

SUN OF INTELLECT

The conclusion to *Man and the Sun*

by Jacquetta Hawkes (1962)

Chapter 10: Sun of Intellect

During the autumn of 1952 thousands of scientists, engineers and nuclear warriors congregated at the coral island of Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands. The bomb-makers, with their sickening fondness for trivializing high tragedy, called their creation Mike. We can, I suppose, be thankful that the P.R. men had not been allowed to name it New Hope or Peace Maker. The thing was set up on the islet of Elugaleb. When it was detonated on the morning of 1st November, a fireball three and a half miles across lifted into the air and Elugaleb disappeared below the sea...

Man's first artificial sun rose above the Pacific, but it was not a star of peace. The Russians watched their own sun rise within a year. So now two chosen people, each confident that they were the children of light, confronted one another across the globe with suns in their bandoliers.

Before the decade was out earth had its man-made satellites and the face of the moon had been struck. In this present year of A.D. 1962, three representatives of *Homo sapiens* have already seen the sun shining in the black skies of interplanetary space. The pace quickens.

Prometheus stole fire from the gods, the fire which has so often been kindled as a symbol of the sun. We have stolen the secret formula of the sun itself. The Titan defied Almighty Zeus on behalf of mankind, and for his sacrilege had to suffer torments from the talons of the eagle, bird of the sun. So he has been a hero for all Apollonians, for the Greeks, for the men of the Renaissance, for ourselves. Prometheus, yes, and Icarus, Phaeton and Faust as well. Is our modern Prometheus, the total scientist, in his greater pride, his more reckless defiance of the gods, about to lead us all to self-destruction? In our hundreds of millions we mass on the face of the earth in helpless expectation of a searing death more terrible than that spread by Phaeton when he found he could not hold the horses of the sun.

In following the solar cycle of this book, I have honoured those who worshipped the Sun God in his many forms. Yet I have also honoured those scientists whose probing minds have dispelled the simple divinity of the star. The members of the Holy Office were right to be fearful of the ideas of Copernicus to see that they would lead to the destruction of many of the old religious forms. They were wrong as well as ridiculous trying to turn back the tide of science, of man's efforts to comprehend the physical universe, for that pursuit is a part of what is divine in humanity. We have to honour both the King of Heaven and Prometheus.

The present peril and despair of humanity show that we cannot live without religious meaning although we may do without religious institutions. (The time may come when even those few who still follow them turn against priests who in gem-encrusted copes and mitres, serve Him who taught poverty and humility, who betray Him who

taught love of one enemy by raising no murmur against a holocaust of hate.) If we cannot find god in the world, we lose Him in ourselves and become contemptible in our own eyes. We become mere statistics. For this is the greatest evil coming from the unbalanced Apollonian mind. Science has won power over the universe of matter by breaking down and down, by numbering and measuring. So at last everything that cannot be broken down, numbered and measured must be deemed not to exist. Science is uniting man with the sun in a totality of energy and matter. That is communion at the lowest level of being. But we have always been right to seek it also at the highest.

The Sun of Intellect shining fierce and alone overhead will make the whole globe a Golgotha. Forms of religious expression, like art, are means towards harmonizing the dark and light within each one of us—those terrible forces, potent as the atom, that are driving us to destruction. We have to find this means of letting light into the dark places, and darkness to temper the light. The late Roman Empire gave birth to Christianity. Will our own world, which so poignantly resembles it, have life and strength for another labour?

It seems that a new religion must exalt the Sun of Life more successfully than Christianity has ever succeeded in doing. It is some proof of our need that the man who has proclaimed 'a reverence for life' as his creed has come to be accepted as a saint of the modern world. The morality of the new religion cannot be of the prohibitive, life-denying kind which may, alas, only serve to strengthen the inner forces of darkness, our sense of 'the enemy', but a no less strenuous positive morality directed towards creative love in all its manifestations. It must respect the chicken crying for life within the shell equally with the light of thought within the skull. Akhenaten in his gardens by the Nile had a vision of what might be, but it was too soon. If we cannot move nearer to this vision now, it will be too late.

I have a hesitant conviction that the young are already moving towards these new forms, infected though they are with our own corruption. I often look at them with distaste and with a great hope. They are stripped down to bare bones of truth and acceptance which could soon be reclothed from head to foot. Many of the attitudes which the older generations delight in censuring (because, like the Inquisition, we are afraid) may well mark stumbling advances towards a better morality.

Meanwhile the sun shines upon us all in turn, the black and the white, the peoples of the East and the peoples of the West.

There is just a chance that it may awaken us to a Good Morning.

Jacquetta Hawkes, *Man and the Sun*, Cressett Press, London 1962:239-241.