THE CRESSET
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS / MARCH, 1990
Contributors

3  David Paul Nord / NOTES FROM THE WAR ON GRADE INFLATION
7  William E. Schlender / COUNTERVAILING VALUES IN BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING
13 James P. Henderson / CHARLES DICKENS'S Hard Times AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
17 John Solensten / RIPENESS
18 Nelvin Vos / IN QUEST OF HOME
20 Richard Maxwell / THE PURSUIT OF THE GREAT AMERICAN MOVIE
22 James Klein / THE DISCO OF OUR DISCONTENTS
23 Walter E. Keller / HERMENEUTICS OF CONSENT
28 Louis J. Reith / THE PRINCES AND THE PROTESTANTS
32 Charles Vandersee / THE GOD OF WINTER

Departmental Editors

Jill Baumgaertner, Poetry Editor
Richard H. W. Brauer, Art Editor
Dorothy Czamanske, Copy Editor
Theodore Jungkuntz, Book Review Editor

Business Managers

Wilbur H. Hutchins, Finance
JoAnna Truemper, Administration and Circulation

Photographer

Ken Bazyn resides in New York where he freelances photography and writes for the Genesis Project currently releasing films on the Bible. The cover and inside cover New York cityscapes are, respectively the Atlas statue at St. Patrick’s Cathedral and the Flatiron Building in Manhattan. On page seventeen is the Chapter House from Notre Dame at the Cloister Museum in Manhattan.

THE CRESSET is published monthly during the academic year, September through May, by the Valparaiso University Press as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor and accompanied by return postage. Letters to the Editor for publication are subject to editing for brevity. The Book Review Index and the American Humanities Index list Cresset reviews. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Regular subscription rates: one year—$5.00; two years—$8.50; single copy—$1.50. Student subscription rates: one year—$2.00; single copy—$.25. Entire contents copyrighted 1980 by the Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383, without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.
Making the Grade

"I teach for free," asserts one of my colleagues. "What I am paid to do," she winces, "is read my students’ papers and assign their grades." Academics are likely no less idealistic than other wage-laborers, and her sentiments probably sum up the attitude of many, possibly most, teachers toward their jobs.

Perhaps my colleague is slightly more sanctified than the rest of us who "teach for free." I would surely add most faculty committee meetings, all urgently requested replies to vagrant Vice-Presidential memoranda, all proctoring of the new infantilism in student behavior, every joyless academic ceremony, all administrators’ solemn speeches on occasions they render inauspicious, and many other nettles in the groves of academe to the list of things I must be paid to endure.

Which still leaves grading as the principal source of income for most teachers. I suspect we must be paid for our judgments of the work of our students (some are pleased to get less than what they pay for) because it is far easier to speak the truth about one’s subject than to speak the truth to a student about the quality of his work.

Leading us into some current reflections on the dubious means of our livelihoods is our March alumni columnist, David Paul Nord. He is seasoned to speak, having gotten grades at three universities and given grades at four universities over the past fifteen years. Graduating from the University in 1969, he took his Woodrow Wilson Fellowship to the University of Minnesota where he received his M.A. in American history in 1972. From 1974 to 1979 he was an Alumni Research Foundation Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he received his Ph.D. in mass communication in 1979. Presently he is Assistant Professor of Journalism at Indiana University at Bloomington.

Mr. Nord has also worked as an Associated Press reporter and editor, as a journalism instructor at Bismark (North Dakota) Junior College, and a researcher and writer for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. He has had articles published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and in the Wisconsin Magazine of History, Minnesota History, Journal of Broadcasting, The Cresset, and Journal of American Culture. He is co-author of "The Logic of Historical Research" in Research Methods in Mass Communication, a forthcoming publication by Prentice-Hall.

The Cresset welcomes alumnus Nord to In Luce Tua.

The Editor

IN LUCE TUA

Notes from the War
On Grade Inflation

David Paul Nord

There is a war on in some colleges today, a war on grade inflation. Like all wars, it is not pretty, and it is not for the faint-hearted. But, some believe it is dirty work that must be done. I am a soldier in this war. I did not enlist. I knew little about the war before I was drafted. But I was proud to go and do my duty. Now, shell-shocked and disoriented, I am asking that fundamental philosophical question that has dogged all soldiers since human warfare began: "Why me?"

It all started when I went to a job interview at the School of Journalism at Indiana University. Among other things, they told me that theirs was a hard-grading department, that a "C" or thereabouts was the average grade just as it had been in ancient days when God or Horace Mann had first handed grades down from the mountain top. This sounded like it might be an interesting change of pace for me. Throughout my life as a student and teacher I had always been mildly annoyed by grades—only mildly because my thoughts had always been inconsistent. As a student, I had resented all grades on philosophical grounds, though I personally liked to get good ones. As a teacher, I had resented the inflexible, arbitrary, and generally ridiculous nature of grades, though I liked to give good ones to good students and bad ones to bad.

My thoughts on the inflation of grades in colleges in recent years had also been rather mixed. First, since grades are at best imprecise, it seemed to me only fair to err on the side of the students. Second, since grades serve a pedagogical as well as a judgmental function, it seemed sensible to encourage students with high grades. Third, since grades are only relative, it seemed to me only fair to matter little whether the zero point was a D or a C or even a B, so long as the good guy got As. And, fourth, who cares? If high grades make students and parents and Veterans Administration officials happy, why not let everyone be happy? So I always gave the prevailing grade. If everyone else in my department rewarded functional illiteracy with a C+ or B−, so did I. And yet I had always a qualm or two. Sometimes, usually late at night the day before grades were due, it would occur
to me that giving Johnson a C+ instead of a D or F would probably contribute to the decline of Western Civilization.

So I guess I was ready for the war on grade inflation. At least I had no notion to resist. If everyone else was going, I might as well go, too. Why not? It seemed easy enough. A few surgical strikes on the grade reports at the end of the semester, and the war would be won. But, alas, it was not to be so simple. The war was not an impersonal, faceless transcript war, but hand-to-hand combat at close quarters. During the fall campaign, the battlefield was my office, and there, daily, I fought individual students to the death. So I write these lines to those who believe in grade deflation but who think it a war easily won. Not so. The enemy is wily, the weapons are crude, and the war, like all wars, is hell.

For me, this past fall the front was a little sector in the School of Journalism at Indiana known to all by its code name, J110. Its official name is “Communications in American Civilization.” It is a survey of the history of journalism in America, and all prospective journalism majors must take it as their initial confrontation with journalism education at Indiana. This course is a kind of skirmish line where the enemy is first encountered, and I was the advance patrol. My assignment was to meet 160 freshman students head-on with grade deflation. My weapons were Cs, Ds, and Fs. My grading objectives were twofold: (1) to break the good and not-so-good students to the idea that journalism is a rigorous academic subject at Indiana, a subject that will require their most diligent attention; and (2) to drive the bad students out of journalism altogether.

The first exam brought the first hostile contact. A shock wave pulsed through the class as I wrote the grade distribution on the blackboard: Eleven As; thirty-nine Bs; fifty-eight Cs; forty-one Ds; and nine Fs—which adds up to a nice, symmetrical grade-point average of 2.01. Disbelief gripped the class. These were the A and B students of the high schools of Indiana. These were the students who had thought the D and F had been outlawed along with mustard gas and dumb-dum bullets. These were the students whose teachers had always told them, if they told them anything, that their writing was good, very good, even excellent. Now I was telling them that it was ungrammatical, unclear, uninformative. The students, to put it mildly, were not instantly persuaded to my point of view, and the battle thence began. They came in waves throughout the semester. First, the arguers in my office, the complainers; then the criers, beggars, and screamers. Office hours, which to me had previously meant time to eat lunch and read the mail, took on a new and desperate meaning.

The arguers arrived minutes after I had handed back the first test, and the advancing columns remained unbroken thereafter. Five of the nine Fs from the first test came, one after the other, with neck hairs bristling, to plead their cause. Shouldn't anything be worth something, they asked. Isn't there even a tiny flick of value here? Not all the words are misspelled; not all the facts are wrong. Shouldn't that be worth at least a D? How about a C+? These sessions left my stomach quivering. There I sat, at point-blank range, trying to convince a human being that his work was, indeed, without merit. Yes, I would agree with him that the F grade was something like a zero point and that only those papers that completely failed to answer the question, that contained no relevant or accurate factual material, and that showed no evidence of thought or preparation were assigned the grade. And, yes, I'm afraid that your paper falls into that category. This is not, I said, a judgment of you or even of what you know or what you can do. It is merely a judgment of this piece of work. Well, the student would reply after a brief pause, then how about a D−?

**He Bottle Throttled his Roommate**

Of course, the Fs were not the only arguers. The Ds wanted Cs; the Cs wanted Bs; the Bs, As. I've always gotten As in all my other courses. These were the constant refrains. I know I can write, they said, because I was the Activities Editor for my high school yearbook, and it won a prize. I just didn't know we were supposed to write good on this test. It's unfair. After all, this isn't an English class, is it? Some arguers were not so defensive as this. Offensive is what they were. They, the fault, they assured me, was mine, not theirs. It was a case of failed teaching, not failed learning. They read the book and attended lectures, so why weren't they taught anything? This was a very effective tactic to use against me, new to the course and new to the school, and soon my head as well as my stomach began to ache. Some of the arguers, however, did not rattle me. They were as unimaginative in my office as they were on their test papers. One student argued that it was unfair of me to test her on material from lectures she had failed to attend. Another came in to complain about a term-paper grade. I had counted sixty-six spelling and mechanical errors in his five-page paper. Now he showed me that one of my red marks was unwarranted. He was right; I actually had made a mistake. There were actually only sixty-five errors. He left feeling contentedly self-righteous. I was exposed, and he was vindicated.

While I argued with the arguers in my office, the complainers were out-flanking me and were attacking behind
The implications of grade deflation are apparently not understood by academic administrators. A limited war on inflated grades is agonizing and, to use my students' word, unfair.

the lines. They went right to headquarters—to complain to the director of the School of Journalism. One complaint was that I expected too much of them. I had, for example, handed out the midterm test questions a week before the exam. I thought this would help the students focus their attention and would limit both their study and their worry. I gave them eight questions to think about. I would choose one of them the day of the test. I told the students they could talk to me anytime before the test and I would answer all their questions. Thus, they understood precisely what they had to know to do well on the test. Two students thought this an outrageous shift of the educational burden to their shoulders, and they complained about it to the director. Wasn't this too much to require of a poor freshman, they asked him. It was unfair, they said. And so it was. It was shamelessly designed to reward those who studied and to punish those who did not. Obviously, this was an affront to the very ideal of democratic, egalitarian education.

Students also complained to the director about my tough grading. On this matter, of course, I thought I was safe, for I was merely a team player. I was the foot soldier carrying out the general's orders. But when I chatted with the general about all of this I felt a little lonely again. Sure, you should grade hard, he said. But make them like it. Make them happy to get their Cs and Ds. They will thank you for it later. Another faculty member made this connection a little more clearly for me. Of course, you have to grade them hard, he said, but don't forget that these students' course evaluations will weigh heavily in your dossier come tenure time. Course evaluations? Tenure time? Oh, boy!

She Was Pregnant and Beside Herself

The arguers and the complainers had arrived with the shock of the first test. The criers, beggars, and screamers came later, after tensions and frustrations had had time to brew. With 160 students in the course, I had expected the excuses to be varied and exotic; they were, and they grew more so as the semester wore on. One day a phone message appeared in my mailbox: "Cindy S. missed the test. She just found out she is pregnant and is beside herself." An interesting image, I thought, though perhaps more appropriate for after the delivery. Pregnancy, by the way, was a fairly popular excuse, for both female and male students, though it was not so popular as the traditional family deaths, divorces, and disasters. Then, of course, there was that chronic and epidemic ailment, freshman malaise. Most of the excuses were symphonies of tears, regrets, and future promises. One student announced at the outset that she would surely break down if she were to tell me the whole story. I immediately suggested that she give me only the highlights, but I got the whole story anyway, fully orchestrated. Another student missed the final exam because he had been extradited to Kentucky. Still another had gotten a bit behind on his term paper because he had been in jail for slugging his roommate with a Coke bottle. Even though he didn't bring the Coke bottle along to my office, I thought it wise to give the strapping young fellow his "incomplete."

There was crying and begging of all sorts. Some of it was ludicrous, but most was believable and genuinely touching. Despite the great variety, however, one theme ran throughout. The burden of responsibility was to fall upon me, not them. Even those who had no real excuse at all took this tack. They had not done the term paper, for instance, and now they were repentant. What was I going to do about it? Was I going to screw them? Few considered the possibility that they had screwed themselves. A student came to me the last week of the semester with two Ds and two Fs on her tests and paper. She said she had flunked this course before and if she got a D in it this time she could not graduate in journalism. She stated her case quite clearly: I alone was responsible for her future. If I gave her a D, her life would be ruined. When I told her there was nothing I could do, she was furious. Her life is now ruined—but at least she has the comfort of knowing that it was my fault, not hers.

When all else failed, a couple of students tried screaming. "Unfair" was the favorite exclamation. For example, I gave the final exam on two different days, and the students could choose the day they preferred. They all had the same eight questions to study. On the first exam day, a Monday, I asked the group to write either on question #1 or question #7. Then came the avalanche of second-guessing and complaining by the second group. Some advised me that if I asked the same two questions on Wednesday it would be unfair. Others said that if I did not ask the same two questions it would be unfair. I reasoned that because the students did not know what I would do ahead of time (in fact, I did not even know), it really made no difference which questions I picked on Wednesday.

