The Gods at Bethel and Beyond...

"Imagine! Just watching while so much marijuana was being smoked, the atmosphere literally reeked with it, while LSD and other dangerous drugs were passed around like candy, while young men and women took off their clothes and paraded around nude, and while some couples openly and publicly engaged in sexual intercourse. Everyone in commenting on the Festival seems to have conveniently forgotten that all these actions are highly illegal."

Such was the umbrage taken by Rabbi Jacob Hecht at the release of the recent report of his Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education on the Bethel, New York, rock festival celebrated last summer by some four hundred thousand young people. The report warns of grave dangers of rock festivals to law and order in this country. It calls for governmental investigation, legislation, and programming of the lives of the young to prevent the recurrence of such a rock festival ever again. Since this country is nearing the season of more, but much smaller, rock festivals, especially during the spring recesses of its high schools and colleges, it is timely to examine them and the responses they have aroused.

Responses like Rabbi Hecht's are typical. They are legally right in marking illegalities, but they are only legally right and therefore inadequate. To the illegalities at Bethel quoted above, Rabbi Hecht adds public health hazards, traffic obstructions, and disturbance of the peace. Further, his judgments fall on the police and the press as well as upon the young people at Bethel. On the police for not locking up the young people for their illegal acts. And on the press for pointing up the peaceable behavior of the young people and the police while neglecting to call sufficient public attention to the "criminal irresponsibility" of both the police and the young people. Our own comment would not conveniently or inconveniently, in season or out of season, forget the illegal acts at Bethel. But we would also be concerned about whether we might have forgotten something else.

...The Rock Religious Quest

We have no doubt that Rabbi Hecht is zealous for the law. However, he so overblows his brief that it is finally underwhelming. We are grateful for his attention rapt upon every illegality of the young at rock festivals, for it alerted us to the inadequacy of the legal response to them. We believe a full response to rock festivals requires religious interpretation, especially from our religious leaders. Legal interpretation is not enough, especially from our religious leaders. In a secular age rock festivals are religiously significant events. And we would have supposed a rabbi would have discerned the religious meaning of Bethel and have led us to a fuller, more religiously wise response.

Rock festivals bring together many forms—dance, concert, political rally, living theatre, revival, family reunion, picnic, freak-out, love-in, and happening. Their content is religion. Within the forms of the rock festival, as indeed with the forms of churches and synagogues, a people is kept alive. A landless, pilgrimage, spiritual community is defined. The spiritual emptiness of each individual is filled by a conspiracy of the spiritual gifts of all.

A vision of a better future is lifted up and driven further into hearts and minds with words, lyrics, rhythms, gestures, sights and sounds. The weary are revived from their work in the world witnessing to an evil generation. The drifting are recalled to commitment. The vision of the future is anticipated by acts of love and sharing, peace and brotherhood, vulnerable openness and a deep experience of community. (It need only be briefly noted that for some within that vision the naked body,
smoking marijuana, and sexual union are neither curious nor shameful.)

The religion, or religious quest, of the rock festival is romantic, sometimes mystical, and even strangely pietistic. It tries pitting innocence against compromise and dissembling. Sensitivity to neighbors and nature against competition and technical domination. Serendipital, archaic life against packaged, programmed modern life. Dikes of pacifism against tides of violence. Dionysian salt against Apollonian ice. All the homeostatic heresies against the excesses of the present age.

**The Rocky Religious Question**

Now, rock festival religion is obviously fragile, insufficient to itself and uncrirical of its tendencies toward its own excesses. It is religion as subject to exploitation from without as it is to exhaustion from within. It cannot take care of itself.

(Rock festivals are now weighted down with adult voyeurs and turning into tourist attractions. That will arrest them faster than legal sanctions. Cynicism would also help us to see that merchandizing rock festivals is arresting them even more. Routinizing the creativity of its many forms into marketable commodities has already driven more of the participants underground than legal sanctions could do as quickly. The cynic needs to consider carefully the psychological possibility for containing the potential militancy of another generation of the young permissively in the merchandised forms of the rock festival. It could buy off their social criticism by offering them measured, diverting pleasures in exchange for their mature citizenship. Sufficiently corrupted, messes of pot and ages of rock might be exchanged for birthrights.)

None need be curious about what becomes of those who participate in only part of the whole of religious truth. In the multiplication of sensations without the reasoned limits that personal freedom requires. In the immediate present without a usable future. In the innocence of doves without the wisdom of serpents that social freedom requires. In grooving *eros* without suffering *agape*. The religiously imbalanced cave in on themselves.

A strictly legal response to rock festivals is an inadequate response and may miss a ministry in religiously significant events. It is especially inadequate when it focuses on illegal actions of the young in rock festivals affecting no one but the participants themselves. But there is in them a ministry arriving for religious men to religious men. There is a calling arriving in rock festival religion for what it is lacking. At least religious men might ask the question of what to put in the place of what legal men would, if they could, take away from the young at rock festivals. That is the deeper question they raise and one which religious leaders need to grasp and with which they need to grapple.

**The Once Invisible Minority**

A new visibility for homophiles, especially male homophiles, has lately arisen in our society. A surge of films, plays, novels, and mass magazine articles about homophiles is nearing crest. Some of them are welcomely honest, factual, and serious. More importantly, the new visibility for homophiles in the arts and the media is now accompanied by political militancy on the part of the homophile community itself.

It would be sad if this new visibility for homophiles led the larger society to no better understanding of this once invisible minority. We surely need now no new round of the old, panicky jokes, nor more leering and shivering, titillation and disgust. It is not particularly heterosexually noble to sigh gladly–There but for the grace of God and a good mother go I–and resign ourselves again to the fate of other men.

In a society zigging and zagging toward sexual candor, it is no surprise that the homophile should emerge more openly into view. Nor is it a surprise that in a society called upon repeatedly to redress the just grievances of its minorities that the homophile community should emerge more politically too. What would be a surprise, and a happy one, would be a new understanding of homosexuality by the larger society and the legal toleration of homophiles within it.

To be sure, the homophile community does not yet readily identify itself openly to seek political redress of its grievances. Reprisals are fearful for homophiles who merely identify themselves and often so insidious that there is no public defense from them possible. Worse, there is little or no support from other communities, save other outcast communities, which could speak up for them. Happily, we note that some churchmen are beginning to take up their defense as well as their counsel, although it is mostly in those familiar cases where
clergymen are without the support of the churches. The numbers within the homophile community are necessarily difficult to obtain. Such estimates as are informed and conservative place the number of males, exclusively homophile, in the United States at 2,600,000 and the number of females, exclusively homophile, at 1,400,000. The number of male and female homophiles, including men and women who are at times heterosexual in practice, has been placed at fifteen million. The homophile community is one minority which can only identify itself and most often identifies itself only privately. Homophiles are part of every social and economic class, political faction, age, race, and religion. And, of course, both sexes. It is, however, mostly an invisible minority of invisible men which has lately become more visible.

We believe it is time for the larger society to think again its relations to the homophile community. These human beings, with sometimes sad and hardly gay lives to live, are yet less of a problem to themselves than they appear to be a problem to the larger society. The first question the homophile community lodges with the larger society is the degree to which it can tolerate sexual behavior it judges deviant. And this is so regardless of whether it may now be judging homophiles to be criminal, sinful, psychologically ill, or—most murky of all—a threat to the sexual practice in the larger society.

Legally, precedent is set in other societies—including England, our mother country in law—for removing homosexual acts from the realm of criminal offenses. We see no social disorder arising from removing private homosexual relations between consenting adults from the realm of illegality. As a people we generally oppose laws regulating whatever is patently private morality, and homosexuality is nearly as clear an instance of private morality as we are likely to find.

Some Straight Thinking Needed

Abolishing the illegality of consensual homosexual acts opens the way to the consideration of the repeal of other questionable laws. For example, laws barring homophiles from naturalized citizenship, visas, and employment in governmental services. It would also clear the path for discontinuing dubious practices. For example, police enticement and entrapment of homophiles. The raiding and harrassing of places where homophiles gather. The prohibition and revocation of certain professional licenses on the grounds of homosexuality. Dishonorable military discharges. Not to mention a considerable amount of blackmail.

Changing the laws does not in itself change deeply conditioned human feelings. There would only be little change for the better for most homophiles if the laws were changed this afternoon. An illiberal, merely majoritarian society can treat its minorities almost any way it pleases, especially a two percent minority of homophiles. But if the United States would not become such a society, it will continue, however beleagueredly, to test itself against the noblest of its legal traditions in order to extend freedom to all men. There is yet sufficient health in the United States for the hope that necessary legislation in all states will be forthcoming in the matter of this minority too.

Whether there is hope for change in human feelings depends on something other than laws, principally upon the deeper understanding of homophiles and upon a deeper understanding of ourselves. Therefore, we must further observe that the progress made in the public mind in shifting homosexuality from the category of sin to the category of psychological illness is not complete. Indeed, in parts of our society social opprobrium and moral censure increase as anyone moves from having sin to be forgiven toward psychological illness to be treated. The circumstances are all the more wretched for anyone for which something about the prevention of his illness is known, but for which there is only a little known for a cure.

We are unimpressed by the further argument of late that homosexuality is not an illness, but only a sexual preference. It does make both psychological and theological sense to understand homosexuality as sickness and only an occasion for sin. And there may indeed be homophiles attacked by no more anxiety, psychologically speaking, or faithlessness, theologically speaking, than heterosexuals. But little remains of the meaning of freedom in any sense in the "only a sexual preference" argument for homosexuality. The obligatory homophile is not preferring his sexual practice. Such an argument does not deal seriously with what is apparently a norm of nature from which, psychologically speaking, we are given to understand health.
In Our Health Is Their Help

The argument may be a defense which is defensive, an answer to the judgment in the diagnosis rather than to the diagnosis of sickness itself. The problems of the homophile community, like the problems of other minorities in our country, will only move toward solution when the larger society grapples with its own problems too. Presently the larger society does not behold the psychological illness of homosexuality with the moral neutrality it beholds other illnesses. The homophile may be the last moral equivalent of the leper, and sometimes the jester, scapegoat, and witch.

See-ing

For sheer gall, you have to hand it to the Surly Majority. You really wonder how long they can keep it up: that whimpering self-pity, that paranoid certainty that all the minorities are ganging up on them.

Intellectuals, for example. The Surly Majority have been berating the intellectuals for some time now — those effete snobs, those pointy-headed professors, those eggheads ("self-appointed") who want to rebuild the whole society.

