

Sorcerers Control?

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In a recent interview the Managing Director of Mercedes Benz, a state-of-the-art German firm for the production of high quality motor cars, painted a picture of mankind's near future in which computer software will disrupt most traditional industries, and in which their own main competitors will no longer be other motor car firms but Google, Apple and Amazon! Law, he says, nursing, car driving, insurance, real estate will all be substantially affected by computers. By 2027 10% of everything produced will be 3D printed. By 2037 70 to 80% of jobs will disappear. Cheap smart-phones will make world class education available worldwide, and so on, and so on. But such dramatic predictions need to be put in their place, which is secondary. Machines are only machines, and computers are only machines.

It is ever since the Industrial Revolution broke out over mankind in the 18th and 19th centuries that men began to wonder what the inhuman machines meant for the future of human beings. Since then many a wise observer has raised serious doubts as to the ultimate impact of the materially more and more marvellous inventions, but mankind as a whole has only hurtled forwards, trusting that the onrush of machines, compounded by electronics and computers, could only be more and more beneficent. Yet is it a wise or happy man whose nose is always buried in his smart-phone?

The basic problem is that machines are purely material while human beings are primarily spiritual. So the most useful of machines can only sub-serve what is primary or most important in the life of human beings. Man is indeed composed of material body as well as spiritual soul, so that material machines can certainly serve his body, but that body is merely the carrier of his spiritual soul for the duration of his

brief life on earth, and then at death either the soul without supernatural grace drags the body down to the eternal torments of Hell, or the soul with the grace of Christ lifts the body, normally through the temporary torments of Purgatory, to the permanent bliss of Heaven. Either way, whatever the body may have done or not done to the soul during life, after death it is the state of the soul which determines the fate of the body, and not the other way round.

However, in our terrible times even Catholics can lose their grip on these elementary realities of body and soul, life and death, so let us turn to music to illustrate the limitations of matter and machines. In a modern recording studio there may be dozens of high-performing machines and thousands of brilliant buttons, knobs and dials making up ever more perfect machines for the recording of what? For the ever more faithful reproduction of sound? What sound? The sound of a human being either singing or playing an instrument. And why record it? Because the recording will sell and make money. And why will it make money? Because music is a unique language for expressing emotions in the human soul, and be it Furtwaengler conducting a classical orchestra, or the Beatles strumming on guitars, the human musicians are by their musical gifts expressing through the material means of orchestra or guitar in the material-spiritual language of music those spiritual emotions which a whole public wants musicians to express for it. And if the musicians are soulless, the most brilliant of recording engineers will never make a living. In every human art, the mechanics are necessarily subordinate to the artists.

Therefore the more spiritual are the lives and activities of men, the less seriously will they take merely material upheavals in human affairs, such as the managing Director of Mercedes Benz evokes. On the other hand the more men turn away from God, the larger such upheavals bulk in their lives. Readers, take a spiritual Rosary into your material hands, and leave well behind you the looming disasters of our

materialistic “civilisation.”

Kyrie eleison.