

Deconstruction and Artistic Creation: “Maritain and the Bad Boys of Philosophy”

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I know the errors that lay waste the modern world, and the fact that it has nothing great but its suffering; but this suffering I respect. Everywhere I see truths made captive. . . . Our business is to find the positive in all things; to use what is true less to strike than to cure.

Jacques Maritain¹

I

Primarily, it was Friederich Nietzsche who made the twentieth century aware that there's more to reality than meets the logician's eye. In a brilliant passage in the *Birth of Tragedy* he writes of the last days of Socrates that:

The voice of the Socratic dream vision is the only sign of any misgivings about the limits of logic: Perhaps — thus he [Socrates] must have asked himself — what is not intelligible to me is not necessarily unintelligent? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is exiled? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and supplement for science?²

Nietzsche wanted to go beyond a logical discussion of good and evil, of an objective text, of a conceptually organized knowledge of things. This paper

¹ Maritain, *Art and Faith: Letters Between Jacques Maritain and Jean Cocteau*, trans. John Coleman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948). This contains a translation of *Réponse à Jean Cocteau* (Paris: Librairie Stock, 1926).

² Friederich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 93.

will reveal a certain Maritainian sympathy with this position of Nietzsche's and of the postmodern philosophers that follow him, by giving an analysis of comments made by Maritain concerning man *as artist*.

To do this we will examine the following Maritainian claims: a) that humans have a legitimate and autonomous transcendental drive for creating in and searching for beauty, along with, and distinct from, the other human drives to understand the truth, and to work towards the "good," b) that this drive is often in conflict with these other drives, and c) that it is only by, what may be legitimately called, the "deconstruction" of concepts and logical systems of thought that the great artist could truly satisfy this drive and create a work of art. Something like deconstruction, therefore, becomes a necessary condition of all great art; and, indeed, if the search for beauty is a legitimate aspiration of all human beings, of human growth as well.

While a Maritainian will oppose much of Nietzsche's and postmodern philosophy, *as philosophy*,³ nevertheless, some of their "central" ideas about there being no objective truth and that language and concepts deflect meaning, are critical for the precarious aesthetic *moment*. It is within this context that a Maritainian can identify and open dialogue with Nietzsche and his progeny.

The creative drive is a legitimate one, and it should not be side-tracked by concerns for truth and moral goodness. In Maritain's classic, *Approaches to God*, where he treats of the many ways to God, he makes a separate claim for creation in beauty. He writes that the practical intellect has its ways of approach towards God—which are not theoretical demonstrations but belong to an existential and *prephilosophic* order. One of these ways is found in the poet's experience. Maritain's argument runs as follows: since beauty is a transcendental and since God is Subsistent Beauty, it is impossible for the artist, as he/she is devoted to created things, *not* to tend—however unconsciously—toward the principle of beauty.⁴ Maritain tells us that this is not a rational knowledge, but a knowledge by connaturality which advances, and is, a spiritual inclination towards God, Himself.⁵ Furthermore, this inclination is transcendental in nature. Maritain confirms this in his essay "Concerning Poetic

³ A Maritainian would oppose the taking of the aesthetic viewpoint as a metaphysical view of the whole of reality. Specifically he or she would reject such statements as, "It is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified (Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 52).

⁴ Jacques Maritain, *Approaches to God*, World Perspectives, trans. Peter O'Reilly (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 69ff.

⁵ Knowledge, not rational and conceptual, but affective and nostalgic, the knowledge through connaturality which the artist has of beauty in his creative experience, is *in itself* (I do not say for him or for his own consciousness) an advance toward God, a spiritual inclination in the direction of God (Maritain, *Approaches to God*, 69-70).

