Whose Culture? Which Liberal Arts?

Christopher Dawson begins his book *The Crisis of Western Education* by recognising that education is enculturation, 'the process by which culture is handed on by the society and acquired by the individual'[1]. However, in Australia today, it is commonly assumed that education is both amoral and a-cultural. Listen to politicians or parents, and education is about facts, skills and job-preparedness, which apparently have nothing to do with morality and have no specific cultural bias. But even if we *were* to grant that education is an enculturating process, we would then be forced to ask, 'Whose culture?' To suggest that education is the transmission of culture from society to individual is to assume there is such a thing as a culture that exists – an interesting proposal in a self-proclaimed multi-cultural, multi-faith, pluralistic society.

One answer to this question is that in the modern West, the appropriate culture is the one we have inherited, that is, Western Civilisation – such is the argument offered by Dawson. But of course, as the roll out of initiatives from the Ramsay Centre has proven, to many, this idea is entirely contestable, if not contemptable. So even if we were to answer our question of 'whose culture' with 'the culture established and created by the Liberal Arts', we would need to stop and recognise that 'Liberal Arts' is now a term meaning just about anything. Today, Liberal Arts includes conducting Marxist readings of Shakespeare proving his misogynist, patriarchal, capitalist and colonialist inclinations. And thus, the question: 'Whose Culture? Which Liberal Arts? This title is modelled after Alasdair MacIntyre's, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, in which he traces the historical progress of how rival conceptions of justice and rationality came to coexist within modernity even though they contradict each other, pointing to separate ethical and anthropological conclusions. I believe MacIntyre accurately identifies incoherence at the heart of society, an incoherence that exists also in education. I here intend to point to one specific cause of the cultural incoherence of modernity – metaphysical nominalism – to reveal, and hopefully find a way to navigate around, the obstacles that it creates for education.

Feelings which propel the question at the heart of Christopher Dawson's historical examination of education in the west were also interrogated by T.S. Eliot in the opening stanza to *Choruses from "The Rock":*

> *The endless cycle of idea and action,*
> *Endless invention, endless experiment,*
> *Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;*

[1] Dawson, Christopher. *The Crisis of Western Education*. 3

Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.[2]

Eliot's rendering of these questions suggests a forgetfulness I believe is at the heart of modernity: an anthropological amnesia about who we are. Permit me to provide an illustration of the situation in which we find ourselves. When I was in university studying to become a teacher, I was told that my future students would be 'digital natives'. My professors said that when it came to technology my students would 'know it all', and it would be second nature to them. But after twelve years of teaching, I can definitively reject this assertion. My students do not 'know it all'. What they know – and know well – is how to use technology. But they do not understand how it works. They know the basics, that 'this button does this'. But that does not mean they know how to troubleshoot when it is not working as expected. To paraphrase Eliot, they have an over-abundance of information, some knowledge, very little understanding, and no wisdom.

As a millennial, I am a digital native, because I grew up alongside the digital age, witnessing its progress and evolution. My children, however, are products of a digital age. There is a difference. And it is this same difference between people who have done the work to 'grow up' with modernity, and people who are merely products of modernity. Unlike the digital age, modernity grew up over the course of five hundred years. Therefore, all of us are products of the modern age, but none of us are naturally 'modern natives', in the sense that I am a 'digital native'. And this presents us with a particular problem; we are a product of something with which we did not grow up and thence do not understand. Of course, there is a way to 'grow up' with modernity, and that is to do the work to understand its birth and development. We do this through studying history which frees us from being blind, aimless, unconscious products of a system of thought, allowing us instead to understand it and therefore to operate as free agents within that

[2] Eliot FN

age. No individual can have lived from 1300 to 2021 and witnessed firsthand the fullness of modernity's birth and development. But we are all products of this world, products of the process of deconstruction and disenchantment that we so optimistically call 'modernity'. Unfortunately, thanks to the general malignment of real history education in schools, very few people know any of this. We are lost in time, committing the chronological snobbery rebuked by C.S. Lewis.[3] We are adults with no memory of our childhood, and thus, no understanding of who we are. We are so steeped in the cultural milieu, that we cannot see outside of it. Almost by definition to be modern means to not understand what it means to be modern. Thus, we have more questions, than answers – though they are questions we do not know to ask, because we cannot even recognise them as possibilities on the horizon of human experience. Therefore 'whose culture' or 'which liberal arts', are questions that remain unasked. Education is about getting a job. There *is* nothing else to talk about, no other question to ask, and if there were, we would lack the capacity to understand the question, let alone start formulating an answer.

