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Above: Gerhard Grimm, German b. 1927, UNTITLED (ALWAYS TALKING), 1985, woodcut from a German printing of Mark Twain's "Adam's Diary," 378/600. University Collection, Valparaiso University Museum of Art. Gift of the artist. 88.1.2

Random Observations

With no opportunity for extended analysis, some quick prejudices and glancing arguments.

- The rush to political judgment of so many bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in opposition to the *contra* appropriations bill confirms the worst fears that the ELCA will follow the liberal Protestant establishment into the shallows of confusing left-wing political stances with the imperatives of the Gospel. The point here is *not* ideological: it is rather the essential distinction between prudential political judgments—about which Christians may allowably disagree—and unambiguous moral necessities. If church leaders and bureaucrats won't take greater care with such distinctions, they will drag the church's public witness into deserved disrepute.

- So it's going to be Bush vs. Dukakis. Center-Right vs. Center-Left. Not as exciting or polarized a contest as some had hoped for, but one that offers an outcome, either way, that the great majority of Americans will be able comfortably to live with. There's a lot to be said for the politics of sobriety. Think about it. It could have been Pat Robertson vs. Jesse Jackson.

- Words Are Not Things Department: We continue to hear endlessly about the Middle East peace process. What Middle East peace process? Israel's bitter-enders are hopelessly intransigent, but that makes no real difference. With which Arab leader could the most pacific of Israelis hope usefully to bargain? Even King Hussein of Jordan, the most frequently cited Arab "moderate," always manages to play artful dodger when it comes down actually to negotiating with Israel. Until another Anwar Sadat comes along (and of course all Arab leaders recall what happened to him) the Middle East situation will remain essentially unchanged.

- It says something depressing about the state of American political culture that Secretary of Education William Bennett continues to be treated in many circles as if he were located on the fringes of political and intellectual respectability. He is by no measure some sort of James Watt clone and it is absurd that he be so categorized. How is it that a sophisticated defender of the great tradition of western civilization gets dismissed as little more than an articulate yahoo?

Hail and Farewell

This issue of *The Cresset* marks the end of Robert V. Schnabel's tenure as its publisher. As Dr. Schnabel concludes his distinguished ten year period as President of Valparaiso University so he also relinquishes his duties with *The Cresset*. We extend to him a warm and affectionate farewell.

It has been the present Editor's privilege and good fortune to work under Robert Schnabel for the past seven years. No aspect of the editorial work of those years has been more pleasant and rewarding than that involved in relations with the Publisher. From the beginning, Dr. Schnabel has in fact been the sort of publisher every editor dreams of. He has been supportive in meeting the journal's chronic deficits and in demonstrating at every opportunity his commitment to its continued existence. He has been personally encouraging and generous in his commendations. Never has he second-guessed or offered even a hint of censorial control. Critics of the journal invariably received a courteous hearing from its Publisher, but if they intended through their criticisms to induce him to impose restrictions on his editorial staff they were disappointed in their hopes.

Dr. Schnabel understood that a journal of the University concerned with ideas and opinion must be—like the University itself—uninhibited in the subjects it investigates and the judgments it renders. Himself a man of orthodox persuasion, he imposed no orthodoxy on *The Cresset*.

Valparaiso University has benefited greatly from Robert Schnabel's dedication to intellectual excellence and the Christian tradition and his conviction that neither need be sacrificed to the other. So also has *The Cresset*. We join all other members of the University community in imploring God's richest blessings in the years to come on a man who has been, in the fullest sense of the term, a Christian gentleman.

At the same time we welcome to the University and to the *Cresset* Publisher's office the man selected to serve as VU's seventeenth President, Dr. Alan F. Harre. All of us at *The Cresset* look forward to working with Dr. Harre in furthering the work of the Christian intellectual tradition in which the Valparaiso University community finds its purpose.
JIMMY SWAGGART AND CHRISTIAN SEXUAL EXTREMISM

A Meditation on a Misreading of Genesis

I have often wondered to what extent and in what ways Western culture would be different if St. Augustine had been obsessed with money instead of sex. Would male Christians today find it worse to be caught on a luxury liner than in a brothel? Would people disguise themselves and give phony names while purchasing Cadillacs? Would Spiegel catalogues come wrapped in brown paper? Would opening a savings account be as morally and legally complex as procuring a divorce? Would adolescents become casuists about greed instead of pre-marital sex? “Does charging interest always lead to usury?” Would this question or one like it replace “Does heavy petting always lead to intercourse?” as the sort of thing pious teens regularly discuss? Would ministers be defrocked for stock market speculation?

Let us grant that this whole investigation would serve better as a premise for a Woody Allen movie than it would as an exercise in counter-factual history. Even so, the recent scandals involving the Bakkers and Jimmy Swaggart should lead all Christians to realize how deeply flawed much of Christian piety really is. Jim and Tammy had been openly and incredibly greedy for years, but none of their followers seemed to notice this, much less condemn it. Had it not been for the episode involving Jessica Hahn, Bakker and his cronies would still be in business. Sex, not greed, was the source of the Bakkers’ and Swaggart’s undoing.

Verily, verily, God does work in mysterious ways. His wonders to perform. His judgment fell, in this case, not so much against Jim and Tammy and Jimmy, but against Christian ministries that virtually equate Christian virtue with chastity and monogamy. Contrary to much of popular Christianity, Jesus Christ did not come to seek and to save the nuclear family. He was not really very much interested in sex and marriage, but He was very much interested in feeding the hungry, healing the sick, mending the broken, and otherwise doing acts of justice and mercy. Had the ministries in question been less preoccupied with sins of the flesh and more concerned with matters of social and political injustice, the recent scandals would not have shaken them so deeply. Those who live by a certain kind of preaching must also die by it.

I think that it is important to assert forcefully the relative significance of matters of sexual morality for Christians before proceeding, as I intend to do here, to discuss human sexuality from a perspective that is informed by the Bible. And by now my biases should be clear. I think that many, perhaps most, Christians have become sexual extremists, meaning that they have emphasized in their personal lives one moral issue to the virtual exclusion of all others. I do not wish to promote such extremism here.

On the other hand, sexuality has always been and is especially now a vital matter of human concern, and I think that secular thinkers have too often ignored the Bible as a vitally important resource for thinking through this matter. My modest aim in this essay is to stimulate and direct some conversation about human sexuality through an analysis and interpretation of one Bible story. And in the course of this interpretation, I shall argue that Christian sexual extremism has arisen in part as the result of a misreading of the same story.

II

The story that I want to consider is the second account of creation (Genesis 2:4b-3:24). That account seems to contain at least two important teachings about human sexuality. First, the principal source of
attraction between the sexes—perhaps even the source of gender itself—is human loneliness, not erotic desire. Second, conflicts between the sexes are inevitably a part of the human condition, but they are not a part of the original divine intention, and they do not arise primarily from carnal desire.

Conflicts between the sexes are a part of the human condition, but they are not a part of the original divine intention, and they do not arise primarily from carnal desire.

The first of these two teachings is perhaps the most important one. Immediately after God has spoken for the first time to the earth creature, the human taken from the ground, He concludes that it is not good that this creature should be alone in the world. The first speaking creates or at least makes manifest the conditions of creatureliness: God commands, the human listens; God permits and prohibits, setting limits for the human. In other words, Creator and creature are not equal, not perhaps fitting companions. Whatever the case here, human loneliness arises as a problem immediately after the creature becomes aware that it is a creature, that it is in a very direct and explicit sense limited.

God instantly discerns this problem and moves to remedy it. Again He creates. Animals. Animals as companions, as suitable or fitting companions? Why not? At least one of the animals, the serpent, can talk. Nevertheless, after all of the animals are formed (like the human "out of the ground"), "there was not found a helper fit" for human companionship. Radical surgery seems required. And so the Creator creates once more, not one but two new beings—the human male and the human female. Out of one, the earth creature, come two, man and woman. And these two in turn "become one flesh." The surgical remedy to the problem of human loneliness is radical indeed.

I realize that the reading I have offered thus far—"out of one, the earth creature, come two, man and woman"—is a matter of considerable scholarly controversy. And I must confess that I am both disqualified (I am not a student of Hebrew) and disinclined fully to defend my reading here. I have in fact relied upon Phyllis Trible’s God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality for the argument that the earth creature was, according to the Genesis account, originally "sexually undifferentiated (neither male nor female nor a combination of both)."

I will only note in passing that if we turn to embryology rather than to mythology for guidance in these matters, we find some peculiar affinities between Trible’s reading of Genesis 2:21-24 and contemporary scientific accounts of how human life begins and develops in utero. Here, for example, is Stephen Jay Gould on the embryological development of gender. "The external differences between male and female develop gradually from an early embryo so generalized that its sex cannot be easily determined. . . . Males and females are not separate entities, shaped independently by natural selection. Rather the two sexes are variants upon a single ground plan, elaborated in later embryology."

Moving now back to Genesis and borrowing from Gould, it seems to me indisputable that the male and the female are indeed "variants upon a single ground plan," grounded, if you will, in a common humanity itself formed "from the ground" by a Creator God who seeks to remedy human loneliness through the creation of companionship. And this seems true even if one does prefer Miltonic discourse about Adam and Eve and Satan to Phyllis Trible’s discourse about a sexually undifferentiated earth creature, a male and a female, and a serpent. The first human longing is for companionship. Becoming one flesh is the completion of companionship, not its cause.

III

Alas, instead of companionship completed and corroborated by physical intimacy, we find more often the proverbial "battle between the sexes." In Genesis 2, we find only harmony and equality. The man and the woman stand "naked" and "not ashamed" before their Creator. But already by Genesis 3:7, the man and the woman are naked and ashamed. Then, in Genesis 3:16, the Creator tells the woman, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Innocence and companionship have given away to self-consciousness and domination.

Is human sexuality centrally implicated in this movement from companionship to conflict? St. Augustine thought so. Indeed, he argued that human sexual desire, as we now know it, is the principal mark and consequence of original disobedience. "This contention, fight, and alteration of lust and will, this need of lust to the sufficiency of the will, had not been laid upon wedlock in paradise, unless disobedience had become the punishment for the sin of disobedience. Otherwise these members had obeyed their wills as well as the rest." In other words, prior to disobedience, human beings were as much in control of their sexual responses as they were in control of all other external bodily movements. But after disobedience, the re-
sponses of the sex organs were no longer voluntary: they acted seemingly in response to an impulse of their own, often contrary to human will—"the lust of the flesh." The rebels were given, in their very bodies, rebellion.

This exceptionally powerful reading of the Genesis story, answering, as it does, to one of the strongest and most mysterious of the physiological processes that we know, has done much to fasten upon Western Christendom the sexual extremism I mentioned earlier. Lust or concupiscence becomes at once the form and the carrier of original sin. It is no wonder that many Christians equate Christian virtue with chastity or monogamy. They must have first equated vice with sex. Thus, according to many Christians, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker were not simply involved in sordid and sinful lapses. They were committing the sin, the primal sin, Sin.

For many Christians, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker were not simply involved in sordid and sinful lapses. They were instead committing the sin, the primal sin, Sin.

And there are a number of unfortunate corollaries, not all of them Augustinian to be sure, that are derived by many Christians and non-Christians alike from the basic idea that concupiscence is the root of all evil. Woman, for example, becomes especially dangerous. She is the tempted, then the temptress, and finally the seducer of man. Man comes to rule over woman, because he should come to rule over her. The grounds for this male domination in popular Christian culture are paradoxical, however. Was man given rule to compensate for his comparative weakness in the face of the more emotionally powerful and more intellectually independent woman? Or was man given rule over woman because he is less driven by rapacious, unruly appetites and hence less subject to temptation?

The assumptions that underlie these inquiries and observations—that concupiscence is the root of all evil, that gender conflict is involved in the eating of the forbidden fruit, and that male domination is a norm prescribed by God—are unwarranted by the text of Genesis 3. The disobedience committed by humanity, by woman and man together, involves the illicit grasp of knowledge in order to become divine. The serpent introduces the interrogative mode into paradise. Questions. The woman answers, thinks critically, judges, misjudges, sees, hungers, seeks wisdom, aspires to deity. Grasps. Eats. Violates limits. Disobeys. So far as we can tell, the man participates fully with her in this extremely complicated process. "... She took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate."

