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ON THE DEATH PENALTY

THE EXECUTION OF GARY Gilmore almost succeeded in confus­
ing the public completely on the matter of capital punishment and the death penalty as a necessary act of retribution for justice in a civilized society. To many people it seemed that Gilmore was able to turn the state and the court into agents of his suicide.

We ought not be surprised at the confusion perpetrated by the whole affair. For so long certain biases have been urged with the assurances that would make them appear as common­places of social wisdom: the death penalty is itself a brutal, violent act, unworthy of a civilized society; the death penalty is itself an act of in­justice because it is society's expres­sion of vengeance, meted out most frequently on blacks and poor people; the death penalty is cruel and in­human treatment because an innocent person may suffer irreversible punish­ment; and, best of all, the object of punishment is rehabilitation, not retributive justice.

Gilmore's appea ls to have the death sentence executed gave a bizarre cast to the episode. Added to that, some of the protestors against the execution represented both the law and the church, weighty witness indeed. But such strange and unusual behavior should not deflect us from the prior obligation of a society bound to justice and freedom: the execution of the death penalty is the necessary keeping of a negative promise. If government cannot or does not keep promise to praise and reward keepers of the law, it soon becomes an instrument of injustice and an enemy of the social good. By its very mode, it invites people to value life in terms of cruelty and fear, power and money. It makes the seed-bed for vigilantes. Similarly, the government must keep the neg­ative promise: those who wantonly and intentionally murder shall have their act declared to be a shameful and odious act, rejected by the society in a most decisive way.

A SOCIETY'S DIRECTION AND future is revealed not only by what its people do, but even more by what they allow. It is neither barbaric nor uncivilized to terminate the life of one who wilfully, intentionally, and wantonly takes the life of another human being. Orderly and lawful, swift and sure retribution, distributed equitably, is precisely the state of affairs that itself resists uncivilized, mob, and vigilante violence.

It is a strange darkness that has descended on us: an unborn infant may be killed if its continuation to birth inconveniences the mother; but somehow it is considered base and evil and outdated to execute death on a murderer. And yet, both posi­tions have in common the attempt to evade accountability for our behav­ior.

It is really full human existence that evades us if we do not start with the category of human accountability.
as primary. The opposite category is to assume that each of us belongs to himself. We do not; and there is an honor attributed to each other when human beings are held accountable for their lives and behavior, with themselves and with others. Death is the supreme accountability demanded of each of us by the Creator-Judge. No one escapes giving that account. When the Creator gives life, he expresses his sovereign and spontaneous will that we shall live as befits his intention. Society's devices, on the one side, to provide governments and laws for the preservation of that life, and, on the other side, to take in retribution the life of the murderer, is grounded in the Creator's unmotivated will to make us living creatures, accountable to him for our life with, for, and from each other. Swift, sure, and justly distributed retribution, executed by the laws under which a people lives, for those who are tried and proved guilty of the crime of murder, is a clear statement in word and deed that a society honors the life of each of its members.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

WITH THIS ISSUE OF The Cresset some new names appear on the masthead. We are pleased to have them working with us, and, no doubt, the readers will share our pleasure when they see the results of their work.

John C. Gienapp, formerly of Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and now on a sabbatical leave, studying at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will write regularly for a new column "Science and Technology." Dr. Gienapp will also survey books, periodicals, and studies related to the investigations in those areas. His interest and competence in the history and philosophy of science combined with similar interest and competence in the theological-moral issues raised by science and technology, promise to make his work both interesting and valuable to our readers. While we join him in his expectations for finding permanent work in his field, we also rejoice that the interim period gives him time to study curricular matters related to teaching science and technology, and to write for The Cresset.

Gail Eifrig, one of Valparaiso University's most literate and well-read graduates (and in other ways a prize alumna), has begun work as editor of reviews of general books. We are certain our readers will welcome her, as we do, and will appreciate her literary judgments, her range of interests, and the benefits of her well stored treasury of reading.

Patricia Winchell, a journalism major at Valparaiso University (as well as a major in theology), and a prospective student of law at Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri) in the fall, will serve her semester as student intern on The Cresset. While much of her work will be hidden from the readers, the editor assures them that the fine work of this promising young scholar is very much present. Hopefully, her one semester's work on The Cresset will be mutually beneficial.

The final note is not about an addition to the staff; it is the bittersweet note of Richard H.W. Brauer's semster sabbatical leave. Readers who have long appreciated Brauer's work on Visual Arts will join the editorial staff in wishing him a restful and refreshing sabbatical; but they, and the editor, will welcome his return in the fall.

TWO BOOKS from Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis, Minnesota certainly ought to be on the reading list of The Cresset readers.

Not since I was a seminarian, thirty years ago, and read Thomas Wolfe's Look Homeward Angel, have I been so emotionally (and literally physically) moved by a book as I was by Edna Hong's Bright Valley of Love. (Augsburg, 1976. Paper). It may have been, in both instances, merely the state of affairs within me at the time, but nevertheless, with both books I found myself rhythmically rocking in my chair. Groans, tears, and laughter were drawn from me, and for days I was haunted by the stories. Hong has written a novel about a true story, the story of Gunther, a severely handicapped boy who was "nothing but a nothing." The haven of love and life he found at Bethel near Bielefeld, Germany, the corresponding determination of this boy to learn, to study the Christian faith, and to endure the threats of the Nazi government will warm your heart.

