The Cresset (archived issues)

11-1969

The Cresset (Vol. XXXIII, No. 1)

Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/cresset_archive

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons, and the Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Cresset (archived issues) by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.
Reinhold Pieper Marxhausen, GUN POWER, 1968, lead. Created the day Martin Luther King, Jr. was buried. 20" long.

3 The Editor IN LUCE TUA
7 Charles Vandersee IN THE PAST IS THE URGENT PRESENT
8 Bill J. Elkins HOPKINS’ “CARRION COMFORT”
13 Ralph L. Moellerer A CHRISTIAN EXORCISM OF DEMONS
18 John H. Elliott THANKSGIVING APOCALYPSE
19 Don A. Affeldt THE FIRST FILMS OF THE SEVENTIES
20 Albert R. Trost DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY
21 BOOKS OF THE MONTH
22 Walter Sorell PRE-SEASON IN LONDON
23 William H. Kroeger BEELZEBUB’S PROGRESS
24 Reinhold Pieper Marxhausen I WONDER
26 John Strietelmeier COVERING UP THE GREY
27 O. P. Kretzmann OPK to jhs

THE CRESSET
November, 1969 Vol. XXXIII, No. 1

ALBERT G. HUEGLI, Publisher
O. P. KRETZMANN, Editor Emeritus
RICHARD LEE, Editor

Departmental Editors
Richard H. W. Brauer, Visual Arts
Don A. Affeldt, Mass Communications
Walter G. Sanders, Poetry; Walter Sorell, Theatre
Albert R. Trost, Political Affairs
Theodore Ludwig, Religion Books
Kenneth F. Korby, General Books
William F. Eifrig, Jr., Music

Consulting Editors
Walter G. Friedrich, Norman Nagel
John Strietelmeier, Richard Baeppler
Charles Vandersee, Anne Springsteen
Arlin Meyer, Warren Rubel, Meredith Berg
William Bellfuss, John Kretzmann

Business Managers
Wilbur H. Hutchins, Finance
Jacquelyn Isley, Circulation

THE CRESSET is published monthly September through June by the Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Indiana 46383, as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University or within the editorial board. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Subscription rates: One year — $2.00; two years — $3.75; three years — $5.50. Single copy 20 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1969 by the Valparaiso University Press, without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part and for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.
Women's Lib

It has occurred to us that The Cresset has not yet delivered an opinion on the women's liberation movement abroad in our country. As we read our staff credits on the opposite page, we suspect our credentials are not good enough to get our opinion heard credibly. With the happy exceptions of Jackie and Anne, this review seems very vulnerable on this issue to the charge of "male chauvinism".

The women's liberation movement, however, in its serious manifestations is not some new skirmish in the battle of the sexes. Nor is it part of any designing women's or resigning men's drive toward unisex in styles and roles. It is a movement trying neither to be against males nor toward maleness on the part of women, but rather a movement to resist those inhuman forces which try to define all of us in our society and only seem to give males the edge.

Its immediate origins, like so many liberation movements now maturing or dying in our country, were in the radical student movement of the sixties. Deeper origins than that we suspect could be traced back to heroic black women in the civil rights struggle early in that decade. Further back would be Third World women the world over who are called into more courageous and interdependent lives with their men and one another than many wealthy, white, middle-class women can imagine.

Yet it appears that it is now just some of these latter women who are seeing a deep need for liberation in their own situation. We do not wonder at this development, for there is often no greater oppression than to be surrounded with a rhetoric of freedom that is denied in reality. It may even be a greater oppression than the rhetoric and reality of oppression agreed. At least in the latter case one need not undeceive herself of a rhetoric of freedom before she can deal with the oppressive realities of her situation.

What are the women of this movement finding to be the realities of their situation? Our reports are sketchy, but the silhouette is appearing. White, middle-class, college-educated women are passing through the radical student movement in which they first fought definition and domination by the men in the movement. For example, in a December, 1965, national conference of what were then the Students for a Democratic Society, a radical women's caucus first appeared. One college generation later, the second unity principle put before the SDS conference this past summer was one opposing "male supremacy" and "supporting women's liberation."

As the politically active women graduate from college and radical student organizations, work or marry and begin rearing children, they find no models for a single woman who is politically active or of a home and marriage in which both the man and woman are politically active. What they transiently achieved in radical student organizations must be achieved again in a wider, more tricky, and more seductive society. Nor is the problem shared and being discussed by politically radical women alone. Many politically uninterested, liberal, and conservative women are joining the discussion and action too.

Sexually, these women first had to overcome the temptation that the pill might only liberate their generation to have the same attitudes toward sex as many males. That is hardly liberating as any perusal of Playboy is cold testimony. The danger of seeing themselves as sex objects as many men see them is heightened by the fact that they can now very easily treat men in kind. Pill possible, aggressive sexual activity for these women ran the risk that they might end up no better than some males, taking silly pride in their conquests or even revenging themselves on men for their exploitation.

The promotion of "passive" and "secondary service" attitudes for women by an argument from the anatomy and physiology of sexual union they found to be false attitudes at the same time they were being conditioned to accept such attitudes by their society. Many in the women's liberation movement transiently require psychological deconditioning and the learning of psychological resistance to their society. The simple doctrine that "function follows form" they are finding as grotesque in the definition of the roles of women in society as it is grotesque in architecture.
Women the butts of their society's little regard and reward woman only $3859. These women find themselves economic and social controls of white women are more subtle than the prostitution, welfare, discriminatory education, and birth control laws used to determine the lives of black women, but they are as sure.

Those few who are cynically "making it" in "a man's world," say, in scientific research, engineering, medicine, law, and government, need to be so crafty and superior they can only believe they must be the "new niggers." Such "niggering" of women is also their lot if they take up work which exploits their sexuality, say, as models, dancers, Playboy "Bunnies," stewardesses, and even receptionists and secretaries. The economic and social controls of white women are more subtle than the prostitution, welfare, discriminatory education, and birth control laws used to determine the lives of black women, but they are as sure.

If the white, middle-class college-educated woman eventually turns in upon a home, husband, and children, she again is finding herself in an oppressive situation. She truly perceives she cannot live totally for her husband and children without becoming a destructive wife and a devouring mother. Certainly she cannot be herself. But there at home amid her labor saving devices (including the pill, but now inside marriage to delay, limit, and space her children) she is supposed to cultivate her leisure, her personal and family consumption, and her femininity according to ghastly and ghostly models. She is to spend eighty percent of the family income, sustain the assaults of eighty percent of American advertising, and be seduced into supporting ever expanding markets for products she finds at best trivial and at worst diversionary of public and private spending for socially necessary and human needs. Then her essentially passive role in the economy — "Women must be liberated to desire new products," writes one rapacious market researcher — is found both cloying and immoral.

She is often as well informed and liberally educated as most men, and sometimes better. She also may more clearly intuit that life is not found in acquiring products and manipulating people but more likely found in becoming a person who can love and work with others in community. And so she finds it increasingly difficult to be unobtrusive, unquestioning, cuddly, sweet-smelling and silent when she is frustrated in her available roles, discerns serious misdirections in society at large, and senses nothing better in the lives of her husband and sons.

If we grasp what women's liberation is about in its serious manifestations, we are all for it. Middle-class women will, of course, have different tasks from the poor. The present tasks to which middle-class women have taken themselves — consumer protections from harmful goods, truth in advertising legislation, air and water pollution controls, inflation and labor exploitation studies and conscientious buying, war resistance and draft counseling, communal child care centers for the poor, educational reforms for women, and many others — can only help liberate men as well and find them allies.

Simply to seek equality with men in our society like new flappers and suffragettes would, of course, only perpetuate the male definition of reality. Worse, it would puff up male vanities and empower the old myth of women as temptresses, only now as temptresses beguiling men to believe more boldly still that they are what is best in the best of all possible worlds.

We have always preferred the first creation story in Genesis, chapter one, to the second creation story in Genesis, chapter two. In the latter story, for example, God creates the woman secondarily, after the man and as his helper, to be defined by man and to be named after man. In the former story, however, the woman and the man are created at once in the image of God, and both are blessed to be creative, to have dominion over the earth and to subdue it. We might wisely suspect some "male chauvinism" crept into the telling of the second story, and we are surely better guided by the telling of the first. Then, women and sisters, God is on your side, and on our side, and on all sides.

The Parochial School

A parochial school has closed for a right reason. Such a closure is an occasion both for thanksgiving and for thinking about the right reasons for other parochial schools to remain open.

When the Evangelical Covenant Church recently took thought for its secondary school, North Park Academy, a right reason was given favoring closure. The president, Dr. Karl Ollson, is reported to have told a Chicago Sun-Times reporter:

Like many private schools, we have begun to price ourselves out of the reach of the people we most
want to help. We have existed because we stood for
certain values. We can't continue to exist, however,
without becoming just another upper class private
school, heavily dependent on the wealthy classes.
Rather than do this, we have chosen to discontinue
the school.

We happen to belong to a denomination of greater
membership, wealth, and numbers of elementary and
secondary schools than the Evangelical Covenant
Church. We are grateful for its witness to denomina-
tions like our own with greater opportunities to do good
and evil with its schools. One is reminded by such an
example that parochial schools are not an absolute good
in themselves, and the relative goods they might serve
need to be weighed against the relative evils.

Parochial schools of all churches have always been ad-
vanced on the basis of some significant difference. This
is especially the case in the United States where public
schools at all levels, and particularly at the elementary
and secondary levels, are rightly or wrongly taken as
the norm. While there is some merit in the mere pres-
ence of schools maintained by agencies other than the
state in such a society, such a difference is not the signi-
ficant one for the church. Its schools are not simply
intended to assure educational pluralism and keep
wholesome doubt cast on the norm of public schools,
as desirable as we find that influence of parochial
schools to be. In the case of our own denomination, we
suspect that the right thing was done for the wrong
reason at the beginnings of its parochial schools, and the
Lord has since turned the wrath of men unto his praise.

Nor do we believe the significant difference resides
in the curriculum of the parochial school. Here are im-
portant differences, to be sure, but they are not what
make the parochial school indispensable. So far as we
have heard the curricular cases made, they fall into two
lots.

The first lot includes all the cases made that the paro-
chial school adds something to the public school curri-
culum. This is popularly called the "Fourth 'R'" ap-
proach, religion being added to "reading, 'riting, and
'rithmetic."

The difficulty with this approach is that plain
and pious men may ask whether there are not means other
than the parochial school for adding religious studies
to the public school curriculum. Maintaining the curri-
culum of the public school in its own schools is un-
doubtedly a generous gift of the church to society and
given at great sacrifice. However, that may not always
be the sacrifice to which the church is called when sacri-
fices are needed elsewhere in a changing society. The
times urge us to aim our sacrifices more carefully as
well as increase them more selflessly. Transmitting its
tradition is an absolutely necessary educational task
for any religious community. It is a relative question
whether it is its task to transmit anything else. Situ-
ations in which the church might wisely take upon itself
the teaching of the public school curriculum are likely
very special situations, a few of which we shall be sug-
gestin in a moment.

The second lot of cases include all those made that the
parochial school qualifies the usual curriculum. This is
essentially the "Qualifying 'R'" approach, religion
qualifying the curriculum into "religious reading, re-
ligious 'riting, and religious 'rithmetic."

We are very interestedly drawn to the cases in this
lot, although we do not understand them all. Some have
all the attractiveness of integration, relevance, and
wholeness. Some have all the perils of tyranny, dilution,
and monologue. We suspect that any curriculum so
dangerous to achieve must be nearing a great truth.

We are, however, persuaded by our own experience
in elementary parochial schools and that of others after
us that such a qualified curriculum is better attempted
at the college and university level of education. And
what may be better may also now be necessary as funds
to maintain all educational levels are strained. At this
time elementary parochial school teachers, especially
women, bear an unequal share of the sacrifices the
church makes to maintain its schools. In our childhood
we were assured that this inequality of sacrifice was re-
warded in heaven with special crowns for parochial
school teachers. Of late we have wondered whether the
obverse might mean that some of the hotter places in
hell are being reserved for the rest of us unless we re-
pent of that injustice against them.