So, on Wednesday I picked the same two—questions #1 and #7. After class, a student came to my office in a full gale rage. Unlike everyone else in the Wednesday group, she said, she had not found out before the test which questions I had asked the earlier group on Monday. If she had known she could have inferred that I would ask these same two again on Wednesday. In other words, everyone except her had known I would ask #1

March, 1980
It will be difficult to impose tougher standards when colleges face declining enrollments. Already instructors feel opposing pressures: be tough, but don't drive the students away.

and #7. Not so, I said. Yes, yes, yes, she screamed. And it's unfair, unfair, unfair! This test is unfair, the paper is unfair, the whole course is unfair, everything is unfair! And off she fumed down the hall. Another student was sitting in my office at the time, there to complain about another matter, and she was astonished by this outburst. Gee, she said, I figured that since you asked #1 and #7 on Monday, you wouldn't ask them again today, so I didn't study those two. Well, I replied, I guess it's just unfair.

And so it went last fall in J110, "Communications in American Civilization." Of course, not everyone complained or argued or cried or screamed. Nervous, insecure teachers always tend to lavish their attention upon the nervous, insecure students. But the agonies of grade deflation were not insignificant and were not, I feel, unique to me or to this course. I think I learned several things about the troubles of grade deflation that may be of general interest: First, a limited war on inflated grades is especially agonizing and, to use my students' favorite word, unfair. By limited I mean not consistent across courses and departments, or even across colleges and universities. My problem was that I was constantly giving Cs and Ds to people who were getting As and Bs in other courses. If I tell students that they have serious problems with their writing, while another instructor is unreservedly praising their work, whom are they likely to believe and whom are they likely to think is the crank?

Second, grade deflation is also unfair unless students are given the help they need to improve. But many lecture courses are too large to give much personal attention to students' thinking and writing. I could scarcely read and comment on 160 term papers, much less really help a student write one. I suppose this situation is what led to grade inflation in the first place. It is much easier simply to declare a paper good than to teach a student to write a good paper.

**Grade Hard, But Make Them Like It**

Third, the implications of grade deflation are apparently not yet clearly understood by academic policy makers. It seems to me that a return to tough grading implies a rejection of the popular democratic ideal that everyone can succeed in college. Yet clearly it will be increasingly difficult to impose tougher standards at the very time colleges are facing declining enrollments. Already instructors feel these opposing pressures: be tough, but don't drive the students away. These conflicting pressures will only increase as the real enrollment crunch comes in the 1980s.

Fourth, grade deflation will never work, it will always be a bitter, unpleasant war for everyone, so long as large numbers of students refuse to take personal responsibility for their own education and the quality of their own work.

But I don't mean to dwell on these issues. My purpose in this article is merely to complain about the troubles of grade deflation, not to do anything about them. After listening to incessant complaining for four months, and expecting to listen to more for some months and years to come, I simply felt the urge to complain back. And yet I'm not hostile toward these students, or at least not toward many of them. They would be foolish not to fight me over grades, for they know that grades are arbitrary and that they are being made to suffer individually for some fuzzy social purpose. I have no grand thoughts on grades, either inflated or deflated, to offer in this article. Grades are not the most important things in life or even in college. But for those of us who give them and who get them, grades are an unpleasant daily reality. And if they are to be deflated, grades will be even more unpleasant in the years to come.
Countervailing Values in Business Decision-Making

Exploring Alternatives to Ambiguity

William E. Schlender

One of the requirements of an effective business manager is that he must be able to live with ambiguity. The issues that he deals with do not have precise dimensions, and the solutions are more often than not fraught with uncertainty. Perhaps that is one reason why there is concern over the values that guide his decisions. On the job he appears to be guided by values different from those which guide him in his private life. Since the business person is an adaptable breed, he has been remarkably good at accommodating to the value system that develops in almost any milieu.

Otto Bremer has suggested that business, through its remarkable contribution to our high material standard of living, has become the dominant source of social values, exerting more influence than such institutions as the family, church, school, or government. If this is so, it is even more important that the ambiguity of values in business decisions be examined. This article proposes to look at some of the circumstances that force the business person to operate by ambiguous standards and to consider some alternatives to mitigate the problem.

The felt need for a higher level of ethics in business is not new. Books on ethics in business appeared in the early part of this century. Business ideals and ethics were early recognized as important dimensions of an effective management philosophy. Perhaps the fact that the training of businessmen was not a matter of formal academic discipline in earlier decades made such books of interest mainly to other academicians. It was only after World War II that executive development programs were used on any scale. By that time, both in business school curricula and in management development programs, we were emphasizing the specialization of courses and techniques and processes, which distracted us even more from moral issues. We probably felt that moral and ethical guidelines could be assumed. Earlier texts in business tended to be prescriptive, and I suppose that the normative approach, particularly in management courses, did encourage students to make some ethical inferences. As business scholarship became more sophisticated, research described how things were rather than prescribed how things should be, and values were de-emphasized as the science of management advanced.

When the moral norms could be assumed in society, business research de-emphasized values and described how things were rather than prescribed how things should be.

Unethical conduct in business does exist, and it probably has since business was first transacted. The events of Watergate revealed first improper political contributions and payoffs in connection with overseas business; later discoveries—or perhaps more open recognition—of domestic legal and ethical violations on a large scale become common.

While current news media routinely reveal unethical and illegal practices in business today, it is yet to be demonstrated that the ethics of businessmen are significantly worse today than a generation or two ago. Certainly the business sector is larger today than ever before, so we will have more unethical practices. Also, the impact of one questionable decision may affect a very large number of people; for example, a decision to place a questionable drug on the market, or a decision to substitute Chevrolet engines for Oldsmobile engines. But it is also true that the searchlight has been focused on practices which have heretofore been effectively kept under cover. Thus we are more aware of ethical abuses

William E. Schlender is The Lutheran Laymen's League Professor of Business Ethics in the College of Business Administration at Valparaiso University. An alumnus of Valparaiso University, he holds his professional degrees from the University of Denver and The Ohio State University and has taught at Bowling Green State, Texas at Austin, Columbia, and Cleveland State Universities. Mr. Schlender has co-authored two books in management, contributed articles to management journal and business cases to the Intercollegiate Clearing House, and is a Fellow of the Academy of Management.

March, 1980
than ever before. The public exposures that cause domestic business ethics to seem flagrantly worse are perhaps instrumental in constraining unethical conduct because of their "sunshine" effect.

At the same time we cannot be complacent about any assurance that business ethics are relatively respectable. Several surveys show that although managers feel that their behavior is ethical, they believe that other managers' ethical behavior is open to criticism. Also, most businessmen think that their competitors are as immoral as the critics of business think they are.

Martin Luther, through the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, asserted that one's vocation or calling could be a form of worship; earnest work was the stewardship of the pious layman. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination, however, was more directly instrumental in nurturing the Protestant ethic. Some Protestants reasoned that for those predestined for salvation there was also a relationship between being blessed materially in temporal life and predestination to blessedness in eternal life. The duty of man on earth was to exercise stewardship of material things bestowed by God. Waste of time and goods was a sin, as was spontaneous enjoyment of life; frugality and thrift were virtues to be sought. The businessman who acquired material wealth was indeed favored by the Lord, and economic gain validated the moral framework of Protestantism. It remained for John Wesley to puzzle over "a curious dilemma, namely that religion makes a man frugal, and frugality begets wealth. Wealth makes a man indifferent to religion, so it seems that religion destroys itself."5

The Accommodating Capitalist Manifesto

Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations in 1776 provided the framework for a value system which proved to be particularly suited to the kind of society and economy being developed in the United States. Smith, a professor of moral philosophy whose other major work was A Theory of Moral Sentiments, saw economic wealth resulting from the operation of natural laws that moved men to act out of self-interest; in economic life they had the "mutual advantages of using one another's genius." According to Smith, a man strives toward selfish gain, but in doing so is led by an "unseen hand" to contribute toward the common good. His naturally acquisitive nature logically leads to a validation of the moral goodness of both his means and ends.6 For the business manager who had difficulty in reconciling his religious principles with the strategy and tactics that he thought necessary to run his business successfully, Adam Smith's "capitalist manifesto" served as a comfortable accommodation.

Perhaps Smith assumed that people would fulfill their self-interest in a legal and moral way, not through deceit or criminal behavior. Later constructions put upon Smith's theory easily justified profit as the only objective of business. Social Darwinism, which held as a social good the demise of any business that could not compete against the efficiency and sometimes ruthless tactics of other businesses, was extolled. A man did what he had to do to make his business survive and reap a profit. The end justified the means.

The businessman who had difficulty reconciling his religious principles with the tactics he felt necessary to run his business found Adam Smith's "capitalist manifesto" a comfort.

The Protestant ethic had powerful early American spokesmen in Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin. Daniel Bell describes Franklin as the pragmatic and utilitarian Protestant—"the key word in Franklin's vocabulary was 'useful.'"7—who secularized religious values in his Poor Richard's Almanack. The religious value system stipulated that the individual had two callings, a general calling to serve the Lord and a particular calling to his job or his business. "A man must not only be pious; he must be useful."8 In his Almanack, Franklin listed thirteen "useful virtues": temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility. In Bell's words, "There is perhaps no better inventory of the American creed."9

For many business decision-makers the harmony between their business practices and their religious tenets did not exist. For them the moral guidelines based in religion were salutary for private life, but they did not serve nearly so well in the world of business. If they could not be identical, then they preferred not to mix business with religion at all. Daniel Drew, after whom Drew Theological Seminary was named, expressed it thus:

Sentiment is all right up in the part of the city where your home is. But downtown, NO. Down there the dog that snaps the quickest gets the bone. Friendship is very nice for a Sunday afternoon when you're sitting around the dinner table with your relations, talking about the sermon that morning. But nine o'clock Monday, Sunday notions should be brushed aside like cobwebs from a machine. I never took stock in a man who mixed up business with anything else.10


9Bell, p. 58.

During the last two years I have conducted conferences and seminars on ethics in business. A number of these were for groups of church laymen, many of whom were business owners or executives. Most discussants insisted that business can operate in an ethical, indeed a Christian, manner, but subsequent interchange showed occasional inconsistency in values.

A small businessman stated unequivocally that he would make a payment under the table to facilitate getting a contract if it meant keeping employees on the job. He added that he found it necessary to make "facilitative" payments in the usual course of his business. Said he, "I couldn't stay in business if I didn't. I charge the cost to telephone, postage, and similar expense accounts." A superintendent of a construction firm opined that in the real world of economic activities, it should not be considered so unusual for an outside auditor not to make a big fuss about finding a $20,000 expense padding irregularity if calling it to the attention of the proper authorities would possibly result in non-renewal of his $100,000 fee service. These comments echo news accounts of under-the-table payoffs as a way of business life in many industries in the United States today.

To be fair, however, there were also instances in these discussions of adherence to firm principles. One executive reported that his electrical and electronic contracting firm was negotiating successfully with a Mideast oil producing nation for a $50 million contract. When the final terms provided for splitting a generous profit between the contractor and the negotiating team for the purchaser, the company president terminated the negotiations abruptly on the basis that it was simply not company policy to do business that way.

Playing Poker and Businessman's Bluff

But the dual system of values lives on and finds expression in other ways. Albert Z. Carr defends a dual system of morality for the business practitioner by putting business in the context of a poker game. The game strategy used in poker is appropriate for business, says Carr; no one expects poker to be played by "the same ethical principles as preached in churches." As long as the ground rules of the game are understood and respected (no cheating or side deals) it is perfectly acceptable to withhold information to put the other party at a disadvantage. Business is a game which has standards of "private morality" in our society.11

That this line of reasoning not only has currency today but begins to acquire the respectability of being adopted at high intellectual levels is suggested by the publicity given recently to Harvard Business School's course in Competitive Decision-making, or as it is alternatively referred to, Strategic Misrepresentation. According to the Wall Street Journal story and the follow-up response by the course instructor, the course objective was to prepare students to recognize the misrepresentation that is often resorted to in business negotiations, and to develop their own style of defense against such misrepresentation.12 The instructor explains that the experience forces students to face the ethical considerations inherent in business problems. The object of the course is not to condone lying but to "confront it in a context which also reckons with the moral values of trust and integrity. The very real dilemma in, as well as outside, the classroom is: How do you do what is ethically right when it sometimes conflicts with what may be economically or strategically beneficial?"13

The game strategy of poker is right for business; no one expects poker to be played by principles preached in church. Competitive decision-making is, alternatively, strategic misrepresentation.

But if critics of bluffing and misrepresentation are inclined to question the ethics of such strategies, we are reminded that the National Labor Relations Act requires that a certified union can demand that management and union bargain collectively. To bargain collectively means that offers and counteroffers must be made. There can be no one first and best offer, as some firms have learned. Thus it would seem that parties are pressured by law to engage in bluffing, withholding facts, and perhaps encouraged to misrepresent.

Daniel Bell identifies another way in which business shows inconsistency in its values. He points out that the rise of mass production and of concomitant high volume consumption has created a conflict of moral appeals. Business (and society) continue to advocate the Protestant ethic of efficiency, thrift, and frugality, with delayed enjoyment of the material wealth created by the work tradition. Business has also developed a distribution system that realizes part of its efficiency through the promotion and promise of instant gratification. With the advertising capacity to stimulate consumer demand and easy credit terms to overcome buyer caution, we have instant hedonism. As Bell puts it:

The glorification of plenty . . . becomes the justification of the system. But all of this was highly incongruent with the theological and sociological foundations of nineteenth-century Protestantism, which was in turn the foundation of the American value system.14

In the international arena, the businessman's quandary is dramatized even more than in domestic activities. Consider the whole matter of improper payments, bribery, and extortion in international business. Watergate investigations exposed the practice of making political contributions.15

14 Bell, p. 75.
itical contributions and other payments to individuals in foreign countries to consummate business deals with foreign firms or governmental agencies. Multinational firms are accused of using unethical and illegal methods in order to establish their business presence in world markets. Perhaps the most notorious case is that of the Lockheed Corporation, which made payments to high government officials in Japan for the purpose of procuring large aircraft orders. In the case of Lockheed and another multinational giant, Gulf Oil Corporation, disclosure of payoff practices resulted in the forced resignation of the chairman of the board and other top executives. Such payoffs are not necessarily illegal, since there is no law which conclusively outlaws such practices in many foreign countries. The practices were condemned, however, as abuses of good moral conduct, and they resulted in The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, which made it a crime to make any payment to an individual of a foreign country for the purpose of influencing a political election or a business deal.