The narrative here defies reduction to any doctrinal formulation about the fundamental character of or motive for human disobedience. The lust of the eyes may well be involved, but so is critical reasoning, autonomous judgment, and presumption. And the humans really do achieve something very significant in the eyes of their Creator: "Behold, the (hu)man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. . . ."

The great paradox of the story is that what we regard as sources of human glory—freedom, critical reasoning, autonomous judgment, quasi-divine knowledge—become the sources of human shame. Self-consciousness, in its double sense of self-awareness and embarrassment, comes into being: "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Whatever else the Genesis story may teach us, it at least teaches us this, that the sources of the most profound human miseries and failures are somehow bound up with the sources of the most glorious human achievements. This tragic dimension to human experience has precious little to do with concupiscence and a great deal to do with the failure of both men and women to accept their common humanity.

Male domination arises in the story, not as a divine prescription for how human life ought to be lived, nor as a divine punishment for transgression. Rather, it is one of the several immediate consequences of human creation, of the kind of disorderly world that the woman and the man and the serpent have brought upon themselves. Gender conflict and inequality are a small part of a much larger pattern of disharmony that includes enmity between humans and animals, a struggle between humans and the vegetable world, and the replacement of life by death. Male rule is not sanctioned by God as a recipe for order; instead, it is one of the several marks of disorder that characterize the cultural world (the world that human beings have made) as opposed to the natural world (the world as it originally emerged from the hands of its Creator). The human beings who created the cultural world from which the Bible arose created patriarchy, but God, in the world of this particular Bible story, created only equality between the sexes.

IV

The end of the story in Genesis 2-3 does suggest that human beings are powerless by themselves to return to paradise. The human condition seems permanently flawed by the conflicts that mark both our
inner and our outer, our psychological and our social, lives. Indeed, the conditions described in Genesis 3 seem so fraught with difficulty that mortality seems more a blessing than a curse.

But if Genesis 3 diagnoses and describes our present predicament, Genesis 2 still remains the horizon of our hopes. It is one thing to say that we are permanently flawed, quite another to suggest that we must act to deepen and maintain those flaws as though they were divinely ordained. And, of course, we do not act this way for the most part. We do not suggest that we should not seek to alleviate human suffering. Nor do we ordinarily argue that leisure is an evil, since we were meant to labor and struggle. Has anyone composed a recent tract in favor of thorns and thistles?

But some Christians do compose elaborate arguments in favor of male supremacy, basing them, more often than not, upon a dubious reading of Genesis. And there is a link, I believe, between these arguments and sexual extremism. This link is not logical, for one could be a sexual extremist, an advocate of chastity or monogamy as the supreme Christian virtue, without being a male or female chauvinist. And conversely, one could be a male or female chauvinist without being a sexual extremist.

Yet sexual chauvinism and sexual extremism are so often found together that one has reason to suspect a psychological connection between them. And this connection is, I think, the fear of intimacy, of genuine and full companionship. The physical aspect of this dread leads directly to sexual extremism; the spiritual aspect leads directly to attempts to dominate and control. But so to divide the fear of intimacy into its physical and spiritual aspects is perhaps already a part of the problem here. Better to say that the dread of intimacy expresses itself in at least two ways, very often in both of these ways at one and the same time.

The Genesis story has much to teach us about the fear and the loss of intimacy. The humans first hide themselves from one another, fashioning aprons for themselves, before they then hide together from the Creator. Having tasted of divinity, securing the knowledge that they are and have always been exposed and vulnerable together, the woman and the man strive instantly to conceal that vulnerability. It is an endeavor that leads directly to estrangement between them. By the time that the Creator finds them out, they are already quarreling, accusing, distrusting. The battle between the sexes takes place in the action of the story before the Creator announces that it will become a part of human life.

The story thus charts in a very subtle manner a movement from one kind of loneliness to completed human companionship to another kind of loneliness. Thus this narrative sequence, whose midpoint involves the human aspiration to be divine, is framed by two very different kinds of separation from the divine. In the first instance, God observes that humanity is alone, solitary by virtue of the distance between Creator and creature. In the second instance, the humans observe that they have estranged themselves from the Creator, having already estranged themselves from each other and having thus undone the divine remedy for the solitary condition of original humanity.

Needless to say, the second state of separation is worse than the first. Paradoxically worse—naturally. For the human aspiration to be divine includes, among other things, the fundamental human need for companionship. But in becoming “like God,” the humans discover for themselves that “it is not good that humans should be alone.” Unfortunately, in the course of discovering this, the humans also become so fully aware of their vulnerability that they forever seek to conceal it. And in seeking to conceal it, they fatally jeopardize the possibility of that full intimacy that their nakedness made possible, even necessary, in the beginning.

V

Jimmy Swaggart and the sexual extremism that he and millions of like-minded Christians espouse will not disappear as the result of an interpretation of Genesis 2-3 such as the one that I have now offered. Sexual extremism is more a psychological, social, and cultural problem than it is a hermeneutical one. And it is more of a spiritual problem than it is a theological one.

Even though exegesis cannot by itself reduce sexual extremism, it can at least remove some of the justifications for it that are allegedly biblical. Even if some of my claims about what the Genesis story does say require correction, I believe that I have shown that the text does not warrant the view that sexual desire is the source or the primary form or the primary carrier of human sinfulness. Human beings, at least according to Genesis 2-3, neither bring sin into the world through sex, nor do they bring sex into the world through sin. People who claim otherwise may reveal more about themselves than they do about Genesis.

St. Augustine’s overemphasis upon concupiscence in his interpretation of the Genesis story therefore involved, I think, a tragic though understandable misreading of the text. The only real significance of the Jimmy Swaggart phenomenon stems from its demonstration that much of Christian piety is still haunted by the same distortion. Or to paraphrase Karl Marx, history does repeat itself, the first time as tragedy, the millionth time as farce.
AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Sources of Unrest in the New Nations

In 1942, five years before India gained its independence, Mohandas Gandhi’s “Quit India” movement had asked the British to “leave India to God or even anarchy” (Collins 74). Gandhi’s call represented a response to a common claim of colonial powers: the subjugated could not survive on their own, were not yet ready for self-government. Gandhi argued that any kind of self-rule was likely to be better than colonial rule.

Now, several decades after gaining independence, many new nations are torn by severe political and social unrest. “The signs of this darkened mood,” writes Clifford Geertz, “are everywhere ... in disenchantment within party politics, parliamentarianism, bureaucracy ... in uncertainties of direction, ideological weariness, and steady spread of random violence” (“After the Revolution” 235). While it may be premature and even unnecessary to worry about the survival of these nations, attempts to understand the nature and causes of this violence are both timely and necessary.

Millenarian dreams of social and economic transformation have since stumbled over recalcitrant reality. Charismatic leaders of these freedom struggles have passed away or, as Geertz says, diminished into mere heads of state. But more difficult has been the process of creating a collective identity, whereby the new nation sees itself as one people, now that there is no longer a common enemy to unite against.

These new African and Asian nations are very different from the nation-states of Europe. In European nations, people usually speak the same language, believe in the same religion (although denominations may be different), and come from the same racial stock. Despite the many local variations, the European states are essentially uni-ethnic. The process of becoming one people for many of these nations was, of course, neither swift nor easy. Germany, for instance, was united as a nation-state only after sixty years of dissension and three rather brutal wars.

The process of nation building involves the slow creation of a common identity where assumptions about commonality may in fact be spurious or artificially generated. Skeptics remark that a nation is a group of people jointly misinformed about their ancestry and jointly hostile to their neighbors. Yet, whatever the process, people of the old nation-states involved in it held similar normative values and patterns of behavior and shared memories of a commonly-conceived historical past.

In contrast, the new nations are pluralistic, containing within their boundaries groups separated sometimes by race, more often by tribe, language, religion, and culture. They are, to use a term made popular by social anthropology, multi-ethnic, where criteria for ethnicity are sub-ethnic distinctions like territoriality, language, and custom. In part, this enclosing of a diversity of people within the boundaries of a single nation is the legacy of colonialism. In Africa, European colonialists artificially carved territories which they then lumped together for administrative convenience. Most colonial borders lacked any rational relationship to existing African divisions. So either people of the same language and tribal group were separated between two or more nations (the Mende people were divided between Sierra Leone and Liberia) or different and even hostile tribes joined into one nation (the Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo were grouped together in Nigeria). Since the independence struggles took place within frontiers drawn by colonial powers, these new nations are often imperfectly integrated groups of many sub-nationalities.

Even when, as with India, the ethnic diversity is not a consequence of colonial rule, it has nevertheless been accentuated by it. Although the boundaries of British India were far larger than the Moghul Empire it re-
placed, India as a geographical identity, an administrative unit of sorts, had preexisted the British. The Muslim empires had introduced a new, and sometimes hostile, religion to the subcontinent. Beyond the bounds of the last Muslim empire, India was ruled by petty chieftains, nawabs, and maharajas. The people of the subcontinent, although bound together by profound cultural similarities, were also separated by language, regional variation, and, in some areas, tribal differences.

**Issues of economics when couched in terms of class bring the threat of a change of government (revolution) within a nation. Issues of economics when linked with ethnic identity promote disintegration and Balkanization of the nation.**

The British welded this conglomeration of identities into a nation. But in choosing to administer this nation through indirect rule (the cheapest and most convenient way to rule a colony), they preserved and even accentuated the existing divisions. Thus they accepted (in the Government of India Act of 1935) separate electorates for different interests, including different ethnic groups. The identity of the people on the subcontinent continued to be defined in local, or to use the now popular Geertzian phrase, primordial terms.

It has been more than forty years since India became an independent nation. Yet the majority of Indians still see their primary identification in primordial terms of language group, caste, religion, or tribe. When asked to identify themselves, they will do so as Bengali brahmins, Punjabi khatris, Behari muslims, Kashmiri pandits, Naga of the northeastern tribes, etc.

Both the similarity and the contrast with the United States are illuminating. The U.S., too, is a plural society whose people often cherish their separate identities. Sometimes these distinctions are based on race (black and white), sometimes on religion (Jews and Catholics), but most often on past nationality, common descent, and ancestral language.

I remember my surprise when I encountered this phenomenon on first arriving here. I had expected identification by race but I had not expected that when I asked my fellow graduate students where they came from (I was seeking information about home in the U.S.) they would often respond "I'm Italian," "I'm a Russian Jew," "I am a German Lutheran." Despite the stress on assimilation built into the notion of a melting-pot culture, Americans are gradually accepting pluralism and cherishing their ethnicity. Yet this more local identity exists side by side with a very strong civil identity as an American. Ethnic loyalties are not divisive because an ethnic community's efforts to further its interests do not threaten the integrity of the nation.

The people of the new nations lack this strong national attachment to check their conflicting multiple loyalties. And the conflict is exacerbated because these groups of people are competing for scarce resources. In such cases, provincial loyalties become a threat to national unity. The lines of cleavage are seldom the same. Religion divides in India but has failed to unite in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the dividing line between the east and the west was language. In India, the Sikhs and Hindus are united by language and in conflict over religion. In Sri Lanka, the Tamils and the Sinhalas differ both in language and religion although differences in language are the more crucial factor. This apparent arbitrariness in the source of a particular ethnic conflict indicates that the roots of conflict lie elsewhere—in issues of political dominance, economic power, cultural hegemony. That is, the symbols of the formation of identity may be different in each case, but the sources of conflict are similar.

**Issues of economics when couched in terms of class bring the threat of a change of government (revolution) within a nation. Issues of economics when linked with ethnic identity promote disintegration and Balkanization of the nation. In South America, Spanish colonialism virtually annihilated the conquered people. It shattered the Amerindians as a society, and, as with the slaves, it forced them to adopt the language and culture of the masters. As a consequence of this ethnocide, these new states of South America, when threatened with unrest, are subject to revolution, not dismemberment. In contrast, the Biafran War was an attempt by the Ibo people to secede from Nigeria, and Pakistan actually split into two separate nations. Even the Soviet Union, held together by enormous coercive power, shudders occasionally, as now, in the throes of ethnic discontent demanding realignment of state boundaries.**

**II**

The history of India since independence offers almost a paradigmatic illustration of the problems just outlined. The partition of the country at the moment of independence, and the terrible blood bath between Hindus and Muslims that accompanied it, served as a cataclysmic warning for the future if religious and ethnic rivalries were not ameliorated. Gandhi's death...
at the hands of a Hindu nationalist underscored the failure of his extraordinary efforts to exorcise communal hatred. The scars of that upheaval, when horror had no religion, are still visible on the psyche of the nation.