Well now. Does the old SM realize the intellectual caliber of those eighteenth century gentlemen who set down deliberately to build a New World society? Do the Surly Majority believe that their Declaration of Independence and their beloved Constitution were scribbled over a glass of Schlitz after a few lanes of bowling? What kind of society — if any — do the Surly Majority expect they would be living in had Mayor Daley and General Hershey drafted our basic documents?

What Republican president of the 1860s, when he was a boy down in rural Illinois, borrowed every book he could get his hands on, to find out whether in fact rural Illinois had a corner on all the wisdom of the ages? Which well-known itinerant rabbi astonished the elders of the Temple, at age twelve, with his understanding and his answers?

Dissenters, for another example. The Surly Majority keeps insisting, and not softly either, that the dissenters — whether youth, radicals, potheads, blacks, poor, students, clergy, professors, underground editors, or community organizers — are always negative, never have anything positive to offer. Surly Spiro: "Protest is generally negative in content. It is against some person or thing. It does not offer constructive alternatives . . . This is negativism at its quintessence."

Indeed. This bizarre assertion they hurl over and over again. Meanwhile they see Ralph Nader on the Time cover, asking for a whole host of positive reforms in government regulatory agencies and for minimum standards of quality and safety in the cars and drugs we buy daily. Is that being negative — to state clearly and firmly the positive steps needed to halt the deterioration of our lives and our environment?

Is it negative when civil rights organizations work years to promote fair housing, to end job discrimination, to insure fairness in the courts? When citizens' groups push for the passage and enforcement of anti-pollution laws and the clear labeling of consumer goods? When young people of all ages organize rural communes in Colorado and New Mexico, showing not only by words but by positive actions what they want out of life?
itself is self-advertized as particularly aesthetic, free, and gay. All of which justifications are doubtful and sometimes frivolous and frantic.

(All of them might also be unnecessary in a society which did not exploit sexuality in its entertainment, advertising, and male and female mythologies. And in a society secure in its own courtships, marriages, child-rearing, and family life. And in a society neither pandering erotica nor projecting its own sexual phobias.)

A society without its own need to score homosexuality as a threat to itself may begin to behold it as a crime without victims and finally as no crime at all. In such a society homosexuality would yet be a personal misfortune. But in such a society homophiles might more easily accept their condition without deluding denials or glamorous justifications and seek the increasing help to live through it or live with it. Changes in the laws are not sufficient, hard as they may be to achieve. Harder, more sufficient work beyond the law needs to be done to develop new attitudes by parents, schools, churches, and the media. What is desirable is a society openly disposed to help those homophiles who wish help and can be helped and to tolerate those who cannot be helped or do not wish to be helped.

By CHARLES VANDERSEE

Majority

Is it negative when college students set up courses in free or experimental universities to pursue valid subjects that their busy professors and overstructured departments won't teach? When they support janitors and cleaning women in pressing for just wages? When they plead with trustees to listen for just a few minutes to the long list of such things that need to be attended to? When the Gallup Poll in December lists ten clear and positive "domestic priorities of college students" (clean up slums, revise welfare programs, control inflation, overhaul the tax system)? Plus yet another ten international priorities?

I think we may as well face it. The issue is something else entirely. The Surly Majority is really not against intellectuals. The Surly Majority is really not getting at the central issue when it growls that protest is negative. We have to understand that the Surly Majority is using the English language in its own funny little way. What the Surly Majority is really saying to intellectuals and protesters is quite simple: WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU PEOPLE WANT, AND BY GOD WE DON'T LIKE IT!

That is what the old SM is shouting, no matter what words they use, no matter how often they pretend not to understand the minorities.

Oh yes. And it's time to stop. It really is. Those of us who are frankly just a little bit more than tired of listening to this are going to have to stand up and do a little talking ourselves. Sometimes rather candid and straightforward talking. I don't mean shouting; I don't mean invective; I don't mean hurling obscenities. That abuse of language has got to go also.

I do mean that the SM have got to be called to account. Their complaints are irrelevant, and they know it. Their pretense of innocence is phony, and they know it. They have been making the rules for all of us, and making them badly. The name of the game they want to play is Monopoly, not Majority. They are the ones who started playing foul first. Behind every Black Panther are ten families in a slumlord's prison. Behind the few rebel students who have broken into the dean's sherry are the thousands whom the Surly Majority have lied to, have crammed into gargantuan multiversities under the pretense that a college degree is the only key to utopia.

Oh yes. Let it be said again. The Surly Majority has got only one thing on its mind: its own preservation and imperial command, on strictly its own terms. With that attitude, the Surly Majority reveals its immaturity. It is a big bullying child, an impudent infant, a squalling brat. And it has no intention of growing up. To grow up means to develop toleration, flexibility, wisdom, charity, goodwill, joy, and a few other virtues that are noticeably more prevalent at Woodstock than in Washington or Wapakoneta.

The minorities in this country have been trying for years to help the Surly Majority grow up and stop being childish. Since the efforts are to no avail, I think we need not go too far out of our way to summon up pity for this petulant juvenile delinquent. It is a travesty of stewardship when we apportion more of our patience to the hypocritical afflicters than to the afflicted.

February 1970
The Development of the Executioner Symbol in Duerrenmatt's Plays

By KURT J. FICKERT
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A myth is in the making in the plays of Friedrich Duerrenmatt. From the first Es steht geschrieben to the latest Der Meteor a fable is evolving which contains the nucleus of Duerrenmatt's thinking on the subject of morality. And he is in essence a moralist (cf. under the rubric Duerrenmatt in the Handbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur). In the myth he has devised for his exploration of the moral values in contemporary society there are two figures, balancing one another, contending with one another, completing one another: the courageous man and the executioner.

The myth concerns the triumph of the courageous man over his opponent — death. It is, of course, a metaphoric victory. Indeed, the executioner assists his victim in his attempt to provide death with meaning, to discover the sense in dying. The answer to the riddle of man's living and dying, which Duerrenmatt supplies in the figure of the courageous man, although tinged with despair, is a moral one. Death becomes meaningful only when it represents the just punishment for guilt or sin. Thus Duerrenmatt insists upon a theocentric point of view. Belief in God affords the only basis for morality.

It is the message of Duerrenmatt's myth that all man-made systems of morality (e.g., the categorical imperativeness, the morality of humanism) fail in the face of death's inexplicability. Only when man has learned the true significance of death, its relationship to man fallen from grace, estranged from God, can he begin to distinguish good from evil, that is, living in the light of God's love from a self-centered and essentially empty, dark existence. In the confessional foundation he gives his myth, Duerrenmatt's unmistakable Protestantism comes to the fore.

The secondary figure in Duerrenmatt's mythological fable, although he later serves the primary function of providing the key to the symbolism, the executioner, appears in the first of Duerrenmatt's plays Es steht geschrieben. Here, at the beginning, he is only tentatively sketched; the symbolism is almost platitudinous and scarcely in the early stages of development. He is simply an executioner (der Scharfrichter), bringing death to the play's two protagonists, the Anabaptists Bockelson and Knipperdollinck, who have vied with one another in trying to lead meaningful lives, the first as a hedonist with the conviction that God meant the earth to be a paradise for the faithful, the latter, a literalist who takes to heart God's word that only those who give their money to the poor and live as mendicants are worthy of entering the kingdom of heaven.

The only depth provided the figure of the executioner in Es steht geschrieben is attained by embellishing it with satirical touches. He is educated, well-spoken and, in fact, professorially quotes Schiller. But he allows his victims no victory. Bockelson and Knipperdollinck die in despair. Only Knipperdollinck's last words: "The depth of my despair is only a metaphor for your justice, and my body lies on this wheel as if in a hollow which you now fill to the top with your mercy" suggest something of the attitude of the courageous man, a faith quia absurdum.

The Blind Believer

The play which Duerrenmatt completed next, Der Blinde, concerns another such true believer who seeks affirmation of his convictions but finds only doubts. The protagonist in the play, the blind duke, who in his faith is, of course, the only "seeing" character in the play, is a Job-like figure, beset by a plague of unbelievers who try to infect him with their skepticism and nihilism. He loses his son to the executioner because he will not bargain away his belief in the goodness of God in order to save his offspring. The executioner appears as a mute character in Der Blinde. The sophisticated symbolism later attached to the executioner figure is only remotely suggested in the fact that the insubstantiality of the character in Der Blinde conveys the shadowy nature of death, its presence in the subconscious. Even the true believer (in the sense that the duke keeps on asserting his faith in God despite the urgency for him to recant) cannot overcome the imponderability of death.

The unanswered dilemmas of Der Blinde gave way in the course of Duerrenmatt's dramatic development to the conciliatory solutions of comedy with its emphasis on witty dialogue and clever plotting — for which Duerrenmatt showed particular talent. Romulus der Grosse, which followed Der Blinde, was a comedy, and, as if the change of pace had opened new vistas to him, Duerrenmatt in creating neither a courageous-man figure nor an executioner figure for the play nevertheless took a step toward the complete moral myth he would eventually arrive at.
Romulus is the first of a number of protagonists in the plays of Duerrenmatt who wage a (losing) fight for a system of humanistic moral values — Gerechtigkeit, earthly justice, a word from which there is (from this point on) no longer any escape in Duerrenmatt's plays. Romulus, the last of the Roman emperors in this "unhistorical comedy" (so Duerrenmatt insists), which is also a morality play, sits in judgment on the Roman Empire and condemns it for its crimes. Using a Biblical phrase, he says, "I will seize you with the jaws (teeth) of justice." As the foremost representative of a government founded on and maintained by corruption, enslavement and war, he awaits execution at the hands of the enemy, at the very moment breaking down the gates of the empire's last citadel. The fact that Romulus does not achieve his goal of self-immolation reveals Duerrenmatt's disinclination toward man-made morality and his sponsorship of the theory of a God-centered universe with its morality based on God's love for humanity.

Romulus, who has undertaken to suffer for the sins of Rome, is saved. Odoaker, chief of the barbarian conquerors, ordained by Romulus to be his executioner, turns out to be every inch the cultivated chicken-fancier that Romulus himself is and sends the last of the wicked Roman emperors into exile, with a pension. Frustrated in his attempt to play a tragic role, Romulus has at least reached the point at which the courageous man comes into existence. In the part of Odoaker, the helpful, philosophic executioner is vaguely foreshadowed.