This, at least, is my experience. I teach in a Christian school which has recently made the decision to purposefully identify with and locate itself within the Liberal Arts Tradition. The decision to do so is much easier than the actual working out of what that tangibly looks like. This is for many reasons: staff have largely been trained in modern universities and formed to think about education through the confusingly impossible combination of post-structuralism and economic neoliberalism; our students have expectations of school shaped by their experiences and see it as government legislated drudgery where sometimes you get to play sport; not only do our parents not read classical literature but they read very little of anything and struggle to understand the value of reading in a technological age, deriding Dante and Wordsworth without knowing who they are; the government funding model is tied to what should be taught and when, which is almost fundamentally antithetical to the liberal arts; and the list goes on.

All these obstacles stem from our great forgetfulness. Though perhaps forgetfulness is too polite a word, considering it is hard to believe that this has not been an intentional amnesia, brought about by the continual concussive barrage of media, ideology and an anti-historical view of history more interested in marginalia than truth. This is more than a forgetting of historical facts or the books and people that made our world. It is an ignorance of the formational moments of modernity, and a determined detestation of everything that came before 'right now'. There are many elements that combined to make the modern world, but today I want to focus on one specific element. And, as with so many seismic shifts in history, it is an idea, not an invention or

[3] Chronological snobbery FN

a revolution or a war, but instead a seemingly irrelevant, complex, and painfully nuanced idea pertaining to a branch of philosophy reserved almost exclusively for academics in ivory towers, yet is inescapably a part of every person's everyday experience: metaphysics.

It all starts with Plato. And perhaps we should not be surprised, for as Professor Diggory Kirke reminds us in C.S. Lewis' *The Last Battle,* 'It's all in Plato, all in Plato'[4]. One of his most famous theories is that of The Forms, a theory which became known as Metaphysical Realism. According to Plato, a concept such as 'Beauty' exists 'in itself'; it is a universal reality in which all things that are in any degree beautiful participate[5]. Aristotle adapted his teacher's idea; not denying the existence of universals, but stating that they were immanent in particulars, rather than existing in and of themselves as Ideal Forms in some transcendent yet actual 'place'. Philosopher Peter Adamson summarises, 'Where Plato thinks of beautiful things as caused by Beauty Itself, Aristotle holds that without beautiful things, there is no such thing as beauty'[6]. Even though this perspective is quite different to Platonic Realism, Aristotle should not be seen as the anti-Platonist he is often reputed to be[7]. Neo-Platonists such as Saint Augustine of Hippo recognised these ideas cohered with the metaphysical claims embedded within Christianity[8]. The Theory of the Forms found root in Christianity by relocating Plato's transcendent realm of ideas into the Divine mind[9] of God, and thus a form of Christian Platonic Realism came to dominate the philosophical and theological landscape for the next thousand years[10].

Of course, throughout the centuries, these ideas were challenged, adapted, and transformed[11]. The largest of these challenges came from the 11th century philosopher Peter Abelard, who rejected the medieval Realism of his time, stating that universal concepts are merely 'names' – words humans use (note the translocation from the mind of God to the mind of men) – and are not ontological entities in and of themselves. Thus, nominalism was born (*nomen* being Latin for name). Despite this attack on realism, Thomas Aquinas, so convinced that 'divine wisdom and valid human reason could not contradict one another' was 'entirely fearless in exploring the learning of the pagan philosopher' Aristotle[12]. Aquinas, therefore, managed to integrate a form of moderate Aristotelean Realism with the pre-existing Christian Platonism and in so doing, held

[4] *The Last Battle*
[5] Republic 276. Plato never wrote a simple and succinct definition of the forms; rather, the theory emerges throughout much of his Socratic Dialogues, primarily the Meno and the Republic.
[6] Adamson *Classical Philosophy* 213
[7] Tyson, 53 & Gerson *Aristotle and Other Platonists*
[8] See Peter Kreeft, *The Platonic Tradition*
[9] FN for the paraphrase of the below block quote, and then get rid of it,.
[10] For a fascinating and convincing discussion of Christian Platonism, see Paul Tyson's *Returning to Reality: Christian Platonism for our Times*. I am much indebted to Dr Tyson for not only this work, but his generous hospitality and conversation around these issues.
[11] Many philosophers, for example, still embraced the hard-lined Platonist perspective that universal forms really did concretely exist in some transcendent place. See Tyson, 72.
[12] Tyson 63.

back the power of nominalism for another century or so, that is, until the devastating work of William of Ockham[13].