Knowledge" where he specifically says that poetry is "an energy of [the] transcendental order like that of metaphysics."⁶

II

But while the drive for Beauty is legitimate and transcendental, it must be noted that it is often in conflict with the other aspirations of the human being; for as the whole human being operates concretely, the aspects of the world that he/she grasps are different. Only in God are the transcendentals united, for humans what is true may not be necessarily good and vice-versa.⁷ Thus, the corresponding faculties of the human being grasp being differently. Maritain claims that our "will . . . does not of itself tend to the true, but solely and jealously to the good of man;"⁸ and that the intellect by itself desires the truth, which of itself does not inspire but "only illumines."⁹ In fact, Maritain would

⁶ Jacques Maritain, "Concerning Poetic Knowledge" in Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, *The Situation of Poetry: Four Essays on the Relations Between Poetry, Mysticism, Magic, and Knowledge*, trans. Marshall Suther, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint, 1968), 69-70. This work is a translation of *Situation de la poésie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938). Also he writes, "The fact is that all these energies, insofar as they pertain to the transcendental universe, aspire like poetry to surpass their nature and to infinitise themselves. . . . Art, poetry, metaphysics, prayer. . . (*Ibid.*, 56).

⁷ In God alone are all these perfections identified according to their formal reason: in Him Truth is Beauty, is Goodness, is Unity, and they are He. In the things of this world, on the other hand, truth, beauty, goodness, etc., are aspects of being *distinct according to their formal reason*, and what is *true simpliciter* (absolutely speaking) may be good or beautiful only *secundum quid* (in a certain relation), what is *beautiful simpliciter* may be good or true only *secundum quid*. . . Wherefore beauty, truth, goodness (especially when it is no longer a question of metaphysical or transcendental good itself, but of moral good) command distinct spheres of human activity (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, trans. Joseph W. Evans [Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974], 174, no. 68.) This work contains translations of both *Art et scolastique*: troisième édition revue et corrigée (Paris: Louis Rouart et Fils, 1935); and *Frontières de la poésie et autres essais* (Paris: Louis Rouart et Fils, 1935); "C'est en Dieu seul que toutes ces perfections s'identifient selon leur raison formelle; en lui la Vérité est la Beauté, est la Bonté, est l'Unité, et elles sont Lui-même. Au contraire dans les choses d'ici-bas la vérité, la beauté, la bonté, etc., sont des aspects de l'être *distincts selon leur raison formelle*, et ce qui est *vrai simpliciter* (absolument parlant) peut n'être bon ou beau que *secundum quid* (sous un certain rapport), ce qui est *beau simpliciter* peut n'être bon ou vrai que *secundum quid*. . . C'est pourquoi la beauté, la vérité, la bonté (surtout quand il ne s'agit plus du bien métaphysique ou transcendantal lui-même, mais du bien moral) commandent des sphères distinctes de l'activité humaine" (*Art et scolastique*, 277, n. 68).

⁸ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 7; "Volonté, qui de soi ne tend pas au vrai, mais uniquement et jalousement au bien de l'homme" (*Art et scolastique*, 8).

⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 26; "le vrai comme tel ne fait qu'illuminer" (*Art et scolastique*, 42).

continue, nothing with a drive toward the infinite—as is the human aspiration for truth or for goodness—is in accord with any other similar drive.¹⁰ Maritain even tells us that they can be enemies:

It is only in this conflict that they can exist and grow. Art, poetry, metaphysics, prayer, contemplation, each one is wounded, struck traitorously in the best of itself, and that is the very condition of its living. *Man* unites them by force, weeping all his tears, dying every day, and thus he wins his peace and their peace.¹¹

We see the resulting conflict being played out in those who, according to Maritain, in the “spirit of Luther, Rousseau, or Tolstoy defend the order of the moral good,”¹² while others like Aristotle¹³ and Aquinas defend the order of truth. “Here are two families which hardly understand each other, here as elsewhere, the prudent one dreads the contemplative and distrusts him.”¹⁴ However irresolvable the situation seems, Maritain still insists on the importance of the autonomy of the creative drive. He writes that “the spirit of Luther, Rousseau or Tolstoy has no place among us: if we defend the rights of God in the order of the moral good, we defend them also in the order of intelligence and beauty, and nothing obliges us to walk on all fours for the love of virtue.”¹⁵

¹⁰ “The fact is that all these energies, insofar as they pertain to the transcendental universe, aspire like poetry to surpass their nature and to infinitise themselves. . . . Art, poetry, metaphysics, prayer, contemplation, each one is wounded, struck traitorously in the best of itself, and that is the very condition of its living. *Man* unites them by force” (Maritain, “Concerning Poetic Knowledge” in *The Situation of Poetry*, 56); “A vrai dire toutes ces énergies, en tant qu’appartenant à l’univers transcendantal, aspirent comme la poésie à sortir de leur nature et à s’infiniter. . . . Art, poésie, métaphysique, prière et contemplation, tout le monde est blessé, atteint traîtreusement au meilleur de soi, et c’est la condition même de vivre. L’homme les unit de force” (*Situation de la poésie*, 113-114).