Resurrection and Flash-backs

Without a doubt, in Duerrenmatt's next play Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi the sketchy outlines of the courageous-man figure have been filled in. The character of Ubelohe in Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi all but exemplifies the concept. Ubelohe functions on the basis of a love for mankind. He accepts his own sinfulness (having participated in the murder of his beloved's — Anastasia's — husband) and wants to atone for it, as well as for the sinfulness of all humanity, perhaps principally Anastasia's. He becomes a South American Dr. Schweizer. What he achieves in the play, despite his failure to win Anastasia for himself or, at least, for his point of view, is the approval of the author.

Duerrenmatt lets Ubelohe discuss with the audience the author of the play they are about to witness. Duerrenmatt proposes that Ubelohe is the only character in the play who has the sympathy of his creator. Since Duerrenmatt is a sentimental (in Schiller's sense) writer, his approval of a character must be related to the person's sentiments, and Ubelohe openly avows faith in redeeming love. Accordingly, the author allows himself the gesture of opening his play with the resurrection of the characters who in the course of the flash-back action meet untoward deaths. (Duerrenmatt's latest play deals more fully with the theme of resurrection.)

If Ubelohe is not as yet the courageous man per se who overcomes the obstacle of his own death (in Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi he survives while others pass violently away), he has, nevertheless, full-fledged, the moral convictions of the courageous-man symbol. To oppose the symbol of life eternal, there are in this play three executioners: three men in raincoats with their hands in their pockets. As American (?) gangsters they represent death by assassination, the kind of death which is most shameful, most immoral, most meaningless. Their part in the play is, however, strictly comic; they act on the periphery of the action and do not preach.

The executioner figure takes the center of the stage in all eloquence in Duerrenmatt's next theatrical venture Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon. It is the only completed section of a trilogy of dramas Duerrenmatt envisioned to elucidate his particular Weltanschaung. This play has a hero, even if he is in theatrical terms an anti-hero: a beggar, a non-conformist, a poet-philosopher. Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon relates how the beggar Akki becomes an executioner. In the world in which Akki lives there is a public executioner, an executioner by profession, who wants to retreat from public life and run a second-hand bookstore. To save his own life, forfeited by incurring the displeasure of the king, Akki, who, living by his wits, deals in everything including proprietorships of second-hand bookstores, acquires the mask and robe of the executioner in exchange for a second-hand bookstore.

In fusing the courageous-man (for Akki refuses to live by the king's code, the code of earthly justice) and executioner figures, Duerrenmatt has in effect created two figures — Akki the courageous man and Akki the executioner. The beggar who has to contend with the idea of his own death has strength of character derived from his refusal to act as judge of his fellow man; accepting all people, even the poets discarded on the refuse heap, responding to them with a will to love them—the essence of moral action, he finds his own death to be a part of his humanity and does not flinch before it; thus he overcomes it. Duerrenmatt then assigns him the role of executioner in order that he might convey to others in the hour of their confrontation with death the bravery of the little man who has solved the riddle of death's meaning, its place in a scheme of things in which there is a retreat from God's love and a return to it — death.

Of course, as executioner Akki actually spares himself and every condemned man. In the final scene of the play Akki takes up the role of beggar once more; with him he has the sign of God's grace and love, Kurrubi, the play's heroine. Followed by Kurrubi and, possibly, a few skipping poets, Akki strikes out across the desert, which signifies perhaps contemporary immoral society, very much the figure of the courageous man.
The Courage of His Conventions

Duerrenmatt's greatest success, Der Besuch der alten Dame, separates the executioner from the courageous man but presents the myth in which they appear in a most trenchant form. As Beda Allemann has pointed out in an article on Duerrenmatt,7 the “heroine” in the play represents the executioner. The mythological propensities in Duerrenmatt's work have thus become highly subtle — brilliantly ironic. The Schiller-quotting Scharfrichter has turned into a marvelously rich old lady with a passion for vengeance, Claire Zachanassian. She sets in motion the workings of retributive justice — Gerechtigkeit, that is, man-made morality in which love and forgiveness play no part.

She demands the death of the man who long ago inflicted an injury on her — Ill. In the character of this plain man (Ill suggests French “il”), a shopkeeper who has never questioned the convention-ridden life he must lead, Duerrenmatt finds the makings of the courageous man. He specifies in his notes on the play that Ill is a man “who experiences justice in his person, because he admits his guilt, who assumes stature by his dying (a certain monumentality must not be lacking in his death.)”8 In the morality play which underlies this hectic tragicomedy, overtly professing a relationship to the theater of the absurd, Claire becomes the catalyst which precipitates out of the conventions of Ill's former character the courageous man. For she is for him the idea of his own death9 with which he must contend; she is the fear he must conquer.

By accepting his guilt — not that incurred by his crime against Claire but that based on a prideful and blasphemous self-sufficiency, shutting out the love of God — he faces execution at the hands of his fellow townspeople with a resignation in which there is peace and victory. The act of dying bravely on the part of the courageous man serves to restore, according to Banziger,10 the moral order in all the world (die sittliche Weltordnung). In Der Besuch der alten Dame there is, therefore, an instance of the presentation of Duerrenmatt's courageous man-executioner myth in its “classic” and most compelling form.

Subsequent plays have varied the pattern of confrontation between the two protagonists without adding to the dimensions of the moral fable. The particularly sardonic and bitter “opera of a private bank,” Frank der Funfte, has a confrontation scene between an assassin and victim. The assassin is Frank himself, the director of the nefarious bank, disguised as a priest! — and his victim, Bockmann, is an employee about to reveal, for the sake of relieving his own conscience, the crimes of the bank. Bockmann has fought his way through to assuming the courageous-man attitude; having accepted his guilt as a human being, he awaits, somewhat fearfully, it must be admitted, death which brings forgiveness and release. His executioner, Frank, has to murder him, a friend as well as a valuable associate, because as a bank director he must believe in a code of morality according to which men are labelled traitors and exterminated.

Duerrenmatt characterizes the climactic scene as revealing a situation in which “unjustified hope, unjustified freedom, and the unjustified intellect (modern morality) are opposed by authentic hope, authentic freedom, and the authentic intellect.”11 Very important to Duerrenmatt is the ideological content in the scene, for he has proposed, in defending Frank der Funfte against the accusation that it is second-hand Brecht without significance, that “whoever doesn't understand me in this scene, doesn't understand me at all.”12

The Physicist and the Psychiatrist

While the two mythological figures appear climactically in Frank der Funfte, Die Physiker is characterized by the fact that the executioner comes to the fore in the denouement to the play, but the courageous man is absent, or at the most only casts a shadow on the stage. The protagonist in the play, the physicist Moebius, seems to have been conceived of as a character who might convert to belief, to true morality. Throughout the play he adheres stubbornly to agnosticism and humanism; he feels himself to be capable of deciding the fate of the world, withholding from it the scientific knowledgeability which can produce an atomic catastrophe. As a representative of scientific humanism he is doomed to be confronted by the irrational — the sudden frustration of his ambitions, his plot to save mankind from extinction.

The “executioner,” the agent of his defeat, who sentences him to a kind of living death — incarceration for the rest of his life in an insane asylum — appears in the form of a psychiatrist, Fraulein Doktor von Zahn. She has stolen his secrets; she takes away his reason for living and offers him not a whit of the solace which the executioner Akki had at his disposal. Moebius's despair at this turn of events is only tinged with the balm of a belief in man's victory over death and himself. Only awareness of Duerrenmatt's attention to the myth of the courageous man makes clear his intent in the line with which Moebius rings down the curtain on Die Physiker: “But my wisdom destroyed my reverence, and when I no longer feared God, my wisdom destroyed my riches.”13

Compensating for his failure to appear in Die Physiker, the courageous man makes his presence felt in Herkules und der Stall des Augias. Augias by the gesture of his having converted the dung which covers his kingdom into manure for a garden, which he has set aside for his son, shows himself to be courageous. He does not believe in man's accomplishing impossible feats (Hercules fails to rid the world of debris, the leavings of its pride and greed), but accepts God's world and does his humble best in it.

The executioner has no part in Herkules und der...
Stall des Augias, but he seems to be represented in the protagonist of Der Meteor, the author who cannot die, Schwitter. Because he has no faith, he brings death to all who come into contact with him. A pastor, an artist, his wife, his mother-in-law — the list is long — all die upon confronting this great skeptic, whose (almost) first words state his refusal to believe in death (and thus he does not die). The relationship of the character Schwitter to the executioner symbol is very subtle in Der Meteor, and the possibility that he is converted from executioner to courageous man at the last minute is too tenuous to play a role in an interpretation of the play. Its similarities to Die Physiker (both were written about at the same time) suggest that here is another Moebius and a final-curtain confession of faith. Schwitter does admit the correspondence between his own skepticism and his mother-in-law's materialistic manipulation of the lives of her children whom she fails to love. He is thwarted in pointing her errors out to her; the executioner takes precedence over the courageous man. She dies, and he still cannot find his way through understanding to peace in death.

Dying Bravely in Black Comedy

The ten major plays of Duerrenmatt deal at varying length with the moral problem posed by a confrontation with death: is a moral world possible, is death (that is, as opposed to an animalistic dying) possible without God? Duerrenmatt has used both myth and symbolical figures exclusively in a radio play Nachtliches Gespräch mit einem verachteten Menschen. Here there are only two characters: der Mann and der Andere.

The first is shown in his conversion from skeptic to courageous man. The latter is the executioner who becomes his guide. The play opens with the man in hiding; he is hiding from the meaninglessness, the immorality of modern life — its pogroms, wars, materialism, nihilism. He is, apparently, an enemy of the state — i.e., the state of affairs. It has hunted him down, however. In the dead of night the executioner crawls through the window, and man faces death, a death without significance. Der Mann begs the favor of an explanation from the executioner, who, granting a last request, complies.

The executioner preaches Duerrenmatt's first article of faith: die bravely. Only the people who believe in guilt, in this sign of an estrangement from God and His love (a love which is present in their love for their fellow man and absent in their lack of it), are capable of accepting with equanimity their human frailty, their subervience to God and death. In Nachtliches Gespräch mit einem verachteten Menschen, der Mann becomes courageous and bares his chest to the executioner's knife. Having found a man who looks him unflinchingly in the eye, death strikes with fervor and with purpose.