At the risk of becoming too entrenched in the complexities of this question, which became known as the Problem of Universals, we must discuss the impact that nominalism had on not only modernity, but on Christianity itself. This is due, in part, to Martin Luther's respect for Ockham, as well as his disgust for scholasticism – the philosophical school that harmonised the works of Aristotle and Plato with Christianity.

In his 1525 treatise *The Bondage of Will*, which was a response to Erasmus' *Discussion of Free Will*, Martin Luther praised Erasmus, saying, 'You have not wearied me with those extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like—trifles rather than issues… you and you alone, have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot'.[14] It would be surprising for many to hear Luther considering the Papacy, purgatory and indulgences – the very things often assumed central problems – as mere trifles. Instead, he points to a hinge upon which, for him, everything turned. That hinge is scholasticism. Among other reasons, this was due to scholasticism's ready acceptance of Aristotelianism, and Luther vehemently rejected how Aristotle's philosophical conceptions of virtue as habit, and happiness as the greatest human end had infiltrated theology in such a way as to suggest that this virtuous habituation contributed to salvation. In Luther's thinking, scholastic philosophy had become so intertwined with theology that Aristotle's ethics had infected the centrality of grace in the Gospel. This is made clear in his 1517 *Disputation against Scholastic Theology*, in which he unleashes a series of take-downs on Aristotle and scholasticism, summarised in point 50: 'Briefly, the whole of Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light. This is in opposition to the scholastics'.[15] This bias against scholasticism meant that Luther, as one of the progenitors of the reforming spirit, was poised to accept other elements of new philosophical approaches, including the new metaphysical approach of William of Ockham, whom he called 'his dear master'.[16]

Ockham's nominalism was a semantic answer to the Problem of Universals, found entirely in human agency. It is the capacity to think and speak which forms or creates the singular *nomen* which give meaning to singular particulars and order the world so as to *appear* to contain universals. In replacing the 'realist conception of universals with a theory of mental signs'[17],

[13] I here join one of three schools of interpretation identified by Heiko Oberman in his introduction to *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, what he calls the 'Thomistic school of interpretation', which holds that the thought of the period succeeding Aquinas, 'beginning with Duns Scotus and culminating in nominalism… is characterized by the disintegration and rapid collapse of the Thomistic synthesis' (I).
[14] Fn for will
[15] Fn for disputation
[16] Fn for luther liking ockham
[17] Hudson?

Ockham rejected not only strict Platonic Realism, but also the more moderate Aristotelean position that statements about the world 'corresponded with the real nature of things as eternally established by God'.[18] While Ockham's answer was a satisfyingly simple alternative to the complex to-and-fro of medieval approaches and revisions of realism, the unintended consequence was that the removal of universals as existing eternally in the mind of God resulted in disconnecting God from the world[19]. The continued impact on theology was profound. As Andrew Wright summarises:

William of Ockham dismissed the received scholastic synthesis of faith and reason on the grounds that any attempt, however limited, to make God accountable to human reason risked compromising divine sovereignty. His nominalist distinction between the reality of particulars and non-reality of universals effectively drove a wedge between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. Though this enabled him to assert the absolute transcendence, otherness and freedom of God, it also denied theological discourse any secure purchase on reality.[20]

Nominalism continued to gather a strong following, and by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

The term 'nominalism' itself fell from ordinary usage, and the great controversy between nominalists and realists receded into history… But nominalism had mutated into radically new forms. William of Ockham himself would been shocked to discover what strange and heretical doctrines had evolved from his first principles.[21]

