

A Humble and Trembling Movement: Creative Intuition and Maritain's Philosophy of Education

Daniel McInerney

My theme in this essay concerns what Maritain calls the *dynamics* of education: i.e., "the inner vitality of the student's mind and the activity of the teacher."¹ It was due in part to its misunderstanding of these dynamics that Maritain saw modern education at a crossroads near the mid-point of this century. The misunderstanding, however, is as old as educational theory itself. Already in Plato's *Republic* we find the basic battle lines drawn. At the end of the allegory of the cave Socrates says to Glaucon that education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be.² They proclaim to put knowledge into the soul that is not already in it, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes. Socrates' argument, by contrast, claims that the power to know already exists in the soul, as sight already exists in the eye, so that the role of education is foremost a liberation of the human person from the darkness of opinion into the light of knowledge.

While Maritain's Thomism rejects the precise Platonic formulation of this idea, it nevertheless agrees that the primary function of education is to be a cultivator of nature's ends rather than a purveyor of sophistical technique. To be sure, Maritain's philosophy of education replaces the Platonic idea of ready-made knowledge in the soul with an Aristotelian view of the soul as *tabula rasa*, ready to be fecundated, in Maritain's word, by sense perception and experience. Yet for Maritain as well as for Aristotle, the *tab-*

¹ Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 29.

² *Republic* VII 510bff.

ula of the soul is not so *rasa* as to exclude a vital and active natural principle of knowledge. For this reason his preferred metaphor for the art of education is medicine. Just as medicine deals with a living being that already possesses inner vitality and the internal principle of health, so the art of education deals with a living being that already possesses the internal principle of knowledge and an inner vitality which seeks the truth. Moreover, as the doctor exerts real causality by imitating nature's ways and complementing her, so too the educator looks to imitate and complement the student's natural grasp of truth.

Across the spectrum of current educational debate attention has returned to the importance of this internal vital principle of learning. Contemporary educators and theorists are now focusing on how students' emotions and intuitions bear upon the dynamics of learning. The work of Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner, for example, is prominent in this regard, as is that of his Harvard colleague Daniel Goleman, whose recent bestseller argues the importance for education of what he and Gardner call "flow."³ "Flow" is a moment of critical mass, comparable to what the athlete calls the "zone," in which mind, emotion and body are in total, unreflective sync. The resultant ecstasy, Goleman argues, should be the primary goal of all good methods of education.

It is easy to see how such a theory can devolve in practice, especially when placed at the service of a public policy like Outcome Based Education. Outcome Based Education, with its emphasis upon how the student feels about what he is doing, has been rightly criticized by many as being too soft on maintaining substantial curricula and standards of excellence. These critics assert that without a set of recognized standards American education is surely done for, and versions of this argument are popular now both from the Left and the Right. So far as it goes, of course, a list of standards, whether it be E.D. Hirsch's proposals or the Great Books advocated by Allan Bloom, is not a bad idea for American education at all levels. Maritain himself in *Education at the Crossroads* advocates a quite substantial curriculum for schools. But familiarity with the items on such a list could never be enough in itself to comprise the goal of education. What advocates of standards continually miss is the need for educational theory to grapple with foundational questions about human nature and its *telos*.⁴ In their ef-

³ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).

⁴ Cf. Curtis L. Hancock, "A Return to the Crossroads: A Maritainian View of the New Educational Reformers" in Peter A. Redpath, ed., *The Cultural Vision of Jacques Maritain* (American Maritain Association, 1990).

fort to avoid giving free rein to students' desires they commit the correlative error of disengaging learning from the *order* of learning, an error which Maritain terms *intellectualism*.