One of the primary tasks for the national leaders of the new nation, then, was to safeguard rights of ethnic minorities without encouraging separatism. The India they set out to govern, an India habituated to caste divisions and communal loyalties, was unlikely to transform itself very readily into a well-integrated nation. So these leaders, while they accepted pluralism, hoped for assimilation, a kind of cultural osmosis whereby differences would be lessened. They were convinced that the British policy of maintaining separate communal representation and electorates for religious minorities had fostered communal politics and had led to the partition of the country.

In the constitution the new leaders devised the minorities are granted special rights to protect their religious and cultural freedom, but they are no longer allowed separate communal representation and electorates. These leaders practiced what has since been termed "liberal pluralism." Whereas under corporate pluralism ethnic groups are formally recognized and economic and political rewards are allocated on the basis of a quota system, under liberal pluralism the state curtails ethnic discrimination by ensuring fundamental rights to individual citizens (Gordon, Human Nature 88).

Nehru thus welcomed this decision to abolish communal representation as a "historic turn of our destiny," for to perpetuate separate identities for different ethnic groups would hinder formation of an integral national community (Pant 41). There was one exception: protective discrimination in favor of the scheduled castes (legal name for the untouchables) and tribes. Here, in order to make up for centuries of unjust discrimination, the constitution allowed, for a limited time, reservation of seats in legislatures and quotas for educational opportunities and hiring in government service.

Nehru hoped that swift modernization would transform the national psyche so that civil loyalties would replace primordial ones. Despite rapid industrialization and development, however, ethnic conflict has increased in India, not declined.

Since development in India has been uneven, economic growth in various sections of the population also has been uneven. This helps to promote its own disequilibriums because the subordinate groups now see their backwardness in relation to other groups. In such situations, ethnicity becomes an organizing principle around which secular demands are now raised. The Kulaks (well-to-do farmers) of Haryana unite against the Baniyas (merchants) in Haryana; there are continued incidents of violence between upper castes and the scheduled castes. In fact in India the fault lines of almost any kind of conflict coincide with ethnic cleavages, because now affective ties can be combined with matters of political or economic interest.

Developing countries like India, where large scale development strategies are planned at the center and where all important decisions about resources and distribution are made at the top, are specially prone to fierce jockeying for power and privilege between different ethnic groups. There are, as well, large discontinuities between political cultures at the national and state level. The national politicians and legislators occupy themselves with large-scale planning, with rapid industrialization, and with national integration. The state politicians, on the other hand, are occupied with intercaste and intercommunal relations, with control of local resources and land.

Within the Indian federal system, the central gov-
ernment plays a significant role in state politics. Intervention in state politics by the central government began with the Nehru era and was taken to unprecedented proportions by Mrs. Gandhi. And more and more, these acts of intervention from the center are clearly linked with a brand of electoral politics which thrives on polarization of communal interests.

At the time of independence, India was dominated by a single party, the Indian National Congress. In the interest of pursuing his national goals, Nehru did not hesitate to undermine the stability of state governments when they were controlled by opposing parties or by opposing factions within the ruling party. The central government in India has the power to terminate a state government when the state governor—who has been appointed by the center—decides that a stable government can no longer be formed in the state.

Mrs. Gandhi used such prerogative ruthlessly and all too frequently, seldom allowing any opposition even within her party. In destroying state autonomy she also damaged party organizations and institutions which worked at the local level. She chose to rely instead on a brand of electoral politics where she appealed directly to the masses without local intermediaries. Her expert demagoguery exploited every sentiment likely to arouse passions—including ethnic loyalties.

State-center conflicts in India, therefore, have often tended to take on a communal overtone. This process of communalization of state-center relations began with the demand for uni-lingual states. When working on the Linguistic Province Committee, Nehru had recognized the dangers of such division. He saw therein the "centuries old India of narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices engaged in mortal conflict... we were simply horrified to see how thin was the ice we were skating upon" (Geertz, "Integrative Revolution" 256).

There was, of course, no way around linguistic division of states, a formula both rationally and emotionally appealing. Linguistic reorganization does not threaten the state or the ruling party, nor does it demand a reworking of center-state relations, since the center is still the adjudicator in these matters. There is always the danger of province bifurcation as language groups within an existing state attempt to break away from each other. But small language groups, lacking popular support, usually remain content with subordinate positions within the larger state. Language has caused violence and unrest only when it becomes an arena for a political struggle between the center and the state or between the ruling party and opposition, as has been the case with Punjab.

Indeed, as the following analysis of the situation in Punjab will indicate, ethnic and communal conflicts in India, including those over language, are essentially political conflicts concerning dominance and power. It is true that demarcation of state boundaries by linguistic or religious principles does promote the tendency for regional politics to acquire an ethnic coloring. But it is also true that most often ethnic and communal movements are not spontaneous but are deliberately contrived phenomena.

III

Religious passion, our experience tells us, can exist without a political framework; religious conflict need not have a direct or even indirect political bearing. Yet the two most violent religious clashes in recent Indian history—the Hindu-Muslim riots of partition and the Hindu-Sikh bloodshed that plagues India today—stem from political conflicts between oppositional political parties.

If a concern for the welfare of Muslims in a largely Hindu state had been the real basis for the partition, there would have been no logic in leaving India with the third largest (after Indonesia and Pakistan) Muslim population in the world. Hindus and Muslims had stood united against the British. The division took place after it was clear that the British would leave and after it was also clear to the leaders of the Muslim League (a party rivalling the Indian National Congress) that they would have very limited access to power in a nation dominated by the Congress.

While there was natural hostility between Hindus and Muslims, the two groups had also co-existed peacefully enough for centuries. This hostility was fanned to massive proportions by the personal ambition of Mr. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, and by his active dislike for the Hindu leadership of the Congress, that is, Gandhi and Nehru. Collins and Lapierrre (Freedom at Midnight) describe what they call this "improbable leader of the Muslim masses": "He drank, ate pork, religiously shaved his beard each morning, and just as religiously avoided the mosque each Friday. God and Koran had no place in Jinnah's vision of the world. He could hardly speak a few sentences of Urdu" (116).

In purely religious terms, there is even less logic in the present Hindu-Sikh conflict. Theologically the two religions are very similar, sharing fundamental beliefs like reincarnation. No Sikh would be denied entry into an orthodox Hindu temple, whereas a Christian or a Muslim might be. Sikhism began as a reform movement within Hinduism, and, like other religious reform movements of medieval India, it was reacting
against the elitist Brahminical orthodoxy (Sikh scriptures are in the vernacular) and the caste system. In many ways, Sikhism synthesizes the strong monotheism of Islam, the mysticism of the Sufi movement, and aspects of the Vedantic philosophy of Hinduism.

Culturally, the two religions are even closer, and until the polarization of the last few decades, the two communities of Punjab were well intertwined. It was traditional in Punjab among Hindus to raise the eldest son as a Sikh, in homage to this land of Sikh Gurus, and intermarriage between Sikhs and Hindus was frequent and common. So it is that my grandmother, who belonged to a Sikh family and had been married to a Hindu, raised her eldest son as a Sikh. And this son, the first to achieve education and stature, the mentor and supporter of his youngest siblings, influenced his siblings to adopt Sikhism. Inevitably, then, there are branches of my family, lived with and loved, who are Hindu. The new hatred seems inconceivable to many of us, its genesis something that requires urgent understanding.

There are, of course, differences in ethos between the two religions, for, with the tenth and last Guru, Sikhs came to see themselves as soldier saints—called to arms by Guru Gobindsingh against the tyranny of the Muslim rulers in North India. Guru Gobindsingh initiated five Hindu disciples from five different castes by making them drink from the same utensil (a caste taboo), and so baptized them into a martial brotherhood of the Khalsa, "the pure." He gave them five external symbols (the uncut hair, the dagger, and the steel bracelet are the three most visible ones) and gave them also the surname "Singh," meaning lion. And so Sikhism as a distinct religion came into existence. Since several of the gurus were martyred to save Hindus, and since these lions among men fought to save the Hindus from whose ranks they were drawn, Sikhs were generally accorded, until recently, respect as saviors of Hindu honor and lives. Their historical tradition does clearly distinguish them as a warlike people. The British, recognizing this aptitude, actively recruited Sikhs for the army, and even today the number of Sikhs in the army is disproportionately high.

The Sikh tradition also mixes religion and politics. Therefore, in the minds of Sikh religious leaders and the masses, the tradition also sanctions their conception of themselves as a political entity. The Gurdwara (the Sikh temple, literally the house of the Guru) committees are quasi-political bodies and have, on numerous occasions, taken up political issues with local or central governments. Furthermore, Sikhs are a coherent group. (They are not homogeneous, therefore allowing for sharp differences in outlook and opinion.) They turn up in large numbers daily at their temples and in even larger numbers at birth and death anniversaries of their Gurus. Hence they can be mobilized relatively easily by their leaders.

Yet despite these special features of the Sikh religion, their new unrest and militancy is just that—new, with some specific causes in the present. Sikhs had always been loyal citizens of the Indian state, and even today the call for a "Khalistan," a separate nation for the Sikhs, is a cry only of the extreme fringe. Actually the claims for Khalistan were first made during the partition, but then they were part of a ploy of the Indian Congress to prevent large chunks of Punjab going to Pakistan. Since then, threats of secession have never been serious and have only been used—and even then never by the responsible leadership—as a bargaining chip.

Sikh militancy is, in fact, not unlike the militancy of the tribal peoples of the northeast (the Nagas, the Mizos, etc.) in that it, too, stems from a minority consciousness, from fears that their identity might easily be lost under pressures for assimilation into the majority culture. The rise of religious fundamentalism all over the world and on the Indian subcontinent prob-
ably aids the postures of some extremist Sikh leaders, but, on the whole, the Sikh community's disaffections are political, economic, and social, not religious. Since the Sikhs (also an entrepreneurial, hardworking people) are usually better off economically than most other Indians, they have been viewed by the government as a pampered and not a deprived minority. In the anger now directed at them, we may also detect a resentment of their relative prosperity.

Sikh attempts to safeguard their identity began with the independence of the country and first crystallized about the issue of language. Punjabi, the language of the people of Punjab, is, of course, the language of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs of Punjab. However, since the Sikh scriptures are written in Punjabi, the language for them became a special symbol of their religious and cultural identity. This close identification between religion and language has been the source of much confusion. When at the moment of independence, Sikhs sought special status as a religious minority and recognition of Punjab as their homeland, they were advised by Dr. Ambedkar, one of the architects of the Indian constitution, to seek a Punjabi state, since that would in effect be a Sikh state. Sikh agitation for a Punjabi state, lasting until the 1960s, was seen by the government, which had otherwise accepted the principle of linguistic organization of states, as a communal demand.

The language issue, mixed up with religion, became in Punjab also a political issue between Hindus and Sikhs in the struggle for hegemony within the state. In response to this Sikh demand for recognition of Punjabi as the official language of the state, Hindu religious organizations urged Hindus to disown Punjabi and claim Hindi as their language. This is precisely what happened. During two censuses in the 1950s and '60s, many Hindus listed Hindi as their language. When, therefore, the central government finally allowed for the creation of a Punjabi state, and when it unwisely chose the 1961 census as a basis of bifurcation of the state, it unwittingly created a Sikh-dominated state in Punjab. From henceforward center and state politics acquired an even greater communal overtone.

Much of what happened in Punjab since the Sixties represents the problematic dimension of center-state relations in a federalist, plural nation like India where the center allocates all resources. As long as the Akali Dal, a Sikh-dominated political party in Punjab, supported the Congress Party ruling at the center, there was communal harmony in the state. Once the Akali Dal adopted an oppositional stance, Mrs. Gandhi did all she could to discredit it and hence also the community the party represented. To weaken the Akalis, Mrs. Gandhi created a splinter group within the Akalis led by Bhindarawale, the extremist, who later had to be flushed out from the Golden Temple.