*With the advertising capacity to arouse consumer demand, and with easy credit to overcome buyer caution, we have instant hedonism. The glory of plenty becomes justification for the system.*

If the above business behavior sounds unethical, consider that many firms were doing business in nations which have value systems differing from those of our own. Payoffs were expected of corporations as a matter of social custom as well as unscrupulous opportunism. Such practices are often informally sanctioned by the host government as a way of redistributing wealth and providing a living income to underpaid functionaries. The “mordida,” or “bite,” as it is termed in several countries, tends to be a fact of life in international commerce.

One cannot always determine if a payoff is an out-and-out bribe. In some nations the host government may require that a foreign firm do its business through a citizen agent of the country, whether or not he is actually used. Should a firm refuse to do business on such a basis? Is the payment of a “dummy” agent any different from the payment of a standby musician when a non-union musician is employed?

Two other recent developments accent the complexity of management’s attempts to cope with the morality of international business. The *Wall Street Journal* two years ago carried an open letter to the Chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. The writer recounted the proceedings of a 1974 meeting at the State Department to discuss how business could stimulate sales in international markets, particularly the Mideast, to speed up the recycling of petrodollars and bring into adjustment the balance of payment deficits. The writer, at the time a member of the first U.S. Trade mission to the Middle East, queried the assembled high-level government officials as to whether international business firms should expect to make facilitative payments. The response was a definite affirmative, that appropriate payments to the right government officials are customary and expected, and that payments varied from 5 to 20 per cent of the amount of the contract. Thus we have evidence of governmental disapproval of such transactions on the one hand, and on the other tacit approval of them as acceptable expediencies.

**Putting the Bite on Our Foreign Trade**

A year ago a special issue of *Business Week* analyzed the decline of the United States as a world power. The analysis emphasized our need and ability to exert global influence through economic and financial power, a fact which is clearly understood by some nations such as Japan and West Germany. “But the U.S.,” the analysis states, “undoubtedly because of a tendency to project its post-Watergate morality overseas, has neglected the financial and business realities required for the exercise of international influence.” The United States tends to negotiate internationally only with political and military interests in mind, but without the self-interest of economic gain. If the U.S. is not to lose its international markets to European and Oriental competitors, argues the writer, the federal government will have to loosen its restrictions against multinational corporations, since their foreign competitors “are not hampered by the anti-bribery and anti-boycott laws or by environmentalist pressures.” While the government may support international trade, the report contends that multinational firms are steering clear of excellent business opportunities in Indonesia, the Philippines, Korea, and other countries due to prohibitions in recent legislation.

It may be helpful to recognize the special complexity of making ethical decisions in the area of social responsibility. This area is still relatively new in the policy-making experience of business firms. Some of the issues relating to social responsibility (or social action) are already beyond the limits of choice, since pollution controls, equal employment opportunities, and similar matters have been legislated and removed from ethical to legal obligation. Unlike an internal organizational matter, a social project such as urban renewal or a community recreation program is not directly related to the economic goals of the firm, and therefore does not fit its traditional value system. Such activities might well be considered the obligation of government or other institutions than business. Also, it has been pointed out that many businesses subscribed to the doctrine of social responsibility because they saw it as a way of reducing

17Ibid.*
the role of government in their affairs, not because of a felt ethical obligation. A major contention of Milton Friedman, Theodore Levitt, Leonard Silk, and others is that businessmen are not prepared professionally to make decisions about activities in the social order. As Silk argues, corporate officials do not represent the full diversity of interests in society, and only government can fulfill that role. Corporate executives may also not have the power attributed to them for affecting the social order. In some areas, “they are the prisoners of economic and political forces beyond their individual control.”

While I do not argue that business should exempt itself from social responsibility, I do see this as an area in which the business decisionmaker needs additional sophistication and assistance. The decision must be made with regard to, and dependent upon, the economic well-being of the firm. The results of social action are usually outside the firm and can not be measured or controlled satisfactorily. Neither am I sure that the corporation’s social responsibility can be judged by its power, as is often argued. For that matter it is not easy to assess even the approximate power of a business firm.

**The dog that snaps the quickest gets the bone.**
**Friendship is nice after the Sunday sermon, but on Monday morning such notions should be brushed aside like cobwebs from a machine.**

Where do we go from here? Clearing up ambiguities begins with attempts to improve ethical awareness and analysis. As a starting point, some inventory of the values of the business firm members should be made. There may not yet be satisfactory tests to measure the concepts of ethics held by individual members, but certainly some surveys have been done with instructive results. Raymond Baumhart in his comprehensive survey of business executives—first done in 1961 and repeated at about five-year intervals—studied the perceptions of ethics held by individuals, the extent to which they felt they could apply their ethics in their business organizations, and the extent to which they were influenced negatively or positively by superiors, peers, industry practices, and similar factors.

When managers of Pitney-Bowes Corporation, whose chairman was a leader in efforts to make business more ethical, were surveyed anonymously by the company, 59 per cent responded that they felt pressured to compromise personal ethics to achieve corporate goals. Sixty-one per cent felt that most managers would obey orders to market off-standard and possibly dangerous items (although they themselves would not). They also felt that younger managers automatically follow the example of their superiors to show loyalty. A similar study to that by Pitney-Bowes was conducted by Uniroyal with comparable results (except that the number of managers who felt pressured to compromise personal ethics reached 70 per cent).

This kind of information can serve as the basis for some organizational action to make ethical thinking an integral part of managerial thinking. (It can also open communication channels for individuals to convey their moral conflicts. The increasing tendency toward “whistle-blowing” by employees, i.e., going public with their complaints, attests to the need for more communication on ethical problems.)

**Toward a Code of Business Ethics**

Ethical awareness and ethical analysis must be incorporated in the logic of business decision-making and problem-solving procedures. This means that after a problem has been identified, analyzed, and the alternatives formulated, the evaluation of the alternatives must include an ethical judgment along with an economic appraisal of the consequences of each alternative.

University courses in business administration can also arouse ethical awareness. In the recent past ethics was given explicit consideration, if at all, in connection with a course in Business and Society. An ethics course, preferably taught by faculty representing both business and moral philosophy, can be valuable. An ethics course could also be part of professional development programs in corporations. Involving managers and future managers in such a course would not provide decision-makers with uniform value systems or necessarily assure agreement on what is ethical. But it would at least sensitize them to the ethical dimension of business decisions, and it could go well beyond that. Business ethics is concerned with the moral correctness of the goals of business and the means to achieve them. Means-end analysis can be made a part of the learning.

A code of ethics has traditionally been one of the requisites of a profession, and most professional associations boast a code of ethics. Relatively few individual firms have had codes, and they were usually regarded as public relations gimmicks or window dressing. Furthermore, they have been criticized as an exercise in futility because they “come down somewhere between too specific and too general.” Yet general policy statements for a business firm are useful. Group development of a code of ethics for a firm will promote broad agreement on the basic values upon which any managerial guidelines are built, and managers will become aware of ethics as part of everyday business conduct. Collective development of the code establishes some consensus as to what is moral. Finally, a code of ethics

---

18Silk and Vogel. p. 197.
19Ibid. p. 215.
20Baumhart. passim.

March, 1980

---

can demonstrate good faith on the part of the company—no small thing at a time when business is suffering from a credibility gap.

The example of superiors is one of the best motivating forces for making subordinates conscious of ethics in management. Therefore the movement toward placing significant responsibility for surveillance of ethical conduct in the board of directors is commendable. We already recognize this important role for the board when a company appoints an audit committee, made up of outside board members, to look into any irregularities. We hold board members legally and personally liable for serious mismanagement when they have not taken reasonable care to inform themselves of the operations of the firm. As the ultimately responsible authority in the organization, the board should be capable of recognizing, preventing, or correcting major ethical abuses, and should establish a system for monitoring the ethical behavior of the whole firm.

The Lies Which are Morally Justified

Some have suggested that a board could profitably have an expert in ethics as a consultant or board member. This may be worth trying, although it could also lead to an embarrassing situation if the consultant repeatedly fails to influence the company decisions. In such circumstance he may choose to leave the organization out of a feeling of futility.

Public directors on the board have been suggested by several observers. A public director would have regular board membership, but would not be solely accountable to the board. He would have recourse to an outside authority if he failed to convince the board of ethical abuse in the firm. He would have access to most information sources in the company. Obviously, the risk involved in this kind of control would be high for the firm, since the public director would approximate the role of an inspector general.

The use of a referral group for ethical decisions is a notion that seems to have support from different sources. When W. Michael Blumenthal was head of Bendix Corporation, he advocated setting up a professional panel with expertise in diagnosing ethical problems. To this panel an executive would be able to bring an ethical case for assistance in analysis and decision. The idea never became a reality, perhaps in part because of the difficulty of implementing it (where do you find a team with the combination of business experience and philosophical training in ethics?).

William E. Diehl, Sales Manager of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, writing on moral values in business, relates some of his ethical perplexities in making decisions that affect personnel or sales of his company. He explains his use of a “support group,” drawn from varying personal and vocational backgrounds and marked by an informal candor and a common interest in exploring moral issues. They serve by sharing their views and experiences which might relate to the question under discussion and provide both indirect and direct counseling to assist in arriving at a conclusion.

Sissela Bok in her book, Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life, takes up the issue of how to establish the morality of that rare lie which is justified ethically. She concludes that “a workable test for looking at concrete moral choices” can be to determine which lies, if any, could successfully be defended or justified to reasonable persons in a public manner. Beyond moral introspection, she would consult with friends, elders, colleagues, specialists in moral values, and research precedents. Since this would still not totally assure against bias in really complex cases, she would go to another level of justification, consulting (or at least not excluding) persons of all persuasions who could contribute wisdom or knowledge. Such consultation, she says, is needed in classes, in professional organizations, and government. It should be open, not closed to all but special interest groups. A good example of how it can operate at its best is to be found in the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects, established by Congress in 1974. It has examined very difficult, searing moral issues—of fetal research, psychosurgery, and the ethics of experimenting on prisoners, for example. Not only has it done so in complete openness, giving a chance for all views to be heard, but has arrived at conclusions in these difficult choices and, in so doing, has helped to shed light on much broader practices.

These are some measures that are worth considering. Some have shown a degree of success. Others show promise. There will always be differences in values among parties affected by a decision, but there can be a sound and reasoned basis for the decision that will invite respect.

A workable test of concrete moral choices may be to determine what lies, if any, can be successfully defended or justified to reasonable persons in a public manner.

Perhaps it needs to be stressed that all the alternatives above rest on the fundamental ethics of the individual businessman, both as a decisionmaker and leadership example to others. We have in a short space of time become extremely value conscious in business circles. Perhaps we can enroll the renewed interest of the present-day church in the moral values of business decision-making. If businessmen and churchmen find common cause, we may have come full circle in the application of the religious ethic to business decisions, this time hopefully without the earlier ambiguity.


Charles Dickens's Hard Times and the Industrial Revolution

James P. Henderson

In his 1912 Introduction to Hard Times, George Bernard Shaw made the following comment:

You must... resign yourself, if you are reading Dickens's books in the order in which they were written, to bid adieu now to the light-hearted and only occasionally indignant Dickens of the earlier books, and get such entertainment as you can from him now that the occasional indignation has spread and deepened into a passionate revolt against the whole industrial order of the modern world. Here you will find no more villains and heroes, but only oppressors and victims, oppressing and suffering in spite of themselves, driven by a huge machinery which grinds to pieces the people it should nourish and ennoble, and having for its directors the basest and most foolish of us instead of the noblest and most farsighted.

... England is full of Bounderbys... and Gradgrinds; and we are all to a quite appalling extent in their power. We either hate and fear them or else we are them, and resent being held up to odium by a novelist.1

One should not be surprised that an economist would interpret Dickens's novel Hard Times, as an effort to portray the two economic classes that arose out of the British Industrial Revolution. Josiah Bounderby represents the rising capitalist class. In Dickens's words: "He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not... a self-made man."2 Stephen Blackpool and Slackbridge represent an idealized image of the industrial working class.

The three major technological advances which created the Industrial Revolution were the mechanization of the textile industry, the development of new techniques in the production of iron and coal, and the introduction of steam power into manufacturing processes. A series of inventions and innovations led to the beginnings of the factory system in the cotton textile industry. These early factories, small and primitive by modern standards, were located along rapidly flowing streams in the countryside which provided the source of power for the new machinery. This required attracting labor to these relatively remote locations.

The development of steam power had a number of effects on production and people. First, the factories could now be located in industrial towns closer to the labor supply. Secondly, factories could be built on a much larger scale. As the factories grew in size, the relationships between capitalist and worker changed radically. The large numbers of workers employed in the factory depersonalized the relations between the capitalist and his employees. The large scale factories, in the words of Asa Briggs, "broke the bond of attachment, substituting for it what Carlyle was to call the 'cash nexus.'"3 Finally, reliable steam power induced the development of more complicated mechanical production techniques. These inventions allowed the capitalist to replace costly skilled workers with cheaper unskilled or semi-skilled labor. Furthermore, as steam power reduced the physical strength required of the operators, adult males were replaced by women and children.