¹¹ Jacques Maritain, “Concerning Poetic Knowledge” in *The Situation of Poetry*, 56; “C’est dans ce conflit seulement qu’elles peuvent exister et grandir. Art, poésie, métaphysique, prière et contemplation, tout le monde est blessé, atteint traîtreusement même de vivre. *L’homme* les unit de force, en y pleurant toutes ses larmes, en y mourant chaque jour, et gange ainsi sa paix et leur paix” (“De la connaissance poétique” in *Situation de la poésie*, 113-4).

¹² Jacques Maritain, “An Essay on Art” in *Art and Scholasticism*, 98; “Discours sur l’art” in *Art et scolastique*, 167.

¹³ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 33; “Mais touche-to-on au bien et à l’Amour, comme les saints, au vrai, comme un Aristote” (*Art et scolastique*, 74).

¹⁴ Jacques Maritain, “The Freedom of Song” in *Art and Poetry*, trans. E. de P. Matthews, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1943), 103. This work contains translations of “Dialogues” (“Dialogues”), “Trois Peintres: Georges Rouault, Gino Severini, Marc Chagall” (“Three Painters”), and “La clef des chants” (“The Freedom of Song”), in *Frontières de la poésie et autres essais*; “Voilà deux familles qui ne s’entendent guère, ici comme ailleurs le prudent redoute le contemplatif et se méfie de lui” (*Ibid.*, 220).

¹⁵ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 220, n. 163 (added in 1927). We might remark

The creative drive follows none of the other drive's rules of fair play. This one is completely different. In Maritain's mature aesthetic work, *Creative Intuition*, he tells us in a note that, "We must thus admit, if we get rid of our 'scientist' modern prejudices, the existence of a poetic science [understand knowledge] which differs *toto coelo* from the theoretical (discursive) sciences."¹⁶ While the opposition is firm throughout Maritain's aesthetic works, perhaps no passage is more vivid than the one in his *magnum opus*, *The Degrees of Knowledge*:

The metaphysician breathes an atmosphere of abstraction which is death for the artist. Imagination, the discontinuous, the unverifiable, in which the metaphysician perishes, is life itself to the artist.¹⁷

III

Our discussion is now brought to the point where we might see the value of deconstruction in the creative act itself. While aesthetically, Maritain and Nietzsche and the Postmodernists, like Derrida, are worlds apart, nevertheless, Maritain does agree with them on three things at least within the creative realm: a) there are no objective (apart from the subject) conceptual realities or truths, b) the artist in the line of art is, in a sense, beyond good and evil, and c) there is at the *heart* of the creative domain no logo-centrality or conceptual organization.

First, following St. Thomas, Maritain holds that poetry and art have a *defect in truth*¹⁸ so that works of art are neither intended to nor actually do address conceptual reason. On the contrary, the way in which art operates is by *seducing* the reason so that the viewer's understanding will be thwarted and his emotion and sympathy might grasp the significance of the work. Furthermore, Maritain

here, *contra* Maritain, that perhaps those who follow Luther pay as much or *even more* attention to beauty especially with regards to music in the liturgy than the followers of Aquinas.

¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, Bollingen Series XXXV.1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 50 n. 4.

¹⁷ Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish To Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 2: "A la naissance du métaphysicien comme à celle du poète, il y a comme une grâce d'ordre naturel. L'un, qui jette son coeur dans les choses comme un dard ou une fusée, voit par divination,—dans le sensible même, impossible à en séparer, l'éclat d'une lumière spirituelle où un regard de Dieu brille pour lui. L'autre, se détournant du sensible, voit par science, dans l'intelligible et détachée des choses périssables, cette lumière spirituelle elle-même captée en quelque idée. L'abstraction, qui est la mort de l'un, l'autre y respire; imagination, le discontinu, l'invérifiable, où l'autre périt, fair la vie de l'un: (*Distinguer Pour unir ou les degrés du savoir* [Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1932], 5).

holds that imitation, classically understood, is an impossible notion. The work of art does not represent anything objective, rather, says Maritain, the artist transfigures, transforms reality so that our normal conceptual grasp of the work of art is halted and we see something new. Imitation exists, for Maritain, but in a very unique way.

