to be true; that is false which they hold to be false*. Subjectivism is the antithesis of the realism that underlies scientific endeavour.
- *Atheism*, rejection of belief in God, has become the religion of the majority. Yes, *the religion*. For the word, which derives from the Latin *religare*, to tie, or to bind oneself to a cause or belief system, has no necessary connection with God. Atheism may rightly be called the religion of those who believe in 'no-God'.
- *Loss of understanding of the existence of a hierarchy among goods*. All things are good but some goods are greater than others, and the lower for the sake of the higher. This perception and the sense of discrimination that accompanies it has largely been lost.

¹ *The Spectator Australia*, January 15th, 2022

² As, for instance, Paul Kelly, *States of Disorder*, *Weekend Australian*, July 17-18, 2021; Steve Waterson, *Vaccine Segregation? This isn't 1950's Alabama*, *Weekend Australian* September 18-19, 2021; Rebecca Weiser, <https://www.spectator.com.au/2022/01/novaks-ace/> & <https://www.spectator.com.au/2022/01/catch-2022/>; Nick Cater at <https://www.spiked-online.com/2022/01/03/lockdown-has-destroyed-the-australian-spirit/>; & James McPherson at <https://spectator.com.au/2022/01/hating-on-novak-has-become-a-national-sport/>

- *Loss of understanding that truth is determined by reality.*³ The failure is a corollary of the subjectivist spirit.
- *Materialism*, the philosophy that holds that reality is adequately explained without recourse to any cause beyond what the senses perceive. In denying that man may induce from effects the existence of causes hidden from the senses, it operates to deny the activity proper to the mind.
- *Loss of a sense of social unity.*
- *Naturalism* understood as the sense that one may embrace and support nature while rejecting any claim that the natural order is the work of God.
- *The abandonment of religious principle by religious leaders* particularly by the bishops of the Catholic Church who, in 1965, effectively rejected the Church's teaching that there is only one true religion on earth, that founded by God in Jesus Christ.

Let us try to put the above in some sort of order. We can do no better than to begin with nature.

Nature and the Natural Order

The philosopher defines *the natural* as that which proceeds from an intrinsic principle without knowledge of end but with knowledge of end presupposed in its Author. The natural is what is given to us. The prefix *na-* means 'given'. We are born in the *na* - *na*-ked. We live in the *na* - *na*-tive, and live according to the demands of the *na* in our human nature. Nature determines *what* we are, our essence as human beings.

Now the modern world disagrees with the rigidity of these assertions. It is happy enough with nature as a material fact, something to be taken for granted, but further than that it will not go. The reason is obvious. If nature is something given, this implies a giver—a *Giver*. And the modern world (immersed in the imperatives of the atheistic belief system) rejects the possibility. The philosophical error at work is the elevation of *the voluntary*, the act of human will, above its station. What is *the voluntary*? The philosopher defines it as that which proceeds from an intrinsic principle with knowledge of end. Only beings who act for the sake of an end, beings with intellect, can exercise the voluntary, for the will is the appetite (order and inclination) that follows *naturally* on intellect. The confusion of these two is behind the push for people to determine their gender, as if this was a matter of choice (*voluntary*) rather than something mandated by nature (*natural*). But there are effects even more profound.

Every natural creature has rules that govern its behaviour. Man, since he moves himself not only about the *execution* of his acts and the *form* of his acts but the *ends* of his acts, is governed by a moral rule, the moral law. He is a moral being. There are ends fitting to him and ends unfitting to him. If he chooses fitting ends he flourishes; if he chooses unfitting ends he suffers. It is a great blindness to assert the superiority of will over the need to comply with these standards. Those who ignore the natural order, who give themselves reasons for

³ Truth (logical truth) is the identity between what is asserted and what is.

discarding 'outworn teachings' on nature and the natural, put themselves and those who rely on them in peril.

This disorder grounds the interference in human reproduction found in contraception and the fertilization *in vitro* of human embryos. It is behind abortion and the perversion of using cells stolen from a human embryo or an aborted human infant for scientific purposes. Those involved turn the natural order on its head: a person, an end in himself, is treated as a means for the ends of others. In this they emulate, though they would be quick to reject it, the behaviour of Hitler's Nazis. Their conduct is worse than engagement in slavery.

The disorder is behind the promotion and legalisation of sexually perverted behaviour. It is the reason its proponents seek to justify and to legitimise murder in euthanasia. It is, in fine, the reason for the hardening of heart that is distinctive of much of modern human behaviour.

It is axiomatic that what is involved in this distorted attitude to nature and the natural order is a rejection of the summary of the natural moral law in the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments.

The Other Categories

From this consideration of the current attitude to the *natural* we see how it is informed by *Atheism*, the atheistic belief system. Its appeal to the opinion of the masses, rather than to the truth mandated by reality, is applied *Subjectivism*. Beneath the air to which they are giving voice, we perceive the continuo refrain - *That is true which the majority think to be true; that is false the majority holds to be false* – and its variation - *It is impossible for the majority to be wrong*.