Economists reach different conclusions whether workers profited from the Industrial Revolution, thus proving the old adage that all economists laid end-to-end would not reach one conclusion.

The result of all this, in the words of E. P. Thompson, was a new equation: "steam power and the cotton mill equals new working class. The physical instruments of production were seen as giving rise in a direct and more-or-less compulsive way to new social relationships, institutions and cultural modes."4

Economic historians have long debated the question of whether or not the working classes improved their standard of living during the Industrial Revolution. It seems fairly clear from the sketchy data available that the money wages received by workers tended to increase during the period 1790 to 1860. The information

2Ibid., p. 11.
regarding the prices paid by workers for the goods they consumed is even less reliable than the wage data, but also shows some tendency toward rising prices. To resolve the debate concerning the workers' standard of living, one can compare money wages received with prices paid (money wages divided by prices gives us "real wages," which measure the workers' standard of living). If money wages increased faster than prices, the workers' standard of living increased. If prices rose faster than wages, the workers were worse off. The problem is that different economic historians reach both conclusions. (Proof of the old adage that if all economists were laid end-to-end, they would not reach a conclusion!) Furthermore, it has proved impossible, so far, to conclude whether these changes in the standard of living of the workers was the direct result of the Industrial Revolution or of other disturbing factors, for example, the Napoleonic Wars.

**The new factory production processes were not merely imposed on raw materials, but also upon the workers, thus alienating men, women, and children from themselves.**

Since the question concerning the workers' standard of living seems nearly impossible to resolve by wage and price data, we are forced to consider environmental factors to deal with the question. Here the evidence is fairly overwhelming that the laboring class's standard of living fell. In the working class districts of the large industrial cities, we find rising suicide and infanticide rates, increasing mental illness figures, and the rise of mass alcoholism. Alcohol was referred to as "the quickest way out of Manchester." The rapid growth of urban slums with little or no public health services resulted in mass epidemics of contagious disease. These epidemics hit only the urban poor, without affecting the upper classes at first. "Only after 1848 when new epidemics sprung from the slums began to kill the rich also... was urban rebuilding and improvement undertaken." All of this, as well as other evidence, leads to only one conclusion, that the working class's standard of living must have been declining.

This new working class was the consequence of economic, political, and cultural factors. The new production processes were not merely imposed on raw materials but also upon people.

In an article, which I shall quote shortly, the author, a worker in a Manchester cotton mill, showed how he and his fellow laborers were alienated by the new industrial system. The term alienation is used in the sense of being (1) deprived of authentic human experience and (2) faced with hostile powers apparently beyond one's control. This worker alienation took four forms. First, the worker was alienated from the product of his labor. He had no control over the goods that he produced because they were owned by his employer who could use or dispose of them as he saw fit. Most cotton mill workers, for example, could not afford cotton clothing but wore homespun woolen clothes. Secondly, the worker was alienated from his productive activity. He had no control over his own job. He was forced to perform the tasks assigned him by his employer. This resulted in the third form of alienation. The worker was alienated from his own basic human nature. Creative productive activity is a distinguishing property of, and necessary to, authentic human existence. But his job was not a source of self-fulfillment. His work was not an end, but merely a means to physical survival. Thus the worker was deprived of meaningful productive activity, a necessary part of his human nature. Finally, the worker was alienated from his fellow men. In particular, the worker was alienated from the capitalist, who hired him merely for his labor, controlled his work experience, and could fire him at will, depriving him not only of that job, but, given the combination of employers, of any job. This was the fate of Stephen Blackpool, who, having lost his job with Bounderby, was forced to change his identity and seek employment in some district where Bounderby was unknown. Stephen was also alienated from his fellow workers, who saw his refusal to join their efforts to organize as a threat to their well-being.

**Class Consciousness in the Black Dwarf**

These working people came to realize their common interests with workers in other industries and where their common interests conflicted with those of the other classes. This growing class consciousness found expression in a number of working class institutions—trade unions, periodicals, friendly societies, political organizations, and co-operative experiments. Perhaps the best expression of this class consciousness and workers' alienation is found in the September 30, 1818, issue of a working class periodical, the Black Dwarf. The article was written by a Manchester worker who called himself "A Journeyman Cotton Spinner."

First, then, as to the employers: with very few exceptions, they are a set of men who have sprung from the cotton-shop without education or address, except so much as they have acquired by their intercourse with the little world of merchants on the exchange at Manchester; but to counterbalance that deficiency, they give you enough appearances by an ostentatious display of elegant mansions, equipages, liveries, parks, hunters, hounds, etc. which they take care to shrow off to the merchant stranger in the most pompous manner. Indeed their houses are gorgeous palaces, far surpassing in bulk and extent the neat charming retreats you see around London... but the chaste observer of the beauties of nature and art combined will observe a woeful deficiency of taste. They bring up their families at the most costly schools. determined to give their offspring a double portion of what they were so deficient in themselves. Thus with scarcely a second idea in their heads, they are literally petty monarchs, absolute and despotic, in their own particular districts; and to support all this, their whole time is occupied in contriving how to get the greatest

---

quantity of work turned out with the least expense. . . . In short, I will venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that there is a greater distance observed between the master there and the spinner, than there is between the first merchant in London and his lowest servant or the lowest artisan. Indeed there is no comparison. I know it to be a fact, that the greater part of the master spinners are anxious to keep wages low for the purpose of keeping the spinners indigent and spiritless . . . and for the purpose of taking the surplus to their own pockets.

The master spinners are a class of men, unlike all other master tradesmen in the kingdom. They are ignorant, proud, and tyrannical. What then must be the men or rather beings who are the instruments of such masters? Why, they have been for a series of years, with their wives and their families, patience itself—bondmen and bondwomen to their cruel taskmasters. It is in vain to insult our common understandings with the observation that such men are free; that the law protects the rich and poor alike, and that the spinner can leave his master if he does not like the wages. True; so he can: but where must he go? Why to another to be sure. Well: he goes; he is asked where did you work last: did he discharge you? No: we could not agree about wages. Well I shall not employ you nor anyone who leaves his master in that manner. Why is this? Because there is an abominable combination existing amongst the masters, first established at Stockport in 1802, and it has since become so general, as to embrace all the great masters for a circuit of many miles around Manchester, though not the little masters: they are excluded . . . when the combination first took place, one of the first articles was, that no master should take on a man until he had first ascertained whether his last master had discharged him. What then is the man to do? If he goes to the parish, that grave of all independence, he is there told—We shall not relieve you; if you dispute with your master, and don’t support your family, we will send you to prison; so that the man is bound, by a combination of circumstances, to submit to his master. He cannot travel and get work in any town like a shoemaker, joiner, or tailor; he is confined to the district.

The workmen in general are an inoffensive, unassuming, set of well-informed men, though how they acquire their information is almost a mystery to me. They are docile and tractable, if not goaded too much; but this is not to be wondered at, when we consider that they are trained to work from six years old, from five in the morning to eight and nine at night. Let one of the advocates for obedience to his master take his stand in an avenue leading to a factory a little before five o’clock in the morning, and observe the squalid appearance of the little infants and their parents taken from their beds at so early an hour in all kinds of weather; let him examine the miserable pittance of food, chiefly composed of water gruel and oatcake broken into it, a little salt, and sometimes coloured with a little milk, together with a few potatoes, and a bit of bacon or fat for dinner; would a London mechanic eat this? There they are, (and if late a few minutes, a quarter of a day is stopped in wages,) locked up until night in rooms heated above the hottest days we have had this summer, and allowed no time, except three-quarters of an hour at dinner in the whole day: whatever they eat at any other time must be as they are at work. The English spinner slave has no enjoyment of the open atmosphere and breezes of heaven. Locked up in factories eight stories high, he has no relaxation till the ponderous engine stops, and then he goes home to get refreshed for the next day; no time for sweet association with his family; they are all alike fatigued and exhausted. This is no over-drawn picture: it is literally true. I ask again, would the mechanics in the South of England submit to this?

When the spinning of cotton was in its infancy, and before those terrible machines for superseding the necessity of human labour, called steam engines, came into use, there were a great number of what were then called little masters; men who with a small capital, could procure a few machines, and employ a few hands, men and boys (say twenty to thirty), the produce of whose labour was all taken to Manchester central market, and put into the hands of brokers . . . The brokers sold it to the merchants, by which means the master spinner was enabled to stay at home and work and attend to his workmen. The cotton was then always given out in its raw state from the bale to the wives of the spinners at home, where they cleansed it ready for the spinners in the factory. By this they could earn eight, ten, or twelve shillings a week, and cook and attend to their families. But none are thus employed now; for all the cotton is broke up by machine, turned by the steam engine, called a devil: so that spinners wives have no employment. except they go to work in the factory all day at what can be done by children for a few shillings, four or five per week. If a man then could not agree with his master, he left him, and could get employed elsewhere. A few years, however, changed the face of things. Steam engines came into use, to purchase which, and to erect buildings sufficient to contain them and six or seven hundred hands, required a great capital. The engine power produced a more marketable (though not a better) article than the little master could at the same price. The consequence was their ruin in a short time; and the overgrown capitalists triumphed in their fall; for they were the only obstacle that stood between them and the complete control of the workers.

Various disputes then originated between the workmen and masters as to the fineness of the work, and the workmen being paid according to the number of hanks or yards of thread they produced from a given quantity of cotton, which was always to be proved by the overseer, whose interest made it imperative on him to lean to his master, and call the material coarser than it was. If the workman would not submit he must summon his employer before a magistrate; the whole of the acting magistrates in that district, with the exception of two worthy clergymen, being gentle men who have sprung from the same source with the master cotton spinners. The employer generally contented himself with sending his overseer to answer any such summons, thinking it beneath him to meet his servant. The magistrate’s decision was generally in favour of the master, though on the testimony of the overseer only. The workman dared not to appeal . . . on account of the expense . . .

These evils to the men have arisen from the dreadful monopoly which exists in those districts where wealth and power are got into the hands of the few, who, in the pride of their hearts, think themselves the lords of the universe.9

### Capitalist Combination Against Labor

The “Journeyman Cotton Spinner” has summarized the grievances of the new industrial working class. First, growing economic and social distance between workers and master, which is attributed largely to the master’s greed and willingness to exploit his employees; next, the unequal application of the law to the two classes; third, the powerlessness of the workers when confronted by the masters’ combinations. It must be remembered that while the capitalists were combining against labor, the workers’ efforts to organize were being broken up through the Combinations Acts during the early years of the nineteenth century.9 Finally, the “Journeyman Cotton Spinners” draws our attention to the introduction of steam power and its impact on the nature of factory work the new controls over the workers’ lives and livelihoods, and the loss of status suffered by labor. No-

9Thompson, pp. 199-202.
Owen’s Workers as Vital Machines

Owen quickly reformed conditions at New Lanark. Working conditions were improved. The children were taken out of the factories and provided free education, at the firm’s expense. Wages were increased, while rents and prices at the company stores were reduced to just cover costs. While Owen admired the technical possibilities of the Industrial Revolution, he was appalled by its social consequences. He found the popular proposition that the poor had only themselves to blame for their poverty revolting. This notion was tied up with

the Malthusian population doctrine which proclaimed that if the incomes of the lower classes should rise above the minimum subsistence level, the immediate result would be a flood of babies. This increase in population would drive incomes back down to bare subsistence. The Malthusian doctrine became very popular among the upper classes, for it not only relieved them of any responsibility for the poverty of the lower classes, but also suggested that any effort to provide relief to the poor, even including charity, was doomed to failure. The poor had no right to relief.

Malthusian doctrine comforted the capitalists, for it relieved them of responsibility for the poverty of the poor and suggested that poor relief, including charity, was doomed to fail.

After reformatting his own cotton mills, Owen set about to reform factory conditions throughout industrial Britain. His first reform crusade was aimed directly at his fellow manufacturers. Owen published and distributed a series of pamphlets addressed to these capitalists. Let me quote Owen’s introductory remarks to one such essay:

Many of you have long experienced in your manufacturing operations the advantages of substantial, well-contrived, and well-executed machinery.

Experience has also shown you the difference of the results between a mechanism which is neat, clean, well-arranged, and always in a high state of repair; and that which is allowed to be dirty, disorderly without the means preventing unnecessary friction, and which therefore becomes, and works, much out of repair.

In the first case the whole economy and management are good: every operation proceeds with ease, order, and success. In the last, the reverse must follow, and a scene be presented of counteraction, confusion, and dissatisfaction among all the agents and instruments interested or occupied in the general process, which cannot fail to create great loss.

If, then, due care and to the state of your inanimate machines can produce such beneficial results, what may not be expected if you devote equal attention to your vital machines, which are far more wonderfully constructed?

When you shall acquire a right knowledge of these, of their curious mechanism, of their self-adjusting powers, when the proper mainspring shall be applied to their varied movements, you shall become conscious of their real value, and you will readily be induced to turn your thoughts more frequently from your inanimate to your living machines; you will discover that the latter may be easily trained and directed to procure a large increase of pecuniary gain, while you may also derive from them a high and substantial gratification.

It is interesting to notice how Owen chose to appeal to his fellow manufacturers. First, he creates an analogy between their “inanimate machines” and their “vital machines,” the workers. Owen has accused the managers of being more concerned with their machinery than with their workers. Secondly, he holds out the promise of financial gain from some investment in labor. Later in this particular work, Owen suggests that such an investment in the workers would return you, not five, ten or fifteen per cent for your capital . . . but often fifty, and


in many cases a hundred per cent.”