This playlet without action, with personified concepts, has been identified as containing the essence of Duerrenmatt's philosophy. His biographer, Elisabeth Brock-Sulzer, writes: "Yet this brief dialogue is not only in general a course of instruction for contemporary man but also in particular an introduction to the study of Duerrenmatt, perhaps even the only introduction." It also conveniently sums up the elements of the myth which evolves from the frenetic, bizarre world of Duerrenmatt's theater and serves as a klieg light, illuminating the moral fervor in the midst of his black comedy.
The New Left and the Millennial Metaphor

By MEL GROTH

The New Left phenomenon is a movement which springs from a variety of sources. Many of these sources are rather obvious — Marxism, anarchism, existentialism, to name just a few — and a great deal has already been written exploring the relationships between the respective parent and the remarkable offspring. A source which has yet to be explored, however — at least to the knowledge of this author — and a source which might perhaps explain the unique American contribution to the movement is the metaphorical source of the American millennial tradition.

True, millennialism is not an exclusive American property, but it is relatively safe to say that the impact of millennialism has been greater on American history than on that of any other country. Though we have become accustomed to thinking of such an impact as a phenomenon of the past, a careful examination of the New Left in the light of the millennial metaphor raises some startling questions for the present. And of all the questions thus raised, perhaps the most startling is this: has the spirit of millennialism, once thought to be dead, now become reincarnate — with chiliasm hope and apocalyptic despair — in the body politic of Redeemer Nation?

Millennial history in America is rich and colorful. Most who have related to it are in the Eusebian, not Augustinian, tradition, and maintain that the Crypto-Millennial is a phenomenon of the past, a careful examination of the New Left in the light of the millennial metaphor raises some startling questions for the present. And of all the questions thus raised, perhaps the most startling is this: has the spirit of millennialism, once thought to be dead, now become reincarnate — with chiliasm hope and apocalyptic despair — in the body politic of Redeemer Nation?

The pre-millenialists are literalistically-inclined and believe, or have believed as the case may be, that the thousand-year reign of Christ after the cataclysmic battle of Armageddon when the devil is bound and led away, is an event to be apprehended within historical time. So convinced were the Shakers of this fact, for example, that they abandoned cohabitation in favor of the millennium. Unfortunately, post-millennialists have never been able to agree on timetables. At the hour of the Civil War, for instance, many were convinced that Armageddon had in fact arrived. But if the Gilded Age which came hard on the heels of the War didn’t disconfirm them of this notion, surely the disillusionment which followed World War I — another highly-touted “Armageddon” — did. Therefore, one doesn’t hear much about either millennialism these days. Pre-millennialism survives — and will survive, I suspect — in these sectarian cults of splinter Christianity which are always sufficient unto themselves; post-millennialism survives only as a ragged and tattered metaphor connoting an optimistic and stubborn belief in the innate goodness of man.

Millennialism and Utopianism

In a sense, then, millennialism has become another utopian metaphor. A metaphor exists semantically to define, abstractly and immediately, a condition tangible in prosaic reality. Northrop Frye’s insistence that the utopian myth is essentially speculative notwithstanding, the utopian-millennial metaphor per se gains meaning only in greater context of history. This being the case, Marx’s celebrated contempt for Saint-Simonianism — that is, for archetypal utopianism — must evoke both our sympathy and amusement. “They still dream of experimental realizations of their social Utopias,” he said bitterly and somewhat bemused, “Of founding isolated phalanstères, of establishing ‘home Colonies,’ of putting up a ‘Little Icaria’ — pocket editions of the New Jerusalem.”

If the metaphor of utopia is meant to connote an ideal society, a projected schema for social regeneration — practical or otherwise, or any one number of a variety of these, then Marx’s own system inadvertently falls into the utopian realm. Perhaps that is why he was so testy; he had a vested interest, and was threatened. Like a bio-chemical exchange or even like a catena, the idea of millennium and utopia work on each other. Millennial scholar Ernest Tuveson has written, “It was no accident...that Marx was writing when millennialism was
particularly strong in both Britain and the United States.5

By the same token, it seems no mere accident that the New Left movement has sprung up within the Judeo-Christian tradition, within the context of the utopian-millennial metaphor. Granted, it is largely a secular phenomenon — a novus ordo saeculorum — thus a movement more-or-less devoid of ostensible Biblical typology, and skeptics will be quick to point to this as lack of evidence in linking the two. The fact is, however, that the New Left, unlike colorless Marxism, has a very definite typology — much of it classical — a typology relying for its effect less on substitution than on transmutation. In this way, the Sorrows of St. Cyprian, reflecting Renaissance pessimism, became reacquainted with the Eclogues of Vergil and the Sibylline myths. The result is today's cult of the Zodiac, a cult not for the frivolous-minded at all, but for the deadly serious who are intent on reaching new conclusions from old allegorical structures.

In so doing, typology receives a new organic impulse and a new homogeneity. For if in the second century A.D. the four horsemen of the Apocalypse could refer to such "economic problems as the increase in wealth on one hand and the increase in poverty on the other," as Tuveson has said,6 there seems little reason why they could not be similarly interpreted today — in the context of the War on Poverty, for example. If Nero was reviled as the anti-Christ in 68 A.D., so was Lyndon Johnson — in 1968 A.D. And while we might not seriously entertain the coming of a new millennia, we do give a great deal of lip service to the dawning of a new Aquarian age — a concept with at least post-millennial overtones.

The Great Awakening of the Young

There is a more compelling argument than typology, however, for the relationship between millennialism and the New Left. It is the argument from demography. The indisputable lathritic fact is that there is an Elect, a discernible body of people, having a collective zeal not unlike that which accompanied the First, Second, and Third Great Awakenings.

Others have noted this as well. In October 1968, in an indifferently-brilliant article in The Atlantic, Richard Poirier wrote of "a cultural force that signals . . . the probable beginnings of a new millennium."7 And what is that particular cultural force? Poirier identifies it at once as the youth-New Left alliance.

Now, Poirier considers himself sympathetic to the movement. In fact, he's gone to extraordinary lengths to bracket — even at times, condemn — the linguistically-conceptual demands of establishmentarian society. Yet his allusion to the millennium is hardly destined to win him friends among the New Left. For regardless of Poirier's intent, the remark comes out a bit smug, and, besides, one of the telling earmarks of the utopian impulse is that it considers itself vitally real and decidedly non-utopian in the first place!

Utopian historiography has a vast space reserved for several conspiracy theories: a favorite is that reality is in a cabal with various agencies, the most nefarious being the entrenched social order (whatever it happens to be at a given point within the space-time continuum), all working together to present, like sleight-of-hand, a distorted view of the facts of existence. Herbert Marcuse is particularly susceptible to this. For what is ideal (so the utopian argument usually runs) is never presented as reality but as chimera, whereas in fact (to the utopian) it is the only reality. Of course, this is manifestly romantic and really quite neo-Platonic. For if it is no accident that the New Left has appeared in the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is equally no accident that it has been largely a youth movement. Youth, says Poirier, is the American pastoral, "secured from the realities of time and history."8

Nevertheless, if the New Left millennium can be said to have an Elect at all, it is the young. Children in the Protestant tradition, youth has introduced another great awakening into the vortex of American history. Insofar as Poirier understands that, he is essentially correct in insisting upon their importance. For the young are no longer young — that is, not in the old sense of discovering manhood at age twenty-one, facilely proceeding through life and oblivious to history. These days the adult identity is discovered and realized much sooner than ever before, sooner at least than anytime since the original tribal generation. The new sexuality and the experience of Chicago prove nothing if not that.

The fact is, what we euphemistically refer to as youth demands participation in what till now has always been (also euphemistically) referred to as the adult world. But notice is served: there is no longer an exclusive adult croft. Armed with utopian-millennial ideals, burning with a desire to be involved, youth is the most potentially-explosive force in the world today, and is the single most serious challenge any existing order has ever faced. The youthful Elect are so confident of ultimate victory that they can afford to be virtually indifferent to the election of Richard Nixon; it is a death rattle of the old generation. It must be clearly understood, however, that what is occurring is not a simple generation gap on a wide scale, but an awakening on a scale never before dreamed possible, an awakening vaguely and ironically owing its existence to the technology provided by the very forces it means to do in.

The Elect in Exile

There are any number of New Left voices crying in the wilderness. One belongs to Richard Shaull, Professor of Ecumenics at Princeton Theological Seminary. Along with Carl Oglesby, former president of Students for a Democratic Society, Shaull has recently published something of a critical book on the New Left, Contain-
ment and Change. Shaull's portion of the book is titled
"Revolution: Heritage and Contemporary Option," and
in this segment he repeatedly calls for "new beginnings"
in a transformed society. "A new game," he says, "calls
for new rules....and it is all too clear that the old rules
no longer suffice." Yet, by the same token, Shaull ad-
mits with a disarming honesty and an almost-intense
insistency that the New Left does "not know just what
these rules should be."

Now, perhaps such an attitude is neither necessarily
irresponsible nor in and of itself denotes a lack of avail-
able options (though the latter of the two seems the some-
what more serious possibility). Rather, it brings to mind
a specific historical precedent: the early Christians,
said Rudolph Bultmann, "abandoned history in favor of
eschatology." It follows then that, if eschatology re-
ters to "temporally the last things in history," the call-
ing for a program of "new rules" is a matter of lower
priority than, say, either the destruction or transforma-
tion of the old rules. There is, therefore, an odd esca-
tological logic to the nonprogram of the New Left — a
pattern not unrelated to the most bizarre dispensational
experiments. For the New Left sits on a hill, neither
making freezers nor furniture, yet no less assertedly
"in but not of" the world than the Woman in the Wild-
erness. Shaull himself uses those very Biblical terms:
"The essential thing," he says, "is for those who have
adopted a revolutionary position to preserve a certain
degree of group identity. Thus they may be able to run
the risks of being 'in' but not 'of' the structure, and live
'as exiles' within the society to which they belong." A
millennial tradition, therefore, emerges once again —
one identifiable in both content and form, in non-di-
agrammatic program as well as in the rhetoric of that
"program."

Still, many millennial schemes — especially pre-
millennial ones — boast highly-sophisticated programs,
and there's no denying that the New Left is a far cry away
from that. This dearth of teleological imagination is
depressing. Certainly Shaull has contributed little to a
program; what he has presented is a curtain teaser, and
one naturally wants to see the entire show. Perhaps, as
Frank Kermode, author of The Sense of an Ending,
once suggested, it's simply because "the good place" is
dull to deal with. "A lifetime of happiness!" exclaims
Jack Tanner, Shaw's rich man-poor man's radical in
Man and Superman, "No man alive could bear it: it
would be hell on earth." It's hard to believe that the world
is peopled with radicals who have no program, but it
seems to be the case. Marcuse, for instance, has a splen-
did understanding, using Freud, of the present repres-
sive totalitarian structure, and he marshals strikingly
good reasons for throwing it over, but his own case for
the construction of a non-repressive society is at best
vague, at worst uninspiring.