By the 20th century, the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar could reflect upon nominalism as a major source of the secularism that infected Western culture and deprived the world of meaning. 'A kind of testing of metaphysical love came with the epochal darkening of the fourteenth century', he writes, and in response, 'philosophers strain and storm nominalistically and shatter the web of the world dialectically'.[22] Balthasar points to the likes of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, as major proponents of nominalism in varying degrees of extremity.[23] Before long, nominalism had become even the denial of that which it itself originally posited. Locke, for example, 'rejected not only realism, but also Ockham's nominalistic doctrine that universal concepts were 'natural' signs' at all.[24] In other words, names ascribed to reality are an entirely abstracted language, not a response to real nature, because there either is no real nature to know, or real nature is entirely unknowable. While perhaps the earliest iterations of

[18] Hudson 285
[19] Scotus' Univocity of Being helped as well, Tyson
[20] Wright, Andrew. *Religious Education and Critical Realism: Knowledge, Reality and Religious Literacy, page 5.*
[21] Hudson 283
[22] 641
[23] Balthasar *The glory of the Lord: Volume 5, p.*289
[24] Hudson 285

nominalism were largely harmless, through its continued reconfigurations in the hands of enlightenment philosophers, it became a powerfully destructive tool.

Here we return to 2021, a world shaped by this desecrating force, but whose population has no knowledge of its existence or of any alternatives. To refer again to my co-opting of MacIntyre's argument, there exist today with seeming harmony rival conceptions of metaphysics, and by extension, education; however, people do not recognise that conceptions other than their own: a) exist, b) are valid, or c) are incompatible with theirs. The harmony, however, is dependent upon the discourse predominating the public sphere. Why was sensible debate around the question of same-sex marriage so hard to come by? Why do we struggle to have non-emotive rational discussion about issues such as abortion, gender, or race? Because it is in these discussions that our rival conceptions rear their otherwise invisible heads. It is here that unconscious metaphysical assumptions that usually lay dormant on the seabed of subjectivity awaken from their slumber to throw confusion and inarticulate rage into the mix. This confusion is not merely *between* sub-cultures; it is not as if there is a united front amongst secular humanists regarding gender theory, and a united front within Christendom opposing them. No, this confusion is *within* these sub-cultures. The powerful metaphysical overhaul of nominalism which ultimately contributed significantly to the growing secularisation of society through its continued revisiting, remodelling and repurposing by increasingly secular philosophers is not restricted to secular atheist society. Nominalism is everywhere, in everything; not only Protestants, but Catholics and Orthodox, Jews and Muslims are all products of modernity, and as such, all have nominalism flowing through their veins, even if they do not know what it is.

Hopefully now we might begin to see the obstacles that are presented to the modern educator who takes seriously the truth that education is enculturation, and the proposal that Liberal Arts is the best way to do so. If, as nominalism suggests, there is no intrinsic meaning in the world, education *cannot* be about anything other than pragmatic skill-attainment. It cannot be what John Ruskin sees as the purpose of true education: 'To make people not merely do the right things, but enjoy the right things – not merely industrious, but to love industry – not merely learned, but to love knowledge – not merely pure, but to love purity – not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice'.[25] Ruskin's sentiment here aligns to that established in C.S. Lewis' *The Abolition of Man*, which identifies the Platonic and Augustinian concept of *ordo amoris* as the purpose of education[26]. For there to be an ordered love – for there to exist right and wrong

[25] Ruskin, *Unto This Last and Other Writings*
[26] Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* page?

responses to the world – the things in the world must be real ontological entities that exist apart from our definition of them. Waterfalls must really *be* sublime, rather than 'sublime' being merely a word to express the feelings of a subject viewing some inert, neutral, mechanistic natural phenomena[27].

While many educators and parents, particularly those identifying as Christians, may accept the ideas of Lewis and Ruskin while they remain in the comfortable realms of broadly accepted ethics, the rebellion and dissonance begins when this realism encroaches upon their personal desires. Everyone is okay with teaching students justice. In the Australian National Curriculum it is included as a 'General Capability', as well as in both Civics and Citizenship and Health and Physical Education courses. However, as MacIntyre would ask, whose justice? What definition of justice?[28] In a nominalist world, justice is only a *nomen*, a name, merely semantics defined by the individual, and thus all teaching becomes relativised. We cannot engage in the passing of a culture from one to another, because the culture of nominalism rejects the existence of a culture at all. There are only subjects, and only subjectivism. A teacher is not a part of a larger cultural organism passing that culture to the next generation. A teacher is only a singular individual in a sea of individuals, disconnected.