The series of demands made by Akalis from the center (most of them economic or political, not communal) became the focal point of lengthy and unsuccessful negotiations. Mrs. Gandhi's strategy—to break off negotiations when they seemed on the verge of success—continued to weaken the influence of moderate Akali leaders and allowed for strengthening of support for the more militant voices.

Since the Sikhs are usually better off economically than most other Indians, they have been viewed by the government as a pampered and not a deprived minority. In the anger now directed at them, we may also detect resentment of their relative prosperity.

From thence it was a vicious circle. Acts of violence by extremists allowed Mrs. Gandhi to represent herself as the strong leader bent on achieving stability and order. In Punjab, the Congress Party could not depend on Sikh voters, but now was able to secure the loyalty of Hindu voters both inside and outside Punjab. Mrs. Gandhi's claims that she would never allow Khalistan made it seem as if it were the accepted ambition of a majority of Sikhs. National unity became the burning issue, when the Akalis actually had sought fair distribution of the waters of Punjab rivers and the allocation of the city of Chandigarh to Punjab, so promised at the moment of bifurcation of the state into Punjab and Haryana on a linguistic basis but thereafter continually put off under pressure from the rival state of Haryana. Religion became an issue when disaffection with the central government's economic policies had motivated the unrest. To take a specific example, the central government had refused to allocate heavy industry to Punjab, thus blocking avenues of development for ambitious young Sikhs and thereby creating discontent.

This is not to say that the Akali Dal behaved particularly wisely. It presented its demands in sectarian terms by making constant references to Sikh interests, when it could have chosen to speak for the interests of the state. It failed to oppose the extremist elements within the party, at least publicly, and it even surrendered itself ideologically to Bhindarawale by allowing him to build a military base within the sacred precincts of the Golden Temple. Similarly, Mrs. Gandhi chose a military solution that she could have avoided. She
could have had Bhindarawale arrested for murders he was known to have committed before he moved into the Temple. She also could have stopped the stockpiling of arms; it is impossible to believe there was such a failure of Indian intelligence services that the central government was unaware of what was going on for six months.

The massive attack on the Temple (a siege might have accomplished the same purpose) at a time when Sikh pilgrims had congregated there to observe a religious anniversary was the final act in the alienation of a community always proud of its place in the nation, but now marginalized away from the mainstream. It made martyrs out of extremists, giving them a new legitimacy among the Sikh masses. Mrs. Gandhi died from a Sikh assassin’s bullet in 1984, and the November killings which followed, on a par with the partition in their brutality, represent another ugly record in the history of communal violence in India.

I have seen how difficult it is in my parents’ generation, having lived through the partition, for Hindus and Muslims to trust each other. Will the events of this generation make it equally difficult for the Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab?

Investigative reports by commissions of reputable citizens have clearly established that the November killings of Sikhs were in most cases not acts of sporadic violence but organized activities in which elements of the Congress Party were implicated. Once again, it seems clear that actions ostensibly rooted in religion actually had their roots in politics.

In 1985, an accord was signed between the Akali Dal and Mrs. Gandhi’s heir, Rajiv Gandhi. Ironically, the accord granted much of what the Akalis had demanded for years, a pointed commentary on the gratuitousness of communal violence in Punjab. Punjab limps toward normality, but now it must reckon with a generation of Sikh youth who have been drawn into the ambit of terrorism because they had been marginalized by the Government’s policies, especially by its draconian “Black Laws” which gave the police warrant to kill recklessly through faked encounters. Such hatred does not die easily. I have seen how difficult it is in my parent’s generation, having lived through the partition, for Hindus and Muslims to trust each other. Will the events of this generation make it equally difficult for the Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab?

The anomic violence which seems to engulf so many new nations has, of course, more than one cause. These nations have discovered the wide gap between formal and real independence, because many still remain enthralled to the new imperialism of the industrialized nations. The aspirations of these people, once radicalized, are hard to keep in check, especially by a morally enfeebled elite. The demand for progress leading to a radical modification of traditional roles produces a crisis of identity that leads people to cling to narrow but secure definitions of self.

The democratic way may be the best way of self-rule, but it is also extremely difficult and expensive. For instance, it is not easy to build national power in a country the size and diversity of India, especially when the moral fervor of a freedom struggle no longer links the people together. Honest, dedicated leaders, working with scarce resources, may be forced to alienate a particular group in the interest of a larger policy for national development. Such, for example, was the original reason for denying heavy industry to Punjab. Leaders less committed to public weal but more anxious to retain power may actually inflame ethnic passions, with situations degenerating, as in the case of the Indian Congress Party, to a politics not of ideology but of opportunism.

Most of us live comfortably with multiple loyalties that spread outward from the family to the state. For most of us, these loyalties never come in conflict. But if we can understand the microcosm of a divided self, we should also be able to visualize these divided nations striving to achieve what Geertz has termed “the integrative revolution.”

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Music as a Liberal Pursuit
Linda Ferguson

Concerning music—in our own day most men cultivate it for the sake of pleasure, but originally it was included in education because nature herself . . . requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well.

— Aristotle

In Book VIII of the Politics, Aristotle reviews the distinction between liberal and illiberal pursuits, the latter being those which deteriorate the condition of body or mind. (Any pursuits undertaken for payment are automatically illiberal since they "absorb and degrade the mind.") The nature of an activity alone does not establish its status as liberal or servile; that also depends on the purpose for its undertaking. In Aristotle's view, music's practice may be liberal or illiberal. It is illiberal when it produces wages for the professional musician, and also when it offers relaxation and amusement to the layperson. It is liberal when it contributes "to the enjoyment of leisure and mental cultivation."

Of these alternatives, "liberal music" is harder to grasp. As in Aristotle's time, the pursuit of music today is commonly understood as either professional or "extra-curricular." But in liberal tradition, music properly serves neither of these ends. The distinction between music as a technical field for the specialist and as a general field for the layperson is usually assumed. But Aristotle's distinction between amusement and "mental cultivation" as they pertain to music is not. Amusement is pleasant and its end is pleasure. Amusement is servile because it relaxes or distracts from workaday pressures. Music, when used to this end, is no different from other diversions and refreshments such as sleeping and drinking. Such use is not bad, but it is not liberal.

Music as a proper activity of leisure, on the other hand, has pleasure as its means, but its end is the good rather than the pleasant. This good, which is music itself, suggests connection to other goods. "Music is pursued," says Aristotle, "not only as an alleviation of past toil, but also as providing recreation. And who can say whether, having this use, it may not also have a nobler one? . . . may it not have also some influence over the character and the soul?"

It is easy to teach music illiberally. Students are receptive to teaching if they believe the object is either useful ("You need to know this in order to make music") or amusing ("Isn't this fun?"). They resist if the object seems to be neither. To teach not only because music is useful or pleasant, but because its end is good, is more challenging. I have trouble selling this. Sometimes I have trouble buying it, although by virtue of my own liberal education, I know all the right words for talking about it.

Recently, however, the Chicago Tribune noted the passing of two remarkable individuals whose obituaries suggest that "liberal music" is indeed a concept with some currency. One clipping, headlined "Carrie Stevens, 107, lover of music," begins "Carrie Booth Stevens, 107, a 1900 graduate of Chicago Musical College, attended Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances for well over 80 years, including ones conducted by its founder, Theodore Thomas. She played a music synthesizer up to the day of her death."

The other clipping, "Arnulfo Martinez, Spanish music leader," begins, "Arnulfo Martinez, 92, a retired musician and stockyards worker, introduced the mariachi band as well as Spanish dance band music to Chicago. In later years, he taught the tuba to neighborhood children for 25 cents a lesson."

Mrs. Stevens was a ninth-generation American who taught school briefly before marrying a steel executive. Mr. Martinez brought his family from Mexico to Chicago in 1924 where he obtained work as a meatpacker. Although Mrs. Stevens studied at a conservatory, she did not make a professional way for herself in music. Mr. Martinez, who in Aristotle's world would have surely been relegated to the "servile" class of wage-earning meatpackers, was known in his own world as "El Maestro." Their obituaries indicate that each of these individuals had "amusements"—Mrs. Stevens was a gardener, swimmer, and horseback rider; Mr. Martinez, a soccer enthusiast—and that music was for each of them something distinct from these activities. Each of them pursued music seriously, but not professionally, for pleasure but, as the clippings suggest, for something beyond simple diversion. Perhaps it was for mental cultivation in leisure.

Mrs. Stevens, blind at age 107, reportedly played hymns on her synthesizer the night before her death; Mr. Martinez gave music lessons at his home until he was 89. Another thing Aristotle said was "Education is the best provision for old age." Perhaps we should all start practicing.
In Remembrance of
Alfred H.L. Meyer

John Strietelmeier

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith.

—Hebrews 13:7

We praise God today for the life and work of our father, teacher, and friend, Alfred Hermann Ludwig Meyer. The long pilgrimage which began 95 years and 3 days ago in the little German Lutheran settlement of Venedy, Illinois, will end soon with his body’s return to the earth which he loved so greatly and understood so well. And whatever sorrow we may feel at his departure will be more than offset by gratitude that his prayers to be taken home have at last been answered.

The text may seem inappropriate for one who was neither a clergyman nor a theologian, but a layman who devoted the best years of a long life to the study of human societies in their natural and social environments. He must have conducted chapel exercises from time to time back in those days when every faculty member was expected to do so, but I have no recollection of him in the role of a preacher or homilist. And his theology, so far as I could ever make it out, was that of Luther’s Small Catechism as interpreted in the devotional literature of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

What word of God was it, then, that he spoke to us? And how and when did he speak it?

Dr. Meyer was one of those courageous figures in the first generation of Missouri Synod boys who braved the suspicions of their pastors and the anxieties of their parents to venture into the unknown and, therefore, ominous world of secular higher education. It was a world, they had been warned, into which godly young men ventured at peril to their souls. And in many congregations it was possible to cite specific instances of gifted young Christians who had made shipwreck of their faith at the state university.

In that world, as an undergraduate majoring in biology first at McKendree College and later at the University of Illinois, the young man from Venedy encountered for the first time such basic scientific ideas as the evolution of species, natural selection, and a record of human life extending back much farther than six thousand years. The theology which he had been taught could not accommodate such ideas. And so he turned from the biological sciences to earth sciences, where the troublesome problem of human origins was not—or so he thought—a central concern.

But as a candidate for the Master’s degree in geology at the University of Illinois, he found the conflicts between science and his theology no less distressing than those which had plagued him in the life sciences. He could find no intellectually honest way to stuff several billion years of earth history into six days of creation plus a universal deluge.

And so he salvaged as much of his geological background as he could by becoming a geographer. After much sacrifice over a long period of time, he was granted the doctorate in geography by the University of Michigan, at that time perhaps the most demanding and the most exciting center of graduate study in geography.

Whatever sorrow we may feel at his departure will be more than offset by gratitude that his prayers to be taken home have at last been answered.

Meanwhile, in 1926, he had begun—with the enthusiastic and unwavering support of his young wife, Lillian—a long and brilliant teaching career at Valparaiso University as a member of that first group of promising young scholars who pledged their lives to the building of a great Christian university on the rubble of a dying institution. And for those many years of service, ten generations of students have been grateful: some of us because he introduced us to a field of study which we would probably never have discovered for ourselves and encouraged us to make a career of it; more of us because he had the great teacher’s gift of communicating his own enthusiasm to his students; all of us, I am sure, because in his lifestyle, in his professionalism, and in his dealings with us as students, he spoke clearly and persuasively.

John Strietelmeier is Professor Emeritus of Geography at Valparaiso University and former Editor of The Cresset. This homily was delivered at the Gloria Christi Chapel at Valparaiso University on March 1, 1988, at the memorial service for Dr. Alfred H.L. Meyer, Distinguished Service Professor of Geography, Emeritus.
without ever being "preachy" about it, a word of God which we found both liberating and empowering—that there is a holy secularity to which most Christians are called, a ministry of reconciliation of man to man, of nation to nation, of man and nations to their fragile and beautiful and often-abused earth home, and this because "the Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the sea and they that dwell therein."