Marcuse's book, Eros and Civilization, is a Freudian
inquiry into the nature of society. As such, it is amazing-
ly conservative — that is, Marcuse rarely attempts to
de-mythologize the favorite Freudian myths, but in-
stead examines them, sees that they have offered, meta-
orphorically at any rate, two basic options, and suggests
that we take the one which we haven't ventured to grasp
in the past.

Freud's classical proposition is that "civilization is
based on the permanent subjugation of the human
instincts. Free gratification of man's instinctual needs is
incompatible with civilized society; renunciation and
delay in satisfaction are the prerequisites of prog-
ress." As a result of this — a sublimated society —
happiness has surrendered to progress, freedom to un-
freedom, and nonrepressiveness to repressiveness. Mar-
cuse militates for reversing the proposition: choosing
happiness, not progress; freedom, not unfreedom; non-
repressiveness, not repressiveness. The battle between
Eros and Thanatos, between the life force and the death
force, a battle clearly apocalyptic in nature, scope, and
dimension, will conclude with the triumph of Eros and
introduce civilization to a kind of politico-cultural on-
tocracy, much as the early Jews had in the days prior to
messianism. Such an ontocracy will rid the universe of
dimensionality men and produce multi-dimensional
men, who have not been introjected by technology or
rationality or any other form of repressive society, but
who instead will govern the universe, rather than
being governed by it. Furthermore, Marcuse doggedly
insists that his proposal is non-utopian. Logically, he
says, repressiveness implies that nonrepressiveness can
exist; and, besides, the present state of repressiveness is
"so intolerable" that it cries for "abolition."

Every Moment as Kairos

Ironically, in presenting these two reasons for "abol-
iton" of the contemporary societal structure, Marcuse
has stated once again — paraphrastically, of course —
the non-programmatic dilemma of the New Left. The
fact is, the present condition of things is nigh onto in-
terable. But that it can be, logically or otherwise, reversed
is quite another matter. This, I suppose, is where the
liberal and radical impulses split: at the juncture of
practicability. For Marcuse runs more-or-less true to
form. When the occasional radical does venture a pro-
gram, it's frequently so radical that it's absurd to the
point of being semantically solipsistic. The apparent
rationale — if such a program can be said to have a co-
gent rationale — is that the dialectic will hone away any
excesses. Yet the excesses are invariably so extreme that
they tend to inhibit communication entirely, and hence
the program is curiously unimaginative.

In general, the role of imagination in the New Left —
and, incidentally, the role of humor as well (for few
ideologues are blessed with a sense of humor, and the
New Left is no exception) — is one so small, and occa-
sionally so distorted, that even the Yippies are some-
thing less than credible. Writing of the impending clash
with the Establishment (of the struggle with Thanatos,
the Battle of Armageddon), Richard Shaull has unmit-

The Cresset
tantly typified this attitude—an attitude suffering from an exaggerated sense of messianism, from a heightened sense of living every moment as kairos: "Crucifixion occurs along the road toward the emergence of the new humanity," he warns severely. Well, I suppose it is asking a bit much for one to go to his crucifixion with a smile on his face. I doubt if Christ himself did that.

A metaphor leads a precarious existence. Pressed too severely, it distorts and loses credibility. Pressed not at all, it becomes a vapid device—extra baggage along for the ride. Like its sister, the utopian metaphor, the millennial metaphor must be handled with prudence. To speak of the New Left as an assemblage of millenialists is frankly rather ridiculous; to speak of the New Left as millennial is not ridiculous at all. Here, then, is where one finds the New Left and the millennial metaphor: at that moment in history at once present and past, at that moment in language at once fictive and real. "We are embarking on a motion which is millennial in scope," declared the Yippies during the 1967 March on the Pentagon. And anybody with a knowledge of history—or language—cannot help but recognize a familiar metaphor whose time came once—and now has come again.

On Second Thought

We do not hesitate to condemn the Russian act in Czechoslovakia. There can be no good in the loss of freedom, the death of hope and laughter. But the condemnation does not flow easily, because the line between the Russian control of Prague and the American control of Saigon is hard to draw. In order to condemn the one and do the other, we are forced to justify ourselves.

We try. We say that our soldiers are in Vietnam to give freedom, not to destroy it. Our presence supports laughter instead of stifling it. We do not kill hope, we bring it. We are not disturbed by the fact that many of the people to whom we bring hope and laughter do not hope or laugh. We say that it's our ultimate purpose that counts, not the immediate effect. We are not disturbed by the fact that the Russian government can say exactly the same thing about their presence in Prague. Our self-justification reduces to the a priori judgment that the democratic philosophy of government is good and the communist philosophy is evil, even though they act in identical patterns.

Obviously there is a difference between the communist mind and the democratic mind. It is almost as obvious that the democratic mind is more consistently supportive of freedom and hope and laughter. But in the comparison of Czechoslovakia and Vietnam the differences between the communist and the democratic mind is irrelevant. It is the military mind that operates in both places. It is relatively unimportant that one operation begins in Moscow and the other in Washington.

Neither of the two operations can be justified on the basis of governmental philosophy. They cannot be condemned or even explained on that basis, either. What operates in Prague and Saigon is neither communist nor democratic, but military. To the extent that American policy is dominated by the military it differs in only minor ways from the Russian policy, to the extent that the policy is dominated by the military. The Russian presence in Prague is military, not communist. Our presence in Saigon is military, not democratic.

It is probably important that then distinctions enter into our evaluation of the two operations. If they do not, our participation may lead us to judge others and to justify ourselves by irrelevant criteria. Both judgment and self-justification will support the authoritarian working of the military mind, perhaps even in the name of the Prince of Peace. The real and honest differences between the communist way and the democratic way will be lost to us, surrendered to a tyranny fostered in ignorance by both and congenial to neither: the military mind. And the cause for which He died will tarry yet another time.
Text: II Cor. 5:17 When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun. (N.E.B.)

The King James Version reads, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The Revised Standard Version has it, “Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation.” Footnote: “Or creature.” Read enough commentaries, and they will probably convince you that the New English Bible translation is preferable: “there is a new world,” a new creation — not “he is a new creature” or “a new creation.” Here endeth the deep, scholarly analysis of the text.

I have an old book about newness down in my basement, where the deep, scholarly books about the Bible are kept. Roy A. Harrisville discusses “The Concept of Newness in the New Testament.” On this text: “Paul writes that nothing avails but the ‘new creation.’ That newness, however, does not refer to the individual, but to the Israel of God which has now come into existence... It is not the believer as such but as a member of the Israel of God who is the “new creation.”

There is a new world, a world of changed conditions. Outside the Israel of God, it does not look that way. When I was a little boy out on the plains of Nebraska, we used to come in from the plains to listen to battery radios. At that time there was a program called The Lutheran Hour. For all I know, it may still be going on. At that time everybody in Nebraska listened. The speaker — I think his name was Walther A. Meyer (Mayer? Meier? Meir?) — coined a slogan, “A Changeless Christ for a Changing World.” He could not have appeared to be more wrong. The world seems changeless. Brutality - war - violence - selfishness - playboyfoldouts - Agnewism - thealmightydollar - itsstillthesameoldstorythefightforloveandgloryacaseofdoordiethefundamentalthingsapply - aggression - territorial - imperative - boredom: these, these are at home in any culture. Changelessly. Christ changes: he creates a new Israel, he is applicable to all, ahead of all.

Someone named Luijpen (I can’t find his first name. Walther?) once said that the great man was the one who knew already what the rest of the world did not know as yet. Something like that is operative in “the new world,” a world that looks changeless but in which the New Israel constitutes the reality of change already, before the rest of the world knows “as yet.” Harrisville again: “It is clear that this new creation is one which has received the goods of the eschatological age, i.e., God’s peace and mercy.”

Pax!

What does the reality of this new world mean for those who claim to be part of “the new Israel”? They ought to change some things, I suppose. Edmund Burke once said, “If it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change.” This is the law of life of the silent majority, the middle American, and the Old Adam in general. I like to twist things a bit: “If it is necessary to change, it is really necessary to change.” If the world as it is looks like the new creation, the new world, let everything alone. If you’ve been dealt four aces, don’t ask for a new deal. But if the world needs rescue, see it changed.

What then becomes of our conservatism? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. Oh, this does not mean that one cannot be conservative about the humane world; humanistic conservatism may be preferable to
some alternatives. James Hitchcock, *The Christian Century*, January 7, 1970: “When almost all honest men are in severe doubt about their own values and beliefs it is folly to surrender willingly any genuine certainty or to identify oneself wholeheartedly with any movement or philosophy which claims to know the future or even merely to be ‘creative.’ Christians who are determined to be radical should at the very least not be naive about change, should recognize that under some conditions “speed kills.” All right. So don’t change anything in the old creation that is already fully like the new creation. As I read it, there is still a sizeable agenda. Humanistic conservatism, *si*. Christological conservatism, *non*.

This is to say that celebration of the newness of the Age of Aquarius is not theologically superior, *per se* or a priori or something like that, to celebration of the oldness of the Age of Agnew. Christian avantgardism is not necessarily always superior to Christian reactionism. The sign of the meaningful difference is Christ. He somehow gets left out of most of the analyses.

E.g. We are so happy to have Theodore Roszak, in *The Making of a Counter Culture*, compare today’s inpeople, the white bourgeois youth who represent, we are told, the new community, the new consciousness, the new mentality, the new sensibility, to the primitive Christian community. Roszak cites chapter and verse: “For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent... For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom... But God hath chosen, etc. I have been running around the country asking people to check what those last three dots in Roszak’s quotation from Paul leave out: “but we preach Christ crucified, etc.” The intact, integral text carries nuances that Roszak’s people may possibly overlook.

So it is time for boasting. We have something they don’t have, haha. We preach Christ crucified and they print three dots. Look at us. The new Israel. Nietzsche £££: “Funny, you don’t look redeemed.” Arthur Cohen, as a Jew, arguing that there is no Judaeo-Christian tradition, says that Jews are experts at waiting and Christians are expert at redeemedness. Maybe. They don’t look it.

Peter Gay on colonial New England: “The word ‘innovation’ was a term of abuse that everyone employed... Cotton Mather confided to his diary: “I see Satan beginning a terrible Shake unto the Churches of New England; and the Innovators, that have set up a new Church in Boston, (a new one indeed!) have made a Day of Temptation among us.”