Augsburg has also republished in paper ($2.95) George McDonald's Diary of an Old Soul, first published by them in 1965 and since out of print. This book of 366 writings for devotional reflection was brought to American readers through the efforts of Alvin Rogness, then president of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. The Rognesses' son Paul was killed in an auto accident as he was returning from two years study at the University of Oxford. The presence of handwritten copies of some of these prayers in his son's wallet led Dr. Rogness to search for the entire book in his son's library. His brief introduction to the volume is not only moving but will also prove to be helpful to the reader of McDonald.

Perhaps readers of The Cresset will remember having seen some of these McDonald sonnets in its pages. My wife and I have used them in our devotional reading and, although the sonnets are of uneven quality, we have no hesitation in recommending them for private reflection or for reading and reflection aloud by adults.
THROUGHOUT HISTORY MEN HAVE CRAVED assurance that they dwell in a universe which is intelligent, rational, well-managed, and orderly—even though, as for Pascal, such a universe is finally unknowable in its infinite magnitude. ("L'eternel silence de ces espaces infinis m'effraie.") However, even though by a kind of perverse paradox an orderly universe which at the same time is infinite defies man's comprehension, there has been no dearth of hypotheses purporting to show that, despite the difficulties involved, order does rule on heaven and earth. No system of thought has ever been more intricate and ingenious than the one which, first advanced by Plato and later refined by the neo-Platonists into an all-embracing cosmogony, came to be known as the Great Chain of Being, according to which all things proceed in a linear gradation from insentient entities—stones, rocks, and metals—up through the lowliest creatures to man and the angels, finally terminating in God himself. The chain is an unbroken sequence, with no voides or discontinuities. Richard Hooker, in his Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, discourses grandly on the evil which would ensue were there not order in the universe and deduces that all creatures must obey the law of nature as "the stay of the world." Since order is the controlling principle in all things, it therefore becomes a binding moral imperative for man himself, and can be violated only at the peril of public and private disaster.

Although they do not always seem so in view of their bloodiness and violence, Shakespeare's major plays are fundamentally concerned with the sanctity of order. Like most Elizabethans, Shakespeare accepted the Great Chain of Being as the overarching principle in the universe. But some things are higher in the chain than others. If there are numerous entities below man, there is also an infinity above him. Degree implies aristocracy, inequality, differences; men themselves are divided in excellence; and of the values they hold not all are of equal worth. In Troilus and Cressida, that strange, puzzling "problem play" which is neither comedy nor tragedy, for example, a war which has lost all morality and transcendent purpose is allowed to drag on long after it should have been terminated because the princes orgulous have violated degree, (the linchpin of order) by elevating honor over justice. It would have been obvious to any educated Englishman of the time that justice was a virtue higher than honor (in fact, it was the highest virtue) and for that reason honor cannot be abstracted from justice and made into an end. To do so is to violate degree.

Perhaps the most powerful poetic expression in English literature of the overriding importance of degree can be found in Ulysses's speech in Troilus and Cressida. The speech is emblematic of what Elizabethans held to be the governing principles of the cosmic and human order. The siege of Troy, Ulysses admonishes his listeners, has faltered not because the Trojans are superior fighters but because among the Greeks the "specialty of rule hath been neglected." That is, discipline has broken down through lack of respect for degree. Such a wanton disregard is bound to lead to hideous confusion. As Ulysses points out, the planets themselves observe order, degree, priority, insisture, and place, the most noble planet being Sol himself, "whose medicinable eye/Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil/And posts like the commandment of a king." But when the planets in disorder wander, mutiny rages, the earth trembles, and the calm of states is jarred from its fixture. "Oh, when degree is shaked/which is the ladder to all high designs/The enterprise is sick!" At that point naked power supplants right reason, power becomes will, will appetite, and man is transformed into a universal wolf which devours itself.

Herbert Meredith Orrell has published previously in The Cresset.

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“If we consider those parts of the material world which lie nearest of us,” Addison wrote in Spectator No. 519, “and are therefore subject to our observations and enquiries, it is surprising to consider the multitude of animals with which we are stocked. Every part of matter is peopled; every green leaf swarms with inhabitants. There is scarce a single humor in the body of man, or of any other animal, in which our glasses do not discover myriads of living creatures.”

Nor is this multiplicity due to caprice or chance but rather to the beneficent plan of the Creator, who, in his infinite love for all forms of being, could not deny existence to any creature which, as it were, has an inalienable right to existence. “Had he [God] made only one species of animals, none of the rest would have enjoyed the happiness of existence; he has, therefore, specified in his creation every degree of life, every capacity of being. The whole chasm in nature, from a plant to a man, is filled up with divers kinds of creatures, rising one from another by such a gentle and easy ascent that the little transitions and deviations from one species to another are almost insensible.”

After celebrating the subtle and intricate gradations, Addison considers man himself. Where does he rank? Not as high as the angels, but not as low as the animals. He stands in between. “In this system of being,” Addison says, “there is no creature so wonderful in its nature, and which so much deserves our particular attention, as Man, who fills up the middle space between the animal and the intellectual nature, the visible and invisible world, and is that link in the chain of beings which has been often termed the nexus utriusque mundi. So that he, who in one respect is associated with angels and archangels, may look upon a being of infinite perfection as his father, and the highest order of spirits as his brethren, and may in another respect say to Corruption, Thou art my father, and to the Worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.”

