break a spell which had bound German youth for generations, a spell equally cast by Wallenstein of whom Otto Ludwig said, 'All moral values fluctuate in this drama, which poisons youth in the most subtle manner'.

But Schneider's criticism is not only a negative one. It was he who rediscovered Franz Grillparzer, the great Austrian dramatist. And for Schneider, *Koenig Ottokars Glueck und Ende* ('King Ottokar's Good Fortune and Death') is one of the best dramatic representations of German history.

The more we become absorbed in Schneider's work the better we realize that his choice of an historic or literary subject is always made with the intention of glorifying God and Christ. He is indifferent to fame and financial reward; all he seeks is a public which will read his books and listen to what he says. Above all he is a man who feels he has a mission on earth, namely to interpret the events of his own time in relation to God.

This is even more clearly revealed when he deals with a purely religious subject as, for example, in *Die sieben Worte am Kreuz* ('The Seven Words from the Cross'), where it is the relevance to contemporary events that is stressed. But all his work reflects a life steeped in religion, and a man whose unshakable faith forms the background of all he writes.

ANANDA COOMERASWAMY, 1877-1948

Neville Braybrooke

THE name Ananda Coomeraswamy conjures for me folk-weave ties, strange theories of social credit, and Ruskin-Morris sympathies. Before now he has been labelled a crank—and I think that there is some truth in the charge. By the same coin, Eric Gill has also been called a crank. Yet, now that their work can be seen in retrospect, a fair degree of modification is necessary.

There is a type of Englishman or American, as there is a type of Indian, who while remaining loyal patriots find that both patriotism is not enough and that their countries can only be best

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served (or saved) by the most vigilant eye of criticism. Both Gill and Coomeraswamy, who equally admired each other, were opposed to many of the trends which they saw in England, America and India. They disapproved of the growing power of technology and yet it was largely because of technology (as it had come to affect printing) that their opposition to it could be disseminated and published so widely. That is the paradox.

Coomeraswamy's father was the first Hindu to be called to the bar in London; his wife was an Englishwoman. When her husband died she left Colombo in 1879, taking with her a young boy of two. It was not until twenty-five years later that her son returned to his native land.

In the meantime, he had fallen a prey to the ideas of Ruskin and Morris, so that when he reached home again he applied as it were Western criticism to the industrial invasion that was beginning to edge out the native culture and handicrafts in Ceylon. One catches the tone of reproach in his voice: 'You teach us to read, but you teach us to forget. . .'. Print destroys the oral memory of a people. In a word this is what Coomeraswamy refers to as 'the bugbear of literacy' in the title essay to one of his books—an essay whose pertinency might easily have been lost to thousands had it been issued in a limited edition by a hand-press. So again one is back with the problem of the original paradox.

In a lecture entitled, 'For What Heritage and to Whom are the English-speaking Peoples Responsible?', Coomeraswamy deals with the theory of progress; he was speaking to an American audience and in the course of his talk he asks, defending the older methods of agriculture, why Western methods should be exported when already in some cases they have led to soil erosion? Further, in the wake of soil erosion, may there not follow the manufacture of the atom bomb? Now it is here, I believe, that Coomeraswamy short-circuits his argument. India is a vast continent that at different times has suffered from famine—and, if in the past, why not in the future? If, as in the past, the soil has refused to yield a harvest, then cannot atomic energy be used to help in re-charging the soil? The splitting of the atom gave men a weapon of attack, but it can also give men a weapon of defence. Any discovery can always be used for good or bad. Coomeraswamy, quoting St Bonaventure, points out that in the Scriptures ascetism means hard work; wisdom, skill; agriculture, culture. Following the

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same line through, one can surely add that if the same water which baptizes and so saves can equally drown, then cannot atomic power save as well as annihilate? For instance, what cures may it not hold for cancer or for the man who is born blind?

Part of Coomeraswamy's significance lies in the fact that he is a writer who all the time is asking questions; his mood becomes infectious with his readers. Impatient parents will call their inquisitive children 'Mister Why-Whys'. Yet to believe that the asking of questions is a childish whim to be brushed aside, is to admit that one is already too old to learn. 'Unless you come as little children. . . .' That was a parable by which Coomeraswamy lived and worked.

Naturally as a research fellow in Oriental Art at the Boston Museum, he wrote a great deal about Indian art. Yet paradoxically he became more revered in America than India for his researches; one recalls the saying about a prophet not being recognized by his own people. . . . At times his thought is not always clear, but what distinguished it is that he is always trying to add to what has already been said on a subject; there is no repetition for the sake of repetition—and, as is the case with such writers, clarity sometimes comes later. Books published a decade ago are suddenly illuminated by phrases in newer essays. There is a sense in which his works are like an anthology, one text expanding another. Characteristically he calls one such essay, 'Paths that Lead to the Same Summit': it is a study in comparative religion—a field in which he particularly excelled.

'If comparative religion is to be taught as the other sciences are taught, the teacher must surely have recognized that his own religion is only one of those that are to be "compared".' And so from these premises to the crucial question: '[Can] the Christian whose conviction is ineradicable that his is the true faith . . . conscientiously permit himself to expound another religion, knowing that he cannot do so honestly?' Moreover, if he does so, is he not teaching 'heresy' which is 'treason'? Or, alternatively, can a democracy allow a party of opposition only so long as it is a minority whose power so far is no threat? 'You cannot think in terms of religion without sooner or later thinking in terms of politics, and *vice versa*.'

Coomeraswamy's thought presents a tightly woven fabric; and there is something especially appropriate in such an image. He has

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been called 'myriad-minded', but perhaps his work could be better compared to a joseph-coat in which there are many strands; the colours do not distract but blend, so that finally all the different shades seem but one; as everything mixes, so the sharp edges of colour drain away. Perhaps thousands of years hence the long view of politics and religion will prove to be something like that. For the present, the time is one of gathering and collating and comparing: 'one must . . . [be] taught to recognize equivalent symbols'—the rose and the lotus (*Rosa Mundi* and *Padmavati*), or be like the Lama Wangyal who said of Christ, 'I see that He was a very Buddha', or 'the learned friend' of the author who spoke of Sri Ramakrishna as 'another Christ . . . Christ's own self.' These are just a few of the signs to paths leading to the same summit, where all shall be made plain, and where the paradox shall be fulfilled of the lamb and lion lying down together. For comparison appears to be a special mark and art of the twentieth century—a drawing together of multi-coloured threads.

As words roar off the modern rotary presses, maybe it is not for nothing that some of their authors, in denouncing the unchecked growth of industry, should have had the personal experience of weaving to colour their language. Certainly Ananda Coomeraswamy and Eric Gill united East and West when they wrote in such a tradition; and certainly Gill could have paid Coomeraswamy no higher tribute than when he wrote: 'I dare not confess myself his disciple; that would only embarrass him. I can only say that I believe that no other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding.'

OBITER

PICASSO: FIFTY YEARS OF GRAPHIC ART (Arts Council, June-August). This large retrospective show of Picasso's work was the most important assembly of his graphic art to be exhibited in this country, ranging as it did from such early examples as 'Le Repas frugal' (where Mannerist elongation became the vehicle for social comment) to the recent 'La

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