I prefer Paul’s version: the new has occurred, innovation is the principle of the new era, not Satan but God has begun a terrible Shake unto the Churches; a new Church, a new Israel is among us, and it is a day of temptation: a temptation that we might change and be swept up in its purposes, to show forth “the goods of the eschatological age, i.e., God’s peace and mercy.”

Don’t salute every flag that says newness or change on it. (You can tell this is a sermon, because there are now some ‘don’ts). Don’t run after every prophet who announces the arrival of the new consciousness, the new sensibility, the new mentality. But if “the new Israel” begins to be announced as a reality already in our midst, “in Christ,” it would seem advisable to give it more than a passing moment’s attention.

Pax, again!
I am writing this month's column on the first day of the year with all my New Decade's resolutions behind me and with the familiar feeling that it is much worse to live through history than to look back on it. Our survival instinct and its perennial companion, the har­ret hope, have the effect of making past pains appear diminished. This may have a great deal to do with our dormant fears of things to come. But since one of my resolutions was to accept calmly what is in store for us, I am willing to face the tragedies of our comedies and the comedies of our tragedies with the equanimity becoming an insignificant recorder of more or less—and less than more—significant events in a world that is a stage and vice versa.

I am very happy that Providence made me deal with the world of make-believe because, at the same time glancing at the real world, I am never quite sure which one is more real. But I do know I have never seen so much bad acting on any off-Broadway stage as on the best plays of the last year or decade because, as a long­term teacher, I have my qualms about grading. More­over, I am not sure I would find ten best plays to name. Will ten better plays do the trick? Better than what? More than ever I have been tortured by the thought of the theatre undergoing a traumatic revolution in one of the most confusing transition periods of history. Live theatre in which I firmly believe as an undying, because badly needed, artistic outlet has never faced more difficult days than now in McLuhan's age of electronics. As long as the art of film-making was tumbling and stumbling, its threat to live theatre was a mere hypothetical question. But now with the film accomplishing artistic feats of unquestionable greatness, the theatre will have to find a new way of asserting itself with its intrinsic and inalienable values and create a state of poetic wonder all its own.

The theatre in America, and to some extent everywhere else, has never been more divided than now into two worlds of make-believe. On one hand, an anguished world in which we are condemned to live and with which we try to cope by bombarding ourselves with shock and assault, with mad music and nudity. And on the other hand, the same anguished world from which we try to escape. Both theatre worlds have always existed side by side, but never before has the gap between the two turned into such an unmistakable intellectual and spiritual cleavage. Hair and Stomp (a new musical by a group of Texan kids, refugees from our society), the dramatic eruptions of the actors and writers at La Mama, the haunting theatre experience of Charles Gordone's No Place to Be Somebody (a Joseph Papp's Public Theatre offering which came to the ANTA) herald a new generation crying out in despair and defiance, a generation which will give the seventies its imprint.

The establishment—as if to take stock of its past achievements and to show them to rebellious youngsters with a parental gesture of “What have you done with your wild oats?”—fell into a paroxysm of revivals. Looking at the Broadway fare offered this season we find an endless string of revivals, mainly evoking our memories of the bad old days of the thirties.

It has become obvious that You Can't Take It With You on The Front Page but we had our Cocktail Party and The Time of Your Life in Our Town with Private Lives as a climactic point. We got to see Three Men on a Horse on the Camino Real followed by Beggar on Horseback. A tremendous nostalgia has overcome Broadway; it suddenly rekindled several love affairs. There is Saroyan with his great love for his sweethart mankind; Wilder's love affair with the people at Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, who are close to nature and one another and both “wonderful” and “awful” but full of life past our dreams; Coward's charm­ing excursion into the private lives of delightful nothingness of the privileged class. And so it goes, on and on, a mass exodus into the past of sweet memories. Can't you see, you unruly youngsters, how happy we once were?

One of those youngsters, Ron Cowen, had written Summertree a couple of years ago. It was a play of which I thought little but which was much applauded then. It was also revived lately and played to great applause again. Written a la Our Town in flash-backs, it is a play about the life of a young boy, killed in Vietnam. This
play, too, has the romantic touch of the past, even though it is of now.

Katherine Hepburn returned to the stage in a musical called *Coco* in which she impersonates Gabrielle Chanel who gave us No. 5. What is more important and sweeter, it brought Hepburn back to the stage. It makes no difference how stupid and uninteresting the musical is, Katherine Hepburn returns with the world of her personal charm. Katie is an endearing as she was in the forties. I suppose when she will be ninety and wish to appear on stage, it will always be like yesterday.

Broadway may be right in giving us a last look at the past. As if it wanted us to know for sure that the new decade will be quite new, it wanted to say once more: Well, wasn’t it a wonderful time? Probably it was. But now we can’t help writing 1970.

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**Political Affairs**

**The First Session of the Ninety-First Congress**

*By Albert R. Trost*

The lack of leadership by the President, control of Congress by the opposition party, the normally high amount of decentralization of authority in the Congress, and the prevailing brokerage style of political accommodation have combined to make the record of the session of Congress completed in December one of the worst in recent history. In view of the problems facing the American political system, one wonders whether our present institutional arrangements can be afforded.

On the negative side of the ledger, and there is much of that side, the slowness of the legislative process and the paucity of substantive legislative accomplishments are two notable features. The fiscal year was half over in December before most of the appropriations bills were passed. Foreign aid and health and education appropriations are still pending. It is difficult for the public to judge executive performance in the administration of programs if the executive agencies do not know the final level of their operating budget.

After a whole year in session, only three major domestic policy enactments stand out, tax reform, draft reform, and a mine safety law. Even here there are a number of qualifications that must be entered. The major draft reform of the year, the lottery, involved Congress formally in only a small way. It required the repeal of a section of the existing Selective Service Act of 1967. With this repeal, the reform was actually accomplished by an executive order. Congress had the opportunity to initiate more comprehensive reform which was offered by Senator Edward Kennedy and others, but at least the House of Representatives could not find much enthusiasm for this larger task.

The most spectacular accomplishment of the session was the tax reform package. Here, unlike the draft reform, the President’s designs were resisted. President Nixon wanted a policy that would ease the burden of the small taxpayer, at the same time maintaining the revenues needed for a balanced budget. He wanted nothing that would encourage inflation. Congress, with an eye to the election this year, passed a reform that helped the small taxpayer, but did not go far toward basic reform. It increases the personal exemption and the standard deduction. Besides depriving the government of revenue, it may prove to be a psychological inducement to spend in the private sector. These tendencies are increased by a 15% rise in social security benefits. The massive, lop-sided support the reform received (only two opposed in the House) indicates what an innocuous lowest-common-denominator the package is. Outside of appeasing the voter, one wonders what the policy goals of the reform are.

The redeeming accomplishment of the session is the mine safety law. In addition to setting stricter safety standards, the law emphatically moves the federal government into this policy area. The extent of this movement almost provoked a Nixon veto. The national government has assumed the responsibility of compensating miners who have contracted occupation-related diseases.

Positive accomplishments are so sparse, that the bright spots of the last session must be found among those things which Congress did not do. The failure to confirm the nomination of Clement Haynsworth to the Supreme Court is one such action. The failure to approve the plan to move control of the anti-poverty program to the states is another. The failure of the Senate to finally act on the Administration’s plan to repeal the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and substitute a more watered-down version of its own can also be viewed as an accomplishment.

With the record of this session of Congress before us, optimism about progress toward solving problems of inflation, poverty, hunger, and the setting of national priorities is hard to muster. The leadership that is required to overcome the decentralization of the Congress, whether from the President, a Congressional party, or a Congressional leader does not appear to be forthcoming. Perhaps this suggests a more basic reform of the structure of the political system.
The Modernity of Two Ancient Chinese Poets


Although Chinese culture has perhaps attained its highest expression in poetry, the Western reader in the past has been generally unable to enjoy the wealth of Chinese poetry because of a paucity of translations. These two volumes are noteworthy if only for their making available in English the work of two important Chinese poets. But their chief value lies in showing the surprising relevance of these pre-modern Chinese men to 1970 man. With modernity in today's warring world meaning such things as pollution, Pinkville, drugs, and the suffocating pressures of uniformity and silent majorities, it is rather startling that two poets who lived over a thousand years ago—Ts'ao Chih (192-232 A.D.) and Li Shang-yin (813-858 A.D.)—can so easily bridge the generation-gap and the much wider cultural gap between East and West. Especially do their poems, marked by themes of frustration and unfulfillment, suggest the plight of sensitive men then and now.

Ts'ao Chih lived during the collapse of the powerful Han dynasty. He was a sincere Confucian, a man clinging to the values of kinship, human society, and history, at a time when Confucianism as a state philosophy had become discredited. His poems show a constant ambition to serve his country and a desire to help in the reunification of the shattered empire. In his early halcyon years as the favorite of his ruling father, the famous general Ts'ao Ts'ao, his Confucian ideals might have been put into practice; but the last half of Ts'ao Chih's life saw disgrace and humiliation at the hands of other relatives. It is from this period of unhappiness that many of his better poems come. Consequently, his poetry also contains expressions of unfulfillment, of obsession with rootlessness and wandering, and (paradoxically since he condemned the tenets of Taoism, which had risen to fill the void left by an effete Confucianism) of hopes for escape.

The poetry of Ts'ao Chih, revealing a moderate Confucianist outlook, is not deeply passionate but somewhat plain and matter-of-fact. Although Ts'ao uses many allusions to Chinese legend and history, the translator, George Kent, has provided adequate notes to make the poetry easily understandable. Kent's translations are generally good—with a few exceptions, such as his rendering *jen*, the chief ethical concept of Confucianism, as "sentimentality." In his introduction Kent alludes to the difficulty of translating Chinese poetry into English and alerts the reader to his coining of a number of new words such as "clearcool," "whirlblow," and "densedarkly" to provide for the inadequacy of English words for Chinese.

The problems of translation are discussed at length in James Liu's work on Li Shang-yin, a much more penetrating and scholarly study than the volume on Ts'ao Chih. Liu feels compelled to answer Frost's quip that "poetry is what disappears in translation," he discusses the meaning of translation and what he calls "the world of a poem."