The efforts of Owen and other humanitarian manufacturers to reform the working conditions in the factories were largely unsuccessful. The general feeling among the manufacturers was that excessive concern with the worker would “conflict with the growth and prosperity of the enterprise. This showed with particular clarity over the question of shortening hours, for the employer, with his capital investment, quite naturally fell into the habit of mind of regarding his capital as his paramount concern, with the worker as hirable and expendable.”

Those reforms which were accomplished were taken either because new technology rendered older exploitative methods obsolete or because the employers feared open rebellion among their workers.

_The new industrial order depended on creating wage laborers faster than employers. For each man who moved up into the business classes, a greater number necessarily moved down._

In summary, the Industrial Revolution seems to have left the working classes with only three possibilities, as E. J. Hobsbawm, the British historian, has suggested. First, the worker could strive to become a capitalist. This appears to be the course taken by Josiah Bounderby in _Hard Times_, though we find out later that he did not come from working class origins. Yet this course was not very promising for the individual worker who lacked the technical qualifications, the attitudes of mind, or the financial resources necessary to success in business. For the working class as a whole, “the evolution of the industrial economy depended on creating wage-laborers faster than employers or the self-employed. For every man who moved up into the business classes, a greater number necessarily moved down.”

Secondly, the workers could allow themselves to be ground down by their economic circumstances. This is the course taken by Stephen Blackpool in Dickens’s novel. Finally, the workers could rebel. This required at least minimal organization. Here is the course offered by Slackbridge in the novel. This character, as drawn by Dickens, is badly flawed. Dickens assumes that the early trade unions were made up of only the weakest and least independent workers who willingly followed any crafty agitator. In fact, those kinds of workers mostly opted for the second course and were ground down. It was the most competent and intelligent workers who instigated the early union movement in Britain. While we may disagree on some details, none-the-less Dickens’s novel _Hard Times_ illustrates the three possibilities open to the workers in the characters of Bounderby, Blackpool, and Slackbridge.

Ripeness

Does a pear apple tree bear birds on its limbs as well as fruits?
The wind thinks on my words a little while, taking them along on its pursed lips with a whistle, Two yellow apples fall.
A blackbird flares on their ripeness.
His beak is a knife.

John Solensten

March, 1980
The Hot l Baltimore, Lanford Wilson's nostalgic mood play of 1973, traces the fall of an ancient but elegant hotel. My contemporary drama students and I took advantage of a recent lively performance of the play by a local community theatre. At the end of the play, one of the resident hookers looks around at the other inhabitants during a farewell champagne party in the hotel lobby and plaintively asks: "We've been like a family, haven't we?" By setting all the action in a hotel lobby, the transiency of the human lives is emphasized. By having the hotel under the threat of the wrecker's ball, the sense of destruction permeates all that takes place in this company of discards and outsiders. "Where are they, the flotsam and the jetsam?" asks one resident, and the unspoken answer is all the people on stage. These outcasts and has-beens are on the periphery and on the edge; yet each searches for something to live for, something to cling to.

The next evening in Princeton's McCarter Theatre with my freshman class, we entered the world of James Agee whose novel A Death in the Family was sensitively translated to the stage by Tad Mosel under the title All the Way Home. Told from the viewpoint of Agee as a six-year-old who is abruptly forced into the adult world because of his father's sudden death, the story sets its tone by lullabies such as: "Get on board, little children" ("A band of shinin' angels./A comin' after me") and "Swing low, sweet chariot." Such music suggests to the child that life is a journey with a destination called home, an idea which, in childlike ways, he both distorts and really understands:

Both the pervasiveness of the motifs of family and home as well as the varied expressions of this theme in drama.

I

His mother sang, "Swing low, sweet cherriyut," and that was the best song of all. "Comin for to care me home." So glad and willing and peaceful. A cherriyut was a sort of a beautiful wagon because home was too far to walk, a long, long way, but of course it was like a cherriyut, too, only he could not understand how a beautiful wagon and a cherriyut could be like each other, but they were. Home was a long, long way. Much too far to walk and you can only come home when God sends the cherriyut for you. And it would care him home.

The language is poetically rich, and the viewer's feelings are touched deeply in a soliloquy such as this:

A great cedar, and the colors of limestone and of clay: the smell of wood smoke and, in the deep orange light of the lamp, the silent logs of the walls, his mother's face, her ridged hand mild on his forehead. . . .

And before his time, before even he was dreamed of in this world, she must have lain under the hand of her mother or her father and they in their childhood under other hands, away on back through the years, it took you right on back as far as you could ever imagine, right on back to Adam, only no one did it for him; or may-be did God?

How far we all come. How far we all come away from ourselves. So far, so much between, you can never go home again. You can go home, it's good to go home, but you never really get all the way home again in your life. And what's it all for? All I tried to be, all I ever wanted and went away for, what's it all for?

Just one way, you do get back home. You have a boy or a girl of your own and now and then you remember, and you know how they feel, and it's almost the same as if you were your own self again, as young as you could remember.

Memories of the past and hopes for the future come together in the awareness that home is what each of us is always looking for.

The motif is ageless; it is deep within us. Classical Greek tragedy dramatizes the strength and destruction within the bonds of the family. A stylized production of Euripides' Medea at the Allentown Art Museum last month complemented an outstanding exhibit on Greek art and culture. By focusing on the internal conflict in Medea between emotions of mother love and desire for revenge, Euripides shows her blazing through life leaving wreckage be-

Nelvin Vos is Head of the English Department at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he has been a faculty member since 1965. A graduate of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, Dr. Vos is the author of The Drama of Comedy: Victim and Victor and of God's Sake, Laugh. This year Fortress Press has published his Monday's Ministries, a discussion of the ministry of Christian laypersons.
Arthur Miller’s Willy Loman is now in the gallery of American self-images along with Hester Pryne, Captain Ahab, Huckleberry Finn, and Jay Gatsby.

hind her. Uncontrolled hate and jealousy overcome reason. Passion rules; no family ties remain; the destruction is complete.

II

Arthur Miller’s own plays revolve around the strengths and inner destructiveness within families. In his first play, All My Sons (1947), a son confronts his war-profiteering father. Death of a Salesman (1949), certainly Miller’s most well-known drama, has added the name of Willy Loman to the small coterie of American self-images such as Hester Pryne, Captain Ahab, Huck Finn, and Jay Gatsby. Willy finds no meaningful way to live, and thus in his illusion of self-sacrifice, he attempts to find a meaningful way to die so that his son may live. Willy desperately wants the family name to endure.

An excellent production in New York recently of Miller’s 1968 play, The Price, suggests still another variation on the theme of fathers and sons. In its bare bones, the play is the confrontation of two estranged brothers at the sale of their dead father’s belongings. The stage is the attic of the house, overwhelmingly cluttered with the debris and memories of the family’s past. The event which has shaped the lives of Walter (played by Fritz Weaver) and his brother Victor (Mitchell Ryan) was the financial and spiritual destruction of their father in the Crash of ’29. Victor abandoned his interest and talent in science and joined the police force in order to provide a secure home for the weak old father. Unwilling to share that responsibility, Walter left home to become a successful surgeon. In an interview in the New York Times, Miller comments about the brothers:

If you extend their characteristics into the world, you see that neither one of them could run the world. The things that can be done by Walter, full of daring, selfishness, power lust and inventiveness, are not the things the other one can do, which is to stick to a job that needs to be done, stay by the hearth and see to it that the fire doesn’t go out. The price each pays for being what he is is what this is about.

He adds: “The brothers are trying to exercise the multiple meanings of things made on their lives, to clear them, to negate them. Of course, it’s not possible—that’s also the price. They are the father’s sons, he’s in them.”

The bondage as well as the bonds of family tie the brothers together; they are not only blood brothers, but they are also re-playing the Cain-Abel jealousy in order to win the acceptance of the father. It is a character duel; at one point, they even use the fencing foils which had been part of their youthful days together many years before. To the question of blame in this modern version of Adam’s sons, the answer is that the only guilty parties are the past and life’s cruel way of wasting lives.

The price of family is that we are our father’s sons—he’s in us—and for all the sons of Adam family ties are both bonds and bondage.

Into this battle comes a wandering Jewish trader who is to appraise the mountain of junk which the family has accumulated. His name is Gregory Solomon, and he must indeed be a Solomon to divide the possessions in fairness and justice. The brothers want a quick evaluation; Solomon instead speaks slowly and wisely in proverbs as he sits in his greatcoat and rakishly angled hat while smoking a cigar. Marvelously played by Joseph Buloff, he drapes himself amply in that great wing chair, crosses his arthritic legs by picking one of them up and carefully depositing it on top of the other, peers owlishly through his eyeglasses, and simply refuses to budge.

Rapping his knuckles against a tabletop obviously strong enough to support several good-sized horses, he points out that furniture built to last is very hard, very hard to dispose of. Sturdy furniture makes people nervous. It’s never going to break, and anything that’s never going to break we don’t want around. “The key word today is ‘disposable,’” he warns, cackling a little to himself. The play ends with Solomon, alone on stage and laughing with tears in his eyes, a most disturbing and provocative comment on the quarrels he and we have just heard. A family within the family of men has been revealed in its strong ties as well as its frailties within the powerful drama.

III

Later in the same essay which opens this column (an essay first published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1956), Arthur Miller writes that if we look at the great plays of our tradition—at Hamlet, Oedipus, Lear—we see that all are “examining the concept of loss, of man’s deprivation of a once-extant state of bliss unjustly shattered—a bliss, a state of equilibrium, which the hero (and his audience) is attempting to reconstruct. . . .” He continued:

It is as though both playwright and audience believed that they had once had an identity, a being, somewhere in the past which in the present has lost its completeness, its definitiveness, so that the central force making for pathos in these large and thrusting plays is the paradox which Time bequeaths to us all: we cannot go home again, and the world we live in is an alien place.

Those closing phrases have almost become clichés; Thomas Wolfe and existentialist thinkers have made them part of our common language. Yet, when such well-worn phrases are transmitted into powerful dramatic form, we respond, for the stage becomes a mirror of the conflicts and yearnings within ourselves.
As the economy collapses, we demand more from the arts. This impulse is a mistake.

The problem for students of novels, say, or movies is in grasping just how art functions in a bad time. As the economy collapses, we demand more from the arts: we embrace new fervor the traditional American search for a definitive, all-encompassing masterpiece. This impulse is a mistake. Masterpieces sneak up; they don't come when called. The pursuit of the Great American Novel brought forth one bloated production after another this year. The pursuit of the Great American Movie—my main concern in this essay—brought forth Apocalypse Now, a film whose aspirations are sufficiently suggested by its title. Apocalypse is not very frequently a mode in which art can flourish.

Even in its technical sense, the word “masterpiece” is a problematic basis for aesthetic judgments. It establishes itself in the English language by the mid-seventeenth century, signifying “a production of art or skill surpassing in excellence all others by the same hand.” Several broad definitions extend the reach of this narrow one, with its emphasis on craftsmanship and individual accomplishment, but for the term to have any meaning at all it must be used sparingly. In addition, it should probably be confined to the description of works created in and through one human mind. On both these counts, the concept of the masterpiece is almost useless to the habitual filmgoer. Going to see movies is a process—a search in which we are rewarded by brilliant fragments and exhilarating continuities from one work to another, rather than by definitive, unified products.

Moreover, we seldom know just who is responsible for the excellence of what we enjoy. There has been a growing acknowledgment that the originally European concept of the genius-director doesn't apply all that neatly to the American scene—or, often enough, to the European scene either. Writers, cameramen, editors, and special-effects experts have all found a place in the limelight. Even actors and actresses have made a comeback. Film, to sum up, is still a prolific and usually a collaborative art. The quest for masterpieces leads to Apocalypse Now. If we forget masterpieces for the moment—if we let them arrive on their own—we receive in return a more fluid and more satisfactory notion of cinematic accomplishment.

We approach then—with a certain amount of trepidation—that most tempting form of criticism, the ten-best list. Any reader of newspapers and magazines has encountered, by this time in March, half a dozen lists of the ten best films of the decade. Typically, the critic will begin his summary by reciting some “trends” of the seventies; disaster films and science fiction will probably dominate. Then he or she will plunge into a list of masterpieces, a list—most likely—having little to do with the account of trends. The films in the list, like comets or other astronomical visitations, will appear magnificent but cold and remote: beautiful visitors, passing through on their way into textbooks.

I will confess that I am on my way to a ten-best list of my own. My only excuse is that I intend to praise not so much individual films as the context, tradition, and spirit that contained these films—that made them possible. The question of how one sees an object (aesthetic or otherwise) is closely wrapped up with the question of what category one chooses to put it in. Jorge Luis Borges cites “a certain Chinese encyclopedia” in which “animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) sucking pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those...
Apocalypse is not very frequently the ambiance in which art can flourish, and it is overly simple to say that social crisis precipitates creativity.

drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance." These categories break up the world of animals and rearrange it before our eyes. I cannot promise to do so much for seventies film but I shall try.

(a) We should first drink—since this is a festive essay—to the survival of several old masters, neither of whom made a masterpiece in this decade, both of whom enlivened it immeasurably. Alfred Hitchcock, who had not made even an interesting film since The Birds (1963) came up with Frenzy and The Family Plot—in which good scripts and good actors allowed him to exercise his talents once more. The more consistent Luis Bunuel produced The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie and That Obscure Object of Desire. To see these films—all of them superb Dr. Watsons.