Frequently other cases are made for the significant
difference of the parochial school. Some that they per-
mit prayers in school which do not violate our Consta-
tion. Some that the personal examples of Christian
teachers help our children in their own character forma-
tion, with even more help given by Christian peers.
Some that parochial schools are missions. These co-
curricular cases, however, do not qualify but only add
to the actions we believe families and congregations
can themselves be taking, and do best when they take
them.

Some Signs of Significance

The significant difference of the parochial school to
us now lies in those it serves. The relative good it might
serve presently lies in those it educates who are not now
educated, or are poorly educated, by the public schools.
The church school, like the church itself, belongs to
Christ and not to us. It is instructive, if not normative,
to recall that when Christ was with us in the teaching Jesus, those who were taught first were the poor, the neglected, the outcast and the trapped.

When we read, as we do, newspaper headlines like URBAN DROP, SUBURBAN GAIN SHOWN IN PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS, we are reading news as scandalous as New York apartment dwellers watching unmoved and unassisting the victim of a strangling.

When we read of parochial schools expanding to make racially segregated schools available again for those who pay well for that miseducation of their children, we are reading news as loathsome as a child molesting or a stock watering.

When we hear of parochial schools costing so much tuition that only the wealthy can afford them, we are hearing news of inverted priorities as mad as our warfare spending in a world of disease and hunger.

When we hear of parochial schools promoted chiefly for what they don’t do — permit long hair, short skirts, rock music for dances, sex education for the elementary pupils, the study of Darwin, Marx, and Freud for the high school students, and other knee-jerk don’ts — we are hearing news as weird to us as the touting of that wonderful rapist who neither smoked nor drank and always anesthetized his prey.

Weird, mad, loathsome? These words are too polite, too middle class in themselves, for news of our participation in offenses against the trust of little ones. For these offenses the teaching Jesus thought a merciful judgment might be tying millstones around our necks and casting us into the sea.

Wisdom and prudence, repentance and new life to us would mean fewer and better schools of the church, strategically placed at points of greatest educational need, supplemented by funds from the treasury of the whole church, and given over to leavening educational experimentation and innovation.

In some cases this could mean closing parochial schools and taking up youth ministries where the young already are gathered in their families, public schools, churches, gangs, places of recreation, and before the media.

In some cases this could mean subsidizing more urban core church schools, especially where public schools are in disarray and destructive. They would serve those who are there regardless of their religious affiliation and with those teachers who can serve them best. In many cases further thinking about the parish or parochial school is irrelevant. We need to think more about the church school.

In a few cases this could mean turning key church secondary schools into evangelical liberation centers for young, white, middle class Christians. This could mean taking up the task of learning with them in tension with social, economic, and political issues and a more Christian theology of controversy, change, and hope.

In some cases it could mean the ecumenical or even merely interdenominational collaboration of several churches in one church school or church school system.

In some cases this could mean church schools given over to the teaching of the young with special learning problems and particularly the public school drop-outs and push-outs.

In some cases this could mean funds given to private agencies which can do educational work no church can yet do, particularly among groups where whatever a middle class church does now only appears as noblesse oblige at best and “Christian colonialism” at worst.

In some cases this could mean mobile and seasonal schools in areas of entrenched illiteracy, in poverty pockets and possibly among migrants.

In some cases this could mean that the question of who is taught has been favorably answered by the very location of the school in a community of great need. But it is possible that now what is taught needs reformulation more congruent with that community, both in general studies and religious studies, and with the active participation of that community in the reformulation.

In many, many cases this could mean simply a new concern by churches for public schools generally, with funds given to public schools to seed special projects for which general support needs to be generated by an insurgent, servant example.

There is no lack of other opportunities. We believe that church schools were saved in a little adventure in the past and that some of them will be saved in so much more adventure in the future. There is more joy set before the teaching church than it has yet claimed.
Whenever I am reading and see the phrase “American Dream” I clip out the article, with all the glee of a Texan who collects chili recipes.

This passion partly stems from teaching an American literature course which examines how American writers have defined their country. You can hardly define America without referring to the American Dream, so I compulsively watch how today’s journalists and authors use this catch phrase.

Presumably you are turning the page at this point, moaning, “Not another rehash of the American Dream! We know perfectly well what the cliche refers to, and are bored stiff as a mobster’s corpse by the whole thing!”

I used to feel the same way — until I made a small discovery. Namely, that people who casually use the term simply do not agree on what it means. Take the Scottish Daily Mail, which discusses the championship golfer Lee Trevino and calls him “the non-American boy who cracked the Great American Dream,” by getting very rich, very quick.

Then take a Village Voice writer, who sarcastically observes Mayor Daley’s South Side neighborhood: “They are all pathetically neat little houses, aluminum storm doors and a tiny stoop. You can imagine the shadow boxes and bric-a-brac shelves on the walls inside. Can they believe this tacky respectability is really the fulfillment of the American dream? They can.”

Or (last example) take Eric Sevareid, the CBS commentator, in a 1968 book You Can’t Kill the Dream. His essay is titled “The American Dream,” and he asks: “What was the dream? It was rebirth, the eternal, haunting craving of men to be born again, the yearning for the second chance.” Shrewdly, Sevareid then observes that “a thousand varieties” of specific dreams belong within the encompassing dream of rebirth: visions of riches, self-confidence, idleness, God, space, health, beauty, brotherhood.

Well, so what is the point — that depending whom you read, the American Dream may mean money or respectability or rebirth or just about anything?

I suppose this is a defense of research for one thing. We do not always know what we think we know, and research or investigation is one method by which we can hover a little closer over truth. For example, by looking at my clipping collection I reach a further conclusion about the American Dream. The money-and-goods aspect is a lot more prominent than brotherhood, say, or spiritual felicity.

But of course, you say. The Puritan Ethic. Doing and Getting, and thus pleasing God. When we look back on our American heritage and tradition, this is indeed a very large part of what we see. We are not likely to escape from it, even if on some crisp and clean winter morning we should suddenly think we wanted to. James Madison said that this is the “glory of America”: that we look back and pay “a decent regard to the opinions of former times.” Crevecoeur, Cotton Mather, Ben Franklin: they urge us on to goods, property, status.

But I should quote the rest of the Madison passage. Because our American tradition, like the Bible, has got all kinds of things in it, and research into some of the more unthumbed pages provides unexpected revelation. Madison, for example (whom I deliberately quoted out of context), is actually making a strong defense of INNOVATION — looking to the PRESENT and urging that we solve our immediate problems by using the resources of NOW:

Is it not the glory of the people of America, that, whilst they have paid a decent regard to the opinions of former times and other nations, they have not suffered a blind veneration for antiquity, for custom, or for names, to over-rule the suggestions of their own good sense, the knowledge of their own situation, and the lessons of their own experience?

So that by thus delving into the wisdom of the 18th century, I arrive at my own American Dream for the 1970s, a plea (echoing Madison) that we use our “own good sense,” that we respond to our “own situation,” and that we pay less “blind” heed to custom.
Not, I'll not, carrion comfort. Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist — slack they may be — these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can:
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlamb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?
Why? That my chaff might fly: my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer.
Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one? That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

Reprinted by permission of The Oxford University Press

Much of Gerard Manley Hopkins' recent popularity is grounded in the later and very personal sonnets. Of that group there is none more intense or provocative than the very fine “Carrion Comfort.” It is in this later period (1884-89) that he turned away from the purely devotional poem like “God's Grandeur” and explored the internal struggle of a Christian in an unfriendly world cut off from God.

“Carrion Comfort” is a sonnet of discovery. The poem obviously grows out of a problem which the poet has of interpreting his own situation. It is intensely introspective, but the situation is so generally felt that it is not overly private. The personal quality only adds to the poem’s effect. The sonnet is a triumph in controlled passion in both subject and form. The conflict results from the speaker’s attempt to retain his humanity and his will in the face of some almost overwhelming force. The presentation of that struggle is convincing, and the reader responds to the situation of the octive even though he may not agree with the success of the sestet and its two attempts at resolution. The resolution is neither a clear-cut victory nor a total defeat. The speaker retains control of his will, but in doing so he discovers the truth of his relationship with God, and that relationship is less than desirable. The assertion of will is the assertion of self, and it is the speaker’s discovery that he is putting self-interest before devotion to God that prompts his horror at his own wretchedness.

The first part of the sestet of the sonnet marks a change in perspective which enables the speaker to realize that at least part of his problem is a failure to understand the real situation. The attempt at resolution in light of this discovery presents an additional problem, however, in the ambiguity of the cheering. The last line of the sonnet does achieve a kind of resolution in the discovery that his struggle is a paradoxical desire to serve and praise God and at the same time assert his own will. In that final horror in which he sees the truth of his actions, the speaker comes close to the transformation of the situation and submission to God’s will. But that trans-
formation is not complete, and the surrender of self is not fully achieved.

The sonnet's success is the honesty with which the struggle is presented, and its failure is the lack of any complete resolution of that struggle; however, we must keep in mind that failure in this sense is not totally condemnatory. These apparently contradictory approaches are necessary because of the duality in the speaker himself, and because of the nature of his problem. He is dealing, actually, with two problems: one theological and the other psychological. That is, the speaker is involved in the struggle on two levels of his being. He is a devout Christian and a Catholic priest, and he looks to the Church and to Christian dogma for one answer. On the other hand, he is a man whose natural impulse is to assert his own will in the solution of his problems, no matter what their nature. To the man, dogmatic generalities are not very comforting. Hopkins must somehow define his problem in such a way that both selves of the speaker find meaning and comfort in a single resolution. This does not happen in "Carrion Comfort." The dogmatic resolution of the beginning of the sestet is perhaps theologically, but certainly not psychologically, satisfying, and it leads to the new questions in the conclusion of the poem. The result is a division of the two selves and the presentation of the old problem in a new form. The poem is a good example of the application of a general truth to a specific problem, and it is a splendid example of the convincing presentation of internal conflict and tension. It is not, however, a total success, because the psychological problem is not specifically solved.

The Octave and the Quatrains

The octave of the sonnet is very fine. Although the transition from an undefined threat against the will to the assumption that the threat is from a divine force may strike some readers as questionable, that transition can be explained. One of the most striking things about the sonnet is the abrupt shift in tension from the octave to the sestet, and that shift is symptomatic of the way in which the poem begins to break down in the sestet. This breakdown is the result of the poet's attempt to arrive at a general, theological or dogmatic resolution of what is essentially a psychological conflict.

The first quatrain of the poem is the emotional outcry against something the speaker sees as a threat to his very being. In the four lines Hopkins successfully presents an internal conflict between the part of the self which is tempted to give up and despair and the other part which is determined to assert its will, though that assertion be very weak. The conflict is defined as a struggle to maintain control in the face of an outside attack that has produced an internal division:

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair,
   not feast on thee;
Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man

In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

The personified Despair is, of course, the foe in this passage, but that figure merely helps to objectify the internal struggle. The conflict in these lines is an internal one, since the intensity of the speaker's cry against despair indicates that his temptation is to give in to it, to feast on that carrion comfort. The conflict, then, is between despair, which here amounts to giving up the will, and "I can!" the assertion of that will. Also, the lines suggest that will and manhood, or self, are synonymous. While the reason for this extreme struggle is still vague, it does become obvious that the speaker is reacting against the inclination to give up the will, the self, to some outside force. The natural reaction of any man is to protect and preserve his independent will, so the speaker is reacting naturally in maintaining his will. But there are theological positions opposed to the natural or psychological positions in the struggle of the Christian speaker of the poem. Since the poet's life is the material for the poem in which the speaker-persona is acting, the poet's Christian priesthood is assumed for that persona. So, in a way, the struggle is between the natural impulse of one to preserve his independence and the admonition of Christ that "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:52)

The speaker's struggle depends on his perspective. In the lines quoted above the speaker is reacting to the threat against his will. In the later lines his view changes when he sees the threat as an act of God to purify him. And, essentially, these two reactions provide the struggle in the poem. So long as he exercises his will, either in hoping for something better or refusing to be party to his own unmanaging, he remains a free self. That freedom, however, is not desirable to the Christian self which would surrender to the will of God. A similar situation in George Herbert's "The Collar" is resolved by the transforming of the apparent slavery to the sonship which makes him heir not servant. In Hopkins' sonnet, though, that transformation does not remove the paradox.