Li Shang-yin, like Ts'ao Chih, lived in a time of turmoil and disintegrating ideals and institutions of the T'ang dynasty. He had passed the Confucian civil service examination and as a result had risen to various minor posts in the bureaucracy. Like the giants of Chinese poetry—Li Po, Tu Fu, and Po Chu-yi—Li Shang-yin was influenced greatly by Taoism and Buddhism, becoming a devout Buddhist near the end of his life. These two philosophies influenced Li in many aspects: the tone of his poetry is often passionate; he frequently deals in worlds of fantasy and almost all of his poems are complex and abstruse. The author suggests that because of Li's pursuit of the extraordinary, because of the ever-present tension between sensuality and spirituality, and because of the tendency to ornamentation and elaboration, this poetry can most accurately be called "baroque."

Professor Liu calls Li "one of the most ambiguous, if not the most ambiguous of Chinese poets:" a brief look at Li's work makes the author's evaluation almost seem an understatement. Liu spends much time explicating each poem, giving copious notes (which in some cases still do not help plumb the depths of Li's poetry), and providing interpretations of other Li scholars. Often the author has no recourse but to suggest in his interpretation that "perhaps this poem is . . ." or "this poem seems to be . . ."

Li often wrote of romantic love, an uncommon theme in most Chinese poetry and in a society where the lover-loved relationship was not emphasized. In many cases, Li's love is of the anguished, longing, passionate variety, frustrated by separation and the passage of time that destroys youth and beauty. Some critics have suggested that Li's poems must be interpreted allegorically; for example, these frustrated experiences of love symbolize universal human aspirations for the unattainable, or in particular, Li's pleas for official advancement. Liu wisely refuses to label Li's poetry as allegorical—a categorization which would, in effect, limit the meaning of the poetry.

In conclusion, the author's assertion that it is not the historical environment but the poet's individual genius which makes the poet can properly be applied to both Li and Ts'ao. It is for this reason that their poetry can transcend formidable barriers of time, language, and culture.

KEITH SCHOPPA


This volume is the first in a projected four-volume series. COMMUNICATION FOR CHURCHMEN, under the general editorship of Jackson, whose title is as long as the book: Executive Director of Communication Processes and learning Resources, Division of the Local Church, Methodist Board of Education. The completed series is to provide the "churchman" with resources for the entire realm of communication and learning activities at the parish level.

In prospect, the series invites commendation as a potentially good one-source library on media use in the local church. It will deserve that vote of confidence on the strength of the diversity and competence of its practical essays (of which this volume contains two, on print resources and audiovisuals). If you're just beginning to get serious about media use and have no resources in the parish library, this series should fill the bill; but if you've already accessioned
A-V manuals and the like, these volumes will only duplicate materials you already have. After all, there is only one way to insert a filmstrip into the projector (even if Mrs. Schmidt in the primary department insists there is a second!).

But don't—repeat, don't—buy the book for its essays on communications and learning theory. The second essay, "Learning and the Church," by Howard W. Ham, is a brutally brief summary of current options in learning theory—a summary too brief to be useful to the educator, but too diffuse and technical to be useful for the beginning Sunday School teacher.

More misgivings arise over the lead essay, "Communication for Churchmen," by William F. Fore, Executive Director of the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches, and a doctoral candidate in communication at Columbia University. A curious blend of theology and McLuhanism, Fore's essay sketches alternative models of the communication process, summarizes basic principles in communication theory, and suggests implications for the Christian's use of and response to the mass media. About half-way through the essay, the reader can no longer escape the question, "Where have I heard all this before?" Page 49 gives the answer:

"This is the great contribution of Marshall McLuhan: he has succeeded in placing the question of the effects of media into a total cultural context, a feat something like getting a school of fish in a fishbowl to consider the environment outside the water in which they live."

"McLuhan's thesis is that the type of information conveyed is not so important as the medium by which it is conveyed, or, to put it in his own terminology, that the forms projected at us by our technology are greatly more informative than any verbal message they convey."

One must recognize, of course, the connection between technology and communication that lies behind McLuhan's theorizing, but Fore seems as ready as his master to insist that electronic communications technology has introduced a new kind of communication, and not merely a new degree of speed and immediacy. In this reviewer's judgment, however, that point has not at all been demonstrated; in fact, one of the weaknesses of many commentators and critics today is this readiness to cry "Qualitative change!" when there is none. Kohlhepp is as likely a prophet for our day as McLuhan: "There is nothing new under the sun. All is vanity and striving after wind!"

Fore's brief final chapter, "The Church's Communication Task," contains some observations which almost redeem the otherwise lack-luster essay. Noting the necessary distinction between "inside" and "outside" communication, Fore suggests that because the "outsider" does not share the common language and symbols of the "insider," the Church must not try to make of the mass media mere extensions of altar and pulpit. Not all of what the church has to say can be said via television and radio, for the media "cannot normally be expected to carry this 'inside' communication [even] to the faithful."

On the other hand, the media and their secular symbols need to be brought more and more to the attention of the "insiders." Says Fore: "Only as churchmen develop a critical stance toward all media, learning to evaluate them from within the categories of their faith, can they avoid being the object of their manipulation." (p. 98)

There is simply no substitute for Gospel- ed reflection on our use of and response to the mass media. Why, we might just understand our churchly and worldly selves a little bit better!

DAVID G. TRUEMPER

Brevity, clarity, and conciseness mark this book. Limited in its undertaking by the format imposed upon him by his German publisher, Mr. Petersen took upon himself the almost impossible task of reducing the complexity of Camus' thought to its basic tenets.

The book is based on the principle that Camus the man and Camus the thinker and writer are not to be divorced. The book is therefore divided into five chapters, each corresponding to a period in Camus' life and to the writings associated with that period. Each writing is then understood as the direct consequence of the circumstances surrounding its genesis and in the context of Camus' experience.

This method is traditional, but I find a writer important not because of what he was but because of what he wrote. Camus, the ephemeral man, matters less to me than the legacy in writing which he left us. His social, psychological, and spiritual characteristics are obviously the instruments of his creation, but the creation itself is what is given to me to understand and work with. To find the man behind the writing is the work of the psychologist or of the sociologist, not of the literary critic.

Therefore, I would have preferred a stricter adherence to the critical method and more space given to the analysis of the texts themselves. Furthermore, I find that in the space devoted to critical analysis, Mr. Peterson reveals great talent. I would have liked to have been exposed to more of his very perceptive textual study.

SIMONE BAEPLER
With the immense advantage of an entire month's perspective, it is finally possible to select the Man of the Decade 1960-1970. His name is Lyndon Johnson, and "for good or ill, his was the influence which did the most to shape the character" of the decade just past. To begin the decade now before us, Johnson is treating the world to $300,000 worth of his reflections in a series of TV interviews with Walter Cronkite. This, of course, is only the first, tempting taste of the shrewdly programmed and packaged Johnson Memorabilia—a mixed media mountain of materials intended to establish a favorable place in history for its protagonist, but in any case guaranteed to embellish an already generous patrimony for the Johnson progeny.

On any reading, Johnson's legacy to the nation at large is the war in Vietnam. It is a gruesome and wicked gift to the world. The war in Vietnam is indisputably Johnson's war. Why this is so is a complex matter to discuss. But the explanation involves some features of the mass media, and I will be mainly concerned here to discuss these features. They are, however, only a part of the larger picture.

It is not simply because Johnson was President at the time America got most deeply involved in the war that justifies one in calling it Johnson's war. Rather, the peculiar character of this conflict, coupled with the role Johnson played in its developing scenario, provide the grounds for the attribution.

The best sign of Lyndon Johnson's responsibility for the war in Vietnam is the fact that recently emerging analyses of the war are so sharply at variance with still current popular views of the conflict—views which Johnson and his subordinates propagated and doubtless, unfortunately, themselves truly believed. The war in Vietnam is intrinsically difficult for Americans to understand—especially Americans, like Johnson and Rusk, so committed to the categories of the Cold War. Because the origin and nature of the basic struggle between Saigon and the countryside, including North Vietnam, is so foreign to our established pattern of thinking, we required our elected leadership to guide our thoughts with respect to the developing conflict—and to guide our actions as well. It now appears that Johnson and his advisers had no fuller understanding of the problem than did the man on the street. This mis-understanding made American involvement in the conflict seem both appropriate and acceptable. The masses of Americans are only now coming to see that American intervention was neither useful nor tolerable.

One doubts that either Johnson or Rusk has come as far in his appreciation of the situation.

Johnson could not invest in this conflict hundreds of thousands of American men, or hundreds of billions of American dollars without soliciting the active or at least passive support of the majority of American people. But equally as surely he could not gain that support by offering to the electorate an analysis of the situation on the order of that which now appears to be most accurate. The people were thinking in terms of stopping Communist aggression; their vision, or nightmare, was that of Red hoards sweeping across Southeast Asia, taking by massed armies what they could not get by contrived insurrection. Johnson, it seems, was thinking this way too. Or at least this was the picture he painted in order to garner support for his policies. We now know that he was in possession of facts which should have been sufficient to convince him that this view was completely mistaken. Yet it was the view he stuck to.

Why? Perhaps because he thought it was the only construal of the conflict which could mobilize popular support. In this, no doubt, he was correct. For the headline-type stories on television and radio news reports, or the front page banners of the local newspaper—the average man's sole sources of news—required that the conflict be reduced to the simplest possible terms: Them vs. Us, Totalitarianism vs. Freedom, Terrorists vs. Disciplined Defenders. One can't build a bonfire of war from the twigs of a properly qualified analysis, and men will not die to save a rubber tree.

Any President knows that to rally the masses of this country to war he must claim that our very survival, or that of the Free World, hangs in the balance. The mass media can deliver such a message quickly and forcefully. The President who uses the media to warmonger without just cause must therefore accept responsibility for his acts. Lyndon Johnson took the nation to war in Vietnam and we should not have gone to war there. The hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded which have resulted from the American intervention are Johnson's responsibility. Thus, depending on what he knew, he is either a tragic or an evil figure.

This verdict may be premature. It is quite possible that I am dead wrong. If I am, then there is a lot about this war which I should know, but have been unable to find out. By the same token, if Johnson is not the demon or the dupe of the past decade, then he is its hero. But is it even conceivable that Lyndon Johnson is the hero of the sixties?
Music

Thoughts from the West Gallery

By PHILIP GEHRING

When the church is undergoing an upheaval in its theology, church music is in for hard times. The Council of Trent rocked the church music establishment of its time; Calvin swept away all music except metrical psalms; the church musicians of England during its Protestant-Catholic oscillation were often without an income. I venture to say that we are experiencing something similar today. The changes are less revolutionary and dramatic, perhaps, but no less profound and widespread. Today's demythologized, secular, socially-oriented theology is bringing with it a demand for a kind of church music which is without the other-worldly atmosphere we have cherished so long, a music which is popular in idiom, concerned more with celebration and brotherhood than with the inner spiritual life of the individual.