And not only does the error of intellectualism disregard the ends of the educational enterprise, it also tends to give short shrift to the proper affective element in learning. However much they may be misguided by behaviorist conceptions of the human person and inclusivist views of the human good, there is a germ of truth in what our contemporaries are saying about the need for teachers to direct attention to the individuality of the student and his inclinations. Consider in this regard some of Maritain's remarks from *Education at the Crossroads*. Of his three fundamental norms of education, the second of which advises teachers to "center attention on the inner depths of personality and its preconscious spiritual dynamism, in other words, to lay stress on inwardness and the internalization of the educational influence."⁵ And how does Maritain propose to accomplish this? "By moving forward along the paths of spontaneous interest and natural curiosity . . . by causing the youth to trust and give expression to those spontaneous or noetic impulses of his own which seem fragile and bizarre, because they are not assured by any social sanction. . . ."⁶ One can imagine a proponent of Outcome Based Education becoming enamored with such language taken out of its context. But what is its proper context within Maritain's philosophy of education? In what follows I would like to pursue this question, *first* by discerning what Maritain understands by the preconscious spiritual dynamism and to what extent this theory lends itself to a philosophy of education: and *second*, by determining how Maritain proposes to elicit this dynamism in students. I would then like to close by discussing how Maritain's philosophy of education avoids the pitfalls of voluntarism while salvaging what is best in the intellectualist's error.

Much of what Maritain has to say about the spiritual dynamism in question can be found in his writings on art, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* foremost among them. This becomes less surprising when we realize that for Maritain the effort of all education is toward a great awakening of the inner resources and creativity, on the freeing of the student's intuitive power.⁷ In *Creative Intuition* Maritain even refers to this preconscious spiritual dynamism as the musical unconscious, thus appropriating for Thomism the Platonic conception of the Muse. But what does Maritain

⁵ Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*

mean here by preconscious and unconscious, and what could this spiritual undertow have to do with learning, which presumably occurs "above the surface," so to speak, on the level of conception, judgment and discursive argumentation?

First, in speaking of the spiritual preconscious or unconscious we must be clear that Maritain is referring to the preconscious life of the *intellect and will*, and not to that preconscious life of the irrational in man, the field of instincts, latent images, affective impulses, and sensual tendencies with which Freud was so interested.⁸ The spiritual preconscious is described by Maritain as the field of the root life of the intellect and will, "the fathomless abyss of personal freedom and of personal thirst and striving for knowledge and seeing, grasping, and expressing. . . ." ⁹ I would especially note in this description Maritain's emphasis on the affective moment of the spiritual preconscious: its thirsting, striving, grasping. Maritain calls this dimension of spiritual activity *preconscious* because it occurs "beneath" the level of the intellect's explicit formations of concepts and judgments as well as the will's explicit choices. The correlation between education and poetic intuition is secured by Maritain's claim that this root life of reason's power is the well-spring "of knowledge and poetry, of love and truly human desires, hidden in the spiritual darkness of the intimate vitality of the soul."¹⁰

Maritain is led to posit such a preconscious, as he explains in *Creative Intuition*, by drawing forth certain implications latent in the Thomistic theory of knowledge. Without rehearsing all the elements of Maritain's theory, it is necessary to clarify two of its central components: (1) what Maritain calls the hidden activity of the *intellectus agens* or illuminating intellect; and (2) Maritain's identification of the intellect's preconscious activity or "creative intuition" with Aquinas's notion of affective connaturality.¹¹

Maritain develops the first of these two components by first affirming that in our fully conscious grasp of truth, what we grasp, of course, is the world through the agency of concepts. The concepts themselves are not known except via a reflective turn upon the intellect and its operations. Yet, Maritain contends, even given the performance of such a reflective turn, much of the activity of the intellect, and especially of the illuminating intellect, evades the searchlight of reflection. Still hidden in darkness is the

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹¹ See Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), chapter 4, esp. p. 87; and *The Situation of Poetry*, trans. Marshall Suther (New York: Philosophical Library, 1995), pp. 64ff.

ceaseless radiation of that intellectual sun which abstracts from phantasms the intelligible species and permeates every operation of our mind. Very often, too, the very images themselves from which the intelligible species are abstracted remain hidden or scarcely perceived in the process. As Maritain writes, though we may know often enough what we are thinking, we don't know *how* we are thinking. And before being formed and expressed in concepts and judgments,

intellectual knowledge is at first a beginning of insight, still unformulated, which proceeds from the impact of the illuminating activity of the intellect on the world of images and emotions and which is but a humble and trembling movement, yet invaluable, toward an intelligible content to be grasped.¹²