He called us, by his own example, to serious and purposeful involvement in this world which God had made and which He loved so greatly that He gave his only-begotten Son to redeem it from futility. And He gave us the tools for that kind of involvement.

His colleagues in the profession found him a strange but admirable fellow. They could never understand his piety or his earnestness, but they were greatly impressed by the excellence of his published research, by his infectious enthusiasm for geography, and by the vigorous and effective leadership he gave the profession at the state and national levels.

And then, after so many years of dedicated labor and faithful testimony, the long years of bereavement and depression and apparent uselessness. How does our faith help us to understand so sad and prolonged an ending to so godly and useful a life?

The Christian faith does not encourage us to entertain any prudential notions that faith and a godly life will immunize us against suffering. The last words of our Lord, as recorded by St. Mark in what most scholars consider the earliest of the Gospels, were "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" ("My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?") If the beloved and sinless Son of God could be driven to experience such forsakenness, why should we be surprised if devout and faithful disciples should be driven to the same cry of dereliction?

Alfred Meyer baptizatus est, and in that baptism he was given to Christ. And now, in keeping with his Lord's desire, he is with Christ to behold His glory.

Dr. Meyer accepted, as all good Lutherans do, that we are not justified by our works, however good and praiseworthy they may be. But what hope is there when one can no longer be confident even of his faith? When he cries to heaven and there is no reply? When even his longing for death goes unheeded?

Martin Luther, in his darkest moments, countered his despair with the rehearsal of one unquestionable, objective fact: "Baptizatus sum." ("I was baptized.") This shifts the whole question of what we must do to be saved from ourselves, who can not by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, or come to Him, onto God, the Love Who will not let us go even when we can no longer hold onto Him. This is purest Gospel. And it was this Gospel which our dear father and friend was preaching to us, wordlessly and with many tears, through all those dark and lonely years.

And now he knows that. For the man who experienced absolute God-forsakenness on the Cross was three days later, by His resurrection from the dead, proclaimed the Son of God with power. And His prayer in glory at the right hand of the Father is the same prayer that He prayed in a borrowed upper room on the night in which He was betrayed: "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which Thou hast given me."

Alfred Meyer baptizatus est, and in that baptism he was given to Christ. And now, in keeping with his Lord's desire, he is with Christ to behold His glory. So he no longer has to ask any of us: "Is there a heaven? Where is it?" It is our "reasonable, religious, and holy hope" that he is there.

Thanks be to God.
Vidal's Rub

James Combs

I recently happened across a televised speech (on C-SPAN) by that expatriate gadfly unattached to the State, Gore Vidal. Vidal has all the advantages of expatriation—perspective, bemusement, and outrageous opinion. Disengagement, however cynical and arrogant it may sound, does have its merits, so I listened to what Vidal had to say.

The American political system, argued Vidal, is gigantic, imperial, and "worn out." We stand for nothing but the defense of wealth and imperial commitments—such as Israel—of which we have become the prisoner. The evidence for our corruption and decline is all around us, but no more evident than in presidential elections. We now have, Vidal maintained, three "parties"—a very conservative party, a conservative party, and the "largest party, the party of the non-voters."

The Republicans and Democrats are so entrenched and hidebound that they are hopeless as vehicles of change. The only hope Vidal holds out for radical change is the non-voters, who, he claims, now constitute 50 per cent of the electorate. If, in the election of 1988, we could increase the non-voting to 70 per cent and in 1992 to 90 per cent of the eligible electorate, perhaps the sham of the system would be so exposed that it would collapse of lack of support. If we are a pseudo-democracy, then massive electoral disobedience would at least expose a system of non-choice for what it is. Non-voting, rather than voting, becomes the only meaningful political act for the many who no longer have any say in an entrenched system of power.

Many of us will not agree that things are as bleak and hopeless as Vidal thinks. I myself do not even think that such a system would be brought down by non-participation in elections. The many pseudo-democracies in the world (autocratic or Communist) operate quite effectively through the use of plebiscites, turning elections into ritual shows of support. Non-participation in elections here would simply speed the process of transforming the State into a system of completely entrenched elite control periodically "legitimated" by plebiscites of approval. Vidal, after all, is not only arguing that the country is politically and economically bankrupt, but that American democracy itself is bankrupt. The democracy of non-voting changes us from citizens to subjects very quickly.

In any case, Vidal is always provocative, and there is a lot of disturbing evidence that support for the system of elections, parties, and the justice of political outcomes is not altogether solid. Consider this, for openers: in a recent Harris Poll, 81 per cent of the respondents agreed that "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer"—the highest number ever recorded since this question was first asked back in 1966 (then, 45 per cent of us agreed). In 1964, 69 per cent of us believed that government is run "for the benefit of all," and 31 per cent for a "few big interests."

And there comes Vidal's rub: the people who are increasingly not voting are those who benefit least from the system—the poorly educated, marginally employed, class immobile—those who constitute an increasingly large segment of society. Like many other observers of American political trends, Vidal sees us moving into an era of class-based politics but without a truly lower-class-based party. Without anyone to represent their interests, the have-nots and dispossessed then do what Vidal recommends for the rest of us: they drop out.

The people who benefit least from a political and economic system obviously have the least incentive to believe in it, so as the lot of the people on the bottom worsens, we shouldn't expect anything else. (In one famous study, well-off children in suburban schools saw the President as a "benevolent leader")
while poor kids in Appalachia saw him as a “malevolent leader.”) Whether their response to deprivation will remain typically anomie or whether they would follow an extreme movement or simply hostile uprising such as the West Bank Palestinians remains to be seen. In any case, the ballot box offers no solution for them.

But what about the rest of us? To a lesser degree, there are lots of better-off folks with a large stake in and benefits from the system who are alienated, turned off, non-participatory, and non-voting. If that group is increasing, as some think it is, then is it following Vidal’s advice, or if not, just why? There are now over eighty million non-voting eligible voters, many of whom are not desperately poor or marginal. Vidal is right in one sense: if present trends continue, the non-voters will indeed constitute the vast majority in most elections, presidential and otherwise, until one election day in the future they will give an election and nobody will come.

The turned-off voter may have different sources of the “what’s the use” conclusion. But there is one school of thought which argues that the trouble with elections is television. Television has now reached the point in its development that it is becoming the whipping boy for every ill that besets humankind. The Palestinians, from this perspective, would not be in rebellion if it were not for television, nor would the black South Africans; it is as if the demonstrators were risking their lives for the chance to be on TV.

The argument is applied in all sorts of contexts: trouble, we are told, would not occur if it were not for television, because trouble only occurs on television; if you turn off the cameras, there is no trouble. Here, the general argument is that alienation from the electoral process is a function of the presence of television. Turnout began to decline when TV started covering elections heavily; since TV coverage expanded as turnout decreased, this correlation means causation. So, one gathers, if TV had not covered recent elections, turnout would have remained high and support for democracy would not have declined.

And there are related, more inferential, arguments: if TV had not covered the demonstrators at the Democratic convention in 1968, Humphrey would have won; if TV had covered the Vietnam War as “patriots,” public opinion would not have turned against it; if TV hadn’t been so biased against Nixon, he would not have had to resign; the Iran-contra hearings wouldn’t have happened if the networks had refused to televise them. In the late 1980s, it has become commonplace for political figures under fire or scrutiny to lash back directly at the media as unfair tormentors of an innocent and put upon public servant—George Bush shouts back at Dan Rather, Ollie North portrays himself as the victim of media persecution, Gary Hart attributes his fall to illegitimate media coverage (or uncoverage, more accurately), and Pat Robertson accuses Tom Brokaw of religious bigotry.

All such arguments are forms of political weaseling that play upon the fallacy of media culpability, transferring responsibility for actions or events from the actor to the media. But in some quarters, at least, such a strategic transfer of blame works. The South African and Israeli brutalities are out of sight and thus out of mind, muting criticism and demands for action. Rather emerges as the villain in the confrontation with Bush, but Bush answers no questions about his role...
in Iran-\textit{contra}; North and Hart can forever attribute their troubles to the insidious monster \textit{Media}; Robertson endears himself to his fervent (but not particularly large) following by attacking the secular-humanist press.

Media-bashing is only the most egregious form of political manipulation nowadays, but it does offer a clue to the problem we have pointed to here: why, in spite of all the patriotic rhetoric of the 1980s, despite all the assertions of the superiority of democracy, does the performance of the most basic act of democratic self-rule—voting—continue to atrophy? Both politicians and scholars (usually with some ideological axe to grind) have accused television in particular and the Fourth Estate in general of spreading cynicism, suspicion, and confusion among the public, resulting in alienation and non-participation. Others have stressed the idea that the media are inherently biased against one candidate or another, engineering their failure at the polls. But since partisans of virtually all losers claim this, it is easy to suspect sour grapes.

More telling is the criticism that media coverage of campaigns turns potential voters off. This argument takes several forms: television and the press so saturate the public with the campaign that by election day voters are overwhelmed; the emphasis on the "horse race" makes politics seem frivolous; the ritual canons of reporting make the race predictable and boring; through intimate and probing "warts and all" coverage of the candidates, all are diminished in the eyes of the voters.

But all these arguments seem to fall into the same trap: by covering the candidates and the campaign, the media become culpable for whatever goes wrong in the campaign. It is as if the media had intruded on a world of perfection, and by turning the camera on they invented the endless primary system and the horse-race metaphor, forced the candidates to become boring, and contrived their moral and political warts. Many recent political campaigns are quite capable on their own of turning off the voters, with little assistance needed from the messengers.

\textbf{Candidates all develop the curious habit of referring to themselves in the third person, as if talking of someone else.}

This is not to say that the mass media, and television in particular, are entirely innocent messengers being executed because they bring the bad news. The presence of television affects campaigns by the nature of the medium, making the candidates favor short messages and slogans, a good deal of colorful spectacle, and an emphasis on appearance and performance. This is not new, only made more urgent by the immediacy and pervasiveness of TV.

More importantly, television seems to have the general effect of transforming contests with the potential of conflict into pseudo-conflicts without real conflict. The candidate debates of 1988, for instance, had a patina of "niceness" about them, with the contenders falling over each other to be pleasant and agreeable (with the notable exception of Bob Dole, whose combative and nastiness would no doubt make him a great Machiavellian prince, but which made for bad television). Television tends to mute the agonistic in discussion and turns discussants not into contestants but rather task groups seeking some sort of consensus.

In large measure, the televised candidate debates resembled shows such as \textit{Washington Week in Review} and \textit{The Donahue Show}, wherein the implicit task seems always to be the mitigation of difference and disputation. Perhaps Dole's problem was that he violated the television group's norm: it wasn't nice for Bob to insist that George 'fess up to his role in Irangate.

Television seems to have another odd and perplexing effect on candidates. They all develop the curious habit of referring to themselves in the third person, as if they were talking about someone else, or at least a public hologram of themselves. Mike Dukakis talks about "Mike Dukakis," George Bush about "George Bush," and so on. One wonders if they separate their media identities from their true selves, seeing "Mike Dukakis" and "George Bush" as separate from the individual by that name who speaks of that other personage. But, then, Joe Biden went so far as to think he was Neil Kinnock.

Will turnout decline again this year? Probably—although slightly, I suspect. If the election is close (which I doubt), it might increase the effort to get out the vote. Does the media play a role in turning off voters? Again, probably, although much more marginally than its critics contend.

Then why does turnout in elections decline? Here I think television is culpable only in an incidental sense. I suspect there are simply a lot of people out there who watch bits and pieces of the presidential race of 1988 and conclude that there is no relationship between the election and their lives. It is a conclusion they reach with the help of television, but they probably would reach it anyway.

Apart from the apathetic and content who never vote, Vidal's "party" consists of the disaffected and dispossessed. The United States, after all, hosts a Third
World country in its midst that is poor, illiterate, and untrained; we have thirty-two million people who live in poverty, a figure steadily growing; the bottom fifth of households in the U.S. got 3.8 per cent of personal income in 1986, while the richest fifth got 46.1 per cent, figures steadily widening; segments of the traditional working class have seen real income drop steadily since the mid-1970s, forcing families into multiple jobs, usually menial ones without fringe benefits; the fastest growing job in America in 1986 was cashier; increasing numbers are cut out of the housing and medical markets, live in unsafe neighborhoods, and send their kids to lousy schools.

