

would be a new experience. The human race has never undergone it, and is still too cocky to admit that it may be coming, and might result in a sprouting of new growths through the dung and spittle. Order, in the social and political category, is unattainable under our present psychology.

And it is not inherent in the astronomical category either, though it was for many years relegated there. The stars, the Army of Unalterable Law, with which George Meredith discomfited Lucifer and comforted the Victorians, prove to be a flying rout of suns and galaxies, rushing away from the solar system and from one another, bursting like H.E.s, wobbling like the dollar or the pound, and with orbits as veering as any European frontier. No longer can we find a suitable contrast to chaos in the night sky. The heavens and the earth have become terribly alike during the last twenty years.

No—there appear to be only two possibilities for order in the entire universe. The first of them is the divine order, available for those who can contemplate it. We must admit its possibility, on the evidence of the mystics, and we must believe them when they say that it is attained, if attainable, by prayer. "O thou who changest not, abide with me" said one of its poets. "*Ordina questo amor, o tu che m'ami*," said another. Intellectuals are such puritanical devils, that they usually recoil with horror when prayer is mentioned. But to be shocked by prayer is as prudish as to be shocked by sex; anyhow, I can find nothing scandalous in exploring and practising its technique, as Gerald Heard and others are now doing, although I have no aptitude myself.

The second possibility is the aesthetic order—the order which an artist can create in his own work. A work of art is a unique product. But why? It is unique not because it is clever or noble or beautiful or enlightened or original or sincere or idealistic or useful—scraps of those qualities lie all over the shop and it may embody any of them—but because it is the only material object in the universe which may possess

internal harmony. All the others have been pressed into shape from outside, and when their mould is removed they collapse. The work of art stands up by itself, and nothing else does. It achieves something which has often been promised by society, but always delusively. Ancient Athens made a mess—but the Antigone stands up. Renaissance Rome made a mess—but the ceiling of the Sistine got painted; Louis XIV made a mess—but there was *Phèdre*; Louis XV continued it, but Voltaire got his letters written. Art for Art's sake? I should just think so, and more so than ever at the present time. It is the one orderly product which our muddling race has produced. It is the cry of a thousand sentinels, the echo from a thousand labyrinths, it is the lighthouse which cannot be hidden; *c'est le meilleur témoignage que nous puissions donner de notre dignité*.

Consequently, I hold that the artist ought to be an outsider, and that the nineteenth-century conception of him as a Bohemian was a just one. The conception erred in two particulars; it postulated an economic system where art could be a full-time job, and it stressed idiosyncrasy and waywardness rather than order. But it is a truer conception than the B.B.C. and M.O.I. one, which treats the artist as if he were a particularly bright Government advertiser, and encourages him to be friendly and matey with his fellow-citizens and not to give himself airs. Estimable is mateyness, and the man who achieves it gives many a half pint of pleasure to himself and to others. But it has no traceable connection with the creative impulse, and probably acts as an inhibition on it. The artist who is seduced by mateyness may stop himself from doing the one thing which he, and he alone, can do: the making of something out of words or sounds or paint or clay or steel or film which has internal harmony, and presents order to a permanently disarranged planet. This seems worth doing, even at the cost of being called uppish by journalists. Some months ago, before it was itself eclipsed by the superior opacity of a body called Cassandra,