We should remember as well that Maritain is following Aquinas in understanding the powers of the soul as emanating from its essence in an ontological procession from that which is naturally higher to that which is naturally lower. The imagination proceeds from the essence of the soul through the more perfect power of the intellect, and the external senses proceed from the essence of the soul through the imagination. The more perfect powers thus envelop the less perfect, and serve as their principles in two ways: first, as being their end; and second, as being the source of their existence. Accordingly, we should understand the life of reason as "an immense dynamism emanating from the very center of the Soul" that terminates in the powers of the external senses, and wraps up all lower powers into its own hidden spiritual life which is "stirred and activated by the light of the Illuminating Intellect."¹³ Crucial here is the fact that all the soul's powers possess a common root, the still point of their emanation, which Maritain locates in the spiritual unconscious. Consequently, the hidden preconscious life of reason involves not only reason's activities, but also our loves and desires, our imaginative activities, and our emotions.

Here again we can recognize correlations between Maritain's philosophy of art and his philosophy of education. Earlier we noted Maritain's description of education as a great awakening of the inner resources of creativity. We have now seen Maritain locate these inner resources of creativity in man's spiritual preconscious. Readers of *Creative Intuition* will recognize the spiritual preconscious as the source of that intuition which is the lifeblood of poetic knowledge. Thus a reading of *Education at the Cross-*

¹² Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 41.

¹³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, pp. 78: 79.

roads makes clear that the lifeblood of academic knowledge consists in an intuition comparable to that of the creative artist. In *The Situation of Poetry*, Maritain more explicitly makes the analogy between creative intuition and learning I have been highlighting. He says here that the end of creative intuition is the work made, the poem, the picture, or the symphony, "which plays the role of the judgment in speculative knowledge."¹⁴ So while we understand the activities of the creative artist and the student culminating in distinct ends—the one in the creative work, the other in speculative knowing—we should also understand them as commencing with a comparable intuition.

Moreover, as with the poet, all that the student discerns and divines in things, he "discerns and divines not as something other than himself, according to the law of speculative knowledge, but, on the contrary, as inseparable from himself and from his emotion, and in truth as identified with himself."¹⁵ The intuition so important to learning is thus not primarily the work of explicit speculative knowledge. It certainly involves the intellect, but the intellect together with our affective inclinations and the dispositions of the will, indeed, "as guided and shaped by them."¹⁶

Explicit in this comment is the second of the two main components of Maritain's account of creative intuition: its identification with the Thomistic doctrine of affective connaturality.¹⁷ For Aquinas, this doctrine is developed within discussions of the virtues of faith and prudence, where judgment is given on the basis of an affective grasp of a certain good. In regard to faith, for instance, the affective movement is embodied in the virtue of charity. In making this point Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of judgments: those made according to the perfect use of reason (*secundum perfectum usum rationis*), and those based upon desire's connatural union

¹⁴ Jacques Maritain, *The Situation of Poetry* (New York: Philosophical Library.), p. 64.

¹⁵ Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, p. 83.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85, emphasis added.

¹⁷ Maritain distinguishes between four types of connatural knowledge in *The Situation of Poetry*, pp. 65–67, and sharply distinguishes the affective connatural knowing of the prudent person and mystic, on the one hand, and the affective connatural knowing which is creative intuition, on the other. Of this last he writes: "I mean . . . connaturality with reality according as reality comes to be buried in subjectivity itself in its quality of intellectually productive existence, and according as it is attained in its concrete and existential consonance with the subject *as subject*. This is poetic knowledge: radically factive or operative, since, being inseparable from the productivity of the spirit . . . and being unable nevertheless to issue in a concept *ad intra*, it can only issue in a work *ad extra*" (pp. 66–7).

with something (*propter connaturalitatem quamdam ad ea de quibus iam est iudicandum*).¹⁸ The second sort of judgment, the judgment according to affective connaturality, is illustrated by an example involving the virtue of prudence: the prudent person rightly judges about matters pertaining to a virtue such as chastity, even though he lack the knowledge of this virtue through the perfect operation of reason, in large part because his *habitus* of chastity provides him with the measure of right action (*sed per quamdam connaturalitatem ad ipsa recte iudicat de eis ille qui habet habitum castitatis*). A chaste person, in short, may not be able to provide a rigorous definition of chaste behavior, but he can correctly discern, directed as he is by the *habitus* of chastity itself, what to do in this or that set of circumstances.¹⁹