Such people are aware of the commitment of both political parties to regressive taxation, "austerity," and their political invisibility. Television mocks them: the American Dream of advertising, Life Styles of the Rich and Famous, and the Cosby show are forever beyond their means and, worse, their children's. What they see of the campaign shows them a parade of careful candidates, each aware of his groomed media image but (with the exception of Jackson, who cannot win) without a populist bone in his political body, afraid to mention what the people on the bottom must feel is the essential injustice of things as they are now.

In that sense, Vidal is right: the non-voters are not fools, and without anyone to champion their interests, they conclude quite rationally that there is no use in voting in an election in which the outcome is irrelevant to the quality of their lives. The basic motive for voting is hope, but if there is no one on TV who can make one's hopes soar, then there is no use in kidding the hopeless. Those who live in declining or desperate circumstances live in the existential world of the first person singular, making the present tense to televised third personage of the candidates seem hollow indeed.

There are other sources of non-voting, but we who have hopes for American democracy to do more than just limp along should not delude ourselves that all those many millions who choose not to vote are political contents. We may fondly hope that Vidal is wrong in both analysis and prediction, but it is folly to ignore the excluded and self-excluded as non-existent. When we trek out to vote this fall, it should be a bit sobering to think that about one-quarter of the adult population will vote for the next President, and that one-half of Americans will not vote at all.

And when we go home to watch the returns on TV, Vidal's rub should haunt us. For a good part of the population, the presidential election is just another television show, as remote and meaningless for their lives as Entertainment Tonight, something viewed with the detached curiosity of the non-participant. For that "party" of Americans, the presidential winner that night will not be seen as someone who can pull swords from stones.

Sir Isaac Newton Confides in His Barber

Why of course hair fell down when you cut it, even before my discovery. After all, that is the nature of "down."

But my own brand of gravity Defies gravity. The white tile where your Australian counterpart stands floats above his chair, and his customers' hair flies up to meet the floor. That is the ancient dream my gravity makes possible, the world a whirling ball reduced to a speck as like a million other specks as peas plucked from their pods and tossed into the air.

But I admit to times this gravity business seems too grave, inflated beyond the mere mathematical expression of "down is where things fall," and I could wish for a Nature a little less dependent on my explanations.

Michael Becker
with God as its prime mover. At God's command, an angel moved each of the spheres. As they moved, the spheres rubbed against one another. The perfect tones resulting from the friction constituted "the music of the spheres."

The Elizabethan Englishman pictured a universe suffused with meaning. The wonder of this universe was that while it was vast and complex, it was also knowable. The Elizabethan firmly believed, based on earnest, scholarly, prayerful speculation, that the universe was created by a rational intelligence. Naturally he observed aberrations in the cosmic order, but they were due to man's rebellion against God's design. The perfect order of the universe was, finally, unassailable.

The English playwright Caryl Churchill has drawn another Elizabethan world picture, a picture of the age of Elizabeth II. As conceived in her "city comedy" Serious Money, and realized on the stage of the New York Shakespeare Festival's Newman Theater, this universe is as arcane as any dreamed up by a scholastic cosmologist.

The world of Serious Money was created by the "Big Bang" of October, 1986, when the London stock market was deregulated. At the center of this new world is the circular trading floor of LIFFE: the London International Financial Futures Exchange. Not that London—or that part of London known as "the City"—is really the center of the universe, it's just that Churchill has located her play there. The trading floor serves only as an image for the web of computer and telephone link-ups that brings such capitals as Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York, and Chicago into the same electronically-generated space.

Radiating from the trading floor is the circle of dealing rooms connected by computers and telephones to the floor. The furious action on this level is generated by the selling of stock shares, securities, and currency. In a circle beyond the dealing rooms are the bankers who provide the capital for trading. Beyond the banking circle is the government. (In Serious Money, this circle is represented by the Department of Trade and Industry, the British equivalent of the SEC in the U.S.) Beyond the government are international monetary interests: a cocoa exporter in Ghana and a copper mine owner in Peru.

This schema suggests that the universe depicted in Serious Money is ordered and rational, but it is also extremely fragile. The order is jeopardized by corporate raiders and arbitrageurs, rogues who move through the financial cosmos seeking short-term gain, indifferent to long-term consequences. The new international symbol for "pernicious arbitrageur" is Ivan Boesky, whose name is invoked in the play.

The universe depicted in Serious Money is ordered and rational, but it is also extremely fragile.
The order is jeopardized by corporate raiders and by arbitrageurs.

Playwright Churchill has given her raider, Corman, none of the attractiveness and glamor that Michael Douglas brought to Wall Street's Gordon Gekko. Corman has the charm of a Mafia thug and the demeanor of a dockworker; his characterization is typical of the incongruity permeating Serious Money. The inhabitants of the City combine the refinement of those whose wealth allows them to travel in the most civilized of circles with the coarseness of street hustlers.
The outer reaches of Churchill's cosmos are occupied, not by God, but by those people whose futures are most affected by futures trading. I refer to the workers whose labor is part of the package when factories, farms, and mines are traded, purchased, or closed for the sake of profit. The principal characters in Serious Money are little concerned with these people, of course. It is the indifference of the "market makers" to those people whose very lives depend on the behavior of the market that renders the entire system so morally reprehensible.

What plot there is in Serious Money turns on the sudden unexplained death of a dealer in "commercial paper" and inside information, one Jake Todd. The only commodity more valuable than money in this world is the kind of information which can be used to make more money. The fact that using inside information is illegal does not make it any less valuable, only more incriminating. Before he died, Jake told his sister Scilla, herself a dealer, that he was being investigated by the DTI. Now Scilla's convinced that her brother's been murdered and she sets about trying to find his killer.

Jake was connected to a number of the City's major market players. Should the extent to which these people had traded on Jake's information become known, the entire house of cards might fall in the scandal. As the play ends, there is no light shed on Jake's death, but the shock of his passing has upset a series of deals including a major takeover by Corman Enterprises. (The government invites Corman to get out with his money while the getting's good. He resigns and retreats to that bastion of English rectitude, the peerage. Also, we are told, "Lord" Corman has become chairman of the National Theatre!)

Though we may study it from the visitors' gallery, the world of international finance reveals its mysteries only to the initiated. To outsiders, stockbrokers are shrouded in esoteric terminology and ritual. A playwright who dramatizes the City must not only penetrate those rituals but must also communicate them to a naive audience. At London's Royal Court Theatre, Caryl Churchill researched and developed Serious Money with a group of actors of the English Stage Company. As part of the preparation of the play, actors infiltrated the City and reported their intelligence to the company.

It is the indifference of the "market makers" to those people whose very lives depend on the behavior of the market that renders the entire system so reprehensible.

Conceding that much of the argot of the City is untranslatable, Churchill has abstracted the paralinguistic features of the language—sounds, inflections, and rhythms—and created from them a special language for the play. From the cacaphony of buying and selling, of winning and losing, of cheering and cursing, of a series of expletives one more vile than the previous, emerges music. The music of the City's spheres, if you will. At times this song lulls, at times it raps, but always it moves relentlessly forward. Moreover, the playwright has rendered the language in rhymed verse, a feature that emphasizes its ritualistic character and its comedy. On a very few occasions, the song stops long enough for a character to be permitted to come down and deliver a refreshingly expository speech.

Typical of comedy, the self-consciously artful language of Serious Money distances the play from its audience. For a prologue to the play, Churchill borrows a scene from Thomas Shadwell's 1692 comedy, The Volunteers. The stockjobbers who appear in the scene recall the comic rogues of the Roman Plautus and we chuckle as they explain that the only thing that really matters is "to turn the penny," never mind the usefulness of the goods traded or the legality of the transaction.

With this prologue, Churchill has allied herself with a great tradition of English playwriting dating to the seventeenth century. But this rogues' gallery put me more in mind of John Gay's The Beggars Opera and its offspring The Threepenny Opera of Bertold Brecht than of Ben Jonson and Thomas Shadwell.

For all its quick-paced good humor and rauous ribaldry, Serious Money depicts the Western world in the late 1980s at its voracious, cynical, decadent worst. We are shown a world that we know as our own. Churchill wastes no time with vague allusions; she names names. This is our world, where everything, including the human being, is valuable only if it can be priced, bid for, and bought. The money earned is spent on Porsches and cocaine. The only fear is AIDS. It is a world where political leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher have absented themselves from the arenas of business and finance and left them to the likes of Ivan Boesky, T. Boone Pickens, and Carl Icahn.

Unlike The Threepenny Opera, there is no last-second pardon from the Queen to save the day in Serious Money. Nor is there any moral resolution. After the shock waves of Jake's death, there is only a general repositioning of the people in positions to make serious money.

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In true Brechtian fashion, the cast closes the play with a song, "Five More Glorious Years" (of Maggie Thatcher). We depart the theatre haunted by the possibility that the City will inevitably come crashing down, and nagged by the thought of just how much of everything else would come down with it.

Serious Money opened in London in February, 1987, and in New York in December, 1987. In between those dates, of course, came Wall Street's "Black Monday." We're all still here to tell about it. So maybe Serious Money isn't all that serious....

At about the same time Serious Money opened in London, Dealing, by June Shelleen and Richard Fire, opened at Evanston's Northlight Theatre. This play about traders and trading in the Chicago Commodity Market was so enthusiastically received by Chicago audiences that it was reopened by the Northlight for a summer run.

Dealing is similar to Serious Money in some important ways: the central staging area is a trading pit and just above it are brokerage offices. Shelleen and Fire have whipped the trading jargon into a rhythmic chant. But where Serious Money takes a global view of the implications of financial machinations, Dealing operates on a local and personal level. The action in the commodities pit pertains exclusively to the people who work there. The playwrights make no attempt to connect the pork bellies in Chicago with the pig farmers in Sioux City.

Dealing is peopled by a series of regular, even likable guys whose personal problems and dilemmas are exacerbated by the peculiar stresses of their line of work.

There are surely no heroes in Dealing, but there are no villains in this amoral world either. The audiences at the Northlight Theatre looked on stage at characters in many ways like themselves (most Chicago theatre audiences are comprised of "upscale" types nowadays). It just so happens that these people have been sucked into the commodities trading game. To play you need nerve, access to a lot of money, and the constitution of a race car driver. The more you win, the more you want to play, until being in the game becomes an addiction. And there's always a little coke on the side.

Playwrights Shelleen and Fire, director Michael Maggio, and the experienced cast of Chicago-theatre regulars gave us a satisfyingly slick and entertaining evening of theatre that was staged more clearly and coherently than was Serious Money in New York. But Dealing, serious though it is, is a play that one can walk away from with a chuckle or a mutter. "Those crazy commodities traders," say some; "those poor commodities traders," say others. But few will be morally outraged by the action as are those who leave Caryl Churchill's "city comedy." If Serious Money assaults us in the tough-minded tradition of Brecht, Dealing draws us in with the emotional appeal of the softest television soap opera.

Like the world conceived by the Elizabethan mind, the worlds depicted in both Serious Money and Dealing are moving, indeed whirling, with a frenzied centrifugal force. In the process, meaning is separated from vitality, and we are left to view action without direction. This is the great difference between the pictures of the first Elizabeth's world and that of the second.

Recently, the Remains Theatre presented Keith Reddin's latest play, Big Time, at the Goodman Studio Theatre. Reddin has given us another, even more cynical view of the meaningless of life in the fast lane. Big Time is a series of sparsely decorated and sparsely developed scenes in the life of Paul, an ambitious young representative of an international banking firm. (Such individuals seem, at present, to be archetypes of the meaningless life.)

Paul is respected by his employer as a good trouble shooter and his life proceeds from one deal to another. He has little time and, apparently, little regard for personal relationships. He lives with Fran, but they barely communicate. In any case, they have little to communicate about. They spend their time searching for ways to satisfy themselves and complaining about the obstacles to their satisfaction. Fran is also sleeping with their
friend Peter, a successful photographer.

This is the world, in all its cynicism, insensitivity, violence, and meaninglessness, that we are in. It's not one we can walk away from with a chuckle or mutter.