Of course, while this may be the logical outcome of nominalism, it does not align with our day-to-day lived experience. Operating functionally in a purely subjectivised and relativised world is impossible. As Paul Tyson remarks, 'I cannot see that it would actually be possible to relate to real people and be an actor in the real world without assuming that reality had qualitative and meaningful dimensions'[29]. Despite our straining against them, there remain immutable realities. This is seen clearly in the fact that while on the meta-scale political talk around education is 'economic', it very quickly becomes ideological and decidedly realist when it wants to. The most recent example of this is perhaps the need for schools to teach about consent – consent[30] – not the nature of humanity, the meaning of sexual union, or even the mere biological purpose of the sexual act. We cannot teach about these things, because according to nominalism, they do not actually exist. All that exists is the Nietzschean conception of will, and therefore, all that be

[27] Lewis *AOM* Page
[28] For example, the context in Health and Physical Education is as follows: 'The HPE curriculum supports critical inquiry where students analyse the factors that influence decision-making, behaviours and actions and explore inclusiveness, power inequalities, assumptions and social justice.'
[29] Tyson 19.
[30] I am not here suggesting that consent education should not necessarily take place in schools, but merely using it as an example of the disconnected nature of the educational process. It also strikes me as an unfortunate example of the school filling the void left by other long-standing institutions such as the church and family.

spoken of is consent. But what is will, if not a metaphysical reality? There is always *something* that needs to be treated as a universal.

However the very fact that government attempts to legislate the teaching of ideas such as consent or gender theory suggests that when thinking along those lines, these institutions are not nominalists[31]. Regardless of the inconsistencies, the fact that this stuff *should* be taught, rests upon a non-relativist, non-nominalist metaphysical platform, because claims of *should* or *ought* belong to realism, whereas claims like, 'you make your own decisions and it's up to you' stem from nominalism. This is the incoherence and confusion which modern education has become, and into which it is enculturating the next generation. If nothing else, education should not be incoherent. We should not be enculturating young people into a culture in which nothing makes sense, in which there is no logical continuity, in which 2+2=5.

This means that even though a Christian School in the Liberal Arts Tradition may not fall into some of nominalism's more obvious snares, it is still populated by students, teachers and families that have been shaped by it. The 16th Century Reformers accepted nominalism as a foundational element of protestant theology, which contributed to the secularising of the west into which we are all born. If unsure of the extent of its impact, perhaps we could look to our students' spiritual health as an indication. Roger Scruton, commenting on what he calls the 'metaphysical loneliness' in every human, talks of the metaphysical 'sacramental bond that is established when people adopt common myths, common liturgies, and a common distinction between the sacred and the profane'.[32] No wonder, in a world shaped by shapelessness, in which the naturally membership-bestowing processes of enculturation such as family and church have been eroded, schools are seen as the last bastion of identity-formation. But in nominalism there are no common myths, common liturgies, or commonly held sanctity, and schools can at best offer incoherent subjectivism which students subconsciously recognise as empty, and our metaphysical loneliness threatens to overwhelm. As R.J. Snell explains, citing Charles Taylor:

Modern freedom resulted when older moral horizons were uprooted, when "liberation" from the "captivity" of divine order was attained. Free, yes, but the world seems to have lost its story, and we suffer "a sense of malaise, emptiness." As Taylor explains in A Secular Age, our freedom is disembedded from reality, with a resulting "terrible flatness in the everyday," the "utter flatness, emptiness of the ordinary." Our freedom came at a cost:

[31] This is, of course, even though a theory of gender in which gender is nothing but a name is possibly one of the clearest examples of nominalism in action in today's age. The feminist philosopher Linda Alcoff identified this in 1988 when she wrote that 'a feminist adoption of nominalism … threatens to wipe out feminism itself. 'Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory'. In discussing Biddy Martin's work, she writes, 'What is a woman? If the category "woman" is fundamentally un- decidable, then we can offer no positive conception of it that is immune to deconstruction, and we are left with a feminism that can be only deconstructive and, thus, nominalist once again.' (420)

[32] Scruton, 58

the loss of anything worth living for, and the only remainder is a "centring on the self." And since the world is devoid of thickness, everything becomes a plaything, something to tame, toy with, lead about on a leash, and discard when we have drained its temporary pleasure.