The two kinds of judgment—that according to the perfect use of reason and that according to affective connaturality—are to be analogously understood, an analogy based upon the sense in which each is an *adequatio* to things. The *adequatio* proper to the perfect use of reason is, as Aquinas argues, according to the mode of the knower, while that of affective connaturality is according to the soul's conformity with the mode of the thing as it is in itself. In the speculative knowing of matter-form composites, for example, we know things in the immaterial mode proper to intellection as forms are abstracted from their particular matter. But when we love, we become the other insofar as we let our desire be shaped by the other's own "existential" mode of being.²⁰ In one of Maritain's favorite phrases, taken from John of St. Thomas, *amor transit in conditionem objecti*.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that in conforming to things through the affections, through desire, we are still making judgments. Most properly speaking, of course, the term "judgment" refers to the speculative grasp of the necessary attributes of things at the level of universality. And in conforming to things through our affections we are not primarily engaged in abstracting universals, but in desiring things in all their particularity. Still, there is judgment in affective connaturality insofar as the intellect conforms itself to desire, and practical *truth* insofar as there is conformity

¹⁸ *Summa Theologiae* II-IIae, q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁹ Cf. *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

²⁰ A good discussion of this distinction, with a collation of the relevant texts in Aquinas, is found in Russell Hittinger, "When It Is More Excellent to Love than to Know: The Other Side of Thomistic 'Realism'," *The Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 57 (1983): pp. 171–179.

with right desire.²¹ It is because the desire of the *prudens* is connatural with what is truly good for him that his desire can serve as *mensura* for the deliberations of practical reason. Similarly in the fine arts, and especially perhaps in poetry and narrative fiction, judgments are made insofar as we incline toward one side of a contradiction on account of the pleasing aspects of the writer's art. We become convinced that "To be or not to be" is the question just so far as the images, rhythms and metaphors of Hamlet's anxious soliloquy "move" us toward that conclusion.²²

Yet for Maritain, creative intuition is hidden, preconscious. "It is not rational knowledge, knowledge through the conceptual, logical and discursive exercise of reason. But it is really and genuinely knowledge, though obscure and perhaps incapable of giving an account of itself."²³ It is difficult to square this claim with Aquinas's treatment of affective connaturality. For in the contexts in which Aquinas discusses this notion there is always some judgment, and hence some "conceptual, logical" exercise of reason, whether the context is that of faith, prudence, or the "judgments" of poetry.²⁴ Such judgments may indeed be incommunicable, as the judgments of prudence sometimes are.²⁵ In the cases of poetry and narrative art, they will depend upon some pleasing aspect for their conviction (as there is no necessity in Hamlet's consideration of suicide). But for all that, in the judgments of affective connaturality—at least as they are understood by

²¹ See *Summa Theologiae* IaIIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 3; and *In VI Ethicorum*, lect. 2, n.1130. Of course, as Aquinas explains at *In X Ethicorum*, VI, lect. 2, no. 1131, right desire is not an unmeasured measure, but is in turn measured by nature.

²² See *In I Sententiarum*, prologus, a. 5, ad 3; *Summa Theologiae*, q. 101, a. 2, ad 2; and *In Libros Posteriorum Analyticorum*, proemium. It should not be forgotten, however, that the judgment of the particular which serves as the conclusion of practical and aesthetic reasoning is derived from a universal consideration, i.e. a major premise. At *In X Ethicorum*, VI, lect. II, no. 1132, Aquinas writes: "Dicendum est ergo, quod intellectus practicus principium quidem habet in universali consideratione, et secundum hoc est idem subjecto cum speculativo, sed terminatur ejus consideratio in particulari operabili. Unde Philosophus dicit in tertio de Anima [III.11 434a16ff.], quod ratio universalis non movet sine particulari. Et secundum hoc, ratiocinativum ponitur diversa pars a scientifico." Cf. *In De anima*, III, lect. XVI, nos. 845–46.

²³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, p. 85.

²⁴ In this regard, see n.42 of Benedict Ashley's introduction to this volume, as well as Ralph McInerney, "Apropos of Art and Connaturality," reprinted in *Being and Predication* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986).