(b) Secondly, we can acknowledge the partial (but still surprising) resurgence of detectives. Jack Nicholson in Chinatown, Elliot Gould in The Long Goodbye, Art Carney in The Long, Hot Summer, and Richard Dreyfuss in The Big Fix were all convincing embodiments of the 1970s sleuth; so—to extend the definition of “detective” a little—were Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford in All the President's Men. The bias of these films towards the hard-boiled stories was pretty strong, but there were also wonderful tributes to the classical texts. The two Christie adaptations demonstrated the dependence of the genre on traditional comic plots and character types. A succession of Holmesian pastiches thrived on period detail, satire, and superb Dr. Watsons.

(c) Horror films had a good decade too: Jaws—I almost hate to admit it—was a pretty good film of its kind; Carrie, Night of the Living Dead, Don't Look Now, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Halloween, and (probably) Werner Herzog's Nosferatu were even better.1 A horror film can be anything from high art to lowest-common-denominator gore. Why not both at once? As a lover of Jacobean tragedy, I find myself believing now and then that horror film is on the verge of finding its John Webster or its Cyril Torneur.

(d) In the sixties, the two Richard Lester-Beatles films looked like a fluke; in the seventies rock 'n roll powered American Graffiti, American Hot Wax, Saturday Night Fever, The Buddy Holly Story (with Gary Busey's superb performance), and Rock 'n Roll High School. These films do not define a genre: they are not musicals or even "youth" films. Collectively, nonetheless, they are a memorable tribute to the survival of energy in a mass society.

The problem for students of film is grasping how art works in a bad time.

(e) and (f) The two American directors who developed styles of lasting worth in this decade were Woody Allen and Robert Altman. It is probable that both men produced masterpieces; more essentially, for the identity and experience of the whole decade, they managed to produce strings of excellent works—films that were idiosyncratic and original, yet seldom repetitious. (For what it's worth, my own favorites were Allen's Love and Death and Altman's Thieves Like Us.) Altman's career faltered a bit towards the end of the seventies, while Allen's picked up. We can expect both of them to make it through the eighties with honor.

(g) I suppose I must put at least one individual film on this list. My choice for best film of the decade is a movie practically no one in this country saw: Alain Tanner's Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000. This Swiss (French language) film was released in 1976, a year or so past the center of the decade. Jonah is a comedy about politics, and especially about radical politics in the aftermath of the sixties. Tanner makes this subject more urgent and vivid than it has ever seemed in film. It is hard to imagine a director infusing Brecht with sentiment or pulling off Godardian tricks with a light, entertaining touch, but Tanner does both. Most important, the community of weird characters here created actually embody a kind of hope for our culture.

(h) Back in the twenties and thirties German movies were of central importance in the development of film; now they are again, thanks to state and audience support for Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders. I want to see more of this stuff. For the moment, it is enough to acknowledge the miraculous revivification of a tradition and an industry.

(i) This was also the decade when we began to get access to good films from places like Cuba and Senegal. On the whole, American film distributors did not do a very effective job in the seventies; we must at least give them credit for making available the movies of Ousmane Sembene, Tomas Gutierrez Alea, and other talented directors from exotic or inaccessible places. The seventies—in however disorganized a fashion—held out the possibility that American audiences might start to perceive film as a truly international art. The technology of the next ten or twenty years may well speed up this process.

(j) My last category is my most complex, and so I can only hint at
its significance. In the nineteenth century, the historical novel was a way of imagining what was almost unimaginable: the interaction between individual yearnings and the fate of whole civilizations. For the first time, in the 1970s, there were some great films—great individually and as a group—that carried on this enterprise. The Conformist, Barry Lyndon, and The Man Who Would Be King come to mind immediately. Each of these films is based on a strong work of narrative fiction; each exploits the possibilities of ironic spectacle as perhaps only the cinematic medium could have done. Extraordinarily, two musicals belong to this group: Cabaret and Hair. Adding Broadway show tunes to a spectacular meditation on modern history might seem a very peculiar thing to do. For some reason, the strategy worked. Apocalypse Now, I suspect, might be usefully seen as a lesser member of this group—less because it tries too hard. Masterpieces don’t direct your attention to their masterfulness, or, if they do, it’s at a considerable risk.

**Masterpieces sneak up; they just don’t come when they are called.**

In spite of myself I have circled back to the idea of the masterpiece. This idea is, of course, useful in its place. Looking back at a given period of time, however—particularly a period we have experienced—we are likely to realize that artistic vitality stems less from isolated works than from the way these works prefigure, amplify, and answer to one another. Thinking in terms of many different categories—genres, national traditions, individual careers, distribution patterns, interrelationships among the arts—may help us to remember just how extensive the cinematic success of the 1970s was. Thinking in these terms may also make us a little more patient as we search for masterpieces—and a lot more willing to see lots of movies.

---

**Music**

---

**The Disco Of Our Discontents**

**The Layered Look In Popular Music**

James Klein

Only a few short years ago, disco became a new force on the popular music scene. Fueled by the success of John Travolta, the Bee Gees, and Saturday Night Fever, disco music became epidemic, much as the sounds of the Beatles had captured the nation’s attention only a decade before. However, as the popularity of disco grew, so did many a musician’s discontent. Musicians covered their ears and hoped that this latest wave in pop music would be a fast passing fad. Their hopes withered, however, for with each new day, the disco craze grew. Today, we find a new disease called “disco fever” and a new sport called “disco roller skating.” At last count at least 20,000 disco clubs were in operation nationwide. For the present, it appears that disco is here to stay.

Last summer, however, at a Chicago White Sox game, a stadium

—

James Klein is director of University Bands at Valparaiso University and teaches low brass and chamber music. He holds the M.M. degree from the University of Texas and is a candidate for the D.M.A. degree at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

---

**The Cresset**

---
Glenn Miller with swing music and Donna Summer. The reason is the other layers include intricate disco, with the possible exception in the past one could associate Elvis Presley with rock and roll, but there are no hit performers of Donna Summer. The reason is disco music is composed and performed.

Discord is the music of technology. In the past one could associate Glenn Miller with swing music in the 40s and the twist promulgated rock and roll in the 50s, so now disco dancing makes disco music a popular musical expression. Dancing may be the whole reason for disco. When evaluated against other musical criteria, disco falls short in almost every category. Although the beat serves as a means to unify, the rhythmical meter never is almost non-existent, and most disco songs have only two or three chords. Melody is minimal and the melodic-harmonic subtleties that make rock and blues so enjoyable are not found in disco. The smoothness of texture results from a fine mixing of the different layers of sound, but even with this refinement, the sameness of the texture soon wears thin.

For this reason, it is impossible to recreate the authentic disco sound in live performance. Donna Summer must travel with a twenty-five piece orchestra to approximate the disco feeling. At today's costs, that makes a live representation of the disco sound an extremely expensive proposition. For this reason, singers like Barry Manilow and Frank Sinatra have found another solution. They have introduced a hybrid form of disco sound, the lyric song to a disco beat. This recreates the disco feel but can be presented live.

Authentic disco, however, remains a product of the recording studio, and it is this mechanical process that possibly offends most musicians. The thought of art by machine, the live performance replaced by the grooved disc, causes a furor among men and women of high musical principles. But while this feeling may be at the heart of most anti-disco sentiment, other factors must be considered.

Just as the jitterbug popularized swing music in the 40s and the twist in the 50s, now disco dancing makes disco music a popular musical expression. Dancing may be the whole reason for disco. When evaluated against other musical criteria, disco falls short in almost every category. Although the beat serves as a means to unify, the rhythmical meter never changes. Too much of a good thing is just too much. Harmonic activity is almost non-existent, and most disco songs have only two or three chords. Melody is minimal and the melodic-harmonic subtleties that make rock and blues so enjoyable are not found in disco. The smoothness of texture results from a fine mixing of the different layers of sound, but even with this refinement, the sameness of the texture soon wears thin.

So what is the fate of disco? Maybe a good composer will combine some of disco's elements into a more serious and lasting form. But more likely disco will be catalogued in the history of music along with other dance music forms such as the basse dance, galliard, minuet, waltz, and tango. Presently, disco must be evaluated as pop art, and in that category disco music is not bad for dancing. Choose your partners!
Under the weight of controversy, Orthodoxy’s biblical exegesis became a system of mining the Scriptures for proof texts for a closed doctrinal system. Its doctrine of biblical infallibility claimed immunity even from the biblical criticism of its own Confessions.

Peter Stuhlmacher, called Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture, and published by Fortress Press, appeared originally in 1975. Read together, these two short volumes not only document a lively concern for biblical interpretation in Protestant Germany, but, as their translation by two Lutheran presses in this country testifies, they address an issue that continues to engage the attention also of many American churchmen.

Both Maier and Stuhlmacher are concerned with the effect that the historical-critical method has had upon the life of the Church, and both agree that it has not been serviceable for the needs of preaching and teaching. Maier laments the “remoteness and estrangement between theological scholarship and congregational life” (p. 22). And Stuhlmacher similarly complains that for professors, pastors, and students “historical criticism is the agent of a repeated and growing rupture of vital contact between the biblical tradition and our own time,” producing a vacuum “which causes them to despair of the possibilities of a useful, historical-critical interpretation of scripture, and in part to seize at hair-raising theological substitutes” (p. 65).

The two differ, however, in their analysis of why this is so. Maier argues that the historical-critical method is in principle unsuited to the task of interpreting the Bible for the Church. The fault lies not in those who use the method; it lies in the method itself. It could be acceptable in so far as it is a historical method; it is totally unacceptable, however, because it is a critical method. The Bible, as divine revelation, demands as the appropriate response not criticism, but obedience to the sovereignty of God. Stuhlmacher contends that the historical-critical method becomes unsuited to the task of interpreting the Bible when it declares its independence of the experience of the tradition and confession of the Church. Hence he seeks to reclaim it as necessary and useful in an instrumental role for the life of the Church.

Maier offers the simpler analysis. He locates the fundamental problem of contemporary biblical hermeneutics, or biblical interpretation, in one fatal historical misstep. In 1775 J.S. Semler completed his four-volume work entitled A Treatise on Freely Investigating the Canon. There he drew a distinction between the Bible and the Word of God. The Orthodox dogmatics had earlier developed the teaching that the Bible is the Word of God. Semler maintained that the Bible contained the Word of God. The result of his distinction was two-fold. First, the Bible could now be studied historically and critically in the confidence that the Word of God was thereby not necessarily being impugned or desecrated; it was, if anything, being given free course. Second, a debate was now launched as to what in the Bible is to be regarded as the genuine, still binding Word of God for the life of the Church. That in Maier’s view was the single error which gave birth to the historical-critical method. Without tracing or assessing any developments in biblical interpretation in the subsequent 200 years, he proceeds immediately to his thesis that the historical-critical method has now come to its end. He makes his point in two ways: first, by asserting the inner impossibility of the historical-critical method because it accepts and perpetuates Semler’s dogmatically unacceptable distinction; and second, by pointing to a symposium of recently published essays (unfortunately not translated from German) edited by the distinguished New Testament scholar, Ernst Kasemann, to document the futility of every effort to find the “genuine” Word of God within the ordinary human words of the Bible. The futility of such a search for a “canon within the Canon,” as it has come to be called, is most transparent, he claims, in the very diversity of results which the scholars offer.

In the last half of his essay Maier then sketches an alternative which he calls a historical-biblical method of Scripture interpretation. His aim is to surmount “the philosophically based cleavage between Scripture and the Word of God introduced by Semler and colleagues,” which “implies nothing less than vanquishing English deism, French skepticism, and the German Enlightenment in the domain of theology.”

Maier can be credited with having set ambitious goals. He cannot be said to have succeeded, however, either in accomplishing them or even in showing the way to reach them. This is due in part to that tendentious and injudicious analysis which must result if one does not do his historical homework. It is true that Semler distinguished between Scripture and the Word of God, and that this event is widely regarded as the beginning of the historical-critical method. But whether that is simply to be dismissed as an unpardonable rebellion against an innocent Orthodoxy is quite another
matter. Maier either overlooks or deliberately suppresses the fact that the champions of the then current Orthodoxy provoked that distinction. They charged that Semler's research into the text of the Bible constituted an illegitimate critical attack upon the Word of God in the Bible. Semler defended himself against such accusations by drawing his distinction. He thereby inaugurated a long and fruitful history of textual criticism, which Orthodoxy has long since had to concede, and he was able to do so in good conscience. For under the terms of his distinction to work critically upon the text of Scripture implies no lesser majesty against the Scriptural Word of God. It is highly significant that, when Maier lists the procedural steps for his alternative historical-biblical method, they are all modelled after the steps established by the historical-critical method. But when he places textual criticism at the very top of the list, suitably repackaged as "finding the text," and when he moreover declares the need for carrying out this step "critically, that is, with reasonable and intelligent standards" (p. 80), he unwittingly shows himself more the heir of Semler than of that Orthodoxy he thinks he is restoring, without either the grace to acknowledge his indebtedness or the humor to perceive the irony.

There is a more serious reason than unacknowledged debt to Semler and to the subsequent history of the historical-critical method for saying that Maier has failed in his attempt. Maier deplores the uncertainty which the historical-critical method has introduced. That uncertainty has two causes: one is the need to discover the "canon within the Canon," and the other is the unsettling diversity of all efforts to articulate that elusive core. His own counterproposal is to return to a pre-Semlerian motto: Scripture is revelation, it does not merely contain revelation (p. 63). This, he claims, will obviate the need for a "canon within the Canon," and will thereby also illuminate the multitude of conflicting theologies. His historical-biblical method will finally yield the long absent, much sought certainty.