Here we must reflect that simply 'teaching the Liberal Arts' is not a remedy for this centring on the self. The Liberal Arts are not immune. It was, after all, wise men of the past trained specifically in the Liberal Arts who not only invented nominalism but continued to warp it and unleash its destructive power upon the world. And so we ask, 'which Liberal Arts?' It will not be the Liberal Arts of the modern progressive Left, in which 'liberal' no longer means the liberating power of truth and wisdom, but rather the promise of a freedom to do and be whatever one desires; a liberation from the weight of meaning through deconstructionism. It will not be the attempt at an amoral Liberal Arts hoping to de-westernise the canon, for there is nothing amoral about an ideology that rejects some biases in favour of others. It needs, therefore, to be more than just 'Liberal Arts'. Even the Liberal Arts promoted by Cardinal John Henry Newman, who so wisely recognised that 'though the useful is not always good, the good is always useful'[33] will fall afoul of nominalism until we accept that the good is a transcendental reality, and not a subjectively determined word existing only in our own minds.

Teaching within the nominalist tradition means not teaching any tradition at all. Nominalism, however, does not empty the world of meaning, because the world is intrinsically meaningful. All it can do is blind us to that meaning, convincing us we can pick and choose. It cannot be coherent, it can never be consistent, and thus it will always be confusing. Can a culture be passed on, as Dawson suggests, when that culture does not even know if it exists, if that culture cannot identify even itself, and if that culture is completely unaware of *why* it does not know itself? It cannot. For education to be what it really is, a school attempting to regain the lost *telos* of the institutionalised educational act must not only reject nominalism, but must take its teachers, students and wider community on the journey of understanding nominalism. This has been and continues to be my experience. This is reason I can be discussing ideas with fellow teachers, and suddenly someone disagrees with a point that logically follows from all the points with which they have hitherto agreed, because suddenly their deeply held nominalism rears its head to rebel against an encroachment upon something they hold dear. Nominalism is, I suggest, a first thing. It is part of a metaphysical platform upon which all other understanding is built. How can education really take place, how can knowledge, understanding, wisdom and culture be passed from master to pupil, if ultimately there is nothing real to pass on? Masters, in fact, could not

[33] *The Idea of A University*

even exist, which is potentially one of the reasons behind the recent fad of student-centred learning[34]. Nominalism empties out, it attempts to place humanity on the throne of meaning-making, gives us the illusion of being the great definers of reality, but in doing so, it sacrifices the meaning of that reality upon the altar of freedom[35]. If education does not grapple with and reject nominalism, it can do nothing better than forge little pretend gods who grow up to believe they can bend reality to their will, but against whom reality will ultimately win.

Another of T.S. Eliot's despairing reflections upon modernity, written before his turn to Christianity, is *The Hollow Men.* It opens:

> *We are the hollow men*
> *We are the stuffed men*
> *Leaning together*
> *Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!*
> *Our dried voices, when*
> *We whisper together*
> *Are quiet and meaningless*
> *As wind in dry grass*
> *Or rats' feet over broken glass*
> *In our dry cellar*
>
> *Shape without form, shade without colour,*
> *Paralysed force, gesture without motion;*

This is an image of a world emptied out by nominalism, in which humanity is empty, yet stuffed; where shapes have no form, shades have no colour, force is paralysed, and gesture is motionless. Whose culture? Which Liberal arts? Whichever it is that lights a candle in the darkness and distortion of modernity and rejects the hollowing-out of nominalism. A Christian School in the Liberal Arts Tradition must do the work to 'grow up' with modernity, taking their teachers and students on the journey with them. Until we return to embracing the thickness of reality, and at the same time, the necessary, beautiful and life-giving limitations it imposes upon us, truly enculturing education will be empty, incoherent and meaningless; it will, in fact, be impossible.

[34] In contrast to C.S. Lewis' reflection in *Our English Syllabus,* 'You see at once that it implies an immense superiority on the part of the teacher… In education, the master is the agent, the pupil, the patient'. 83-84
[35] So much more is said on this important topic in *Acedia and its Discontents,* by RJ Snell