By the fourth line of the sonnet the speaker has averted what he defines as the first crisis. He has made a strong assertion of the will, and in that assertion discovered his ability always to maintain that control. For to make such an assertion is to exercise control. A self can preserve its independence by refusing to admit any external force. It is he who must choose to give up or keep control of the will. And in that first part of the struggle the self wins over the inclination to sacrifice independence and give the will to an outside control.

With his will secure, the speaker turns to the second problem. We find in the second quatrain that the will-struggle is actually symptomatic of another struggle, that which has threatened the will in the first place. 
That is, the inclination to despair is prompted by some conflict preceding his effort to keep his will intact. The new question raised at this point has to do with that primary situation which caused the struggle of the will. The rest of the poem is an attempt to identify the source of the original threat and to achieve some resolution or transformation of that problem.

The Technical Achievement

Before discussing the remainder of the sonnet, I must say a word about the technical achievement of the first quatrain. The convincing struggle and the intensity of its presentation are significant achievements in the use of such devices as meter and alliteration. The first lines of this sonnet are among the finest in all of Hopkins' poetry precisely because of the way in which technique and matter unite to present the sense of the internal, psychological struggle. The structure of the lines reinforces the sense of tension within the speaker as he attempts to maintain control of himself. The sonnet form which Hopkins uses in presenting the struggle is itself a tightly controlled structure, but even the traditional shape of the sonnet suffers from the heat of this tremendous tension, and its lines are extended beyond the traditional ten syllables to as many as seventeen. Also, within the lines parenthetical phrases and alliteration combine to slow down and control what has the tendency to become an hysterical screaming. For instance, in the first line if we read, "Not, I'll not feast on thee!" the line could, and probably should, be read as a screech, demonstrating the loss of control rather than asserting the control which the line claims for the speaker. The alliteration and the parenthetical effect of "carrion comfort" force the reader to slow down and change pitch, controlling the line and preventing the screech which is possible without those devices. Also, "Despair" brings the movement of the line almost to a halt in a kind of gritting-of-the-teeth controlling of the passion. The technique continues throughout the sonnet, but its effect in the sestet is less impressive.

The technical accomplishment, of which I have mentioned only two of the obvious devices, is complete in the octave. What I want to show by this abbreviated look at technique is the command which the poet has in the beginning of the sonnet and the considerable accomplishment of the way he integrates the argument and the presentation of the argument. When we compare the tension of these first lines and their effectiveness with the beginning lines of the sestet, we can readily see the inferiority of the latter.

The tension of the first quatrain is somewhat diminished by the strong and effective assertion of the will; and with the control gained in that assertion, the speaker proceeds to the cause of that near despair. We are convinced by the end of the first quatrain that the speaker is in a very precarious position, and that he must do something to end the threat against him. In the second quatrain he reveals the source of the attack:

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou ruse on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there;
me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Here he identifies the source of that threatened destruction as the terrible. From the descriptive imagery which follows the identification, we know that the force is either heavenly or demonic, but the speaker apparently does not know which at this point in the struggle. The conflict is grossly one-sided, and the speaker points out the disadvantage he has in the fight when he questions the reason for the attack from that terrible foe. The terrible has rudely placed his foot, that foot which can wring the world, on the speaker and has made other destructive advances against him.

Hopkins' imagery suggests that the terrible is engaged mainly in a siege where his attack is more threat than total assault. At least, the scanning and fanning of the heap of bruised bones are not overtly hostile, though it does suggest the threat of hostility, and is certainly rude. The attacker, then, is perhaps not attempting the complete destruction of the speaker, but is certainly making, as far as he can see, an unwarranted invasion upon his will. The rudeness of the attack is as offensive as the pain involved. The speaker's bruised bones are besieged, and he cannot avoid the attacker to flee. He is frantic to flee because the threat, as we saw in the first quatrain, is against his will and his manhood, and he wants to preserve them at all cost. It is not physical destruction which he fears, but a forced surrender of his will.

God the Terrible

The speaker identifies the "terrible" as God in the sestet, and clarifies some of the ambiguity of the second quatrain. That ambiguity involves the way in which the speaker sees the will he is attempting to preserve and the way he interprets the attack by God. On the one hand, he sees his will in conflict with himself. Part of him sees the attempt of God to capture his will as being destructive and unfortunate; the other self sees God's actions as essentially benevolent and persuasive. It is, the speaker realizes, his will and his decision whether or not he will surrender to God. In those first lines he learned that no matter what the threat, his will cannot be forced from him, and the threat from God is a threat only so far as part of him wants to submit to God.

The last half of the octave with its questions, then, is concerned less with ways in which the speaker may maintain control of his will than it is with attempting to interpret the motive for God's wanting to control him. The speaker's own decision to keep or surrender...
his will must be made on the basis of the interpretation he gives for God's actions. Why does God do these rude things? For the self identified with the dogma of the Church the answer is not at all difficult, but in the sestet there is also the second self which makes the dogmatic answer insufficient and leads to a different kind of question.

The sestet begins with the dogmatic answer to the question of the octave. The answer picks up and elaborates the images of the question, particularly the heap of bones and the fanning of that heap:

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie,  
seer and clear.

Nay in all that toll, that coil, since (seems)  
I kissed the rod,  
Hand rather, my heart lol lapped strength, stole  
joy, would laugh, cheer.

These lines offer a complete and unambiguous transformation of the problem in the octave, from the point of view of the Church and dogmatic generalities. That resolution depends on the validity of the images used to describe the attack and on the transformational interpretation of those images. In the first lines of the sestet the bruised bones become a heap of unwinnowed grain, and God is harvester and preserver, rather than destroyer. What earlier seemed the laying of a lionlimb against the speaker was really God's flailing the stalks in order to separate chaff from grain; and the destructive tempests are transformed into winds which winnow that chaff. In this shift of imagery and application of dogma, the attack is transformed from an affront to a service, and from a destructive to a saving act. Moreover, the flailing rod and attacking lionlimb become a hand which the speaker seems to have kissed in the process of that transformation. Since that time of the transformation he has laughed and gained strength.

The whole process of the transformation, however, seems to have come a bit too easily, and the speaker is apparently unsure of the exact process, for he "seems" to have kissed the rod which became a hand. Still, there must have been a real transformation, for the situation seems definitely to have improved with the speaker's laughing and cheering. If the success were total, though, the poem should end there, as it does not. The sonnet continues with the examination of the speaker's new state, and in that examination what appeared unambiguous proves to be very ambiguous.

Had "Carrion Comfort" ended with this resolution and transformation, it would have been very much like earlier Hopkins poems, consistent with Christian dogma in interpreting apparent destruction as action good for devout men. For Hopkins to affirm the truth of that doctrine, however, without pursuing further the problem of the octave would have been disastrous. The passionate expression of pain and struggle is too abruptly and too easily ended. But mainly, the conflict of the different selves within the speaker would have been put aside rather than resolved. The solution satisfies the Christian dogma, but it does not answer the problem of the struggle for the will to maintain one's independence against the outside attack. So, while the transformation appears to be theologically complete, it avoids the particular conflict of the sonnet. The conflict is that of the self refusing to commit itself wholly to a truth which it acknowledges; of one self seeking union with the will of God and the other trying to maintain independence.

Cheers for God and Himself

In the last lines of the sonnet the speaker acknowledges his dissatisfaction with the general and tentative resolution. He has not accepted the commitment to that general truth, so his appearing to accept it is now suspect. His cheering was the apparent acceptance of God's right to his will, so that cheer raises the new point of ambiguity in the situation:

Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling  
flung me, foot trod

Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it  
each one? That night that year  
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling  
with (my God!) my God.

Is he cheering the heavenly hero who has so rudely (even if for his own good) beaten him, or is he making himself the hero by cheering himself? The ambiguity of his response is heightened by the labeling of himself as "me that fought him." In the octave he is the victim of a grossly one-sided attack from "the terrible," but now it sounds as if he were on more nearly equal terms with his foe. His cheer, then, may be for himself and the good fight he has made against the greater opponent in maintaining his will. Or he may be cheering the ease with which he transformed the fight by affirming the grain image. In either case, to cheer himself is to taunt the hero of heaven. This passage successfully presents the self-examination that the speaker undergoes in an effort to understand the truth of his response to God. He finally decides that he has cheered both God and himself. That is, that part of him which fought to retain control of the will has cheered himself for keeping control, and the part of him which affirms the dogma of that general resolution and wants to surrender the will to God cheers Him.

At this point in the sonnet we find the speaker in a new time period. In the Now of the poem he looks back at that struggle and the ambiguous cheering. He is now outside of the situation which caused the struggle, because he calls it the "now done darkness." That is, he is either outside it or assumes that he is. Before this point he has been, as it were, within the struggle and reporting the action in present tense as it occurred; now he takes a retrospective view of it and makes a more objective judgment. He sees that in the fight of that year he was not wrestling with the "terrible" or with a hero from heaven but with "(My God!) my God." He sees

November, 1969
himself not as a strong and worthy combatant, but as a "wretch" wrestling with the Holy God. The parenthetical "my God" is successful as a significant discovery only if we see it as the first time in the sonnet that the speaker identifies that terrible force not just as a great power but as God Himself. When we see the intensity of this discovery, we are convinced of the horror with which the speaker now views that past action. Also, that horror convinces us of the speaker's present acknowledgment of God's supremacy and of his own wretchedness.

**Three Problems, Three Resolutions**

The sonnet, then, works through three problems to three kinds of resolutions. First, the speaker is faced with the internal conflict involving his temptation to give up his will. The despair of the first line suggests that to abandon his will for any reason, to give up his selfhood, is to feast on the rotten comfort and ease of not being responsible for oneself, of having no center to fight for. This conflict he temporarily resolves by the assertion that "I can, can something." As long as that much will remains, his manhood, his center, is secure.

Second, he is faced with the struggle against the real foe, against the "terrible" who is attacking his center. This problem he resolves, again temporarily, by transforming the attack from a destructive to a constructive act which leaves him sheer and clear, not the shattered center but a more complete and clearly defined center. Third, the conflict of ambiguity of his cheering after the transforming act of the grain imagery brings to light the struggle which was so vague before. In that cheering, as viewed from the Now of the poem, he sees that he cheered God in acknowledgment of His supreme will and he also cheered himself in an act of self-promotion. Both attitudes, contradictory as they are, are the speaker's, and the attempt to eliminate that ambiguity begins with its clarification in this sonnet, and that ambiguous situation becomes the material for other sonnets of the later "Terrible Sonnet" group.

In so far as it is a convincing presentation of a conflict and as its form conveys the sense of tension and controlled passion which is the material of the poem, "Carrion Comfort" is a very fine poem. But if we evaluate the sonnet as it works out the resolution of the speaker's problem, then it is not totally successful. What we must distinguish here is the difference between the sonnet as an expression of the conflict and the communication of that conflict to the reader, and the sonnet as an instrument by which the poet discovers the real situation and resolves that situation. Again, in the first sense, particularly in the octave, the sonnet succeeds admirably, while in the latter sense it fails for two reasons.

In discussing the extent to which the poet fails to achieve a complete resolution of the problem which led to the composition of the poem, I will be dealing with it only as an instrument of discovery. And what I say of the failure in that respect does not detract from the poem's value as an expression of an internal conflict. It is this failure, or partial success, of the sonnet as a resolution of the original problem situation which makes necessary the continuation of the attempt into the other poems in the "Terrible Sonnet" group, where he picks up the theme at the point of conclusion of "Carrion Comfort" and attacks it from other perspectives.

**Side Issues and Time Shifts**

The success of the sonnet is not complete because of the way in which the resolution is achieved and because the original problem is redirected rather than resolved. If we approach the poem again, examining less the expression of conflict and more the working out of the conflict, we can see the weaknesses. These weaknesses take two forms: One, the introduction of side issues which redirect the line of the real action and conflict; Two, the time shifts in the sestet which remove the speaker from the immediacy of the situation and permit him to comment too objectively and detachedly on it. These two weaknesses do not affect, except to make easier, the theological or doctrinal resolution of the poem; but they do prevent, or at least hinder, the psychological resolution which is necessary for the real transformation of the situation.