Of everything that is, as of every action performed, there are two philosophical components: form and matter (the *intrinsic* causes). It is the burden of the philosophy of *Materialism* to deny the form, to deny what is essential, implying that neither thing nor act is anything more than an accident of time and place, lacking direction, purpose or end. In denying formality – *what* a thing is – materialism denies its finality – *why* the thing is. Hence, atheism's denial of an ultimate *efficient* cause (a maker) is buttressed by materialism's denial of a *final* cause (end or purpose). (Efficient and final are the *extrinsic* causes of a thing or an action.)

Thus every atheist is, at least implicitly, a materialist and every materialist is, at least implicitly an atheist.

And, if there is no ultimate end of human existence, it is illusory to assert that there exist intermediate ends, or that there is a hierarchy among them. If there is no formal cause of things then it is presumptuous to call them 'good', or to order one above, or below, another: in other words - *There is no hierarchy among goods*. Consistent with the subjectivist refrain, only those things - those actions - are 'good' that the majority asserts to be so!

Man is social not as a result of some contract, as Rousseau asserted in the 18th century, but by nature. We see in Rousseau's initiative an early instance of the gutting of nature of its *formal* content, restricting its worth to what is *material*, a contention that sounded with his atheism and his rejection of the Catholic doctrine of original sin.⁴ We see, equally, early assertion of the *voluntary* at the expense of what is *natural*.

Now, what is of nature is of God who is its author, and is therefore good. The harmony of human society arising out of the unity of purpose of its members is a great good. When it is attacked, as occurs with division over essential issues, the harm that ensues is as great as the good that is lost.⁵ This is exemplified in the conduct of Australia's elected representatives, Federal and State, and of their bureaucrats in the field of health—in their lack of grasp of fundamental political principle and of prudence—in addressing the crisis posed by the Corona virus over the last two years.

But the chief disposing cause of the political chaos to which we have been subjected has been *the abandonment of religious principle by our religious leaders*. The bishops of the Catholic Church have, since the Second Vatican Council, presided over a mockery of the Faith established by Jesus Christ in the reduction of its principles to the banalities of the Modernist heresy. The Council's spirit of *aggiornamento*, or assimilation to secular and non-Catholic protocols, has rendered them functionaries of a Modernist entity, the Synodal church of Vatican II, to the enduring harm of the Catholic faithful.

Their reaction to the incompetence manifested by government and its bureaucracies has been misleading and un-Catholic, the very opposite of the leadership expected of those who claim to be successors of the Apostles. This has been demonstrated by their collective failure to support the fundamental issues of—

- the conscientious rights of individuals to refuse to undergo 'vaccination' with experimental chemicals promoted as 'vaccines';
- the use of such chemicals when they are, notoriously, grounded in or tested with cells taken from murdered human infants;
- whether the circumstances even justify the necessity of administration of such 'vaccines' in circumstances where the mortality rate of the virus for which they are mandated is less than 1%;
- whether administration of such 'vaccines' can be justified where their well-documented side effects include irreparable harm, including death, to a proportion of those so 'vaccinated';
- whether administration of such 'vaccines' can be justified in circumstances where there is scientific proof available, supported by objective evidence that they are contraceptive and abortifacient in effect;

⁴ 'Man is born free and is everywhere in chains', he argued. *The Social Contract*, 1, ch. 1

⁵ It is instructive to consider the reaction of the Catholic Church to an attack on the unity of its members. The Church condemns the sin involved, *schism* (lit. 'division'), as a sin against charity, the love of God and of one's fellow man. CCC, n. 2089; CIC, canon 751; St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 39, aa. 1, 2.

- their refusal to offer counsel in the public forum against the great harm to the body social and the body economic of 'lock-downs';
- support for those marginalised by their refusal to conform to the zeitgeist represented by the arms of government and bureaucracy so misinformed.

It has been demonstrated, moreover, by their calculated refusal, on September 22nd last, to allow their priests to proclaim publicly their allegiance to Catholic truths and principles.⁶

The state of the crisis that has befallen the Australian people has been pungently expressed by the *Spectator Australia's* Rebecca Weisser:

"We know they are lying, they know they are lying, they know we know they are lying, we know they know we know they are lying, but they are still lying,' wrote Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. How did it come to pass so quickly that Australia feels like a former Eastern bloc country where virological Lysenkoism is an official doctrine, dissidents are sacked, the newspapers report propaganda and the truth is relegated to social media samizdat?"⁷

Michael Baker

St Hilary of Poitiers, Doctor of the Church—January 14th, 2022

⁶ See https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/aus-bishops-crisis-of-loyalty.pdf

⁷ The Petrovsky Affair, *The Spectator Australia*, November 6th, 2021, p. xi