DESPITE ITS ADMIRABLE PERSUASIVENESS AS A FINAL EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THINGS, HOWEVER, THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING RAISED TROUBLESOME QUESTIONS WHICH EARLIER GENERATIONS EITHER HAD NOT PERCEIVED OR HAD NOT CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH TO BE DEALT WITH. WHILE IT SEEMED IN ACCORD WITH BOTH OBSERVABLE FACTS AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY, FOR EXAMPLE, TO PLACE MAN, AS THE NEXUS UTRIUSQUE MUNDI, IN THE MIDDLE SPACE BETWEEN INSENTIENT MATTER AND THE CELESTIAL SPIRITS, THE CONCLUSION COULD NOT BE AVOIDED THAT THE MIDDLE POSITION WAS NEVERTHELESS AN UNCOMFORTABLE RUNG ON THE LADDER OF BEING. A CREATURE WHO CAN ADDRESS BOTH GOD AND CORRUPTION AS HIS FATHER CANNOT POSSIBLY KNOW WHAT HE IS. “The definition of him [man],” says Arthur Lovejoy in The Great Chain of Being, “a study to which I am greatly indebted, “as the ‘middle link’, in the sense usually given to it, especially emphasized the peculiar duality of his constitution and the tragi-comic discord in him which results from this.” As a member of two orders at once, as Lovejoy says, man wavers between both and is not quite at home in either. He has a uniqueness, to be sure, but an unhappy uniqueness. Alexander Pope expresses the melancholy consequences of this duality as follows:

Plac’d in this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise and rudely great,  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the stoic pride,  
He hangs between; in doubt to act or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a god or beast;  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;  
Chaos of thought and passion all confus’d,  
Still by himself abused, or disabus’d;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall,  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl’d;  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world.

Other philosophers concurred that it was indeed man’s fate to be “the creature in which the merely animal series terminates and the ‘intellectual’ series has its dim and rudimentary beginnings, and man is that creature.” (Lovejoy)

The consequences of man’s dual nature were not lost

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4Ibid., p. 136.
5Ibid., p. 139.
on the gloomier spirits of the time. Since *homo sapiens* is not far removed from the beasts of the field, it is clear that not much can be expected of him in the way of wisdom. Consequently no improvement in society or political structure can be hoped for. Soame Jenyns, a *philosophe* of the period, held that corruption and depravity are so closely interwoven into the very essence of all human strivings that nothing can be expected without a complete alteration of human nature. Jenyns's conclusion, therefore, is that there never has been and never will be *any* good form of government.\(^8\)

Aside from the moral and political implications of a view that denied any possibility of amelioration of man's nature and his existential predicament—a view that did not accord with the thrust towards political democracy which was beginning to be felt everywhere in Europe—the Great Chain of Being was also shaken by the discoveries of the newly emerging science of biology. Although one of the tenets had always been that nature makes no leaps (*natura non saltum factit*) closer research indicated that nature does, indeed, make leaps. These little, insensible transitions so admired by Addison proved, when examined, to be disturbingly sensible, so sensible, indeed, that there was no accounting for them. Not only does nature make leaps but even may allow a species to drop out of existence, thus leaving a vacuum in the chain of being.

**THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS NO LESS vexatious.** In the theological sphere, for instance, during the eighteenth century, the Great Chain of Being became increasingly difficult to reconcile with the existence of evil. William King, Archbishop of Dublin, in his theodicy *De Origine de Mali*, was one of those who undertook to explain once and for all why evil exists in a world fashioned by a loving Creator.\(^9\) King rests his argument on the principle of plenitude. He begins by admitting there is indeed evil in the world—"troops of miseries marching through human life"—but then adds the astonishing—although not altogether novel—proposition that evil is a necessary consequence of God's goodness because God, being devoid of envy, could not deny existence to any form of being logically possible. Hence his creatures, being limited and imperfect, are subject to all kinds of evils. Although King accepts plenitude and diversity as part of God's plan, he holds that the mere existence of something is no necessary guarantee of its excellence. To the objection that if God was compelled by his own goodness to create human beings why did he not create them with fewer imperfections, King responds that if men had only been paradisiacal they would not have been human and therefore a gap would have existed in the chain of being. It was better for the imperfect to exist than not to exist.

King was driven to some rather extreme stands to support his premises, stands which are clearly inconsistent with Christian theology. For instance, he must justify the existence of predacious animals as a necessary consequence of the principle of plenitude. In King's theodicy the lamb does not lie down with the lion but exists to be eaten by him. In King's elaborate defense of things as they are there is no room for *non omnia hominum causa fieri*.

Although King had shown that evil has a sufficient reason to exist, the implications of his theodicy are far from palatable. King postulates a static universe which can never change. If the universe if perfect, it has been perfect throughout time. God does not have second thoughts, as it were, and that which is already perfect cannot be improved. There is nothing new under the sun. Nothing more can be produced beyond that which has already been produced.