The first limitation in the movement of the speaker toward a solution for the problem which begins the poem is that of sidetracking the main issue. The main issue in the octave is the threatened destruction of the speaker's manhood both from an attack by the "terrible" and from his own inclination to give up his self-will in despair. In the sestet, the first attempt at resolution is with a symptom of the main issue rather than with the issue directly. That is, the question of why God is attacking his will is not the same as the assumed question of why God is punishing him, though the speaker offers the resolution for the second question and not the first, the real one. God is trying, the speaker tells us, to purify him, and he acknowledges the value of that purification. He is willing for God to attack him in this purifying act, but those are not the terms under which the attack is presented in the octave. The speaker has avoided the decision of whether or not to surrender his will and self to the will of God by translating the attack on his will to an act of winnowing his chaff. The problem he solves, then, is not the problem in the context of the sonnet; it is rather a symptom of the real struggle.

His suspicion of his cheering that transformation and the new question of who is cheered suggests the speaker's own awareness of the redirection of the original problem. But it also suggests a greater awareness of just what the conflict of the octave was really like. That conflict and the ambiguous cheering are results of the division within the speaker between his attempt to subject self to God and the natural impulse to preserve the self
as an independent being. The horror with which the final awareness of the struggle comes is compounded by the speaker’s attempt to redirect the attack. At any rate, the final horror does not complete the transformation of the problem; it only exposes it and the speaker’s awareness of it.

The other limitation of the sonnet is the shifting time of the sestet. The octave is presented as an immediate struggle with the speaker crying out spontaneously from the heat of conflict. The time shifts of the sestet are closely linked with the other problem of side-tracking the issue. The first shift begins with the first line of the sestet, and it is specifically indicated in the next line with the use of “since.” Here, the speaker is suddenly projecting himself out of the struggle to comment on it. While he was in that struggle, he gave the spontaneous and honest appraisal of the attack on a total self and of the conflict within that self. When he projects himself into a time which gives him a retrospective view, he alienates that part of the self still involved in the struggle. That is, he dissociates the commenting self from the suffering self. And, therefore, his resolution is only partial and general, not complete and specific as the situation demands.

The second time shift occurs in the last sentence of the sonnet in which the struggle becomes one of “that night, that year.” His horror seems genuine and his recognition of his own wretched behavior is admirable enough, but he achieves that attitude of horror only by further removing himself from the self involved in the struggle. That is, the attitude holds true for that self in the past, but apparently not for the self in the Now of the last line. Time shifts are not necessarily bad, but here they do suggest the way in which the speaker has reached his general resolution that gets him out of the immediate struggle without resolving the problem behind that struggle. So, the poet cheats, and the poem suffers for it. Our final judgment of the sonnet must be that it fails, but it is a very impressive failure.

A Christian Exorcism of Demons Old and New

By RALPH L. MOELLERING
University Pastor
University of California, Berkeley

“When an evil spirit goes out of a man, it travels over dry country looking for a place to rest. If it can’t find one, it says to itself, ‘I will go back to my house which I left. So it goes back and finds it empty, clean, and all fixed up. Then it goes out and brings along seven other spirits even worse than itself, and they come and live with it. So that man is in worse shape, when it is all over, than he was at the beginning. This is the way it will happen to the evil people of this day.”

Summing Up the Sixties

Within the last decade we have experienced revolutionary change of shattering intensity in every sphere of life. Automation and cybernetics have drastically transformed our modes of production. Gutenberg-oriented intellectuals have become displaced persons with the advent of Marshall McLuhan’s electronic age in which television with its instantaneous impact on eye and ear tends to replace the sequential logic of the printed page. In air travel we have surmounted the sound barrier and in the penetration of outer space we have encompassed the moon.

In domestic politics the rivalry between Republicans and a coalition of forces (labor-radical-minorities-intellectuals) which dominated Washington from FDR through LBJ has been superseded by the rivalry among the old Liberals, the New Left, the Right Wing typified by the Wallace candidacy in 1968, and the self-styled “silent majority” to which Richard Nixon owes his election. In international affairs the tragic impasse in Vietnam has vitiated American prestige, while Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia has discredited the claims of the Kremlin. Both super-powers are distrusted by the impoverished Third World which has moved beyond the Cold War phobias of the Fifties and has scorned the socio-economic ideologies of West and East alike. Confusion and bewilderment have multiplied as stability seems unattainable and long standing assumptions have crumbled.

The cherished visions of civil rights enthusiasts have been blurred, if not totally demolished. The soft plea for racial integration has been drowned out by the loud clamor for “Black Power.” Puritanical restraints and Victorian prudery in sex relations have been brushed aside by Hugh Hefner’s playboy philosophy with its reaffirmation of hedonism. Under the aegis of the pill, inhibitions have been dispelled and premarital sex has gained a broader sanction. Rules and principles governing human behavior have been challenged by situation ethics.

Undeniably, on every hand, the old is giving way to the new. As the Christian analyst surveys the contemporary scene he may be moved to inquire: how many evil spirits have been expelled and replaced with benign spirits: Or have the good and the bad in our inherited way of life — in our morals and in our mores — been indiscriminately and unwisely banished? Or have the exorcised demons been replaced by even more dia-
bolical distortions so that the ensuing state of humanity may be worse than the unsatisfactory condition which we sought to rectify and improve? In a frenzied effort to escape the ills of the past we may be tempted to sabotage our best prospects for future achievement.

One stinging indictment after another has been leveled against institutionalized forms of religion. The blind spots and glaring failures of historical Christianity have been relentlessly exposed. Reluctant to denounce the nefarious traffic in slavery; silent throughout a post-emancipation century of abuse and injustice, the established church did little or nothing (at least until recently) to procure human rights for Black citizens. Infidels and non-Christian humanists have scorned the pretensions of people who claim to be the followers of the Prince of Peace but who have rallied behind every flag to indulge in carnage on the battlefield.2

In the last ten years an incessant spate of books and articles has uncovered the blemishes on all external manifestations of Christianity. Martin Marty demonstrated the superficiality and idolatrous perversions in The New Shape of American Religion. Peter Berger expressed disdain for The Noise of Solemn Assemblies. Gibson Winter predicted the demise of Protestantism if no release could be found from The Suburban Captivity of the Churches. Pierre Berton complained about the lack of prophetic discernment in The Comfortable Pew. At the beginning of 1969 a Roman Catholic professor of Protestant theology, W. H. van de Pol, wrote about The End of Conventional Christianity.

Who can honestly deny the validity of a great deal of this criticism? Much of the excess baggage of outmoded tradition has been thrown overboard. Thanks to perceptive theologians we can all travel more lightly now without so many superfluous burdens. Some evil spirits of yesteryear may have been dispersed. Have new ones reininfested our dwellings?

**Worldliness Without End**

Our sanctuaries may have been cleansed of medieval superstition and much irrelevant piety. Our seminaries have been refurnished with world-affirming secular concerns. The evangelical passion to “save souls” from eternal perdition has been replaced by an avid social activism. “Honest to God” Robinson and “A Time for Christian Candor” Pike have been followed by “Secular City” Cox and “Christian Atheists” Altizer and Hamilton. The neo-orthodoxy of Barth and Brunner has been supplanted by the radical demythologizing of Bultmann and the new hermeneutics of the post-Bultmannians. The Niebuhr brothers and Tillich have been superseded by a resurgence of neo-liberalism. Paul Van Buren, for instance, rejects all forms of transcendence whether they be the pre-scientific metaphysics of the Fundamentalists or the qualified literal theism that speaks of the “Ground of Being” (Tillich) or any non-objective Reality which can be construed as trans-empirical (Bultmann).3

Ferment in the Roman Catholic Church has caused the Supreme Pontiff to warn about the erosion of basic doctrine. Pope Paul VI has complained that in updating the church some enthusiasts appear to be undermining its foundations. He has complained that the present era is imperiled by “criticism, doubt and doctrinal whim.”4 Orthodox theologian Father John Megendorf has accused radicals of remolding Christianity into a “form of social humanism, which actually does not need the Gospel, the historical Jesus, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the Church anymore.”5

More recently, moderate and highly respected voices have expressed dismay over what appears to be a deterioration in Christian convictions. Elton Trueblood argues that “confusion arises when people move from an antipathy for particular creeds to rejection of all creedal expression...” The former head of the philosophy department at Earlham College in Indiana insists that “there is really no hope for the Christian faith apart from tough-mindedness in matters of belief.” Quite properly, Trueblood concedes, there has been a reaction against “arid intellectualism” (including barren theological abstractions?). The danger confronting us at present, however, is that we will succumb to anti-intellectualism and our resultant stupidity will be more grievous than our original rationalism.6

Martin Marty is displeased with what he terms the stasis or frozen equilibrium in mainstream Protestantism. Walter D. Wagoner, director of the Boston Theological Institute, concurs and characterizes the ailments as “theological exhaustion,” “ecumenical doldrums,” “parish bafflement,” and “devotional emptiness.” Beyond complaining about mental depletion “verging on panic” because of the accelerated pace of change, he is upset over the “fatigue syndrome” which “is further aggravated by the unrelenting faddism in Protestant theology.” Somewhere between New Delhi and Uppsala, Wagoner admits the stimulation “derived from an ecumenical teleology” has diminished. With the loss of excitement over crossing denominational boundaries has come a slackening of interest in the whole enterprise. The vexing realization has overtaken us that sheer ecumenism is not in itself an assured panacea for the ills besetting the church. Reeling under an almost masochistic barrage of socio-theological criticism, catatonic bewilderment has set in. Disillusionment with the institutional church has become so widespread that clergy and laity alike tend to become confused and weary. Devotional discipline has never been acquired as “valid piety” and has been allowed to wither.7

Admonitions are beginning to emanate from a surprising number of sources which suggest that our much-heralded revival of theology has taken some devious turns. Demons are only temporarily expelled; they do not expire. Iconclast Peter Berger indicates that we
may have prematurely and ill advisedly dismissed the whole category of the supernatural as incompatible with scientific enlightenment.8

Horace D. Hummel, Old Testament professor at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, contends that a confessional point of departure remains indispensable for basic hermeneutics. In opposition to the apparent abandonment of a confessional orientation by many modern scholars he wants to maintain three axioms: “1) The Bible’s inspiration and authority; 2) its fundamental unity; and 3) its basically soteriological intent.” No longer does Hummel feel constrained to enter the battlefield as he once did against stubborn obscurantists and anti-intellectual Fundamentalists. What worries him is the naive seminarians who are thoroughly conditioned to accept at face value whatever the “latest research” champions. The most sprightly demons infesting the ecclesiastical realm these days may be insidiously embedded in the time-honored, but unorthodox concepts of humanism, universalism and social salvation. The apostles of secularization, he fears, are more dependent on Comte’s evolutionary positivism than authentic Biblical interpretation.9

Hippier Than Thou Ministries

Jesuit priest, John A. Rohr, and Lutheran pastor, David Luecke, have prepared a joint article to register their caveats over current proclivities among would-be avant-garde churchmen. While they find it praiseworthy that the City of God seeks involvement in the City of Man, they doubt the competence of the church to provide specific answers to social problems. In their analysis Rohr and Luecke suspect that many clergymen are eager to jump on the secular band wagon of social concern because they see no other viable function to perform. Reference to the supernatural has become increasingly embarrassing. The sum total of the church’s task, then, becomes the endorsement of racial justice, educational reform, and the conquest of poverty. The clamor for immediate and obvious relevance brushes aside the proclamation of man’s broken relationship with God. Personal sin and the reality of divine judgment are not popular themes, so they are ignored or denied. Idealistic youth and the clergymen who yearn to be identified with their lofty aspirations are in danger of being swept along in a theologically irresponsible humanist movement which is overly optimistic about the prospects for a perfectible society. We seem to be foredoomed to be victimized anew by the same delusions which propelled overzealous proponents of the social gospel early in this century.10