²⁵ The incommunicability of some practical judgments is a theme developed by Yves R. Simon. See his *Practical Knowledge*, ed. Robert J. Mulvaney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), pp. 23ff.

Aquinas—it is *the intellect*, fully conscious, working with concepts, which inclines toward one side of a contradiction.²⁶

None of which implies, however, that every judgment of affective connaturality must be *clear*. While it would appear best, at least with respect to the philosophy of education, to prefer Aquinas's understanding of affective judgment to Maritain's extrapolation of it in his notion of creative intuition, what we can still learn from Maritain is that our approach to the truth should begin with an affective movement, a movement which will and must take the form of a vague assent based upon some enticing feature—hopefully, if the teacher has done his job, a genuine one—of the subject matter. At this level of knowing, the object is characterized, primarily, as either the good, the beautiful, or the noble (or some combination of same), and only secondarily as true in the speculative sense. For here there is not yet fully-articulated, philosophical knowledge. Still, one has grasped truth, that is, the truth in conformity with right appetite. A student beginning his study of the *Iliad*, for example, might be struck with the nobility of Achilles long before he understands what Homer has to say of the relationships between courage, honor, and death in that poem. In being swept up by Achilles's nobility the student joins, by a quasi-prudential, quasi-aesthetic syllogistic, his natural appreciation for great deeds (a kind of major term), with the character of Achilles (a kind of minor). Reading Homer, however, is doubtless much more than this. The limitations of the Homeric code of honor, the criticisms against it mustered by Plato and Aristotle, these are discriminations which are speculative in nature and go far beyond the student's original fascination for the poem. But again, what Maritain has to teach us, at least, is that the student's original cleaving to the object of knowledge through desire, thus bringing the object into his own subjectivity in something of a practical or aesthetic judgement, is the first indispensable movement in the pursuit of truth, a movement which will no doubt have to be renewed again and again throughout his inquiry. The right analogy to the student's situation is the judgment of faith. For here, too, we incline toward an object too high for our intellect—though this one necessarily beyond our grasp—by way of a judgment reposing on love.

But to be clear: the judgment of affective connaturality is only the awakening of the student's inclination to the truth. Its aim is a further connatu-

²⁶ It is true that these judgments are all concerned with singular existents, but for Aquinas singulars are only known through the intellect's "doubling-back" to the phantasm via its concepts. See *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 86, a. 1, c. and ad 2; and Aristotle, *De Anima* III.11 434a16–20.

rality, a properly intellectual connaturality whereby the intellect is proportioned to reality according to the intellect's speculative mode. Both the successful achievement of the original intuition as well as the bridge to speculative knowing are due in large part to the quality of the teacher's art.

I would now like briefly to focus on this part of the teacher's task, namely, on how Maritain proposes that teachers cultivate affective connatural knowing in students. In *Education at the Crossroads*, Maritain presents his proposal by way of a dichotomy between the notions of *pressure* and *aspiration*. By pressure Maritain means those educational methods based upon an atrophied rationalism he sees as ultimately derived from the Cartesian psychology of clear and distinct ideas.²⁷ On the one hand, such methods exert pressure on the *intellect* insofar as they present to students freeze-dried formulas of knowledge fit for memorization and regurgitation. On the other hand, they exert pressure on the *will* either by excessive, compulsory discipline or extraneous incentives which only motivate self-interest and competition. The result of such methods, Maritain concludes, is an internal world of the student's soul left either dormant or bewildered and rebellious.²⁸

The art of the teacher should rather strive to awaken the *aspirations* proper to creative intuition. No technique, however impressive in its operations, can substitute for the teacher's obligation to liberate these aspirations in his students. In *Education at the Crossroads* Maritain suggests two guidelines according to which it can successfully be done.

The first comes down to a fundamental intellectual sympathy on the part of the teacher for the questions and difficulties the student confronts.²⁹ The teacher must keep in mind that the student's original affective grasp of the object, while a rich germ of intellectual life, is as yet inarticulate. It is a yearning that in attempting to articulate its object in concepts and arguments will often stammer and lapse into silence. Maritain warns, in a remark that must be sobering for any teacher, that "in fact any awkward gesture or rebuff or untimely advice on the part of the teacher can crush such timid sproutings and push them back into the shell of the unconscious."³⁰ For this reason the teacher must be especially attentive to encouraging the student's natural impulses as he engages an object of study; the teacher

²⁷ Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, pp. 39ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

must learn to listen a great deal to the student's stammerings, so that he will keep speaking until the teacher's conceptual language becomes his own.