Paradoxically, however, this best of all possible worlds ("Whatever is, is right," in Pope's words) provides a shaky ground for optimism since, as Voltaire was quick to point out, it leaves no room for hope. Long before Voltaire, Addison himself was not really content with a static chain of being and conceived of the soul as embarking on an endless journey in its ascent to greater and greater perfection. And as it gradually became clear that the world described by thinkers such as Jenyns and King was hopeless, however rational it might be, accommodation had to be made for the possibility of change.

The way was opened for change when the Chain of Being was temporalized—that is, when it was seen that God, like a musician, does not strike all strings at once. Not everything has to happen in an instant, to remain constant for eternity. "While all the possibles demand realization," Lovejoy says, "they are not accorded all at once." They are spread out in time, and sooner or later every idea will find its manifestation. The way was therefore opened for man to climb the ladder of being, a prospect, as mentioned, which Addison had already foreseen. As he says, "To look upon the soul as going from strength to strength ... carries with it something that is wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his Creation ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance."

Once the Great Chain of Being was temporalized, Plato's God of Being underwent radical transformation. He was no longer immutable and self-sufficient, but, like man, was seen as actualizing himself through time and history. Put another way, the God of Being evolves into the God of Becoming, whose essence is generativeness, creativity. The best of all possible worlds is therefore not a world of fixed hierarchies but a world of diversity, because diversity most closely expresses God's bountiful nature. As Schiller said, "Every kind of perfection must

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attain existence in the fullness of the world." The implication is that the range of possibilities, far from being completed, has only begun. This view becomes the generative force behind Romanticism. As Lovejoy points out, with the temporalizing of the Great Chain of Being, the way is opened to the Romantic revolution, wherein man is seen as ascending through spires of form (Emerson's phrase) into higher and higher orders of life.

Though removed by almost a century from the Romantics, Addison no doubt would have welcomed the Faustian inferences later generations would draw from his venerated system. Throughout much of the eighteenth century we have the cheering spectacle of Addison's medicinable eye overlooking the world of man and nature and finding it rational, benign, and hopeful. If evil was present in this world (and eighteenth century philosophers, contrary to modern belief, did not deny the reality of evil) it was an evil, as we have seen, which flowed out of God's goodness and bounty. Since not even God can create his double, his creatures must necessarily be less perfect than he. Being less perfect, they are not wholly good; they contain evil in some measure. All the more reason, therefore, for them to strive to become better by ascending the ladder of being. And by the early decades of the nineteenth century Schelling can say that God himself must participate in the same process of actualization; otherwise he is not a live God but a "dead God."

As Lovejoy says, the Great Chain of Being "constitutes one of the most grandiose enterprises of the human intellect." Yet, when all its implications are drawn out, it must be seen as failing to have achieved its goal: a belief in the cosmos as ultimately rational. The trouble rises from trying to harmonize the dual aspects of God—God as the Absolute and God as the World-Spirit or Life-Force. He cannot be both. If he is a God who is all-sufficient, a lonely Absolute overlooking time and space, friendless, there is no need for him to create all kinds of creatures through which he can only fall to a lower esteem. And there is no way to explain why, as the Supreme Intelligience, he could have given rise to a world so deeply involved in confusion and disaster. If, on the other hand, he is conceived of as a generative God actualizing himself through time and history (even though, as for Schelling, his absoluteness always existed in potentia if not in actu) then he becomes a kind of higher order of man, a humanly suffering God who himself participates in the agonies and tragedies of history. Finally, a world of the generative God seems governed not by reason but by contingency and fortuitousness: why should such a world have begun at any particular point in history or indeed why should it have begun at all? Nor is it easy to accept Schelling's evolutionistic premise that history represents a continuous ascent into a higher order of being. For those in the twentieth century it is far easier to believe that just the opposite is the case.

Yet, even though its science eventually proved to be faulty and its metaphysics open to serious question, the Great Chain of Being helped to place moral restraints on men's conduct for two millennia. For all its weakness, weakness which finally could no longer be concealed, the system may have contained an enduring truth, a truth very difficult for moderns to countenance, much less accept—namely, that innate aristocracy and subordination are part of the cosmic order; that men are most secure when these differences are recognized and systematized; and that when degree is violated, the enterprise is sick, and humanity will prey on itself like the ravening wolf in Ulysses's speech.

FOR THOMAS À. BECKET, AN OPTIONAL MEMORIAL

My boots hollow frozen, pre-dawn, long-fallen snow
His pilgrims hollowed the steps kneeling up to their April shrine
behind me the mountains take on sun's strawberry ice-cream glow
The Pardoner jostled the Parson: "Here's a relic for thee and thine."
Scudding snow clouds spray the stucco broken-off spire
The murderer's swords slit the Parson's eyes open to see
Silvering shines on the cross surging up from the ruck to require
the altar where blood gouts burst from Becket's gutted body
for the sake of His Church, for God's most precious blood.
His pilgrims found what they brought to St. Thomas at Canterbury
Crimson-vested the priest rasps, skipping the understood
the Pardoner's brass, the Parson's gold, ironic mystery
the Christmas verse of John: "For God so loved the world"
man, martyred for God, God, whose Love was the world.