From another vantage point, Beverly Asbury, chaplain at Vanderbilt University, questions the effectiveness of much of what passes for “campus ministry” amid the present unrest and rebellion. Most of the clergy serving at major colleges and universities are proud of their front line involvement “where the action is”, and their identification with the victims of stress and crisis: Blacks from urban ghettos, runaway hippies (middle class dropouts), and conscientious young men who will not submit to the draft. Allies of righteous causes, they seek to prove their worth and competence in “humanizing” society. Performing their secular tasks with sophisticated reference to “religionless Christianity” it becomes difficult to distinguish their role from that of any other well intentioned functionary. What is unique, if anything, about their contribution or motivation? Why should they be salaried by church funds rather than by some civic or philanthropic organization? Asbury predicts:

“If we settle for what is now called a ‘secular ministry’ sans preaching and witnessing we shall see the church, and its Campus Ministry, doomed. Either we have something to say or we don’t. If we don’t we are doomed to become a cult of personal liberation and fulfillment, with no social purpose, no sense of the Kingdom of God.”1

From many sources we hear the sounds of alarm. Who can doubt that the content of traditional Christianity has been vastly eroded? Notwithstanding the persistence of diehard conservatives the secularization of consciousness has proceeded in the Western world from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment to be rapidly accelerated by the rise of modern science and Biblical criticism. Between the two world wars it appeared that Karl Barth’s repudiation of the major tenets of Protestant liberalism and his clarion call for a revivification of the theology of the Reformation might predominate. However, the champions of neo-orthodoxy seem to be dwindling in numbers and influence. A broad survey of the last two centuries as a whole would have to concede a major trend of accommodation to this-worldliness in Protestant thought. Today anyone who clings to beliefs associated with the supernatural will find himself buffeted by psychological and social pressures which are almost overwhelming. Metaphysical presuppositions are scorned. The fundamental category of transcendence—the affirmation of another dimension of reality which is not subject to empirical verification—is discarded as untenable.

The story of the Tower of Babel must be retold to fit Prometheus man, so that he can emerge defiant and victorious. Much contemporary theology, which might more appropriately be called anthropology or sociology, assumes that man really can become the master of his own destiny. Marxism has promised to overcome alienation and to evolve a “new humanity” with the elimination of economic exploitation and an equitable distribution of material benefits. Theologians have fallen in line by extolling the secular city and magnifying “man come of age.”1 2

A Chastened Secularism

No matter how fashionable this “secular theology” has become it is utterly vulnerable when confronted

November, 1969
with some of the sheer realities of the human predicament. No sooner have we exorcised the demon which paralyzes the Christian search for justice by misapplying a doctrine of human fallibility, than we jump to the other extreme and open the door to usher in the demon of human arrogance and presumptiveness. Where is the evidence to demonstrate that we have a new breed of *homo sapiens* who is so self-reliant that he can chart his own course without appeal to any cosmic deity? Kyle Haselden, former editor of *The Christian Century*, once commented that Harvey Cox’s autonomous secular man was “the most unforgettable character he had not yet had the pleasure of meeting.”

Biologically speaking, there is no exemption from the ancient decree that “it is appointed for man to die once.” Increased longevity, heart transplants, and all of the marvels of medical science have not altered man’s inescapable mortality. Psychologically considered, people seem to be disturbed as much as ever by all sorts of neuroses and maladjustments. Psychiatrists have no lack of patients. Even astrology and absurd superstitions abound. From a moral perspective who can attest that we have advanced? With approval of the six billion dollar ABM system it appears that we may have another round of escalation in the arms race. The atrocities of grinding poverty persists amid unprecedented affluence, and college campuses are in turmoil. Where does one find this alleged maturity in human character and conduct? Ruthless power struggles are as rampant as they have always been. Folly and perversity are no less present now than they were in previous generations.

After we have granted that much of our historic theology has been one-sided in its gloomy portrayal of man’s depravity, we must also indict much recent theology for swinging the pendulum too far in the opposite direction as though man has suddenly become omniscient and self-sufficient. Neither the testimony of Scripture nor all of the data supplied by the historical record will verify the postulation of man’s sufficiency unto himself. The radical malady at the core of man’s being called “sin” is all-pervading. To agree with the psalmist that man is saturated in iniquity is not to despair, but to recognize that he needs the divine miracle of renewal and grace which can create a “clean heart” and instill “truth in the inward being.” As always the misery of man as a wretched sinner must be viewed in paradoxical combination with his potential grandeur as a redeemed “son of God.”

Emil Fackenheim, a Canadian Jew, assists us in combating the demons of both mythological religion and modern secularism by distinguishing carefully between pseudo and authentic forms of secularity. We are not obliged to choose between a mystical flight from the world and an uncritical endorsement of the world. Indeed, the Biblical God has already demythologized nature in His command to subdue the earth. Scientific advancement is in accord with the intention of the Creator. Under God we are called upon to be responsible for the preservation and improvement of the world. However, human reason cannot be over God. Modern secularists end up misunderstanding and miscarrying their own earth bound powers. “On every side,” writes Fackenheim, “we see the ancient demons of the earth resurrected. . . the Biblical believer. . . must detect the ancient idols underneath their modern guises. And he must fight them with all his might.”

### Between Adolescence and Senility is Maturity

One way of characterizing the dilemma that confronts us might be to refer to what the Polish Marxist, Leszek Kolakowski, calls “the conflict between the philosophy of the jester and that of the priest. . . the clash between the unbearable traits of adolescence and the equally unbearable traits of senility.” The priest is the guardian of tradition who appreciates stability and continuity. He performs his ritualistic functions to reinforce inherited beliefs. The jester “exposes as doubtful what seems most unshakeable.” His profession is to criticize prevalent institutions and “to consider all the possible reasons for contradictory ideas.” There is an incurable antagonism between “a philosophy that perpetuates the absolute and a philosophy that questions accepted absolutes.” As soon as one demonic force has been expelled, another arises to replace it. We must be on our guard. When long-accepted norms and beliefs have become corroded, “new myths proliferate with the greatest ease. . . Atheists have their saints, and blasphemers build their temples.”

If maximum human welfare is to be assured, then it is crucial to maintain a balance between radicalism and conservatism. The implied tension is unavoidable between a stabilized system and the urge to modify or reconstruct it. One cannot dispense with the search for absolutes and the prospect of finality. Yet one must repeatedly challenge the monistic temptation to understand the multiplicity of facts by means of a single ordering principle. Always and again one must assail the conclusion that any sociological scheme or theological formulation is equivalent to perfection. Conservatism can remind us that the latest social movements and the most recent theologies are not necessarily the most perspicacious or the most durable. Radicals can remind us that the most hallowed traditions are not beyond disputation; that reevaluation and revision of institutions and ideas can never cease.

How can we move beyond the uncertainty of conflicting interpretations that seem to arise if we take seriously the contentions of both intelligent conservatives and responsible radicals? What are the alternatives to chaos and folly?
Despite the abuse of Dietrich Bonhoeffer at the hands of the "God is Dead" theologians, I am convinced that he has much to offer us in our current perplexity. Bonhoeffer was determined to re-interpret the full Gospel for modern man in a meaningful and appropriate way without surrendering to scepticism. He disavowed both metaphysical speculation and individualistic religiosity. "Carnal reason," as Luther argued four centuries earlier, cannot induce us to risk the venture of faith. Only God's self-revelation in the Incarnation can make us aware of the reality of His love. At the same time we are not directed to pursue a life of other-worldly piety detached from concern for the here and the now. During his imprisonment Bonhoeffer cautioned:

"This world must not be prematurely written off. In this the Old and New Testaments are at one. Myths of salvation arise from human experiences of the boundary situation: Christ takes hold of a man in the center of his life." 7

The call to discipleship is not an appeal to abandon the world. Jesus was the man who lived for others as He shared their griefs and woes. An other-worldly concentration upon personal holiness is a retreat from Christian responsibility. On the other hand, service to humanity in emulation of Christ forbids conformity with this world. Bonhoeffer's desire for a "worldly" Christianity was never a denial of the reality of transcendence. A transcendent God, manifested in Christ within the world, always remained central in Bonhoeffer's theolo- 
gizing. 8

Sociologist Peter Berger speaks of "the rediscovery of the supernatural as a possibility for theological thought in our times." 9 Wolfhart Pannenberg has affirmed the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus as an exceptional event which, while it can only be expressed in symbolic language, nonetheless really took place at a definite point in time and was attested to by specific persons. 10

The promise of celestial joy as a compensation for earthly misery has long been misconstrued as an "opiate of the people." Resurrection hope has been proclaimed as an evasion of present duty. But this is heresy. The theologians of hope like Johannes Metz (Roman Catholic) and Jurgen Moltmann (Lutheran) maintain that the Resurrection of Christ is the motivation for involvement in mundane affairs rather than withdrawal. God's promises dramatized in the Exodus of Israel and the New Creation in Christ are loaded with vast possibilities for further fulfillment within the historical process. "The Christian mission," says Moltmann, "has no cause to enter into an alliance with romanticist nihilism against the revolutionary progressiveness of the modern age" and to offer its own teachings as "a haven of traditionalism" for those who are weary of the struggles in life. 11

The perennial danger is that in our zeal to exorcise one demon we prepare the way for the arrival of another so that we end up in a worse mess than we were at the outset. In our eagerness to overcome a spurious dichotomy between the sacred and the secular we may forget the tension which authentic Christians live in as their witness to the world of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we do forget, the lament of Jeremiah becomes applicable to us: "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, that can hold no water." 12

FOOTNOTES

6. Cf. Elton Trueblood, A Place to Stand (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). "The tendency is to fall into an extreme even worse than the one that is being rejected."
9. Horace Hummel, "The Bible and the Confessions," Dialog, Winter, 1969: "If the Scriptures are not essentially the Gospel of what God has done for man's salvation from sin and eternal death, then why should it not (short of total repudiation) become an ethical guidebook with Jesus as the greatest guru, either a talkieman of the 'America first' rightist line, or a leftist hand- book of the 'new politics', a 'prophetic' manual for a socialist reconstruction of society, perhaps even something to use alongside Mao's thoughts to usher in the 'revolution'?"
10. David Luccke and John A. Rohr, "Not Social Solutions, but the Preaching of Christ is the Church's Proper Task," Lutheran Forum, January 1969. Reprinted from America, 1968. While refusing some of the exaggerated expecta- tions of social activists, the authors seem to run the risk of relapsing into social irresponsibility in drawing such a sharp distinction between the "spiritual" and "social" spheres. Furthermore, our inability to offer fully satisfying solutions to social disruption does not demonstrate that no at- tempts to improve society should be made by representatives of the church. "Preaching Christ" cannot be limited to verbal communication. Without direct participation in meeting the needs of people (including social action) the full implications of the Gospel are not experienced or understood.
12. Many radical theologians claim to find their starting point in this phrase of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. However, there is no indication in Bonhoeffer's writings that he intended to make man omnipotent and God dispensable. His concern was to refute the deus ex machina type of religion that falls back on God to "fill the gaps" in human knowledge or to rescue man in "boundary situations."
16. Leszek Kolakowski, Toward a Marxist Humanism, Essays on the Left To- day (New York: Grove, 1968), 53-56.
20. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Grundzuge der Christologie, 92. Quoted in James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (editors) New Frontiers in Theology, Vol. III, Theology as History, 39: "In this sense than the resurrection of Jesus is to be designated as a historical event; if the origin of primitive Christianity that... is traced back also by Paul to appearances of the resurrected Jesus is... intelligible only if one regards it in the light of the eschatological hope of a resurrection from the dead, then that which is so design- nated is a historical event...".
22. Jeremiah 2:13 (RSV)
Last night I had a stranger dream than I ever had before. It was a party, I think. Or a late hour bull session. Or maybe it was a night at the movies or a class discussion or a church voter's assembly or a series of TV programs or a service of worship. Perhaps it was all of this at once. It was loud and raucous and confusing. Or maybe it was a political caucus, a church council and the Fillmore auditorium all rolled into one. There were piercing dissonant sounds, jabbing lights, people caressing my body, stepping on my toes, draining my soul.

