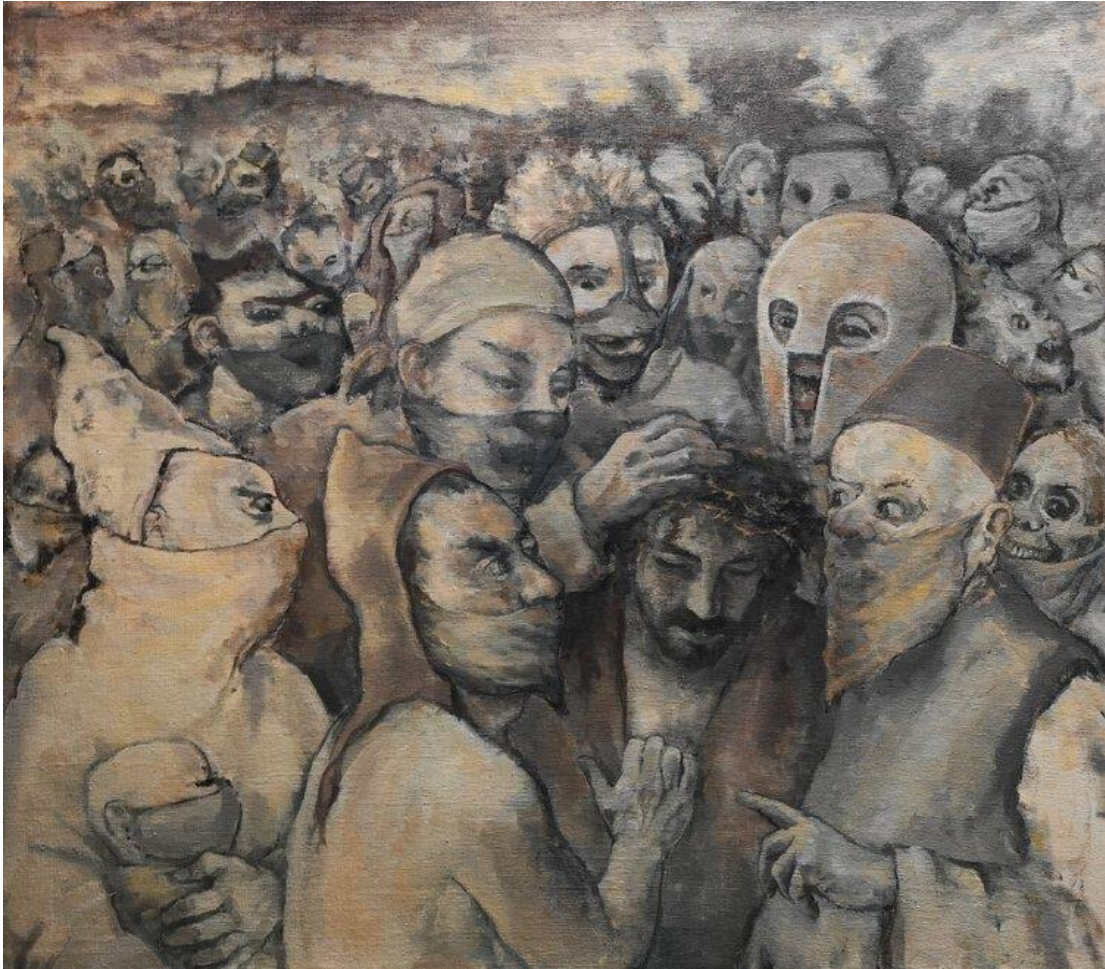


The Age of Auto Iconoclasm



They know what they do. 31 x 36 ins. 2020

Other than genocide there is no tyranny that controls a people better than fashion. Although fashion is a crude term, and 'zeitgeist' is the preferred word used by people who pretend to be thinkers; I am not referring to a 'a spirit of the age', but of the contagion that is described by fashion.

By 'thinkers', I mean those who are capable of rational thought which I believe is more rare than genius. Most people go through life thinking other people's thoughts mistakenly believing themselves to be conscious. This is especially true of the commentator and educator classes.

We have puffed up our own period under the grand title of 'The Enlightenment' but this has proved to be nothing more than a naïve solipsism. And the silliness of postmodernism and deconstructionism shows there are few things more contemptible than modern philosophy.

When Jorge Bergoglio, who with devilish humour calls himself Pope Francis, came to Ireland, I held an exhibition, one of the main paintings was called 'The Great Coprophiliac'.

(Bergoglio's contribution to religious and intellectual thought has been a metaphor on coprophagia).

Being fearful for my safety because Bergoglio is as vindictive as he is pagan, I did something that is not my wont, I went into a nearby church to pray for protection. In the empty church, as I knelt, I heard from within, for the only time in my life, a distinct and somewhat irate voice; *'look to the log in your own eye'*.

I was not a little discommoded by this response, whether it was of divine or angelic or even of diabolic origin. For although as an artist I have lived a life of casual dissolution I have often pretended (in the old meaning of the word) to be a Christian.

The exhibition was ignored because God has granted me one singular grace: anonymity. But I now realise that although, like many great souls, I am a religious enthusiast, I am likewise a moral dilettante.

Every age considers itself modern but only one considers itself 'postmodern'. The hubristic price of calling previous ages 'dark' or 'middle' will soon be paid. The sun also shone brightly in 'the dark ages'.

Our scientific era decrees that by a quirk of time and sunshine, matter self-mutated into consciousness and has now grown sensibilities and rights that must not be offended.

The great idiocy of our age is that all humans can be made equal. This is a perversion of the Christian concept that all human life is sacred. Our time portends a utopian darkness and digital serfdom. Is it not already here?

Artists in Roman times were probably slaves. But some freedom was gained when Caesar Augustus decreed that the head of the household did not have the right to put a slave to death without a tribunal. In more recent times, the rise of towns and cities with artisan guilds gave workers an independence from the lords and great landowners and artists were greedy to gain social status especially during the Renaissance.

The fruit of Christianity was a growing awareness of the value of every human person whether male or female, slave or lord because everyone had within a divine element. A significant effect of this in early Christian times was the decline in (mostly female) infanticide. These values were eventually codified by cannon lawyers in the 'middle ages' and formed the basis of western law.

This was quite unlike the Greek notion where gods were separated from man by an unfathomable divide, except where a god took a fancy to a woman, which was often.

The fruit of the 'enlightenment' is that the good of the individual (now a non-spiritual being) must allow for a system for the common good. This communal (or communist) good requires a suppression of individual values, religious, national or cultural. It requires as it were a great reset.

The triumph of this transformative utopia whether ideological or fiscal cannot be achieved without the undermining of one significant enemy, one that which nourishes and cherishes the individual: the family. The truth is that the family is the foundation of society.

But there can be no such truths say the postmodernist thinkers. There are no absolutes. They hold this to be an absolute truth.

And by a chain of evils, a virus has been sold as an apocalypse. The contagion of a malevolent ideology, political cowardice and the peacockery of an 'expert' class. In 'lockdown' a new slavery is born, a gulag of conformism with constant vaccination as the mark of purity, for the human condition is now a thing of contamination.

Every age has seen the destruction of images. Iconoclasm has many forms and is both a manifestation of power and expression of revulsion. The wearing of masks, the defacement of the face. is such a manifestation. It is quixotically an expression of revulsion and a declaration of virtue.

Yet the human face is more than a matter of aesthetics. It is also a symbol, a miracle, an icon of the spirit, an incarnation.

The wearing of masks as a societal norm, points to a spiritual malaise that may well be described as 'dark', the age of auto iconoclasm.

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