Maier's critique of the search for a "canon within the Canon" is directed especially against Kasemann. Kasemann's thesis is that "the Scripture ... without the principal key leads not only to a multiplicity of confessions but also to the inability to distinguish between faith and superstition, the Father of Jesus Christ and the idol" (pp. 37-38). The key which Kasemann urges is the Pauline doctrine of the justification of the ungodly, because there "the message and words of Jesus stand out as message and work of the Crucified, and His glory and dominion stand out unmistakably from all other religious statements" (p. 38). What Kasemann proposes as an interpretive key to the entire Bible, Maier fears is working toward a "subtraction procedure" (p. 38), an "instrument of minimizing or setting aside other statements of Scripture" (p. 39). Such keys "break apart"; hence "none of these keys is able to put a stop to the misuse of Scripture; ... the historical-critical method denotes a Babylonian captivity that hands the exegete over to a harmful degree of subjectivity" (p. 40).

In the light of such a critique of the search for a "canon within the Canon," one is poorly prepared for the paragraphs with which Maier concludes his own program of a historical-biblical method. "It was our objective ... to let divine revelation ... determine and define itself so far as possible" (emphasis supplied). Yet "in spite of the Scriptural conception and interpretation we have discussed, the Scriptures contain such an abundance of truth ... that the individual theologian will not be able to function without some kind of a personal order of priorities," which are moreover "absolutely necessary" (p. 89). Now we discover that the need for an inquiry which Maier had attributed to the faulty premises of the historical-critical method also turns up as an absolute necessity in his historical-biblical method; and what was unacceptable as Kasemann's "canon within the Canon" has become acceptable merely by re-labelling it an "order of priorities." What is more, there seems to be little essential difference between Kasemann's canon and Maier's order of priorities. Maier's position consists of three basic observations: the purpose of the Scriptures is to deliver man from evil and ultimately to lead him into fellowship with God; this unfolds in a history of salvation whose author is God; the midpoint of this process is Christ. From this it is obvious that Maier's historical-biblical method has neither overcome the absolute necessity for a "canon within the Canon," it has merely disguised it under another name. Nor has it made any significant material difference in describing that canon; it has merely elaborated Kasemann's in a more homiletical fashion.

It will also not have escaped the careful reader's notice that Maier's historical-biblical method does not really relieve him of the embarrassment of conflicting theologies. He appeals to the Orthodox doctrine of biblical inspiration and infallibility to promulgate a mild chiliasm and dispensationalism. But this is unacceptable doctrine to Lutherans who also appeal to the Orthodox doctrine of biblical infallibility. This opens the door to the wider embarrassment which all champions of

March, 1980
biblical infallibility must endure. An infallible Bible has historically been claimed by Lutherans and Calvinists and Baptists and Fundamentalists, to mention only a few; and all of them plead the same infallible Bible to prove the others wrong. The Orthodox doctrine of scriptural infallibility is no more proof against theological pluralism than is the historical-critical method. Maier's little book illustrates that, if the historical-critical method is indeed a vulnerable target for throwing stones, Orthodoxy's doctrine of biblical infallibility is a glass-house; and that any historical-biblical method which appeals to it has only boomerangs for ammunition.

Fundamentally, Maier's analysis, though simple, is simply inadequate. It is far too parochial. He attempts to discuss the problem of biblical interpretation without distinguishing between the Orthodoxy he champions and the Reformation, without any analysis of the impact which the Reformation made upon the earlier hermeneutical efforts of the ancient and medieval Church, and without reference to developments since then which have led to the current new stirrings, not only in general hermeneutics, but also in the Catholic Church after Vatican II. In effect he proposes little more than a retreat into a tightly knit convivialite of like-minded pietists who by insulating themselves against all unwanted criticism effectually deprive themselves of any remedy against their own miscalculations and self-deceptions.

This is an error which Stuhlmacher does not commit. His is the surer and more instructive analysis of the historical-critical method, because he locates the contemporary question in the context of the Church's struggle for hermeneutical clarity from the very beginning. Hence also his proposals are the more balanced and attract more serious consideration.

The problem of biblical interpretation began already with Jesus's own critical reinterpretation of the Old Testament, especially in the so-called antithesis of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21-48), where He employs the formula, "You have heard it said ... but I say unto you." St. Paul also critically reinterpreted the Old Testament scripture, making a last contribution to principles of biblical interpretation with his pioneering distinction between the letter and the spirit. A critical mind was at work when the Church wrestled with the problem of the limits of the New Testament canon, and when it developed the rule of faith, or the creedal norms. The lasting legacy of the pre-Reformation period is the experience "that Scripture truly discloses itself only to those who dare to exist by common faith in Christ as Christ's own community and as such hearken to the word of Scripture" (p. 31).

The Reformation did not abandon the teaching tradition of the Church, but in the interpretive circle of scripture and Church, Reformation exegesis gives decisive weight to the Scripture," because "from it alone can be heard the Gospel" (p. 32). It aimed "at a reflective theological dialogue with the historical and dogmatic tradition of the church, a tradition in part instructive and in part also full of error and miscalculation," in order to achieve its goal "to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel" (p. 35). Stuhlmacher scores Orthodoxy because, under the weight of controversy, biblical exegesis became a system of mining the Scriptures for proof texts for a closed doctrinal system. Its doctrine of biblical infallibility claimed immunity even from the biblical criticism of its own confessional system, and consequently it was attacked from the outside by the emerging historical-critical research (p. 36). Ever since that time, "Protestant exegesis has been at pains to appropriate the method of criticism which irresistibly emerged during the seventeenth century and to practice it in the interest of evangelical faith" (p. 59, emphasis supplied). Yet because the historical critical method "implies its own system of values," the history of exegesis "has shown that a theological use of the historical method is possible only to the degree these implications of historical criticism are seen and in turn subjected to criticism" (p. 59). There is therefore "no occasion to speak summarily of a collapse of historical criticism. There is rather occasion to point to the gain in historical and hermeneutical insights attained by the way of this method" (p. 60). Accordingly, Stuhlmacher subjects historical criticism to historical criticism, and is able to show that the history of the historical-critical method, both inside and outside the Church, exhibits what he calls a "functionalism." By this he means that there is an inner tendency or characteristic in the historical-critical method which inevitably expresses itself. Stuhlmacher notes two such tendencies. First, historical criticism "detaches from the present" and "describes [data] at a historical distance." Hence it "achieves no union of the then and the now." He then goes on to say that "this distancing effect is welcome and tolerable only so long as the goal of historical research is the intellectual mastery of history and the emancipation from all inhibiting tradition. But as such this cannot be the aim of a church whose very identity stands or falls by its connection with Holy Scripture" (p. 62). Second, historical criticism assumes and depends upon a prior concept of history and
If the historical-critical method is a vulnerable target for throwing stones, then Orthodox's doctrine of biblical infallibility is a glass house. Any historical-biblical method of interpretation appealing to it has only boomerangs for ammunition.

realty. "If we proceed from a rationalistic notion of history and reality, the phenomena of historical tradition conformable or applicable to this concept are made to appear in markedly positive light, while conversely all historical experiences and utterances which resist rationalism are subject to criticism and skepticism. The same reciprocal relation is repeated when we approach history with an idealistic, existential, or materialistic concept of reality and history" (p. 62). With the historical-critical method's functionalism thus exposed, Stuhlmacher constructs an alternative model, one in which the historical-critical method is employed only in an instrumental role for the Church's needs. His model consists of two basic elements: the first is a return to the connection with dogmatics, and the second is what he terms a hermeneutics of consent.

The hermeneutics of consent is a willingness to be open to the claims of tradition, the present, and of transcendence.

The dogmatics with which Stuhlmacher seeks a connection is not that represented by Maier's brand of Orthodoxy. Indeed, Stuhlmacher devotes a five-page excursus to a critique of Maier's book in which he dissociates himself from a dogmatic basis in biblical infallibility. He seeks rather a dogmatics which will take seriously two lessons he has learned from his historical overview of biblical interpretation, namely the hermeneutical significance of inspiration and the Third Article of the Creed. This he sees at work when exegesis critically interprets the biblical texts in reference to Jesus Christ as the Word of God in person (p. 78), thus uncovering the original biblical witness for use in the Church today. He therefore calls for scholarship to adopt "two stages of reflection, a historical-critical stage and a dogmatic-normative stage" (p. 79). This will include the guidance of confessional writings, because they are intended to lead to a better understanding of Scripture. Stuhlmacher recommends a spiritual exposition which employs both critical exposition and confessional tradition to demonstrate "that the intent of the biblical texts is disclosed to such an understanding—and only to such!—which allows itself to be led by the witness of those who heard the Scripture before us" (p. 80).

The second basic element of Stuhlmacher's proposal is a hermeneutics of consent. By this he means that ancient texts of any kind, whether biblical or otherwise, must be approached with the expectation that they leave something valuable to say and may not be dismissed merely because they are old. At this crucial juncture Stuhlmacher appeals to the insights of the newer theoretical studies of the interpretive process, as, for example, those of Godamer. These, he holds, can help relax that "insolent attitude" which in principle regards every traditional claim upon us to be an imposition and restriction of our rights and our absolute freedom. "One of the essential questions of our time is whether we will succeed in getting free of this absolutist stance toward emancipation and find our way to a new openness to the world, that is, a willingness to open ourselves anew to the claim of tradition, of the present, and of transcendence." This means that we employ the historical-critical method not only as we would relate to the texts, but in addition "we must again learn to ask what claim or truth about man, his world, and transcendence we hear from these texts." The hermeneutics of consent would thus employ the "principle of hearing" in order to initiate "a critical dialogue with tradition" (p. 85), which in turn requires accountability for its method also in the forum of the general academic community, lest by retreating into a privileged preserve it become "no longer communicable" (p. 86).

Stuhlmacher is seeking quite consciously to walk a middle road. As part of a general awareness that the historical-critical method has reached a turning point, he explicitly rejects Fundamentalism's call for a pre-critical interpretation of the Bible, while at the same time disavowing the movement to transfer the method from use in the Church into the socio-political arena. As one who moves along the boundaries between kerygmatic theology, Pietism, and biblically oriented Lutheranism he offers his model as one that takes the experience of the Church seriously and is anchored in the Reformation. Yet he has gone beyond the ancient Church and the Reformation by showing "the possibility and the freedom of making use of historical criticism where it is really productive, namely, in the historical analysis and description, and at the same time of transcending it when it threatens to restrict our encounter with historical reality" (p. 90).

Whether or not Stuhlmacher's proposal will succeed remains to be seen, of course. He himself acknowledges that methodological considerations alone are not enough. The proof of any pudding lies in the eating. But the trained eye will be able to recognize a promising recipe. Beyond that, all that is required is the courage to try it and the freedom to use the kitchen.
The tension between the theological and political forces in the Reformation is often resolved by histories which dissolve one force in the other.

Professional history. Both works were commissioned and published by Concordia Publishing House as part of the 400th anniversary of the Formula of Concord's formulation and adoption by Lutheran Churches in Europe. The authors, each in his own particular way, have succeeded admirably in rendering complicated and disjointed theological controversies understandable to the man and woman in the pew. At the same time they have unconsciously raised thought-provoking questions concerning the nature of the Formula's origins, the contributions of the individual formulators in bringing wearisome negotiations to fruition, and the abiding significance of this sixteenth-century confessional formulation for our own time. Of all these questions perhaps none is so fascinating or so elusive as that of the relationship between theological formulation and princely power or, in the words of another author, "the connection between theology and politics," the precise nature of the uneasy, ambiguous relationship between confessional theologian and Christian prince.

Historians of the sixteenth century have tended to resolve the tension between the theological and the political components of the Protestant Reformation by over-emphasizing one side of the equation at the expense of the other. Thus the historians of dogma have succumbed to a flattened-out view of confessional formulation that focuses upon theological issues to the practical exclusion of the essential political background—the confessional equivalent of an a historical approach to the composition of the biblical record. On the other hand, secular historians have highlighted the political aspect of confessional formulation while downplaying very real theological concerns that motivated the formulators.

Happily, Professors Jungkuntz and Kolb have judiciously avoided these twin pitfalls with balanced and thoughtful accounts that do justice to the complexity of the subject matter. And, what is more, each has done so with a refreshing absence of theological jargon, cheap polemical potshots, and ideological obfuscation and axe-grinding. Given the nature of the subject matter, these are rare gifts, devoutly to be welcomed and appreciated!

Jungkuntz has set out "to permit the historical factors leading to the framing of this document (i.e. The Book of Concord) to come to as full an expression as the limits imposed upon us permit." He examines in careful detail four leading figures in the Formula of Concord's formulation—Jakob Andreea; Martin Chemnitz; David Chytraeus; and Nikolaus Selnecker—against the backdrop of the major ecclesiastical parties (i.e. the Philippists, the Gnesio-Lutherans, and the Center Party) and the principal theological controversies which ravaged Protestantism during the decades leading up to the final formulation of the Formula.

A special strength of Jungkuntz's approach is the manner in which both theological and political foci are given their due. The public career of Jakob Andreea (1528-1590) is instructive in this respect. As the recipient of a ducal scholarship from his Swabian prince and the protege of Swabian Reformer Johann Brenz, Andreea—after an unsuccessful attempt to override Brenz's centralized state-enforced concept of church discipline in favor of locally controlled congregational discipline—demonstrated in his person the problematical relationship of

---

Christian dogma to princely power. Long accused by his detractors of having served his prince too uncritically, Andreae persisted in his single-minded quest for concord through one dispute after another, despite the fact (admitted by both Jungkuntz and Kolb) that he was frequently irascible and overbearing toward his colleagues. The tantalizing excerpt from Nikolaus Selnecker's diary concerning Andreae's bizarre behavior in 1576 and 1579 (reproduced in translation on pp. 146-154 of Jungkuntz's book) is a case in point:

"As a wolf-fish is among fish, so is he [i.e. Andreae] among men of his own rank: he heeds the warnings of none unless he is forced to do so by the authority of his superiors; what he says one minute, he denies the next; he takes oaths rashly and calls God to witness falsely; he deceives all who do not know him; he is meddlesome, a busybody, an exulter in other men's misfortunes. He speaks well of no prince but his own. He is a fickle blabbermouth, spiteful, treacherous. Be gracious, O God, convert the man or force him as judge!"