In regard to the presentation of the object of study itself, Maritain further suggests that in order to set the student's love for the truth free the teacher must offer to the student the same kind of fruit the creative artist desires, a fruit found more in sense experience, imagination, emotion and desire than in any purely intellectual object. In this Maritain follows Aristotle's teaching in the *Poetics* that all learning begins with imitation.³¹ Imitation is by definition an inclination to form oneself to something else. While such a strategy is particularly appropriate for children, it is not exclusively so. Maritain does advise that before giving a youth the rules of good style, "let us tell him first never to write anything which does not seem to him really beautiful, whatever the result may be."³² In *Creative Intuition* he quotes with approval the following statement of Marsten Morse:

The first essential bond between mathematics and the arts is found in the fact that discovery in mathematics is not a matter of logic. It is rather the result of mysterious powers which no one understands, and in which the unconscious recognition of beauty must play an important part. Out of an infinity of designs a mathematician chooses one pattern for beauty's sake, and pulls it down to earth, no one knows how. Afterwards the logic of words and of forms sets the pattern right.³³

Here we see that even for the adult armed with intellectual virtue it is often his affective connaturality that serves as his guide to the truth. It is thus the duty of teachers to practice setting before their students intelligible objects under the aspect of the beautiful, the good, and the noble, which the student, like the poet, can grasp as one with himself and his desire.³⁴

Having indicated now in general terms how Maritain's notion of creative intuition can play an important role in the philosophy of education, and also, in rough outline, how Maritain thinks it should be cultivated, I would like to close by underscoring the essential difference between Maritain's concern with the individual student's affective connaturality and the ersatz version of this concern so prevalent in contemporary educational theory.

³¹ See *Poetics* 4 1448b5ff.

³² Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 44.

³³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, p. 307, n. 21.

³⁴ In the interpretive essay attached to his translation of Plato's *Republic*, Allan Bloom speaks of Socrates's effort to lure Glaucon and Adeimantus into a philosophical discussion of justice by a way of an exercise designed to elicit their noble instincts, namely, the founding of a city, albeit a city in speech. See *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), p. 343.

What separates Maritain from our contemporaries is the distinction he makes, a Thomistic distinction, between the *individual* and the *person*. A man is a person according to the spiritual subsistence of his intellectual soul, while he is an individual according to the non-specific properties of signate matter. Even at the time of *Education at the Crossroads* educational philosophy was rife with forms of instruction which sought to liberate the student's inner dynamism for truth by an emphasis upon his *individual* inclinations; and for Maritain, such emphasis could only result in a disordinate letting loose of those tendencies which are present in the student solely by virtue of matter and heredity.³⁵ Maritain claims that educators who fail to make the distinction between individuality and personality

mistakenly believe they are providing man with the freedom of expansion and autonomy to which personality aspires while at the same time they deny the value of all discipline and asceticism, as well as the necessary striving toward self-perfection. As a result, instead of fulfilling himself, man disperses himself and disintegrates.³⁶

It may be that for a teacher to inspire a given student's desire for a particular subject matter he must pay attention to one or other aspect of the student's individuality. This is simply good pedagogy. But if the attention paid to individuality devolves into a glorification of the student's material ego, teachers who engage in it must be regarded as engaged in an elaborate form of pandering, at bottom no different than that sophistical pandering which Socrates and Plato were so determined to combat.

For Maritain, the right way to liberate the inner dynamism of the student is to liberate the student's personality—his spiritual nature—from all that is selfishly individual. This liberation should not be equated with a false, despotic conception in which all sentiment, inclination and particular talent is rooted out for the sake of a standardized conception of what a human being ought to be. Rather, this liberation seeks to guide the student's natural desire for the truth out of the inarticulateness of affective knowing, and show the way toward conceptual truth. This freeing of the personality is a constant endeavor for man, involving of course a lifetime of study and action.

³⁵ Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.