SARA deFORD

The Cresset
ONE OF THE MORE COMMON UNINFORMED assumptions about the origins of Afro-American literature is that there was Phillis Wheatley in the mid-eighteenth century (1753-1784) and there was Paul Laurence Dunbar in the late nineteenth century (1872-1906). Most literary histories, including Spiller's much lauded Third Revised edition, (as late as 1969!) yet of Literary History of the United States, fail even to acknowledge Wheatley; perforce, this kind of scholarship would have us believe that between Wheatley and Dunbar there was a vast unrelieved silence in Black belles lettres. Joan Sherman's Invisible Poets: Afro-Americans of the Nineteenth Century dispels this erroneous assumption conclusively.

Uncategorically, Sherman asserts that there were at least one hundred thirty published Black poets in the nineteenth century. Of these, she chose to do intensive profiles on the lives and writings of twenty-six Afro-American literary figures in the intervening century and more between Wheatley and Dunbar. Not content with merely shattering the illusion of a Black silence in American literature, Sherman goes on to acknowledge Wheatley; perforce, this kind of scholarship would have us believe that between Wheatley and Dunbar there was a vast unrelieved silence in Black belles lettres. Joan Sherman's Invisible Poets: Afro-Americans of the Nineteenth Century dispels this erroneous assumption conclusively.

The resource material alone would make Invisible Poets invaluable but what is of equal importance is the almost classic American Studies methodology Sherman employs for her disclosures. Essentially, she sets her study firmly in a literary and social-historical framework. This interdisciplinary approach allows us to focus on the poetry not only as poetry but also as social statement; it allows us to see the conditions out of which the poetry and the poets were forged. By no means does Sherman slight concise literary criticism in her examination of extant texts but she places that criticism within a context that pays its due to historical perspective.

Language is important to me and consequently, I am cautious with effusive praise; however, the appellation "invaluable" is quite applicable to Invisible Poets. Sherman's introduction is—invaluable. It is engrossing and lucid. It is factually true. It is objective and lucid. It is factual. It is objectively hard hitting in its revelation of the status to which nineteenth century Afro-American poetry has been relegated:

None of the early [Afro-American] poets is mentioned in American literature bibliographies and literary histories compiled by Evans, Foley, Fullerton, Roobach, Sabin, Spiller and others; bibliographies of black literature offer scanty

Sandra Y. Govan, since her last publication in The Cresset, is pursuing advanced studies at The Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University.

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and inaccurate references to their work. The poets are invisible in white magazines and poetry anthologies of their time and ours, and they fare little better in black literature collections... it is estimated that only ten percent of nineteenth century Afro-American poetry is currently available. Not only are these black voices unheard, but the poets' very existence is also unacknowledged.4

THE INTRODUCTION CONTAINS A PRECISE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE and the body of the book fully meets that purpose. Sherman's intentions were "to render these Afro-Americans and their poetry visible, to strip myth and misinformation from their lives and offer the most accurate biographies and bibliographies obtainable after a century of neglect, and to assess all their poetry objectively."5 She meets those intentions admirably by offering what she calls a "new pair of glasses... as a partial and preliminary corrective toward total realistic appraisal of the black artists' contribution to American literature."6

Part of the corrected vision that Sherman presents in the introduction is documentation of the fact that there was a "widespread Afro-American literary and political community which flourished throughout the century" and that several of the poets in the group chosen for examination "traveled among outstanding black and white activists of the century."7 One worked with John Brown. Another was a leading figure in women's rights and temperance movements as well as being an avowed abolitionist. Some labored for colonization and others labored against it. Some worked with the century's big names—Douglass, Washington, DuBois; others were apparently isolated and knew only one or two fellow-writers in their immediate area. Towards the end of the century a few knew or had met Dunbar personally. Apart from working with their poetry, several wrote autobiographies; one was the first Afro-American female novelist; "ten published, edited, and wrote for their own periodicals; almost all published essays on such topics as race, religion, politics and economics, metaphysics, literature, temperament, astronomy, and current events."8 They were a heterogeneous group and their backgrounds, lives, occupations, and poetry varied considerably.

BEFORE MOVING INTO GENERAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY on the poetry and assessing critical response and interpretation of it, Sherman provides an interesting demographic overview of the twenty-six representative poets. All were "exceptionally long-lived" for the century and the average age of death was sixty-five. For twenty-four whose birthplaces were documented, eleven were Southerners and thirteen Northerners. Ethnic origins seemed to be "questionable" in some cases and had to be established by dubious contemporary descriptions or drawings. Sherman says her research indicated that "two, George Horton and Elymas Rogers, were of 'pure' African blood; seven others were predominantly African, five were mulattoes and six were of predominantly Caucasian ancestry."9

Five were born slaves and remained in slavery until Emancipation. For T. Thomas Fortune, called the "dean of Negro Editors," this meant freedom at age seven. For George Moses Horton, it meant sixty-six years a slave. Horton and several others were entirely self-educated; Fortune had three years of formal schooling; another poet had one year. Five poets had less than a high school education; six completed an equivalent to high school and had additional education or religious training. Five earned B.A. degrees at colleges and seminaries; three received advanced degrees: "H. Cordelia Ray earned an M.A. in pedagogy; George Vashon, the first black graduate of Oberlin College, read law and passed the New York bar examinations; and George McClellan earned an A.B. and M.A. from Fisk and a B.D. from Hartford Seminary."10

Using understatement, Sherman tells us that vocational choices and job opportunities for nineteenth-century Blacks were "severely limited." Consequently, a majority of the poets were preachers or teachers. Some combined the two vocations and some even added a third and became newspaper editors too. Of the twenty-six, only Frances E.W. Harper earned a living from publication of her work and from the lecture circuit. (Harper took the podium almost continuously as an abolitionist, a suffragette, a poet, and a temperance worker.) Some had skilled jobs: plastering, printing, bar-bering, manufacturing; some did civil service or minor municipal work; some were journalists and others did manual labor. Most traveled, in search of schooling or jobs, and the distances they wandered covered Central America to Canada, New York to California. Many of the poets were civic-minded or community-oriented and worked actively with various black literary and educational societies, religious organizations, lodges and welfare agencies, and national organizations like the WCTU, YMCA, and NAACP.11 Most were involved in some way with abolitionist or civil rights activity.