We sat rigid and silent before the boob tube transfixed in the ignorance that we were bored. The violence and sadism of a hundred John Wayne Late Shows and a thousand news reports from Vietnam and Newark and Washington and Miami and Chicago and Oakland, San Francisco, and Berkeley stupefied us in the assurance that this was the American way of life, as American as cherry pie and cherry bombs and atom bombs. We heard a black man say, "I have a dream" and mumbled back, "rabble-rouser! ingrate! discontent!" His assassination was mentioned in passing and we said, "Isn't that a shame?"

Another tray of martinis floated through the crowd interrupting our deploring of the hippies and the disgusting amount of pot being pushed in Marin and Alameda Counties. Lights flashed on the wall and Bonnie and Clyde came tumbling, twisting, rolling at us full of lead and blood and dust and one of the girls exclaimed, "isn't that slow motion beautiful?" "We had to destroy the city in order to save it," blared the six o'clock news while three seminarians sang "Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

A Greek danced a dance of life to the music of the Tijuana Brass. But he was soon stopped by the owners who objected that dancing wasn't permitted on the premises and besides it was immoral. A clown cavorted around the room and strummed his banjo while his managers chased after, threatening to fire him if he didn't conform to the middle class game. "Why don't you take the example of that professor over there?" they cautioned. "You don't see him stepping on other peoples' toes and making a spectacle of himself, do you?"

The cork popped, the champagne flowed, and we opened the first seals of the book of life. Out rode four horses of the Apocalypse upon which were seated four students dressed in monkey skins. The first had his hands over his eyes, the second covered his ears; the third covered his mouth; the fourth had his hands tied behind his back. "Hurrah!" we shouted. "Who said this was the rebellious and indiscrete generation?"

One potato, two potato, three potato, four; litigation, segregation, emasculation, more. There is nothing like a dame; diamonds are a girl's best friend. Sock it to me, baby! Do your teeth have more cavities than mine? Take if off, take it all off; make the world safe for democracy, bringing Christ to the nations.

A newsboy selling papers blared out the evening headlines: "The Church rejects the Kerner Report as unchristian. High officials resent its disturbing and accusing tone." Page 20 item: "Black power representatives approaching president of Christian University with demand for black students found note on prexy's door: Out to prayer; will be back in 1972." Page 45, next to obituary column: "Church representatives voice concern for Negroes; plan to spend $20 million on buildings to educate whites who will study ghetto problems."

Three college kids wearing "wage peace, not war" buttons were crowded in a corner by a college administrator pleading with them not to ruin the institution's image. Toward the center of the room 24 elderly gentlemen in grey flannel suits and ushers emblems shook their heads in dismay as a bearded young man in their midst sang, "blessed are the spat upon, sat upon, rattled upon." "I'm so lonely," cried the blonde girl at the piano belting out, "What a friend we have in Jesus," "so lonely and afraid." "Okay, crowd, let's have it: a Day of National Thanksgiving. Come, let us prey. Holy things to the holy people: turkey, cranberry, and yams! Three cheers for Pat and Dick! Hip, hip, hooray!" "3 cheers for Che!" The antiphon responded. "3 cheers for IRS!" "3 cheers for IHS." "Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!"

And as the roar subsided into dangling conversations, and we wondered half inaudibly, "was the gold crisis really over, is the peril really yellow, is the church really dead?" a deformed little boy smelling of mace, napalm, and gunpowder carresses us all with his fingers, stretches on his tiptoes to kiss each one of us on the lips and smiles, "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven. Look! I am making all things new!" And a crowd of Simon and Garfunkels breaks out in a chorus of "Feelin' Groovy."

The dream was over. It was a dream, wasn't it? Life, I still love you!
The First Films of the Seventies

By DON A. AFFELDT

In the first films of the nineteen-seventies are alive, good, and running in your local cinema. Their titles are Medium Cool and Alice's Restaurant. Medium Cool is the story of a television news-cameraman breaking his shield of non-involvement with the episodes he is accustomed to photograph. Alice's Restaurant is about a proto-commune in Stockbridge, Mass., and the kids, surrogate parents, and local fuzz who helped make life in a deconsecrated Episcopal church a thing of beauty, and a joy for a while. Both films are in color, and neither has as much sex, violence, or foul language as you're apt to find in a random selection of films currently on the circuit. So why all the fuss about these flicks?

Their importance lies, I think, in the extent to which they infiltrate reality into illusion, life into art. Medium Cool does this by having the reporter cover the funeral of RFK, by having him comment about a television tribute to Martin Luther King, and by setting the climax of the film amid the riots which attended the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. The riot footage is not staged. Haskell Wexler, the photographer-director, was on the scene — as we are reminded by the cry on the soundtrack as we see a tear-gas canister drop in front of the camera: "Look out, Haskell, it's real!"

What's real? The tear gas, yes; but what about the car wreck that ends the film? The cops in phalanxes in front of the Hilton and the NBC News Trucks, yes; but what about the shots of the reporter in the International Amphitheater? The effect is disturbing, and it won't be surprising to see someone take the next logical step: A film about the Vietnam war, say, with combat troops in starring roles, a brilliant editor in the cutting room, and an audience left to wonder whether the blood on the screen was shed by a soldier or poured on by the make-up man; or a love-making scene in which actor and actress forgo the Method for the madness itself; or a Student Revolution film which shows a real Administration Building going up in real flames, with or without the advice and consent of the shooting script. If this happens — and the way seems paved for it both on the screen and on the stage — what happens to our old habits of thinking in terms of the distinctions between art and life, illusion and reality, vicarious and immediate experience? Surely one could now find actors and actresses who would have sex on the screen or stage, for the sake of verisimilitude; how long will it be before one finds an actor who would be willing to die, if the script called for it, in order to render an immortal performance?

Alice's Restaurant poses different problems, offers different hints of what's to come. It depicts a community which actually existed a couple of years ago; but in depicting this community, it dips into the immediate past to involve the principals. Newsweek's fine cover story (September 29) tells the tale: "Penn (the director) sprinkled his cast with amateurs. The real Alice Brock played an extra in a film which, in part, dramatizes the violent dissolution of her marriage to Ray. (The two are now divorced.) Penn contacted Alice when she was down and out in Boston to ask her if she would cooperate in the filming. 'I thought to myself,' remembers 28-year-old Alice, 'This is psychodrama that a millionaire couldn't afford.' And so it turned out to be, not just for Alice but for nearly everyone connected with the picture. Penn hired professional actors James Broderick and Pat Quinn, who bore a striking resemblance to Alice, to stabilize a cast that had commissioner Obanhein and the kids in the church playing their own roles. . . . 'When the shooting began,' remembers Alice, 'Arthur (Penn) would call for Alice and I'd come on the scene instead of Pat Quinn. After a while, they started calling me the Other Alice. Can you imagine how tough that is for an actress, to perform with the character she's playing watching everything she does and criticizing it? And, at the same time, all my friends were saying to me, "You should have played yourself, Alice." . . . In the shooting, it became clear why this ideal family finally disintegrated. 'We found ourselves talking about things we should have talked about three years ago,' says Alice. 'They shot that scene where Alice is in the restaurant and Ray and the kids go off swimming. Now, during that time, I was working seventeen hours a day in the restaurant. . . . After we shot that scene, some of the kids said: "Gee, Alice, was it really that hard for you? Were you that unhappy?" And, man, during that time I was dying. . . ."' The real clincher: Commissioner Obanhein, who plays himself in the film, is asked whether he is pleased about the picture. He is, and he explains why: "I'll tell you in one word: satisfaction. I'm 44 years old and now I've finally done something." What has he done? he's played himself.

Art illuminating life — even for those whose life it was, the first time around. How viable in the seventies will be the distinction between art and life? Films now on our screens suggest that it, like the illusion — reality distinction, is in for a rough go.

(But are we the worse for that?)
The picture which the American public receives of the German political system has been a little out of focus in the post-World War II period. This is especially true of what we are told concerning democratic political processes in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). The American mass media's vision is blurred by memories of the human atrocities in the Nazi regime. The official American view is obscured by our role in the occupation of Germany and in the drafting of the present constitution, the Basic Law. This view sees West Germany as steadily marching toward American civics textbook democracy, a perspective helped along by a large German public relations effort in the United States. The combination of the mass media's perspective and the official view is misleading in both the phenomena which are selected for presentation in the United States and in their interpretation. The coverage of the events leading up to and including the parliamentary elections on September 28 are illustrative of this distortion.

Before the election campaign got into full swing in August, the focus was on extremist groups in West Germany. For three years, American reporters have been making much of the small National Democratic Party and its electoral fortunes in various German state elections. There were frequent references to its "neo-Nazi" platform and membership, and to the general rise of nationalism and anti-Semitism in Germany. The equally extreme Poujadists in post-war France and the neo-Fascists in Italy did not get the same attention. It does not seem to be too unusual that 4.3% of the population of a highly complex industrialized society might be disoriented enough by life in that society to opt for an extreme political cause. Although there was never any evidence that the National Democrats were much larger than this, one can hope that now that a national vote is in we will not hear so much about Nazi resurgence.

Equally misleading is the opposite view being pushed upon us by the Germans themselves, American public officials, and some press editors. Theirs is the view that this last election against demonstrates the health of participatory democracy in Germany. Especially lauded is the further movement toward the elimination of third political parties in that country and the closer realization of equal two-party competition. The third party, the Free Democrats dropped from 9.5% of the vote in 1965 to 5.7% in this election, their lowest level. The party which once seemed doomed to second place for eternity, the Social Democrats, managed to gain ground on the leading Christian Democrats. They rose from 39.3% of the vote in 1965 to 42.7%, their highest post-war level. The Christian Democrats got 46.1%. In fact, the closeness of the vote will probably result in a Government led by the Social Democrats, with the cooperation of the Free Democrats. This fact in itself is being lauded because it represents the first time in twenty years that a party other than the Christian Democrats has led Germany, and the first time in thirty-five years that there has been a peaceful change in the governmental leadership.

The analysis of democracy in West Germany should go deeper than their formal structure of government, or the number of parties contesting elections. The health of German democracy is not as strong as reports of the election and its results would lead one to believe. Neither are political forces as volatile and regressive as reports of neo-Nazism, student and labor unrest, anti-Semitism, and nationalism would indicate. Paradoxically, it is the stability and continuity of recent events in West Germany that casts the most doubt on the viability of democracy there.

The German people had the opportunity to make a real choice of a different direction in German policy by selecting the Social Democrats, instead of the Christian Democrats. Few made this switch. Most switching seemed to be away from the Free Democrats to the Social Democrats, perhaps reflecting the former party's own internal change of course to the left. German political leaders did little to help dramatize the choices that the people had. Post-war German politics has been characterized by little discussion of issues among the parties, a phenomenon that has not greatly bothered a de-politicized German electorate. The fact that the two major parties have ruled together in a coalition for the last few years has done even more to submerge real disagreements in Cabinet meetings.

The prospect of Social Democratic rule in another smaller coalition does not brighten the picture. They will be constrained from adopting a radical new course by their partners. There is, of course, little evidence that the Germans want a new course, or that democratic practice in Germany is well enough developed to allow the expression of such a choice. In this, an elite-directed polity, the Germans are typical rather than atypical of Western, industrialized "democracies." There is little need for more anxiety or more enthusiasm than we show for our own political practices.
By Dallas M. High, editor. (Oxford University Press, 1969)

Benjamin Lee Whorf said the way we see, live, feel and think is determined by the nature of our language. Wittgenstein, the center of the language analysis field agrees. Granted this close relation, when language is sick, man and his culture is sick. To heal man is to heal his language. But given the all pervasiveness of the sickness, who is to be the therapist or physician? Are we, as Erich Heller has suggested, destined to move from one fly bottle only to find ourselves in another?

This, in general, is the problem posed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, and one which the language analysts dare to assume as the focus of their task. If Wittgenstein is correct then the task is enormous and profound and cannot be abused by the primitive carvings of diletantes or the witchcraft of medicine men. Nor dare we allow the demagogues and the greedy to cruelly abuse language and whatever meaning it may still retain to work their own neurotic ends. What is required are men who live life fully and richly and who demonstrate a passion for a unity of life, meaning, and reality.