One day Paul is asked to go to an unnamed Middle Eastern country to fix a problem his bank is having with the royal family. The royal family is having its own problems with fundamentalist insurgents. (The situation is reminiscent of the last days of the Shah of Iran.) Paul attempts to get a representative of the royal family to face up to the deteriorating political situation. After all, a violent overthrow of the government would be very bad for international business interests.

Suddenly the insurgents interrupt the meeting and Paul is taken prisoner. The playwright takes us inside the drama of a hostage episode. We see Paul blindfolded, kept disoriented in an unidentifiable location, forced to make a public statement at the point of a gun. The images of the hostage existence are terrifyingly effective even when they are not presented realistically.

The pivotal scene of the play has one of Paul's guards questioning him, not as part of an interrogation, but as an expression of true curiosity about Americans. The guard has had experience with Americans while studying history at the University of Wisconsin. He asks Paul, "What would you die for?" Paul, still at gunpoint, cannot at first come up with an answer. Finally he says, firmly, "Nothing." The guard looks at him with a mixture of disbelief and contempt, but no surprise.

Paul is lucky and we breathe a sigh of relief when his company bargains for and wins his release. When he gets home, his girlfriend wonders where he has been, but doesn't care much when he tells her. She is in the process of moving out anyway. So now we see Paul, alone, but with a second chance at life. We wait to hear how this experience has changed him, given him a new perspective. We wait in vain.

In the last scene, Paul is in the office of Diane, an executive headhunter. She is a former colleague of his at the bank and he figures that she can find him a new position. Aha, we think, here comes the change, he's tired of this life of international power plays and manipulation. But Diane returns with an idea. She thinks she can get Paul a position on the White House staff. We see immediately that he likes the idea of moving up from one circle of power brokers to another. Contemplating his career in government "service," Paul turns to us with a voraciously self-confident look and says, "Yeah. I think I'm ready for the 'Big Time.'"

Big Time, like Serious Money, is troubling because we suspect that Reddin's picture of the world is true. This is the world, in all its cynicism, insensitivity, violence, brutality, and meaninglessness, that we are in. It's not one we can walk away from with a chuckle or a mutter. We wonder, though this world may be known to and manipulated by only a powerful few, is it possible to be in such a world and not of it?

The Last Snapshot of Mother

How did we miss it? There, in her eyes—that last sift of silver, that unnatural joy!

But we, oh, we sing to distract her as if it's only a sigh, high in the willows, or unusual rustle of dunegrass, or summer's familiar whisper, still circling the island, she watches.

Surely the children have noticed? See how they race from the beach to her arms, flying their towels like banners, before it can slip from its cloudnest and plummet, before we try to outrun it, frantic for shelter.

Did they know, all along, we'd rush only her shell through its terrible song? That she laughed for it bore her a star's trip distant already?

But we, oh, we swore, until now, it was hardly a wind from all others that different!

Lois Reiner

May, 1988
The U.S. and the UN Revisited

Albert R. Trost

The topic of American relations with the United Nations is not a new one in this column. This writer has addressed it on at least two occasions in the last eight years. It was my opinion that our relations with the UN were deteriorating, especially since the beginning of the Reagan presidency, though the Administration merely strengthened a trend that started in the early 1960s.

From its early years, when the U.S. helped initiate the United Nations, and then boosted and dominated it, we have come a good distance downward in support of it. For the last four years, from both officials of the Administration and a scattering of academics, we have even heard talk of leaving it, a suggestion that used to be restricted to the John Birch Society and other organs of the extreme right.

There was a marked tone of irony in the remarks made by one of the members of the American delegation, Charles Lichenstein, reacting to an American defeat in the UN in September of 1983, just as the world was preparing to celebrate forty years of the United Nations' existence: "If, in the judicious determination of the members of the UN, they feel that they are not welcome and that they are not being treated with the hostility consideration that is their due, then the United States strongly encourages such member states seriously to consider removing themselves and this organization from the soil of the U.S. We will put no impediment in your way. The members of the U.S. mission to the UN will be down at the dockside waving you a fond farewell."

Those current in their reading of the news will realize why we here reawaken the "sleeping dog" that is the topic of U.S./UN relations. In March the American government, under a mandate from Congress, began to move to close the Observer Mission of the Palestinian Liberation Organization to the United Nations in New York. The reaction of the UN majority to these moves was hostile and extreme. A variation on the 1983 quotation above was probably on the lips (or at least in the hearts) of many American officials in response to that reaction.

Might the final break now be imminent? I would hope not, even though a dramatic improvement in relations is unlikely. Even a Democrat in the White House, unless that Democrat be Jesse Jackson, will not significantly improve relations. The reality is that the United Nations, as it is today, is not likely to change. It is dominated by a very large majority with an agenda, particularly in the economic area, to which no American leader can easily agree. The purposes for which it was created, and for which the United States joined, are not its main purposes or its value today. It is a vastly different organization from the one that the United States supported from 1945 to 1960. Still, it represents the world as it currently exists, a world less appreciative of the United States than it once was and less willing to follow its lead. The U.S. cannot withdraw from this world.

The purpose of the United Nations, as conceived by its founders and as stated in its Charter, was to eliminate wars, aggression, and threats to the peace. The UN was to accomplish these laudable ends through two mechanisms, the peaceful settlement of disputes and collective security. The peaceful settlement of disputes entails the use of diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement to achieve its ends. The United Nations has machinery for this, the most conspicuous being the Secretary-General and the International Court of Justice. This machinery has been used for a number of disputes, sometimes successfully. This kind of machinery also exists outside of the United Nations, where it has been used a bit more.

Collective security involves the banding together of the international community to punish or invoke sanctions of a diplomatic, economic, or military nature against any party that threatens the peace. Within the United Nations, the responsibility for collective security lies with the Security Council. The Council must obtain the votes of all of the permanent members (the U.S., the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, France, and China) plus at least four of the non-permanent members of the body before it can take collective security action.

The veto has hampered action by the Council since the beginning of the United Nations. Korea is the only case where full military sanctions were invoked. In the first twenty years of the United Nations, it was the Soviet Union that cast the veto. In recent years, it has

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been the veto of the United States and the United Kingdom, and the fact that few peace and security issues even get a hearing, that has hampered the collective security machinery. In any case, the United Nations has not stopped or settled most of the wars that have occurred since 1945, wars that have taken an estimated twenty million lives. Compared with the hopes of the founders of the UN, this is a most discouraging record.

For the Third World nations that now make up some 120 of the approximately 160 members of the United Nations, peace and security issues do not rank at the top of their agenda. Decolonization and the restructuring of the world's economic system constitute their major concerns. They prefer not to bring their own disputes and wars to the UN, keeping these issues within regional organizations. The only peace and security issues that now get an airing (but no action) are those that involve one of the superpowers, or those that involve one of the so-called "pariah" states, like Israel and South Africa.

Since the United States has often found it necessary to defend Israel from what it considers unfair attacks in the United Nations, and since it will use its veto to stop sanctions against South Africa that might overturn its present government, it seems as if the U.S. is the target of almost all of the UN's considerations of peace and security issues. The UN's condemnations of American actions in Central America have reinforced the impression of many in the U.S. that the United Nations is anti-American.

The Security Council, the organ of the UN system that its founders believed should carry the major responsibility for peace and security, has declined in importance along with these kinds of issues. Without a doubt, the most active organ of the United Nations today is the General Assembly. Here, the only one of the principal organs of the UN in which all the members have a voice and a vote, the Third World can exercise the full weight of its majority.

However, the General Assembly has no authority under the Charter to punish or compel a nation. Most of the resolutions that pass the General Assembly, regardless of the size of the majority, stand no chance of being implemented. The pattern has been to pass radical-sounding resolutions that will have little practical effect. Again, these are typically directed at nations like the United States or the United Kingdom, asking them to relinquish a dependent territory like Puerto Rico or Gibraltar, or condemning them for some activity judged to be colonialist or racist.

By far the major activity of the General Assembly over the last fifteen years has been to address the maldistribution of wealth in the world and to call on the rich nations to relinquish their advantage in this area. Although not frequently mentioned by name, the United States as the world's largest economic power is undoubtedly the target of these resolutions by implication.

The foundation of these redistributive urgings is the resolution passed in 1974 which called for what is known as the New International Economic Order. The New International Economic Order proposed a transfer of capital and the granting of more trade concessions to the poorer nations as well as the restructuring of economic decision-making institutions to give Third World nations a greater voice. Lacking the ability to compel the transfer of capital or to alter trade policies, the General Assembly majority has had to be content with

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whom you will love

only
a flutter in the air now
whom you will love

and later
by an evening lake
a wing of light

one morning
when you wake up on the mountain
an air of rose
a certain bird will brush
against your ear
planting the name there

one you have never known before
one you have always known

joan vayo

May, 1988
tampering with administrative machinery within the United Nations itself.

The net effect of this tampering has been to increase the number of subsidiary organs in the UN that are subject to the Third World's influence, thereby adding small additional numbers of employees and meetings. This increases the budget of the United Nations, of which the U.S. contributes 25 per cent. The increased amount, in the neighborhood of a few million dollars, is a drop in the bucket in the American budget. However, in view of the widespread skepticism concerning the UN, it is a highly visible "drop."

**It would be wrong for the U.S. to withdraw from the United Nations.**

The official American response to the perceived hostility of the United Nations' majority has been one of "selective withdrawal," both of membership and attendance at UN conferences and meetings. The most spectacular withdrawal was that from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1984. Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas has also led a successful effort in the Congress to place limits on American contributions to the United Nations. At the end of 1987, the United States was in arrears $252 million for its regular budget assessments, a result both of the United States Congress' balking at the UN and of the impersonal budget-cutting axe of Gramm-Rudman. In brighter days in the United Nations America used to take the Russians to task for being in arrears on their contributions. They are now more cooperative in fulfilling their obligations than we are.

Congress, this time led by Senator Charles Grassley and Representative Jack Kemp, was also behind the latest moves to close the PLO's Observer Mission in New York. This time the Administration opposed the move, wanting both to avoid the clash with the UN majority and to encourage the Middle East peace process. However, since the Congress had approved an amendment to the State Department Authorization Bill that mandated closure, the Administration had to begin the process.

At a special meeting of the General Assembly on March 2, 1988, the General Assembly approved by 143 votes to 1 (Israel) a resolution which called on the United States to fulfill its duties as the host nation and allow the Palestinian delegation to remain in place. Many of our allies supported the resolution. The United States cast no vote at all. This latest UN action will confirm again for many Americans in high and low places the hostility of the United Nations.

It would be wrong for the United States to take further partial or full action to withdraw from the organization. The number of issues with global ramifications is increasing, not declining. International organizations cannot resolve these issues on their own, but neither can individual nation-states.

We are locked in a dilemma. If we withdraw from the United Nations, we will have to find another organization to take its place. The gap between rich and poor nations will still be there, as will the anti-colonial intensity of the Third World nations. Even outside of the UN, American political hegemony has declined. That is the state of the world as it is. Our withdrawal could destroy the United Nations and deprive the vast majority of the rest of the world of its benefits, hard as it may be for us to see what these are.
curs, all those associated with the making of the movie will have had their artistic careers greatly advanced, the size of the salaries they can command significantly enhanced. There is nothing new or exceptional in the knowledge that these events will take place. However, something special may have occurred in this year’s competition, since two of the strong candidates in the Best Picture category, Broadcast News and Moonstruck, are listed as comedies.

In the sixty years since Paramount Pictures’ Wings won the first Academy Award for Best Picture in 1927, only eight films which might loosely be labelled as comedies have been so honored. Despite the fact that comedy has constantly served Hollywood as a steady source of income, despite indications that comedy is a form which since the silent era origins of filmmaking has seemed best suited for the medium, despite the demonstrated ability of comedies to survive the test of time and endure as classics, and despite evidence that comedies have often been first to reflect the critical conscience of the country, respect as symbolized through recognition by the Academy members has been nearly non-existent.

Reasons for the film community’s reluctance to bestow official recognition for artistic achievement on comic films are easy to find.