As persons and poets their experiences were

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9Ibid., p. 251.
10Ibid., p. xv.
11Ibid., p. xvi.
12Ibid., p. xvii.
13Ibid., p. xix.
14Ibid., p. xvi.
15Ibid., p. xvi.
16Ibid., p. xvii.
17Ibid., p. xix.
18Ibid., p. xvi.
different and distinctive from each other; consequently, although they shared several themes in common, their poetry was varied. The one point Sherman insists upon is that whatever the range of the poetry—from militant racially strident protest to sentimental love lyrics or nature poems—the central thought to keep in mind is that their work conformed to nineteenth century poetic standards. At the same time, however, the poetry is an invaluable record of over one hundred years of black experience as felt and articulated by some of the most sensitive and talented of the race.” Sherman further buttresses her argument with support from J. Saunders Redding, considered the “dean” of Afro-American literary critics. Redding had said:

... American Negro literature, so called, is American literature in fact... American Negro literature cannot be lopped off from the main body of American literary expression without doing grave harm to both as complimentary instruments of historical and social diagnosis and as the joint articulated corpus of American experience.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF THIS material, Sherman moves into some rather penetrating critical commentary. On first reading it sounds as if she is breaking entirely new ground; on second reading I found that not all of her premises are startlingly fresh and that, in fact, many of them are alluded to in another fine book on Black literature, Barksdale and Kinnamon’s Black Writers of America, A Comprehensive Anthology. However, the Barksdale and Kinnamon book is an anthology and is therefore more generalized; its introductions and bibliographic materials are excellent, but because Sherman’s work is more narrow, her comments are often more illustrative and specific. She shares with other scholars in the field the observation that nineteenth-century Black poetry is generally American in subject, versification, and attitudes. She contends that both black and white poetry of the period reflects and responds “to the changing political, social, and cultural scene, to the events, ideologies, and leaders, black and white, that constitute American history.” She concedes that “naturally, black writing most vividly mirrors the changing fortunes of the black race,” but that “these fortunes were in turn wholly a product of the American environment.” Having disposed of these general assessments, Sherman moves toward more pointed criticism:

In the entire body of black verse published between 1829 and 1900 there is scarcely a trace of those qualities commonly assigned to the Negro folk temperament (or an African heritage) such as peasant irony, sensuousness, tropic nonchalance, primitive rhythms or emotional raciness. [Many of these alleged attributes were often imputed to Blacks by early 20th century writers and critics, particularly those enamoured of the idea that Blacks were an atavistic people, free from the “burdens” of civilization. Names that come immediately to my mind are Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, Carl Van Vechten. In the 19th century writers like Joel Chandler Harris and George Washington Cable contributed their fair share to the shaping of the myth(s).] There is much evidence, however, of other qualities lumped under the Negro folk rubric which in fact are common to black and white 19th century poetry: sentimentality, imagination, childlike innocence, musicality, and colloquialism. Moreover, a majority of the black poets share with their white contemporaries a variety of poetic and personal values: unambiguous thought, refined sentiments, and elevated language; Christian piety and morality; and an affectionate nostalgia for a simply, homely rural life.

Sherman proceeds with more pungent criticism and for the most part protects herself from the possible charge of too stringent a critical stance by acknowledging that black and white poetry of the nineteenth-century shared common defects: “didacticism and rhetorical shrillness, intellectual and emotional banality, diffuseness, and fondness for abstract and archaic diction and mythological-literary allusions.” Having studied the works of several nineteenth-century poets—Black and white—I can attest to the truth of many of Sherman’s charges. I must confess that I bridle a bit at “intellectual and emotional banality.” The century’s dictum to poetry was that it teach, instruct, uplift, and reform; pleasure was a secondary thought. I doubt that our late twentieth-century perspective gives us leave to condemn a whole canon of verse as intellectually poor or emotionally banal merely because we’ve moved another hundred years and our perceptions about the nature of poetry or the poet’s obligations have changed. At that, there is still a great deal of debate about the notion of a Black Aesthetic and what the formulators of that artistic credo feel is the responsibility of the artist and his/her work.

Sherman makes another critical assessment to

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12Ibid., p. xvi.
14Ibid., p. xx.
15Ibid., p. xx.
16Ibid., p. xx.
which I must take exception. She asserts, and rightly as far as she goes, that “instead of African or Afro-American song patterns, black poets employ every traditional [European] verse form: the ode, sonnet, ballad, Spenserian stanza, ottava rima, heroic couplet, terza rima, rhymed triplet, quatrains, blank verse, and all standard combinations of meter and rhyme.”17 The implication of this statement is that there were no poets who employed any vestiges of an African sensibility or culture in their art. This contention may be accurate in terms of those poets who rendered their art via the written word; it does not apply to those who relied primarily on oral creations. There is a very viable argument in this regard: that some of the greatest Afro-American poets and artists were those unlettered Blacks who created and sustained an enduring oral folk tradition. It is these artists whom James Eldon Johnson celebrates in his “O Black and Unknown Bards.”