These winds of change have been enthusiastically greeted by some, who hope that much stuffiness will be blown away. Others fear that the new popular emphasis will result in the loss of a precious heritage in church music. But, friend or foe, the movement is upon us. How shall the church musician respond to it? I have some suggestions.

First, let music be music. The making of music is a profoundly human creative process, complete in itself. The musician does not, as a rule, look outside of music for his tools and procedures, nor does he normally anticipate non-musical rewards for his labors (leaving aside, of course, the monetary rewards which any professional person hopes to receive for his work). This is not to say, however, that music does not touch life. It does so, at many crucial points. It calls up memories and images, it joins us together in a common effort, it[note: this sentence appears to be incomplete and fragmented]...
The Visual Arts

Architecture for a Democratic Society

Such as the life is, such is the form.  

Samuel Coleridge

Frontier people wanted a sense of being together, of being one in common purpose with their fellow beings, for without this the burden of freedom and the responsibilities of individuality could scarcely be born.  

Hugh Duncan

We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us.  

Winston Churchill

The Sunday morning Bible class, which my wife and I attend, used to meet in the church pews and there listen to the pastor lecture. Then, early last year, the class relocated itself around an open square of tables and served coffee. People seemed increasingly inclined to ask questions and offer comments concerning the issues of life and Biblical faith. Best of all, out of this new form, which encourages face to face encounters of individuals, a warm sense of oneness is developing on the basis of a common search for a life in Christ. Forms do influence functions.

On a larger scale, the potential of architecture to help shape society — that is, to help shape a democratic society — was taken very seriously by two great Chicago architects, Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). By 1890, with a population of over one million, their Chicago had become the booming agricultural manufacturing, meat packing, railroading, merchandising, labor and business center of the midwest, and in some ways of the nation. With the soon-to-be-founded University of Chicago and Jane Adam's Hull House, Chicago was becoming a national focal point for the establishment of democracy in urban society. Furthermore, Chicago's engineers had innovated the steel cage as a basic new building construction system, and the business men had developed new public buildings for offices and the retail department store.

Louis Sullivan was the first to give the steel cage commercial building its own unique aesthetic form. To do so he fought against others who would shape these buildings in Old World monumental forms, such as adaptations of baroque palaces, imitations of masonry load-bearing walls, and machine-made versions of handmade Renaissance detailing. In Sullivan's view such forms were spurious and communicated both plutocratic power and the undemocratic past of kings and classes. Rather, Sullivan designed the steel cage commercial building in such a way as to celebrate its structure as an exciting achievement of a democratic-technological society. He designed its function as a new kind of stage for work and social encounters of the entire range of citizenry, and through naturalistic ornamentation he reminded the populace of the order and exuberance of the natural world.

In 1910, the Wasmuth Company of Germany printed a handsome portfolio of drawings prepared by Frank Lloyd Wright and his studio, showing seventy buildings and projects representative of Wright's first seventeen years of architectural work. Many of the buildings were of family dwellings built in and around Chicago. Accompanying the drawings was an essay by Wright called The Sovereignty of the Individual. In it he states that a building must grow out of the conditions of the life that is lived and the ideals that are held, rather than out of the traditional forms of pillars, capitals, and cornices of so-called high beauty originated in times now alien. Instead, he wanted his buildings to serve the democratic ideal of the free individual living in close harmony with nature and society. Our country should encourage, Wright said, "...the highest possible development of the individual consistent with a harmonious life of the whole... (and) the whole, to be worthy as complete, must consist of individual units great and strong in themselves, not units yoked from outside in bondage but united by spirit from inside..."

To achieve his ideals, Wright designed buildings that respected and submitted themselves to the size of the human being. Entrances are surprisingly low and private. The larger shapes and space of the buildings, such as the outer walls, are broken down into smaller units, following, it seems, a freely interpreted underlying geometric module. This play of abstract geometric order is echoed in the breaking up of plane surfaces with linear strips of concrete or wooden plank molding, or glass leading in the windows, or even on the designs in the carpeting. In short, the scale of the individual is constantly referred to. The only shapes that seem to dominate the human scale in these "Prairie Style" buildings are those of the horizontal or of the overall outer shape of buildings, such as those of Unity Temple, in which group functions are dominant. Even so, the interior room for worship contains innumerable references to the human scale. There are two balconies on each of three sides, each balcony having only three or four rows of pews. The entire room holds a congregation of over
1909 Frederick C. Robie house, Chicago, Ill. Plans of upper and lower floors.

four hundred but no one is farther than fifteen rows away from podium. Furthermore, Wright breaks down the size of the surfaces with a full play of patterning.

Wright’s dwellings also offers the person “bearing the burden of freedom and the responsibilities of individuality” in a democratic society something of the reassuringly stable, secure, protecting shelter of a cave. Low, hovering roofs anchored to a broad central masonry fireplace provides a sense of privacy and a first-hand encounter with enduring, raw elements of nature. At the same time, the spaces and forms of the buildings never seem static. Contracting and expanding, hiding and revealing, space and form flow from area to area within the building and out past the ribbon of casement windows or wall of veranda doors, ever outward under the broad eaves, on to the projecting terraces and beyond but always invitingly back again. The building has become a pavilion demonstrating involvement and interaction with nature and the larger environment.

These buildings are over sixty years old. Wright’s forms are too personal, apparently, for others to use them successfully again. Yet as Edgar Kaufman, the architectural critic, recently wrote, Wright’s work involves three ideas of much concern in the architectural shaping of our environment today. The first idea is territoriality and environment. I think of it as meaning “sense of place.” Wright’s territoriality was that of a center hub from which man attempts a healthful relation-

ship with society and the natural environment. Another idea is clustering, that is learning to group these hubs on perhaps a geometric module so that an underlying order is apparent, yet not ruling out individuality and variety. Such clustering would permit mass building to take advantage of the economies of standardization and mass production. The third idea is indeterminacy, a quality that imparts to a building flexibility, a feeling of uncertainty and adventure, a sense that in this place and in this environment there are fresh possibilities for life.

February 1970
At the risk of being accused of fiddling while Rome burns, I should like to suggest that what we as a nation need most of all just now is to recover a sense of humor.

I know that we are caught up in a ghastly war which we neither can win nor deserve to win; that our air and waters are poisoned; that our cities are concrete jungles; that the Mafia has infiltrated business and government; that the black, the poor, and the young feel left out of the processes by which our society makes its decisions; that the moral absolutes of my childhood no longer serve as the parameters necessary for true freedom. No matter. I still maintain that the road back to sanity and wholeness lies through a recovery of that balanced view of things which we call a sense of humor.

To a much larger extent than we care to admit our present troubles, personal and societal, are the consequences of the triumph of Pelagianism, as grim a heresy as ever infected the body of Christian theology and, through that, the whole of Western thought. Pelagius denied the reality of original sin and he denied that any supernatural grace is necessary for man to be healed of its corruption. Man had it in him, Pelagius thought, to build either heaven or hell on this earth, a view which was later adopted by most of popular Protestantism, particularly by the Methodist element which dominated religious thinking in this country.

Pelagianism drives men to despair for it lays upon them the whole burden of their failures, the whole weight of their imperfections, the whole responsibility for pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. The best antidote to Pelagianism is the Gospel with its realistic definition of man’s condition (“I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him”) and its remedy for that condition (“By grace are ye saved through faith.”) But an apostate age which has rejected the Gospel must be content with

A clear winter night. . . . . . There they are again — or still — the guardians of the universe, the watchers of the sky wheeling in their appointed courses. . . . . Far away in the West the glow of the city kills the light of the stars. . . . . Here is our story and our problem. . . . . Too often the near and noisy things hide the far and the quiet. . . . . There is something immeasurably purifying in being washed in starlight. . . . . A glimpse of the country beyond time and the city beyond earth. . . . .

What strange matters men have thought on nights like this. . . . . Adam saw beyond the gates of Paradise Lost the lights of his lost home. . . . . Job saw them from his ashes, St. Paul through a barred window, St. John to the music of the Aegean Sea, and Luther from the towers of the Wartburg. . . . . Under these stars Matthew Arnold wrote his elegy for a world whose death he saw as it was being born:

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits . . . .
The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
and naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

The Cresset
weaker medicine. And the best of the weaker medicines is a sense of humor.

"Laughter," Chesterton once wrote, "has something in it in common with the ancient winds of faith and inspiration; it unfreezes pride and unwinds secrecy; it makes men forget themselves in the presence of something greater than themselves; something (as the common phrase goes about a joke) that they cannot resist." Laughter is the healthy and natural reaction to the inescapable incongruities of life. It is the antidote to the despair that results from seeing man only at his worst and to the idolatry which results from seeing him at his best.

The man blessed with a sense of humor knows that man and his institutions are a mixture of the divine and the demonic. He knows that we are a messy, paradoxical lot, capable of the most remarkable feats of self-denying heroism and equally capable of obscenities like Buchenwald and My Lai. He knows that we do not have it in us to build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land, or in any other land for that matter. He sees us as slightly absurd at our best and not quite hopeless at our worst. And he does not expect of us more than we have in us—something far short of perfection and yet worth salvaging.

If we could accept, and laugh at, our humanness, we might be on the way toward making this world not the new Jerusalem but a bit more tolerable, a bit more decent for ourselves and each other. We should be content with limited, attainable objectives rather than make shipwreck of our lives in a quest for the unattainable. And in the laughter of mutual acceptance we should perhaps find a way to bear those many things which, if they cannot be changed, can nevertheless be endured.

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**Starlight**

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Shelley came nearer the meaning of the stars than Arnold. . . . Perhaps you remember the famous stanza from his last farewell to Keats:

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.
Die —
If thou wouldest be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled! Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak —
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

"All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side"
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

But the final truth lies in a stanza more simple and more profound:

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Here then is man's final dilemma. . . . To hold in the same heart and mind the mysterious universe, the light years, the distant stars, the dark expanses of the worlds beyond worlds — and beyond them to see that the truth of starlit nights lies in "Silent Night, Holy Night." . . . To know both worlds and be at home in one is the secret of life. . . . Then the stars can light fires in shadowed eyes which burn the brighter for the shadows. . . .