

1-27-1966

Notes: Various Themes: Thunder on the Left (Fragments), 1966

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Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "Notes: Various Themes: Thunder on the Left (Fragments), 1966" (1966). *O.P. Kretzmann Collection*. 43.
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THEME Thunder on the left

2. (After typed page) ^{And} This year of our lord 1966 I would like to say something quite different at this opening convocation - something dictated - directly & immediately by the contemporary situation.

3. Ancient Greeks - remarkable tradition - if before battle - any great & decisive event: you would hear thunder on the left - a good omen - gods were with you - left side usually the weak side - but thunder on the left meant that the Gods were near - profertly - helping - intervening.

4. Interesting! - because I would like to suggest the notion that this is exactly what is happening on the America campus today - during the past two years many campuses have ^{flourished} turned from their quiet, ivy-covered ways to an activism which may have profound meaning

from
Brooklyn to
Brooklyn

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III

THEME

Thunder on the left

for American education, American life,
and the life of the world - there is

||| now thunder on the left - the political
social - economic - and even theological
left - the left as characterized by
dissatisfaction with things as they are -
the status quo. The bleak, blasted
heritage of our century - our ^{smugness} smugness -
our stupid satisfaction with things and
gadgets & ^{social} immorality -

5. Now - this - this thunder on the left -
these uprisings - these protests - these
sit-ins - sit-downs - teachers have been
good and can continue to be good
men - I know that this new thunder
has been accompanied by excesses - by
squealing and squalling - by idiotic
demands which tend to weaken the
real sound of the real thunder - the
younger generation expressing its
cosmic dissatisfaction with some of
the mistakes we have made - with
our injustices - our hardness of heart
and our softness of mind - of the

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6. Now this new thunder on the left can be a good omen or a bad omen - good: if it means a new interest in the great things - ^{words} justice - rights - freedom - authority - the lights by which men find their way between the ages.
7. It can be - and has been - a bad omen - when it turns out that the thunder means only a demand for later hours in domestic - for sexed license - for contempt for the thunder - law of God - of Sinai, Athens & Calvary - these too can thunder - and the new thunder should be an addition not a substitute.
8. So - let us accept the new thunder as potentially a good and solemn thing - perhaps the silent generation has now finally become unsilent - and while the new thunder on the American camp now and then has an ominous sound - let us _{has} _{uncertain}

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THEME Thunder on the heft

help to make it certain, clear - with
 some of the ^{sound} of the ^{deed} of the ^{deed} - the
 day of wrath in it - let it be ^{accompanied}
 by lightning which will tear down the
 prison house of the modern world - the
 barriers which man have built between
 themselves - the towering structures of a
 world built on sack - ^{crumbs} - ^{any one old}

9. Now one more thing - turn to individual.

xx
 Country
 how many
 hopes in
 buried but

a few weeks ago - Jim Hagan - ^{xx} ^{hope}
 this was the way he wanted it - II
 have tried to reconstruct that day &
 night - basic fact - he was alone all
 alone in wanting death - God did
not want it - his parents - we - and
 so we might write on his tombstone
 "How many hopes lie buried here"
 but - at the last ^{he was} alone with God - and
 what happened in his interior soul
 those long hours while his body was
 fighting for life we do not know -
 most of us know God better than
 we knew Jim - and I believe that
 in that dark fighting night, God

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in His ^{unmeasured} ~~unmeasured~~ pity, stood by Jim and finally took him gently home - at the end there was thunder on the left - & from on high

God stands by-

10. Lesson - we do not have to wait for death to write the words - "How many hopes lie buried here" - for those of us who waste our God-given time - who wilfully keep God out of our lives - who peer thru chapel as if it were a building in another world - who think that freedom means sexual license - for these there can be written this ^{semester} over their days and years "How many hopes lie buried here."

11. So - a good & gracious semester - let the ^{new} thunder on the left be a good omen for us - an omen of wisdom & understanding and the Fear of God.