Second, no moral lesson should be preached by the artist, and he is responsible *as artist* for no moral values. According to Maritain, even evil people can be great artists. He writes in his last aesthetic work *The Responsibility of the Artist* that, "Oscar Wilde was but a good Thomist when he wrote: 'The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose.'"¹⁹ Here in this work Maritain quotes St. Thomas as saying, "The kind of good which art pursues is not the good of the human will or appetite [or the good of man], but the good of the very works done or artifacts (*Sum. Theol.* I-II, 57, 4.)."²⁰ Summing up our discussion thus far, Maritain writes,

In this sense every thesis [an intention extrinsic to the work itself] whether it claims to demonstrate some truth or to touch the heart, is for art a foreign importation, hence an impurity. It imposes on art, in art's own sphere, that is to say in the very production of the work, a rule and an end which is not the end or rule of the production.²¹

If one sees in both Nietzsche and Derrida a resistance to a logically conceived and organized world, one sees it also in Maritain's aesthetics. According to Maritain's own aesthetic principles, it is by the deconstruction of concepts and metaphors that every genuine artist creates a great work of art. Not only is a theoretical and discursive grasp of the world different from the artist's, but Maritain finds that, as the artist creates, the resources of discursive reason are a positive hindrance to him. Perhaps this is particularly evident in the activity of the poet. Words, the obvious product of discursive reason, are the enemy. The poet must at some point disengage and loosen himself from language. Maritain is so strongly insistent upon this point and speaks of language with such abuse that one almost wonders whether Maritain even secretly wanted to be a poet rather than a philosopher.²²

¹⁸ Jacques Maritain, "Concerning Poetic Knowledge," in *The Situation of Poetry*, 67 n. 16.

¹⁹ Jacques Maritain, *The Responsibility of the Artist* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹ Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* 62-3; "En ce sens-là toute thèse, qu'elle prétende démontrer ou qu'elle prétende émouvoir, est pour l'art un apport étranger, donc une impureté. Elle impose à l'art, dans sa sphère propre, c'est-à-dire dans la production même de l'oeuvre, une règle et une fin qui n'est pas la sienne." (*Art et scolastique*, 109).

²² "There are never words for what it would be most important to say. Isn't it because of that we need poets and musicians?" See *The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions*

In his discussion of poetry, Maritain continually insists that language deflects the meanings of the poet. He writes: "Rational language is not cut out to express the singular . . . it does not only interfere with poetry, it perpetually sidetracks it."²³ One might speculate on what this might mean if one were to take this aesthetic and poetic view of the world as one's whole metaphysical perspective. Maritain continues by noting that poetry causes art to "long to be freed from reason."²⁴ While there are concepts in poetry, to be sure, they have been dethroned.²⁵ Ultimately, the poems want to take the viewer beyond words and concepts, for they simply get in the way.²⁶

While the intellect of the artist does, of course, play a dominant role, for Maritain, its discursive and logical abilities play but a small part in the creative act. While there are many issues involved here, let us examine two in particular: the magical sign and the heart of the creative intuition.

It was a stroke of genius for Maritain to develop the notion of the "magical sign." He classically defines any sign as something that "makes manifest, makes known . . . something distinct from itself, of which it takes the place and with regard to which it exercises a ministerial function, and on which it depends as on its measure."²⁷ However, he is very unclassical, and perhaps even radical when he describes the "magical sign" and how it differs from the logical sign. The magical sign, the one used by the artist, is a "sign in the sphere of the dream."²⁸ It is a sign for the imagination that has dethroned the logos-dominated intelligence and has begun to rule the activities of the

Himself About the Present Time, trans. Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 14; Also see Wallace Fowlie, "Maritain the Writer" in *Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Achievement*, ed. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 46-57.