In this, as in other passages, Jungkuntz enables the reader as it were to gaze behind the curtain of endless filiopietistic history writing and to approach something resembling the real flesh-and-blood personalities of the Formula's formulators. Thus we discover in Andreae the paradox of a contentious and often difficult personality who nevertheless was unwavering in his search for doctrinal agreement among fellow Protestants, in Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586) the scholar-librarian with a bent for astrology who represented perhaps the most illustrious of all Luther's disciples" (p. 56), in David Chytraeus (1531-1600) a steadfast confessional Lutheran who could encourage his Austrian fellow-Evangelicals that "doctrinal statements ought not be made binding on one and all but should, to begin with, be obligatory only for those who voluntarily commit themselves to it and thereupon for all those about to be ordained or those who come to this country from the outside" (p. 80), and in Nikolaus Selnecker (1530-1592) a poet and hymnist so sorely buffeted by the winds of theological controversy that he could cry out in anguish: "Must a man always be engulfed in a struggle while on this earth?" (p. 105)

Here the reader steps behind the curtain of filiopietistic histories and sees something which resembles flesh-and-blood men at work formulating the Formula of Concord.

A few historical and typographical inaccuracies have crept into the text. Duke Ludwig III of Wurttemberg—that jovial prince whose favorite hobbies were participating in theological disputations and overindulging in the fruit of the vine—succeeded his father Christoph not in 1567 but in 1568 (p. 35, but cf. the correct date on p. 11), and then in name only. A regency consisting of three princes ruled in Ludwig's stead until he came of age in 1578, just in time to intervene actively in the Formula discussions on behalf of Andreae and the Center Party. The rendering of German place names with an "e" instead of an umlaut (i.e. Koeln, Tubingen) is awkward and could be improved by giving the English equivalent (i.e. Cologne) or the normal German usage (i.e. Köln, Tübingen).

Andreae's lack of success in the early decade of the 1570s (pp. 37f.) can perhaps be explained quite naturally by the deaths, in 1568 and 1570 respectively, of his two leading patrons, Duke Christoph and Johann Brenz. Finally, it should be noted that some degree of care must be taken in the use of secondary sources for the biographies of the formulators, especially that of Professor Rosemarie Muller-Streisand, presently a leading Reformation specialist in the German Democratic Republic, since ideological presuppositions may have entered into her depiction of Andreae as a more-than-willing "tool of the princes." This caveat, to be sure, can equally be ascribed to polemical studies of the Formula on the part of theologians who have their own "hidden agendas."

On occasion, Jungkuntz's language produces some strange-sounding similes, such as "into this trap the Gnesio-Lutherans ran with confessional zeal" (p. 27) or "enabled a worm to enter the apple that was the harvest of his life" (p. 85), not to speak of the contention that "Chemnitz burnt sensitive Jesuit flesh with his book" (p. 55). More often than not, however, the vivid language does add color and life to the bare skeleton of the formulators' biographies. And the author makes no attempt to hide the fact that this is intended, not as a general historical introduction to the Formula of Concord, but "rather to provide this public with a greater amount of ma-

The Formula of Concord cuts with a two-edged sword, and perhaps there is a sword which brings a peace and a peace which brings a sword. The formulators of the Formula of Concord were, paradoxically, at the same time the sowers of discord.

terior on those four men most directly responsible for the framing of the Formula of Concord and to pay more attention than is commonly done in Lutheran confessional circles in America and elsewhere to the inevitable but often unnoticed close relationship between the 'everlasting Gospel' and the thoroughly historical circumstances coming to expression in the formulated confessions of that Gospel . . ." (p. 115, n. 4). It is against this expressed purpose that the author should be judged. A concise but satisfactory bibliography directs the reader to more detailed secondary literature in German and in English.

Kolb has restricted his attention to a single figure, that of Jakob Andreae, and the six sermons (which may never have been preached!) that served to promote a negotiated settlement for controverted theological articles. Like Jungkuntz, Kolb recognizes that "Jakob Andreae was not, from many points of view, the ideal ambassador of peace and reconciliation in the midst of the turmoil that beset German Lutheranism in the third quarter of the 16th-century" (Kolb p. 9). Similar to Jungkuntz, Kolb raises a major question concerning the motivating force in Andreae's relentless quest for theological concord, inasmuch as he argues that "princely power alone could not have imposed a settlement on cantankerous theologians . . . It was Andreae who was able to use both princely power and the power of the Lutheran longing for concord to construct the settlement of the Formula of Concord" (Kolb, p. 9).

The vignettes which Kolb provides of the major sixteenth-century controversies (i.e. the Majoristic controversy, the adiaphoristic controversy, the synergistic controversies, controversies over Law and Gospel, controversies over the Lord's Supper and the person of Christ, and the Osiandrian controversy) are commendable, as well as mercifully brief! Whereas the modern reader may view the section entitled "Andreae and the Beginnings of the Movement Toward Concord" (pp. 43-57) as a depiction of progressive development toward a certain goal, such a steady upward progression was hardly the experience of the architects of Lutheran unity in the late sixteenth century, and great care must be taken not to impose an artificial framework for such a development from the vantagepoint of four hundred years of hindsight.

A symbiotic relationship between political power and religious confession was not original to the Protestant Reformation.

What is clear is that Andreae, on the basis of his own words, believed that God had sent him on a special mission in behalf of Protestant unity, and he firmly assigned to the Christian princes a major role in determining the nature of that unity. In the preface to his "six sermons," Andreae claimed to be performing his service "only out of dutiful obedience to the Christian and godly princes by whom I was sent for the benefit and welfare of the whole church of God" (p. 49). The remainder of the book consists of Kolb's quite readable translations of Andreae's "six sermons on the way to Lutheran unity" from the year 1573. Inasmuch as they mention offending theological spokesmen by name and issue specific condemnations of rejected doctrines, the sermons are political as well as theological documents.

Purists may be disturbed at Kolb's reference to the "young whiz kid in Goeppingen" (p. 12) or the designation of Andreae as a "theological light" by his enemies (p. 10). But his account of the relationship of Jakob Andreae to his princely patrons is lucid and fair-minded. Yet the question persistently arises: what was the relationship of princely power to theological decision-making?

The symbiotic relationship between political power and theological confession was not something that originated with the Protestant Reformation. It is the considered judgment of a leading historian of "confession-formation" (Konfessions-bildung) that

... for many centuries the political authorities spared no effort to get the church that lay within the boundaries of their sovereign territory, together with all its attendant privileges and possessions, under control and, in the course of time, to tighten their grip on it.3

So close was this mutual interrelationship between political power and theological confession that it may be asserted with some confidence that

... where the Reformation prevailed, whether it be in urban congregations, territories, or kingdoms, in almost every instance it was the state that was the deciding factor . . . the quarrel between contending faiths, and "divided religion," and the formulation of confessions were therefore political factors of primary importance. No religious colloquy, no obligatory ecclesiastical law, no (church) council, and no religious peace came to pass without the participation of the secular authority.4

The chronological divide of four hundred years that separates us from the era of the Formula of Concord cannot obscure the abundant evidence that the leading theological parties during the Reformation Era encompassed more than strictly


4Ibid. p. 11.
Wherever the Reformation prevailed, the state was the deciding factor in almost every instance. No religious peace came without secular authority.

Theological concerns:

Even when this party (i.e. the Gnesio-Lutherans) was contending against the high-handed princes and town councils, they were inevitably involved in power politics as the aftermath of the Smalcald War. The bitterness of the controversy with Wittenberg is explained not only by theological zeal or personal animosity, but also by the antagonism between Ernestine and Albertine Saxony, between the princes and the cities.5

Not only did the secular authorities take an active role in the confessional quarrels, but they frequently allowed theological differences to determine their political strategy (as in the case of the ill-fated Convention of Princes at Naumburg in 1561, where the German princes attempted to reach agreement by leaving their theologians at home). And not all of these princes were as insightful as Duke Christoph of Wurttemberg, one of the few German princes who seems to have deserved Luther's commendation of the pious prince as a rare bird. Christoph refused to allow his elder son and heir, Eberhard, to meddle in the affairs of strangers... is sedition (i.e. against the king of France).6

The fact of the matter is that more often than not the favorite court theologians, far from being simply "tools of the princes," were busily prevailing upon and encouraging their princes to enter the theological fray on their side. Thus there may be some truth to the observation that "frequently and in many places confessional objectives pre-dominated and compelled the politicians to march to their tune."7

Some resulting side-effects were unfortunate. The state authorities desired religious uniformity within their lands and were prepared to enforce such conformity against heretics or adherents of other illegal religious persuasions with the sword (i.e. as in the execution of those designated as heretics). It also is undeniable that the Formula of Concord, even as it brought a certain degree of unity to Europe's scattered and mistrustful Lutherans, by virtue of its exclusions and condemnations effectively shut out the Calvinists theologically just as they had been excluded politically by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Thus it is apparent that no easy or universally applicable answer can be given to the question as to how princely power and theological confession related to one another.

Whether the theological or the political side of the equation predominated in any given situation was bound to vary, depending upon individual circumstances, the personalities of those involved, and the confessional composition of each city, territory, or kingdom. Much research and sifting of the evidence remains to be done before it will be possible with any degree of certainty to produce a relatively uncontroversial map of the confessional landscape of sixteenth-century Germany as it affected confessional Lutheranism.

Jungkantz, in his excellent summary, has caught the double-edged thrust of the Formula of Concord when he observes that "perhaps there is a peace which brings the sword and a sword which brings peace" (p. 110). The formulators of Concord, paradoxically, were at the same time the sowers of discord.

Parents gently inculcate reality when children skeptically wonder about secular proof texts ("an apple a day," "early to bed"). They respond, "Well, yes, people use that expression, and what they're driving at is..." So with "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart... and with all thy mind." It's an expression. God did not create us able to do that—unless we take all things bright and beautiful, call them God, and become pantheists. "Ye must be born again." It's an expression. "Ask, and it shall be given you." "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

It would seem that the proper vision of the real God has to confute the God who speaks and the God who acts.

Not that these pithy aphoristic statements have no power, no function, no truth. It's nice to realize that in January you can ski in Virginia, as one often feels sought out and embraced by God. One feels reborn, renewal. One has asked, even unknowingly, and been given. Sometimes one manages to love Him.

What if all the globe were Greenland? Would we think of God only in terms of cold sun and bright ice? Or, if all its waters were body-temperature lagoons, would God merely be the stirrings of our own marrow and satisfaction? From Virginia, where the winter weather refuses extremes for long, it's easier than in most places to reach out and be touched by the God who is neither too hard nor too soft, the perfect God.
The God of Winter

Charles Vandersee

Dear Editor:

After several years in central Vir­ginia, a four-hour drive below the Mason-Dixon Line, I'm learning not to expect a Midwestern winter. Or a green tropical Florida winter, which I think I expected at first.

Virginia is in between, never zero and seldom below freezing for long, but not palm trees and bougainvillea either. Two years ago we had snow cover from mid-January to mid-March, as if the climate was indefinite degree, but the ultimate conceivable of every good quality, as if snow, distilled, had no trace of impurity. Either man's grandiose needs or God's tremendous ego had produced the idea that such completeness and such perfection were required of a god.

As God told his story to man, however, bare ground and thistles showed up; thaws produced mud and mess. God was not perfect. God was not complete. He used poor judgment (created beings without sufficient will to obey Him), played favorites (chose a people), became repeatedly vindictive (punished and harassed the beings He had ineptly created), lost his temper and repented, made political promises (a messiah) that turned out to be misleading ones (spiritual, not national), and finally sent a messiah allegedly to save everybody while speaking in parables grasped by few.

Possibly the mess derives from another of man's odd obsessive demands: an inerrant text. This notion—really not that of "mankind" but of western Christendom, or rather of certain formula-makers in that tradition—requires a perfect God as inspirer of every phrase and idea in the writings we call the Bible. But does God wish us to need or want inerrancy? Then we have to make superhuman—unsuccessful—efforts to reconcile a theory of allness and ultimacy with the story that presents, often, quite a different God.

We reconcile by calling God infinitely incomprehensible, his design complex and wondrous, his ways past finding out. Yet the text also says that God made man in His image, which connotes—if not denotes—that man can grasp the basic ideas and values of God. We don't see his whole picture, as children in Iowa don't see the snow-covered Rockies. But they have picture books; they do not reach adult­hood unable to conceive of Vail or Aspen.

Virginia from December to March is easy, like the yoke of Jesus, and our winter is becoming my metaphor for God.

It would seem that the proper human vision of the real God has to conflate the God who speaks and the God who acts. Words alone mislead, as an ad promising skiing on the Blue Ridge doesn't guarantee a white surface magically appearing on any 50-degree day in January. Generally speaking you can ski in Virginia in winter. Generally speaking you find the truth about God and man in the Bible, but you do not take every observation in it and build an inclusive, unambiguous, certified, and completed revelation of God. Oh well, you can, if you helplessly crave Rube Goldberg machines; some systematic theologians must be precious to God, as entertainers unawares.

You do not take Virginia's variable winter climate, put into your computer each year's particulars, and rest on the results as God's sole

Concluded on page 31

Dean of the Echols Scholars and Associate Professor of English at the University of Virginia, Charles Vandersee is also Associate Editor of The Letters of Henry Adams to be published next year by Harvard University Press and wrote the "Introduction" to The Papers of Henry Adams microfilmed last year by the Massachusetts Historical Society.