First, members of the Academy are ever-aware of the financial burdens of filmmaking and have a clear understanding of the economic impact a Best Picture award can offer. Since selection can stimulate an additional income of millions of dollars through re-release and cable contracts, provide a vast audience for a film which might have been overlooked by the general public, and nearly guarantee filmmakers used to working within tight budget restrictions an opportunity to work in the future with generous studio support, voters often choose to elect films and filmmakers in need of such assistance.

Therefore, movies which struggle at the theatre box office despite extraordinary critical notices, mostly films deemed serious and sophisticated, are prime candidates for recognition. In recent years, Chariots of Fire and Gandhi have fit into this mold and have been rewarded. Even when such a film cannot garner the top award, it may be honored indirectly through acknowledgement of a member of its cast in one of the secondary categories, as has been seen in the past few Academy Awards in which films such as Tender Mercies, Kiss of the Spider Woman, and A Trip to Bountiful have been cited in such a way.

Since the various types of comedy historically have been the most popular genres of film with the viewing public, comedies are almost always excluded from this sort of consideration for the needy. Consequently, by casting votes for these under-appreciated films, members of the Academy also achieve a certain degree of self-satisfaction. They are thereby able to improve their image, to give the millions of viewers of the Academy Awards ceremonies the impression that the film community really does strongly support serious, sophisticated filmmaking, really does believe in film as an art form—and they can do so without actually spending any industry money in offering that support, since checking a box on a ballot costs nothing.

The only recent exceptions that come to mind—films that were classified as comedies, yet received such treatment as listed above—are Amadeus and Annie Hall. Both of these films received critical praise, but suffered economically when first released: Amadeus initially appealed to the small audience which appreciated classical music, and Annie Hall attracted the Woody Allen following which by industry standards has always been limited. However, with stories that do not end happily, one can question whether these two films fulfill the traditional definition of comedy. (The same can be said for the only other recent comedy to win an Oscar, Terms of Endearment.)

Another reason comedies have not received their fair share of awards is closely linked to the first: comedies have always been associated with the less sophisticated, lowbrow forms of entertainment. One cannot deny that the early age of comic films—the silent era of Mack Sennett, Charlie Chaplin, and Buster Keaton, or the early sound years of Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields, and the Marx Brothers—might be considered by many as low bred, poorly born of the illmannered and crude vaudeville and burlesque theatre.

No matter how hilarious the humor, the coarse and vulgar be-
ginnings of comedy did not reflect well upon the fledgling film industry as it attempted to achieve respectability. Unlike those dramas whose origins lay in between the covers of a classical novel or on the boards of the legitimate Broadway stage, comedies brought to the screen the seedy and sometimes sordid images of vaudeville and burlesque. Even Broadway's conservative tradition of the musical has been more successfully rewarded by the Academy—ten musicals have been selected as best films, and of the eight comedies cited, a couple might more accurately be labelled musical comedies.

For a form of expression which has had to struggle to achieve any respect in the world of arts and literature, filmmaking was better off in the past by not spotlighting comedy, whose elements capitalize on the idea of disrespect and anti-social behavior. With this in mind, as well as other political concerns about image, it is not surprising that it took Hollywood nearly fifty years just to recognize with an honorary statue the achievements of someone of Charlie Chaplin's stature as a filmmaking pioneer.

A third reason for comedy's inability to attain respect over the decades is more abstract. In addition to the economic independence shown by the success comedies have had with the public, as well as the social stigma attached to film comedy's outgrowth from vaudeville and burlesque, film comedy suffers from a long record of slight treatment that has been inherited from other comic art forms. This can best be seen in the way comedy has been viewed in theatre throughout the ages and is taught today in the classrooms of our educational institutions.

When academic critics discuss the ancient Greek theatre, readers are usually asked to consider the greatness of Antigone or Oedipus, the Sophocles tragedies, not that of Lysistrata, the Aristophanes comedy. Although Lysistrata concerns crucial themes, such as the follies of war, discrimination, and sexism, it is not given equal standing with the tragedies due to its use of humor as a technique to ridicule and because of its bawdiness, which appeals to the more base side of human nature. Even Shakespeare's plays are not immune to the abstract double standard applied to tragedy and comedy. The writing in some of Shakespeare's comedies measures up to the quality of the writing in his other plays; nevertheless, none of the comedies is granted the elevated status conferred upon Hamlet, Othello, or the other tragedies.

It is as if admission of the lessons of comedy is too uncomfortable because comedy's main purpose is to dismantle illusions held about society.

In the evaluation of film, as in various areas of literature, comedy almost always appears to be under-valued as art. It is as if viewers are discomfited by an inability to distinguish between the laughter which is brought about by incisive criticism and caricature of society and the laughter which results from the distressing recognition of their own individual weaknesses being reflected or exaggerated on the stage—the comedy of a Dr. Strangelove as opposed to the humor of a Play It Again, Sam. It is as if admission of the lessons of comedy is too uncomfortable because comedy's main purpose is to dismantle the illusions held about society and to expose the insanities evident in everyday lives—illusions which often hold society together and insanities which are normally subconsciously ignored in order to help retain threads of sanity in a shredded, often insane world.

A final explanation for the resistance toward acceptance of comedy by the Academy may be found in the demographic information gathered about its membership. The typical voting member is thirty to forty years older than the average moviegoer. According to guidelines originally set by Aristophanes, comedy contains action which begins with a society constrained by authority, it follows a humorous series of events which undercut that authority, reaches a point containing a new liberated scene built around the values of youth, vitality, and sexuality, and concludes in a celebration, feast, or dance.

Remarkably, films such as Animal House or Footloose, movies popular with the younger audiences, clearly adhere to this oldest of definitions for comedy. Comedy, in order to challenge the established, to reflect the critical conscience of its time, must reject the settled, the secure institutions and individuals. Therefore, the nature of comedy tends to alienate the older, more conservative populace while gaining the allegiance of the youthful, more experimental sections of society.

The targets of comedy are more often the powerful and wealthy—from all indications, a fair description of those whose ballots choose Academy Award winners. Many institutions and industries, including the film industry, are mocked, parodied, or criticized in comedies. It is interesting to note that in comedies the poor, the powerless, the minorities often display rebellious behavior and are depicted as heroic. As early as the 1930s and 1940s, women in movies were allowed more aggressive actions, career opportunities, and equal power in comedies than in "seri-
ous" dramatic forms. Had Rosalind Russell's character in *His Girl Friday* appeared in a drama instead of a comedy, she would have to have been taken seriously by the audience and, instead of being seen as lovably kooky, would have been viewed as obnoxious and boorish.

Throughout the decades, directors have used humor to introduce new, controversial points of view and alter the attitudes of the American public. A compelling argument might be made that film comedies serve as the best social and political barometers of their times. One need only look at a few of the comedies of one decade, the late-'60s through early-'70s, to see plainly its social concerns and political concerns.

*Alice's Restaurant*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Harold and Maude*, *Hair*, and *M*A*S*H* are only a few of the movies which catch the mood of the times—the conflicts between generations over such issues as war, racial discrimination, sexual attitudes, and materialism, as well as drugs, music, and fashion. Another comedy, *The Graduate*, probably captures coming of age in the 1960s as well as any drama, just as its 1980s counterpart, *Risky Business*, demonstrates how the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Comedy seems easy. If the quotes by Sennett and Chaplin at the head of this article are taken literally, comedy appears to be simple to create, simplistic in its creation. However, comedy's apparent simplicity is usually deceptive, as are those quotes. Oftentimes, comedy questions established institutions and figures of state, commerce, and religion: it takes to task questionable developments in society such as nationalism, militarism, and materialism. For too long, comedy in film, as in literature and other media, has been undervalued as art, while remaining an essential commodity for the film studios, offering convenience and profit, no more than a piece of merchandise. John Locke declared: "Commodities are movables, valuable by money, the common measure." Too often comedies are commodities measured solely by profits.

Perhaps this year the voting members have made a selection for Best Picture which does not conform to the traditional choice: one of the comedies nominated has already won and received recognition. If not, once again the creators of comic films will have come away from the awards ceremonies without having achieved proper respect or reward, and one might think these filmmakers are only left to echo the semblance of self-satisfac-

**Irish Spring**

Why am I, at 46, so suddenly amazed by green,
green grass, green leaves, green
Spring shining.

And more than these,
green _anything_—the measuring
 glass I fill half up,
the plastic lighter, emerald-

green, green fire!
At my age, a jaded man, what
birth does this portent, I wonder?
Or what death approaches me

soddy under clover?
The difference is everything, I
admonish myself to know . . .
but then I see another green
thing, and green into green I go.

Frank Polite
The Last Word?

Dot Nuechterlein

Dear Mr. Editor,

Oh, woe is me—such a dilemma. This is the final column for this publishing year, the last word of The Last Word, so to speak, and there are still so many things I want to say. And since you haven’t yet decided if we’ll do this again next year, or if someone else will fill this place, it could be that this is The Last Word, so to speak, ever.

So I must take care to choose the right topic. But what a quandary! There are at least half a dozen possibilities.

Take health clubs, for instance. Have you ever been to one? Several times recently I have stayed at hotels that made available to guests the opportunity to visit such facilities, and being someone who never turns down anything that’s free, I have found myself among the young and beautiful.

That, in fact, is the lingering impression of those places. You’ve seen the ads, haven’t you. They feature the likes of Cher and Heather and Raquel, all women known for their, uh, good bone structure. And what I have noticed is that practically all the females in these clubs look the same. Many advertisements lie to people, saying in effect, “Do this or eat that or buy this product and you will look like she does”; perhaps the message of the health club ad has boomeranged into, “Do this if you look like she does.” So people don’t go if they don’t.

I would also like to discuss accidentalness (no, I didn’t make up that word—it’s in Webster). You have probably noticed, as have I, that a great deal of life results from happenstance. Humans are planners; we plot about the future; but when it comes right down to it we have much less control over what happens to us than we think we do.

Let me illustrate: a friend and I both rushed out to the parking lot, got into our respective cars, looked both ways, and backed out—smack into one another. I repeat, we both looked! But we were directly opposite from each other, and when we looked, neither was moving. So we had a not serious, injury-free, nobody’s fault, but nonetheless annoying, fender-bender.

Consequently, each of us was delayed in getting to where we had been going, we spent hours in the next few weeks obtaining insurance estimates and having repairs made, and we found our schedules altered and our energies expended in ways we had not chosen.

Or take an even more common case: you decide to make a phone call; you think through what you are going to say, imagining what the other person’s response will be; then you build a possible conversation from there. You’re prepared for the talk.

But what happens? Frequently the other party doesn’t follow the “script” you planned, and the discussion goes in different directions. That can be nice, or not—the point is, the results are unintended. I have a theory about accidentalness, based on social psychology, that could fill a page.

Someone asked me the other day if I have anything to report yet about my new career in political life. Sure. My first observation is that I have spent most of my life in church-related situations, where everything starts with a prayer, but in civic circumstances everything begins with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Which, by the way, is a bit nervous-making for me. Now I know the Pledge—or rather, I knew the old version. Every schoolchild in America learns it, right? Not quite. I went to a parochial school where everything started with a prayer. But I did belong to the 4-H Club, where the Pledge was de rigueur.

But somewhere along the way the new phrase “under God” was added. I think that’s great. The only problem is, I lived in another country for a long time and didn’t have much chance to practice the new words. Now I get panic-stricken because I can never remember where they go!

One day as a candidate I was the guest at a political function and was given the great honor of leading the assembly in the Pledge. I broke into a sweat trying to recall if God came before or after “indivisible.” No joke. Fortunately, once I got the first few words out the group took over and nobody heard me stumble, but that could get awkward someday.

Also, I could write about the results of a survey I have been taking over the past decade in my classes and on various social occasions. Suppose I ask you a question that must be answered either one way or another, even though you will be tempted to say “Both.”

Want to try? Okay, here’s the question: “How would you prefer to have people think of you—as intelligent, or good looking?” Ah, ah, ah, you can’t say “both.” Choose one, and then explain why that’s your preference. I have found that males and females tend to answer differently, and I think I know why they do.

But I can’t tell you, because oh, woe, here comes the end of the page already. And I haven’t even touched on travel tips, or my humor class, or the danger inherent in opening storage boxes because they accuse you of things you began and never finished, and so on.

Maybe next time?