

Change and loss

A vignette in honor of Stephen Spender and Louis McNeice

Lausanne, 1990

§1. Loss:

Reminding – ‘you, too,
Disintegrate
With the plaster – but you
At a faster rate’.
(Spender: *Sleepless*)

§2. Change:

The future is the bride of what has been.
(MacNeice: *Autumn Journal*).

§3. Spain ... the terrain ... the theatre of change ... of loss ... of war:

And I remember Spain
At Easter ripe as an egg for revolt and ruin.
(MacNeice: *Autumn Journal*)

§4. This disruptive war was the gory expression of the mythological battles that divided Europe (and the world) throughout:

The light is fallen and you are hidden
In sunbright peninsulas of the sword:
Torn like leaves though Europe is the peace
That through us flowed
(Spender: *The Room above the Square*)

§5. If one can exceptionally label – and I stress “exceptionally” because I cannot help thinking that such labeling fails to describe the social complexity it refers to let alone to the diversity found within such types – “fascist” and “communist” the two mythologies in battle at Spain, the latter mythology was espoused by intellectuals as they felt that the former was (to become) answerable for actions of grave social injustice and inhumanity only to be disillusioned ten years after when the latter became to mean the former!

§6. Spain was not only the terrain of mythological battles but also of scientific experimentation, a scientific savagery to gain more ... for additional resources, whether these be cultural, linguistic, ethnic ... oil, gold, water ... an apocalypse that is human:

Money, steel, fire, stones
Stripping flesh from bones,
With a wagging tongue of fear
Tormenting the ear
(Spender: *A Man-Made World*)

The world is what was given,
The world is what we make
And we only can discover
Life in the life we make
(MacNeice: *London Rain*)

§7. 'Disintegration' is loss that comes about with change ... a present to be and with it, surprisingly – and I stress “surprisingly” as one needs to think why this is so, there always seems to be hope:

Expecting always
Some brightness to hold in trust
Some final innocence
Exempt from dust
(Spender: *What I Expected*)

For reference:

ZAMAROS, PANAYOTIS (1990), *Change & Loss - A vignette in honor of Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice*, Lausanne, DrZ Network.