²³ Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, 74.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 74. ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 323.

²⁶ Quoting Baudelaire favorably, he writes, "Great poetry is essentially *stupid*, it believes, and that's what makes its glory and force. Do not ever confuse the phantoms of reason with the phantoms of imagination: the former are equations, the latter are beings and memories" (*Ibid.*, 249; Also, Maritain writes, "In brief, it could happen . . . that a neo-classical reaction would ask poetry to *exhibit ideas and sentiments*, to charge itself with the rubbish of human notions in their verbosity and their natural meanness, and to fabricate *versified discourses* for the delectation of the formal intelligence. We should then see born a poetics "of abundance," of verbal abundance and of intellectual reduplication. And the word would again become master, the glory of the word, the endless and buzzing heroism of language—and all the stupidity of man" (*Situation of Poetry*, 60).

²⁷ Jacques Maritain, "Sign and Symbol" in *Ransoming the Time*, trans. Harry Lorin Binsse (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 218. This is a translation of "Sign et symbole," *Revue Thomiste*, XLIV (April, 1938) 299-300.

²⁸ Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, 227; "Sign et symbole," 311.

soul.²⁹ Here consciousness is "immersed in the living ocean of the imagination."³⁰ Here the consciousness is at play, for as Maritain wrote on the "Experience of the Poet:"

[The poet] is rather a child who tames things by calling them affectionate names, and who makes a paradise with them. They tell him their names only in an enigma, he enters into their games, blindfolded, he plays with them at life and death.³¹

This is not irrationalism or emotivism; the intelligence is present, but it is bound. Truth here is felt, lived, participated in, but not winnowed out for its own sake. The magical sign represents reality by asserting the living union of man with nature whereof the various primitive myths are symbols. To experience these magical signs is like believing in a story like a child does, but not being able to "wake up." Above all, and perhaps most amenable to Deconstructive sympathies, is the fact that in the case of the magical sign, various distinctions between things break down. The distinction between sign and signified disappears. For the viewer receiving the magical sign, there seems to be a physical interpenetration and fusion of the sign and the signified. In addition, according to Maritain, "the principle of identity does not exist," here and the "identity of things is constantly unmade and made again."³² All of this becomes extremely interesting if viewed in the light of Nietzsche's existentialism and Derrida's dislike for both binary oppositions and logocentrism. According to Maritain, this magical sign constitutes a key feature to art at its best.

If the magical sign resists logic, so too does the artist's creative intuition in its beginning moments. We will argue here that, in the heart of the creative intuition, as explored in Maritain's discussion of it in the work of the same name, there is a subrational and musical beginning not a conceptual or logical one.

Maritain claims that the mind works in the three spiritual spheres of the soul: the preconscious, the imagination, and the region of conceptual reason,³³ and he relates these to three epiphanies or stages of the creative intuition: the flash of insight, the intuition as intellectually conceived, and the intuition as worked out into a concrete work of art.³⁴

²⁹ The comparison between the magical sign, and its function in art, cannot but suggest certain doctrines of the Deconstructionists.

³⁰ Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, 227; "Sign et symbole," 311.

³¹ Jacques Maritain, "The Experience of the Poet" in *The Situation of Poetry*, 79. For further discussion see "Sign and Symbol" in *Ransoming the Time* 233ff.

³² Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time* 235-6; "Sign et symbole," 317.

³³ Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, 319.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 365-370.

An image that might be helpful in describing the creative process, is that of a deep-sea diver coming up for air. In the beginning, the first phase of creative intuition, the first "epiphany," as Maritain calls it, the intuition begins in the preconscious of the soul where all of the powers are conjoined at the root—a place where intellect, will and emotion are one. This is place within the poet where she sees with her mind, will and emotion all synchronized together. This is a vantage point where she sees with her dreams and longings and perceives with her love. Here she sees into reality and has a flash of knowledge and a kind of music begins to stir within her soul. One may notice that at the origin the creative intuition is music. May one think of Dionysius?