O black and unknown bards of long ago, How came your lips to touch the sacred fire? How, in your darkness, did you come to know The power and beauty of the minstrel’s lyre? Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes? Who first from out the still watch, lone and long, Feeling the ancient faith of prophets rise Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song? It is within this tradition that the African and Afro-American materials merge and surface. Although there is still some debate about European vs. African origins, most scholars recognize that the bulk of whole cycles of Afro-American folktales came from Africa. Are we to say these folktales are not art? No. Are we to say that the creation of community art and poetry—sermons, spirituals, work songs, blues—is not art and poetry merely because it does not correspond to the European aesthetic? I think not. Yes, those poets who wrote in the English language used European models and techniques to ground their work firmly. But there were other poets whose materials were grounded in African and Afro-American sensibilities. Their art was oral. Many of the more formalized poets were aware of the problems of dual audience and often directed their work toward a white audience in order to reach the conscience of the nation. They had to use the forms that white Americans could deal with if they were to reach them. In effect, they were showcase “tokens” forced into a stance of “proving” their claim to humanity by wielding the pen “like-white-folks.”

These points aside, I have no great difficulties with Sherman’s work. I appreciate the fact that up to now there has been virtually no audience for nineteenth-century Black poetry and no critical theorists of it. In fact, in an early essay in Home Le Roi Jones had the temerity to dismiss any thought of a valid Black literary tradition by condemning all formal—as opposed to folk—art as a “Myth of Negro Literature.” Other writers like Richard Wright and Nick Aaron Ford have occasionally done “blueprints” for Black writing over the years—again stressing the folk art and suggesting that future writers look to the folk tradition for inspiration and material. This is not a bad suggestion and has, in fact, been followed; but, it is no reason to ignore the works of those poets who “put-down-their-buckets-where-they-were” (to borrow from Booker T. Washington) and struggled to show the race’s poetic ability in the conventional forms of the century. Given the dearth of critical guidelines, I have no qualms about accepting Sherman’s critical criteria for the poetry studied. Basically, her criteria were consideration of “the moral, social, and sentimental strengths of [the] verse, the appropriateness of its language and versification to the subject, and the poem’s effectiveness in conveying its emotion or message.”18

FOR EACH POET PROFILED SHERMAN gives detailed biographical information to paint the scene of the poets’ social surroundings; then, she makes a critique of the poetry and whatever occasional prose the poet has. Her criticisms are incisive and speak directly to the technical accomplishments, or lack of same, in a poet’s work.

James Monroe Whitfield was a “protest” poet. Sherman says much of his work is “outstanding, not only for his metrical smoothness and breath of classical imagery but even more for the biting cynicism of his anti-slavery tirades . . . ‘America, it is to thee/Thou boasted land of liberty—/It is to thee I raise my song,/Thou land of blood and crime and wrong.’” She analyzes other verses of Whitfield in terms of their structure, tone, diction, and imagery. “Poem’ surveys 200 years of American history building on a forming metaphor with its imagery of sowing, blowing, harvesting, blighting.”

Two sails, with different intent Approached the Western Continent New England’s cold and sterile land Gave shelter to the pilgrim band; Virginia’s rich and fertile soil Received the dusky sons of toil.

Since the poem is truncated Sherman tells us that “Pilgrims and slavers planted seeds. In the North, future generations reaped

17Ibid., p. xxi.

18Ibid., p. xxxii.
Abundance of the glorious fruit—
Freedom of thought, and of the pen,
Free schools, free speech, free soil, free men.” 19

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was the most popular Black poet before Dunbar. Her major subjects were race, religion, and social reform. Sherman traces images of a gentle Redeemer and a fiery Jehovah through Harper’s religious poetry (incidentally, she claims that the “fiery Jehovah” poems are more “poetically interesting” because they show a “dynamic God who redresses grievances in this world”). By Sherman’s reckoning, Harper’s verse is “frankly propagandistic.” But she does note that Harper was aware of concentrating too much on racial protest themes and had branched out to write “more of feelings that are general . . . and delve into the heart of the world.” 20 Be it “propagandistic” or “general,” Harper’s verse was created for oral recitation and was at its best in this form. Despite the fact that much of it was abolitionist verse and therefore subject to generic problems like eliciting the emotions of fear, pain, or pity, it could be powerfully moving when declaimed. Just read “Bury me in a Free Land” aloud.

Make me a grave wher’er you will,
In a lowly plain or a lofty hill;
Make it among earth’s humblest graves,
But not in a land where men are slaves.

I ask no monument, proud and high,
To arrest the gaze of the passers-by
All that my yearning spirit craves,
Is bury me not in a land of slaves. 21

Shirley Chisholm was not the first Black woman to espouse the cause of equal rights for women. In “A Double Standard” Harper employs the voice of a “tarnished” young woman.

Crime has no sex and yet today
I wear the brand of shame;
Whilst he amid the gay and proud

Still bears an honored name.