Happily for us Dallas M. High in his book *New Essays on Religious Language* has gathered together a group of essayists who demonstrate this passion— theologians, philosophers and a professor of German. Each in his own way possesses an ultimate commitment and expresses a deep religious passion. They do not speak with one voice. Yet, whether Thomist, existentialist, process thinker, phenomenologist, or logician, all demonstrate the common concern for the recovery of meaning and the pervasiveness of the problem for society. If language analysis is the new mode of doing philosophy then every theologian has a tie with philosophy, if not in principle then certainly in terms of practice and need.

**Language as Perspective**

What sort of ideas have come filtering through the work of the linguistic analysts? The meaning of a language is dependent upon its function and how it is being used. The task of the analyst is to look at how language is used to discover its meaning.

There is no one universal language or set of categories that determines the final meanings and shape of man's thought. The continuing temptation to simplicity is to accept the tyranny of one language as the sole determinant of meaning and sense. The logical positivists succumbed to the temptation in yielding to the language of science. Language analysts recently have become much humbler despite the pervasive influence of science and its language in shaping the thought of contemporary society.

Meaning cannot be carried from one language into another without creating confusion. Each language may be called the language of a perspective. Each language with its perspective is a way of seeing our world and limiting our vision to certain aspects of it.

The chief task of each of the contributors is to get at the meanings in actual usage in theology and religious language. But two questions may be raised to suggest the authors in High's volume may be attempting more than this. First, do these men go beyond the descriptive and analytic task to the one of diagnosing the illness of language (Wittgenstein's allegation)? and second, do they offer constructive solutions? To both questions I would give a qualified "yes".

There is a bashful reluctance on the part of the authors to boldly state the nature of the illness. This is to be expected, for the diagnosis of a pervasive illness requires a pervasive set of criteria as to the character of health. Their bashfulness stems from the native distrust among the analysts of any over-arching scheme. The deep passion and commitment of Wittgenstein made him a lot less bashful. It is here that we can begin to see the subtle influence of Wittgenstein pervading the book.

**A Captivating Picture**

The authors seem to assume that society has become bound by "all those categorical certainties that, as if they were an inherited anatomy, have been allowed to determine the body of traditional thought." It is as though the thought world of man, his understanding of life, has become fixated and has reached a stasis hindering growth. We might say that man having reached a new level of consciousness is determined and frustrated by meanings moulded by categories that will not work anymore. There is a loss of meaning and an alienation of man from "reality", a break between "the logic of our thought and language and the 'logic' of Reality." Our language has left us with a set of taken-for-granted assumptions hidden deep within our language which need to be resurrected and reexamined if not discarded. To quote Wittgenstein, "A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." Meaning has broken down, but to turn away from the rational, cognitive, and the meaningful to the supra- or infra-rational (cf. the drug syndrome) is only a further sign of the illness.

The tentative answers to the first question is mirrored by the tentativeness of the authors to give constructive directions in response to the second question. The contribution of these men is found not so much in the direct answers they give (none of them is so presumptious) as in the problems and issues that emerge out of their works.

What is the relation of language, particularly religious language, to reality? What is the correspondence between the two? (This is the "truth" problem put in terms of the function of language.) Is meaning conveyed to us from outside and, if so, in what way? Or is meaning created by man so he might make sense out of an irrational universe? What is the relation between the two? (This is the linguistic way of putting the subject/object problem.) Granting the diversity of languages is there a possibility of building logical bridges from one language to another, i.e., from science with its language of observables to theology with its language of paradox? (This is the problem of synthesis.)

**Flesh Becoming Word**

These are large issues, and our authors see them as accessible to understanding only in the day by day struggle with language and its functional meanings. Perhaps we may even have to wait for a contribution from those who "will think in quite a different way, breathe a different air of life from that of present day men," for the word that is becoming flesh.

Each of these men does assert that if we are to escape on the one hand the stasis of entrenched categories of thought and old meanings and on the other hand the tyranny of an objective empiricism, we will need a theology sensitive to the linguistic task, open to a new future, and able and willing to join in fruitful dialogue with culture.

I recommend this book to those who wish to join battle with the authors (they are worthy opponents) and to those looking toward a new future in philosophy and theology. Lutherans in this context, with their continuing concern for the unity of observables and unobservables (Sacramental understanding), have both a stake and a contribution.

NORMAND J. WIDIGER
I only recently saw the *Canterbury Tales* in London, a successful musical on both sides of the Atlantic. Before going to see it I thought I would have to be apologetic for reporting on it at such a late stage of its success. Although it is very well produced and some scenes are quite charming — I loved the costumes very much — I felt a bit bored by it. I don't think it is easy to translate Chaucer's tales into musical dramatization, and this attempt at it wasn't really successful. With growing age one is permitted to acquire a more resigned philosophy, and I could only think of how little one usually misses in missing certain theatrical events.

Bertolt Brecht's *Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* is the play in which Hitler's rise to power is illustrated by the rise of a Chicago gangster gaining power over vegetable dealers by assassinations and double-crossing. It received a very skilful presentation in the Saville, although its satire is weakened by too much obviousness. It was adapted by George Tabori, and the central role of the little man with the Chaplin moustache was played with great gusto and virtuosity by Leonard Rossiter. It is a frightful sign of our willful suppression of certain parts of history that one now follows the image of this figure with Charlie Chaplin and his tragicomic antics far more in mind than with Adolf Hitler in mind.

The Royal Shakespeare Company revived Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*, the story of a war hero from Flanders who from his wheelchair sees his fiancee won away from him by one of his luckier comrades-in-arms. Comedy is beautifully mingled with tragedy as is realism with symbolism. The play was not given all it needed, and O'Casey got away from this theatrical fray wounded in action as his hero did.

The same company certainly knows how to do justice to Pinter whose *Landscape* was presented together with the one-acter *Silence*. It was a rather silent evening with people sitting on high chairs as in a reading and with non-communicativeness celebrating its most eloquent existence. A woman dreams of a happy summer day at the sea, a man muses about beer. The censor prevented the production of these playlets a season ago. I don't quite know why. The fact that four-letter words occur about ten times in the two plays is no reason in our era of timidity and frustration to suppress the production of such minor Pinters. Meanwhile, censorship died in England and so did the plays of a playwright who certainly knows how to write good plays.

I was not impressed by Edward Bond's *Narrow Road to the Deep North*. An excellent dramatist failed with this one. It is a satire on Victorian society, on religious fanatics who see the angel of God only on their bloodthirsty and righteous side. That the scene takes place in Japan adds to this theme a great deal of color, Brechtian overtones, and the irony of warfare. The Royal Court Theatre has produced this play with great devotion.

The experimental Hampstead Theater Club presented Kenneth Cameron's *Papp*. Behind that title hides a doddering old Pope who, in some future dark age (How much darker can it get?), reacts forgotten ceremonies in a mumbo-jumbo manner to impress an indifferent flock. This play aims at being a highbrow comedy, but its anti-religious attitude would need a George Bernard Shaw to keep it interesting and atfloat. It isn't enough to show the Pope being surrounded by stacks full of books he cannot read. And puns as comic distortions of Christian terms do not suffice for an evening. As one of the British critics said, "His Wholeness speaks with Pappal Unability of the legend of the Garden of Heathen."

Henry James's delicate and lovingly mannered dialogue, written to be read, not heard, has always encountered difficulties on stage. The American author, Professor Robert Manson Myers, adapted James's *The Spoils of Poynton* twenty years ago. He had to wait until 1969 and for Basil Ashmore to direct this dramatized version. It was rather a version willfully changed by Ashmore into a more literal transcription of James's dialogue. Myers tried to prevent this production, but in vain. The premier took place at the Mayfair Theatre, the play was performed a few times, always preceded by the author's disclaimer that it wasn't really his play.

A similar thing happened about the same time to a more experienced playwright, Edward Albee, whose *Everything in the Garden* was even more willfully changed by a German director. Internationally known, Albee could prevent any distortion of what he himself perpetrated. Professor Myers had agreed to stay away from the rehearsals which was a mistake.

Henry James had never much luck in the theatre. But this lively controversy reminded me of the late Erwin Piscator who maintained that the director's theatre — with which we now seem to be blessed — permits the director to do with a script as he pleases. I overheard him saying so to Thornton Wilder whom Piscator had then asked to do an adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial*. To avoid such a trial, Wilder turned around and left. Being articulate as Thornton Wilder is, he did so only after he had put Piscator in his place which was the director's. *Vive l'auteur!*

The Cresset
Mr. Kroeger approaches church music Lutheran-style with the perspective of the professional pianist and experienced choral director. He enjoys the reputation of a free spirit and gad-fly. There is little that escapes his irreverent good humor.

By WILLIAM H. KROEGER

The following is an imaginary scene involving the chairman of the music committee of a church in the midwest who encounters the devil in the narthex of the chapel of Valparaiso University.

The narthex is empty except for the presence of an enormous, tall, fat man resembling a German butcher dressed in clericals (played by Sidney Greenstreet) and a small, shrunken, shivering milquetoast of a man. (The archetype of a member of a church music committee who knows nothing about music, much less that of church music.)

The two meet following a session of a church music seminar.

Music chairman: (approaching fat man) “Say, you look like the devil!”

Devil: “Mhmhmhmhmahahaha! It takes one to know one. I thought I’d meet you here.”

Chairman: “Well, I certainly didn’t expect to see you here! How is it that you’re attending this specialized nonsense?”

Devil: “No Nonsense, my good man. After all I’m trying my level best to destroy the church and I can’t afford to overlook any angles. Music, you recall, is one of the ancient strongholds that has been most frustrating over the centuries. Yes, I attend many church conclaves, revolting though they be.

Chairman: “I suppose the organized church is still a bitter pill.”

Devil: “Ohhohohohoo no! The organized church has been one of my best allies. After all I work on a principle of alienation, confusion, and lack of communication. I had that for about 1400 years until that nut, Martin Luther came along and restored the Scriptures to those mobs that followed him. But I still had pretty good luck for the next 400 years until that jerk, John XXIII, upset the apple cart for all those hordes of Catholics, and now they’re able to get a much clearer concept of their religion than they ever had before. I tell you life isn’t getting any easier! Of course, there is a by-product or two out of all this, and that is that there is opposition to much of this new freedom within the church and I do think I can hook a few victims. I hope I can get back to having it all locked up again if I can get the right people running things once more.”

Chairman: “I suppose that music in the church has paralleled those two developments you cited.”

Devil: “Ah yes. Each time this happened music also was given much more freedom, unfortunately. It seems that communication with those putrid parishioners strengthened a religious stronghold on the individual.”

Chairman: “I just hate music and I wish I could do something to help.”

Devil: “Ahmhmhmhmhmahahaha. You can. You look most innocent and ineffectual. You are invaluable as a saboteur. I recently made a great deal of progress in a Roman Catholic parish in northern Indiana. They have now eliminated all choirs and have declared that they no longer have use for a trained organist. I’ve not gotten them down to the folk-mass only, with guitars only. Ohhohohoho how delicious!

Chairman: “Didn’t the clergy object?”

Devil: “Don’t worry about the clergy. Many of the clergy are quite unmusical; if not, they’re anti-music. Most of them don’t care what goes on. Just so there’s some noise during the service.”

Chairman: “Where to start? Where to start? What do you think of the items they were discussing in there this afternoon? What do you think of Gregorian Chant?”

Devil: “A perfect place to start. I personally hate Gregorian Chant but I think it’s very useful for what we are trying to promulgate. Encourage the use of chant in the contemporary church music program. It usually gets people upset and promotes a great deal of alienation. Lutherans and other Protestants think it’s their duty to hate chant because it’s so Roman Catholic in origin. This is always a good approach. Though I must admit in the hands of the musically insensitive it can be a trial to the ear. This is usually the situation that you have with the inevitable volunteer choir and director in a majority of circumstances.”

Chairman: “What about the Baroque idiom?”

Devil: “You forgot the Renaissance crowd, you idiot. But while we’re at it avoid all the great ones like the plague: Palestrina, Gabrieli, J. S. Bach (I hate that man), Mozart, Haydn, Brahms. They never miss. Stay away from them!”