The musical stir increases as the creative intuition seeks for expression in signs and makes its first attempt at it deep within the imagination with imaginal-emotional complexes known as musical pulsions.³⁵ These are rhythmically presented sets of images that bring together the flux of reality into a relatively depersonalized unity. One can think of them as intelligence trying to read or scan reality in its spatio-temporal environment.³⁶ Through these musical pulsions, through imagination and through emotion, the intelligence is trying to read a reality in process, a reality in Bergsonian duration or Heraclitean flux, and ultimately a reality that the mind's finished product, the *judged concept*, will—out of necessity—banish to irrelevance.³⁷

The soul for Maritain is like a laboratory.³⁸ Everything that transpires in the pre-conscious and in the imagination is ultimately in the service of fashioning an end-product which is either a concept, an action, or a work made. Here, in what we shall term the primary area of the imagination, occurs the formation of images from the musical pulsions. Here at the frontiers of intelligence, the pulsions frame and put into cognitive and emotional perspective the reality to be grasped. Some newly born images will serve to illuminate for

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 302-4. According to one who knew Maritain, he was questioned by his colleagues at Princeton for his choice of the word. But, according to Maritain, while not commonly used in English or in French, it "is listed in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*" and it is the best word for describing the "kind of mental wave or vibration, charged with dynamic unity" (*Ibid.*, 302 n. 3) that he had in mind.

³⁶ Probably not unlike my eighteen-month old son, Theodore, who imitates the rhythms of what he hears, in order to better absorb the reality. Also, I have been amazed at some mentally "handicapped" people who, while unable to speak a sentence, nevertheless, can sing whole songs. These signs—these pulsions—are what allow what is outside of us inside.

³⁷ This is another reason why an artwork must be and present itself as "defect in truth." Concepts will only inhibit the flow of the concrete world. Maritain's philosophical mentor, Henri Bergson saw this well and is, no doubt, in Maritain's consciousness as he philosophizes here. For further discussion, see Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, reprinted by Citadel Press, 1946).

³⁸ Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, 106-111.

the intellect some obscure and pressing intelligibility that *discursive reason is incapable* of processing. These images, called by Maritain "immediately illuminating images,"³⁹ present to the viewer under the guise of one set of appearances a reality that is present but far away from the understanding. A brilliant example of this, according to Maritain, can be seen in this poem by John Berryman:

Movements of stone within a woman's heart, abrupt and dominant. They
gesture how fingrs really are. Rarely a child sings now.⁴⁰

Here the image of large stones reveal a characteristic about the poet's experience of a woman's heart and about how we often find it, at least from a man's point of view, moving back and forth and feeling helpless, like a child, in our inability to stop it. The poet is not simply comparing a woman's heart to an already prefabricated, logically determined, and/or well-worn image of spring, flowers, roses, or warmth, but is using a rather unexpected and unforeseeable image that could reveal nothing to the discursive intellect to warn it ahead of time of the comparison. Rather, it is as if the image grew up with, was formed in secret for, the creating of the experience of a woman's character. Examples of immediately illuminating images can be seen in painting no less than in poetry. One might consider Chagall here.⁴¹

With our discussion of the magical sign and the beginning and heart of the creative moment, we can see that creating great works of art is not a matter of telling the truth about things, and if it were, one would have to be a liar who told it.⁴² It is not a matter edifying the reader with sound moral values and it isn't a matter of argumentation. Ultimately, art is not motivated and guided by discursive reason either theoretically or practically, it is motivated by something far beyond and behind, something necessary but possibly dangerous. This is something that challenges the rational order of things. In conclusion, let us play with the following quote from Maritain:

As in each case in which thought attacks a difficult task, it begins, in the conquering of new domains, and especially the interior domains of its own spiritual universe, by bringing on troubles, disasters. The human being seems to disorganize itself, and it happens in fact sometimes that these crises of growth end badly. They are nevertheless crises of growth.⁴³

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 325-333.

⁴⁰ John Berryman, *The Dispossessed* (New York: William Sloane, 1948) quoted in Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, 293.

⁴¹ For example, see the circle in Chagall's *Around Her*, plate 60 in Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.

⁴² "The poet is a liar who always speaks the truth," Jean Cocteau.

⁴³ Jacques Maritain, "Concerning Poetic Knowledge," in *The Situation of Poetry*, 38.