

of Eastern Europe different from what one is accustomed to, one also wishes that it were better.

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THE LABYRINTH OF THE WORLD AND THE PARADISE OF THE HEART. By *John Amos Comenius*. Newly translated by *Matthew Spinka*. Michigan Slavic Translations, no. 1. Ann Arbor: Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America and Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures of the University of Michigan, 1972. xiv, 148 pp. and appendix [facsimile of Amsterdam ed., 1663]. Paper.

Comenius (1592–1670) is, next to John Hus and Thomas Masaryk, probably the most prominent figure in Czech cultural history. The most striking fact about his intellectual outlook was its combination of rationalism with utopianism and mysticism. On the one hand, he was an intellectual sponsor of the seventeenth-century scientific revolution, and Trevor-Roper identifies him as one of the three foreign *philosophes* of the English Puritan Revolution. On the other hand, his mystical writings played a part in the religious ferment in Russia, and with Jacob Boehme he belongs among the Western progenitors of modern Russian mysticism.

Comenius originally wrote the *Labyrinth* in his exemplary, idiomatic Czech in 1623 during the ongoing destruction of Bohemian Protestantism. Though borrowing many formal elements of the story from the German theologian John Andreae (1586–1654), he surpassed his mentor by the artistic power of his ideas, imagination, and style. The work has two parts; the first and more important one—reminiscent of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* or Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*—dwells on the vanity of human strivings, the second on the happiness of men dedicated to God. The author's radical critique of contemporary social life and the Aristotelian-scholastic erudition was not an end in itself; it served to free his mind to embrace new social and intellectual models. Chizhevsky considers the Solomon episode of the *Labyrinth* the finest treatment of the theme of "expelled Truth" in world literature, except for Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor." Others have discerned anticipations of Kafka and modern expressionism in his artistic method and allegorical inventiveness.

The first English translation of the *Labyrinth* by Franz Luetzow (from the Amsterdam edition of 1663) was published in 1901 and reissued several times. The second translation by Spinka, published first in 1942, is less literal and more readable, yet essentially accurate; moreover, it is based on the standard scholarly Czech edition of 1910. For the second edition, which is under review, the language has been further modernized, with modifications in almost every sentence; the introduction and the notes have been updated. A newly added bibliography is helpful, though it omits some of the English translations of Comenius's works, the anniversary literature of 1970–71, and references to scholarship specifically on the *Labyrinth*, especially by Novák, Souček, and Škarka. Another new feature is the appendix containing a clear photographic reproduction of the entire Amsterdam edition of 1663.

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