Chairman: “How about the contemporary idiom?”

Devil: “Oh, recommend that by all means. That usually leads to utter confusion and tremendous alienation. But on the other hand there is such a diversity of styles that some of it seems to be very appealing. You have to be careful with this stuff. You never know how it’s going to hit.”

Chairman: “Well, that gives me a lead or two with which to start. I’m certainly going to go back and do my best to sabotage the music of our church.”

Devil: “Yes, and by all means keep your cool. Do it with an innocent smile and try to look very pious. Tell them how sacred it all is. It’s too bad you can’t turn your collar around as I do. Turn your collar around and you can get by with MURHURHURDERAHHA HAHAHAHW!”

November, 1969
BY REINHOLD PIEPER MARXHAUSEN

Art is the celebration of the ordinary. John Dewey

Our work, our actions, our sensations seem to us regular and acceptable. But there always exists the beautiful possibility that one may experience an excitement in the discovery of a momentary relationship between two common experiences or objects which together are extraordinary, or even sensational. The artist is needed to keep alive and satisfy man’s curiosity for such newness in the commonplace. Because the artist is a pioneer in new manifestations of reality, the church may assure its state of aliveness by utilizing the creative arts in the church.

Churches which have artists as members should use them as ministers of art to program visuals just as we have programmed sound; to explore what things can be said visually by a group of people who use the ordinary objects of their surroundings in an extraordinary combination. Stained glass windows from France will not necessarily transform your church into a meaningful worship center.

The narthex of Saint John’s Lutheran Church, Seward, Nebraska, has a niche which changes in content according to the needs of time and circumstance. It holds unsuspected surprises. Panels for this niche have been designed so that they can be interchanged and each new position can determine new meanings. It takes on new meanings in much the same way as a flag has different meanings depending upon its position upon the pole. The combination called Sin and the combination called Grace illustrate how three of the same panels in the niche, when inverted, produce opposite effects.

The white formica circle symbolizes God. The center panel represents the base of a tree. Because man sinned, he is condemned. The roots of the tree and the dark shape press down on all the round shapes (people) and also casts a doomed feeling on the magazine collage of real people in the world. When these three panels are reversed, an opposite effect is achieved. God through the redemptive work of Christ (center panel is now a wooden cross with red mosaic) now redeems man and holds him up. He is free, his sins are forgiven. The grace of God is for all mankind. The doomed shape now is an altar or a pedestal. The gesture is hopeful. The Father and Son panels along with the Spirit panel of course are used together during the Advent season. Ordinary faces and events in magazines in our living rooms are only happenings in the world. When these same faces appear as collage in our church, they become actual and real. They become people and events which need our prayer, concern, and love. And so this niche in the narthex is utilized in many ways. Sometimes the effect is more aesthetic or visual, sometimes it is more didactic. A healthy combination of both is good since it is often difficult to have both in each case.

The Thanksgiving Combination: To give thanks for living in a land of plenty is still to covet for more. Thanksgiving has nothing to do with the present. It is past. It has nothing to do with a full gut, but that a total person was sustained by God. The city dump is a perpetual monument to the blessings of God and ought to be the site of Thanksgiving services. The remains: hulls, shells, lids and caps, are reminders. Thousands of round, empty, rusty, broken, used, bent, twisted, flat, worn, smashed containers of blessings come back to haunt the narthex of Saint John’s at Thanksgiving time. These reminders die slowly. The lower panel with the name plates of all its members, either can reach up, or down depending upon position.

Moon Music Maker: While beginning a piece of sculpture, a curious notion overtook me. I wonder. Why not listen to the object. When no one was looking, I placed the object to my ears and strummed the wires. WOW! The unheard of, unearthly, indescribably beautiful and haunting sounds from the hollow chambers of a door knob. Sounds so intimate as not to be heard by anyone but the performer. Sounds that make a nun dance, old people laugh, and everyone smile. “Celestial Music,” “Moon Music Maker!” The planned sculpture was never a reality because curiosity and flexibility found a new completeness which was far more exciting. Chance comes only to prepared minds.

Appealing: Who would ever think that the strong, tough, sturdy steel disks which turn over the soil for the farmer, could be translated into a bouncy, giddy, happy, turning mobile? This dancing, gyrating, little-noticed action of daily life initiated by a paring knife can become a subject to perceive and enjoy.

Gun Power: The world wept, time after time, and thousand’s of people wailed and marched and wondered, “Why?” During the dirge of a funeral of an assassinated man, I fashioned a lead cylinder. Small opening at one end, and awful shattered eruption at the other.

Monthly Statement: The machinery age is cold. It is filled with spiritless buttons, dials, and chrome. The computer panels with countless wires have a beginning and an end. The information flows. The answers are received, problems are solved. It may look organic when wires are used as a core of an idea.

Look Around, Look Around… the Beatles.

The Cresset
Reinhold Marxhausen is an alumnus of Valparaiso University and a professor of art at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska. He is active in creating art for Christian churches. Photographs of the artist and his work by Larry Veland.

R. P. Marxhausen, MONTHLY STATEMENT, 1969, plaster, 24 x 24".


R. P. Marxhausen, SIN or ADVENT, 1968, three panels, formica, wood, collage, 8' x 4'.

R. P. Marxhausen, GRACE or FULFILLMENT, 1968, three panels, formica, wood, collage, 8' x 4'.

R. P. Marxhausen, APPEALING, 1969, steel, 10' high.
"Would you," asked the barber in the muted, conspiratorial tones of a junior executive about to suggest an evening of relaxing but illicit pleasure to a Big Buyer from Out of Town, "care for a little something to cover up the grey?"

He was referring to the light powdering of grey hairs which, in the past four or five years, has transformed me in the eyes of my colleagues and superiors from a Promising Young Man into a Sound Chap, and the voice that I heard was the voice of Delilah, seeking to deprive me of my power.

"No, thank you," I replied, managing (I think) to conceal the horror that his indecent proposal had sent rolling over me like some great, black, engulfing wave. Cover up the grey? From the distant past I summoned up ancestral voices which responded to such impertinences with a half-growl, half-snort which the literature of my childhood rendered as "harumph." And only an uncertainty as to whether the "u" should carry the "uh" sound (as in "grumpy") or the short "oo" sound (as in bull) prevented me from harumphing out of the chair.

But I now see that I did the young man an injustice. What he had intended for my good I had taken as an insult. He had offered me what he felt it his bounden duty as a man and as a barber to offer a middle-aged customer: the appearance, at least, of another ten years of physical, mental, and sexual vigor. Something in the deep recesses of his mind recognized my grey hair for what they are: signs of aging, portents of death. And in his own way, he was offering me a gift of life.

No doubt many of my contemporaries would have accepted the gift gratefully, or at least declined it gracefully. Youthcult is, after all, one of the most widely attractive heresies that have moved into the vacuum created by the disappearance of the Christian Faith. But to one like myself schooled in the Schwan Catechism, Youthcult is worse than a heresy; it is a blasphemy. It blasphemes God by diminishing man, by denying to the autumn of our lives a beauty different in kind, but no less in degree, from the "endearing young charms" of life's springtime. We can not, as the Catechism's proof-text enjoins us, "rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man" if roving bands of barbers, cosmeticians, and plastic surgeons are to be allowed to run wild painting every autumn leaf a false and standardized green. And when young and old become — or, worse still, pretend to be — contemporaries we get the kind of generation gap which we are presently experiencing, to the great loss of young and old alike.

Worst of all, the priests of Youthcult create a communications gap which leaves us far more vulnerable than were our fathers to the shocks of change, decay, and death. It is hard to think of any means of communication in which the medium is more truly the message than a grey hair. It not only prefigures death, it is death — death in a little dose, so to speak. Youthcult, of course, prefers not to think or speak of death. It is the only obscene word still left in its vocabulary. And so it distorts life by robbing it of one of its essential dimensions, the dimension of death. To those who can not accept death in small doses it nevertheless comes surely, but as a monster springing from the underbrush rather than a friend with whom we have had occasion to become well-acquainted.

Does all of this sound morbid? I hope not. It would be ironical if the only topic forbidden in mixed company were death and the only thing we had to cover up was the grey in our hair. Of course, it may be that we have come to that. In which case, to borrow a phrase which has long been a favorite of The Pilgrim's, "it is later than we think."
Many, many years ago some of us learned that the business of the Universe is done with memos... Even the telephone has not been able to eliminate entirely this ancient and modern way of communication between human souls... I am sure that when Rameses wanted to tell his Chief of Rivers and Sewers to keep a sharper eye on the bull-rushes along the Nile he had his secretary chisel out a memo... This was the beginning of all libraries — since the seventh day of creation we want things in writing... The telephone puts all our communications with one another... Why is the blame on the bull-rushes along the Nile he had his secretaries point to the essential weakness of the telephone, the ear, and our sloppy enunciation?... So — also in the lowly environs of the Cresset we have, for several decades, relied on the "Memo" for transmittal of orders, petitions, regrets and (rarely) ideas... In the immediate past these couriers of the mind were normally signed O.P.K. (O. P. Kretzmann) and jhs (John Henry Strietelmeier)... The latter's insistence on using lower case letters was an ironic acknowledgement of his lowly estate... Even though he wrote almost all editorials, procured reasonably intelligent articles and ran the whole show, jhs' innate modesty was evident in his "little" letters... There may have also been some dim reflection of the leadership of e. e. cummings and his tribe — though jhs was never one to follow anybody... Now he has gone back to his beloved class room and I have retired to my rain-swept window... The long day of the flying memos has ended... and yet I could not bear its demise without a final word to and about jhs... He was a good companion in the Way, sometimes ahead but usually alongside — never quite out of breath and never complaining... He often reminded me of Grossouw's definition of a "friend": "It is he, toward whom 'in concreto' I have a relation of friendship, not the one whom I casually meet, but him with whom I can hold communication. My friend is the one whom I wish to encounter in the total concrete situation of my 'being-in-the-world'."

jhs was and is a laymen of a kind comparatively new in the post-modern church... Intelligent, articulate (at times even reluctantly eloquent), widely read, he represents God on several frontiers, notably in literature and public affairs... I have been told that the day of the Renaissance man is done; the knowledge explosion has made him impossible... This may be true but I have seen in jhs a forerunner of a possible resurrection... What is needed is a reunion of all things in a charismatic obedience to God in Whom all divergent disciplines and ideas are met in a new oneness of life and thought... jhs was — and is — always for the underdog... Born middle-class, middle-west, middle-Lutheran, he has always had a sympathetic eye, ear and heart for all those whom life has passed by, who lie, weary and heavy laden, at the feet of God and the door of the Church... Over the years, I must admit, I developed an interest in the upper-dog — but jhs always shied away from that... All administrators, boards, church officials, congressmen were quietly anathema... He didn't hate them; he just did not like them... The so-called "liberal" (in the best sense of that abused word) tone of the Cresset was often over my faint reluctant groan, but the light of the revealing years usually proved that he was right... O.P.K. to jhs (final): Was it Goethe, Pascal or Shaw who said: "Life is a tragedy for those who feel and a comedy for those who think"?... Occasionally a human soul appears in whom this dichotomy is very evident, and you are one of them... This can be a very unhappy though fruitful condition, provided that you turn your partially destructive polarization into a creative tension... To a great extent you have been able to do this... And you must accept the fact that this warfare will be with and within you until the light of another world dawns... Meanwhile, you may have to go to gentle Cambridge again and again in order to find once more the creative tension to which you were born a second time, in the benediction of solitude...

Even then you may not like the way the angels sing and the heavens roll... But you will remember that God has hung within you heartstrings which must, always and finally, register His own melodies... He has not done this in the same degree for the rest of us... What more do you want?
Reinhold Pieper Marxhausen, THANKSGIVING. 1968, a three panel combination for a narthex niche in St. John’s Lutheran Church, Seward, Nebraska. 8 x 4'. Mixed media. Bottom panel: name plates of congregation members; center: city dump collage; top: archetypal symbol for divinity.

Front cover: detail of THANKSGIVING center panel.

Name plates of St. John’s congregation members give thanks for these things we had to God.