

GRIST

Diocese of New Ulm Social Concerns Office November, 2010

Enchantment

[from *A Certain World: A Commonplace Book*,
by W. H. Auden]

Where is your Self to be found? Always in the
deepest enchantment that you have experienced.
Hugo von Hofmannsthal

The state of enchantment is one of certainty.
When enchanted, we neither believe nor
doubt nor deny: we *know*, even if, as in the
case of a false enchantment, our knowledge
is self-deception.

All folk tales recognize that there are false
enchantments as well as true ones. When
we are truly enchanted we desire nothing for
ourselves, only that the enchanting object or
person shall continue to exist. When we are
falsely enchanted, we desire to possess the
enchanting being or be possessed by it. We
are not free to choose by what we shall be
enchanted, truly or falsely. In the case of a
false enchantment, all we can do is take
immediate flight before the spell really takes
hold.

Recognizing idols for what they are does not
break their enchantment.

All true enchantments fade in time. Sooner
or later we must walk alone in faith. When
this happens, we are tempted, either to deny
our vision, to say that it must have been an
illusion and, in consequence, grow
hardhearted and cynical, or to make futile
attempts to recover our vision by force, i.e.,
by alcohol or drugs.

A false enchantment can all too easily
last a lifetime.

Christ did not enchant men; He demanded
that they believe in Him. Except on one
occasion, the Transfiguration. For a brief
while, Peter, James, and John were
permitted to see Him in His glory. For that
brief while they had no need of faith. The
vision vanished, and the memory of it did
not prevent them from all forsaking Him
when He was arrested, or Peter from
denying that he had ever known Him.

God loves all men but is enchanted by none.

My neighbor: someone who needs me
but by whom I am not enchanted.



Variations on the Theme

Music I heard with you was more than
music. And bread I broke with you was
more than bread. *Conrad Aiken*

When we think a thing, the thing we think
is not the thing we think we think, but only
the thing we think we think we think.

Anonymous

Abraham was hospitable,
and God was with him.
Elias loved quiet, and God was with him.
David was humble, and God was with him.
Find your soul's desire in following God.
Do that, and keep your heart. *St. Antony*

We are ensnared by the wisdom of the
serpent; we are set free by the foolishness
of God. *St. Augustine*

There are four classes of idols
which beset our minds. To these for
distinction's sake I have assigned names –
calling the first *Idols of the Tribe*;
the second, *Idols of the Cave*;
the third, *Idols of the Marketplace*;
the fourth, *Idols of the Theater*.

Francis Bacon

There's a very fine line between "hobby"
and mental illness.

Dave Barry

In order to be prepared to hope in what
does not deceive, we must first lose hope
in everything that deceives.

Georges Bernanos

Discernment unmask the lie of temptation,
whose object appears to be good,
a "delight to the eyes" and desirable,
when in reality its fruit is death.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #2847

The smallest piece of scientific foolery
enchants.

Louis-Ferdinand Celine

We always keep God waiting while we
admit more importunate suitors.

Malcolm de Chazal

His soul will never starve for exploits or
excitements who is wise enough to be made
a fool of. To be "taken in" everywhere is to
see the inside of everything.

G. K. Chesterton

The song "If I Had a Hammer" is geared
toward people who don't have a hammer.
Maybe before I had a hammer I thought I'd
hammer in the morning and hammer in the
evening. But once you get a hammer, you
find you don't really hammer as much as
you thought you would.

Ellen DeGeneres

The people long eagerly for two things –
bread and circuses.

Juvenal

This is one of the miracles of love;
it gives a power of seeing through
its own enchantments and yet not being
disenchanted.

C. S. Lewis

God, have mercy on me.
From the earth's greedy mouth deliver me,
cleanse me of her untrue songs.

Czeslaw Milosz

He that can apprehend and consider vice
with all her baits and seeming pleasures,
and yet abstain, and yet distinguish,
and yet prefer that which is truly better,
he is the true wayfaring Christian.

John Milton

The child sees everything which has to be
experienced and learned as a doorway.
So does the adult. But what to the child
is an entrance is to the adult only a passage.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Tell me what you pay attention to
and I will tell you who you are.

Jose Ortega y Gasset

All that we see or seem
is but a dream within a dream.

Edgar Allen Poe

Do not give your heart to that
which does not satisfy your heart.

*Poemen the Shepherd
(Desert Father)*

Look everywhere with your eyes;
but with your soul never look at many
things, but at *one*.

V. Rozinov

Advertisers are the interpreters of our
dreams... Like the movies, they infect the
routine futility of our days with purposeful
adventure. Their weapons are our
weaknesses: fear, ambition, illness, pride,
selfishness, desire, ignorance. And these
weapons must be kept bright as a sword.

E. B. White