No golden weights can turn the scale
Of Justice in His sight;
And what is wrong in woman’s life
In man’s cannot be right. 22

UNFORTUNATELY, IN A STUDY OF THIS scope we cannot see the complete text of every poem by each author; space limitations prevent it, and some of the poems are very long. Sherman shares portions of poems and alludes to others in her critical assessment of the body of a poet’s works. She also provides a comprehensive bibliography on each author at the end of her text. There is a book somewhat akin to hers in which much larger segments of the poetry are given and in many cases an entire poem may be cited; but, other than this, William Robinson’s Early Black American Poets simply cannot compare with Sherman’s accomplishment in Invisible Poets. Again, the bibliographies and appendices alone distinguish it; the socio-historical context, as well as the literary focus, make it one of the best examples of scholarship in the field.

Obviously, there is a lot I’ve left unsaid. I haven’t been able to present as many selections of poetry and critical commentary as I would have liked. I haven’t really discussed the range of poetry that Sherman covers—abolitionist to accommodationist, strident militancy to love lyrics to charming dialect. I haven’t responded to all of her critical judgments where she and I could take issue with each other. What I hope I have done is generate sufficient reaction so that those who teach or take an American literature course (most of which will inevitably touch on the nineteenth-century) will be motivated to look into a significant aspect of nineteenth-century American literature that has been shamefully shunted into the dark. Sherman’s Invisible Poets should be read by scholars and general readers alike; we must render these poets visible; like Ellison’s hero, they’ve hibernated long enough. 

ELEMENTAL
I meditate on air, fire, water, earth.
Father, Your wrath is tempered by Your mirth.

R.L. BARTH

January, 1977
A SCIENCE COURT?

IN AN EDITORIAL IN SCIENCE a year ago Alvin Weinberg urged that mechanisms are needed to promote responsibility in scientific debates conducted in the public arena. He asserted that "lower standards of proof are demanded in the public than in the professional debate, and half-truths are too often perpetuated on the public by scientists." One proposal to improve the quality of scientific debate on issues in the public arena is the formation of a science court, an idea championed chiefly by Arthur Kantrowitz, chairman of the Avco Everett Research Laboratory, Inc.

In such a court, technical disputes would be argued in adversary proceedings before a panel of well-versed but disinterested scientists, who would presumably be better than the scientific laity at weeding out errors, half-truths, and irrelevancies. In a particular controversy (such as aerosol damage to the ozone layer or the safety of recombinant DNA experiments) experts would be appointed to argue each side of the controversy, attempting to reach agreement on statements of scientific fact with testimony subject to cross-examination, just as in a legal proceeding. The impaneled scientists would conclude the proceeding by giving an opinion on the scientific facts in the case, as well as an estimate of the probable validity of their conclusions.

According to Kantrowitz, the court would be limited to scientific and technical facts; it would not make regulatory recommendations nor even consider the diverse social, economic, and political issues surrounding a regulatory proceeding.

While Kantrowitz' proposal has not enlisted large support, enough government bureaucrats have been influenced by Kantrowitz and his fellow government adviser, Simon Ramo, so that the concept may be given a trial run. Before the change of administration several agencies were considering such a test.

THE IDEA OF THE COURT raises several concerns on which members of the scientific community differ. The chief question is whether scientific facts can be separated effectively from values. Generally those who think so favor the court; those who think not, oppose. Barry Commoner and Alan McGowan, chairman and president of the Scientists' Institute for Public Information respectively, are in the latter camp. Commoner described the court concept in one interview as "a very serious attempt to reintroduce authoritarianism in science." McGowan predicted that political pressures on scientists to "play ball with the Supreme Court team" would diminish the variety of public debate. In a discussion of the concept at the Hastings Institute this year [January, 1977] Barry Cooper, Research Fellow at the University of Minnesota School of Public Affairs, reportedly argued that the question of which issues to set before the court would inevitably be political, a value-laden judgment on what issues are really important.

Lawyers have also responded to the idea. Columbia law professor Harold Edgar expressed fear that the adversary process may obscure issues by clever argument. On the other hand, lawyer and consumer advocate James S. Turner favors experimenting with the science court in the hope that debate focused on facts will help screen out value-laden policy recommendations proposed by experts as "scientific judgments," which would ultimately reduce scientists' political clout.

In assessing the merit of Kantrowitz' proposal, a major consideration is the reality that rational debate over the bearing of scientific information on public policy is now difficult to sustain in a way that is relevant, informed, and comprehensive. If a science court can improve the quality of debate and help to reach mutually perceived sensible conclusions, it should be welcomed. Whether the court and such debate can achieve such a goal seems to be an empirical question for which a test will supply evidence, provided an experimental court can be fairly arranged. The opinions of such a body, if widely disseminated, might help in the monumental task of maintaining a scientifically informed citizenry. Fears about application of the adversary process to science may be somewhat allayed by the reflection that legal processes are by no means the worst method of decision-making. There is evidence that adversary processes in evaluation and policy studies aid in reaching sensible decisions; they might in scientific matters as well. Most likely, the court will never completely isolate scientific facts from values, but this need not be a decisive objection to the court concept. Debate may clarify where facts and values interpenetrate. Finally, there is substantial experience on the ways in which knowledge is used, misused, or ignored in political and bureaucratic decision-making. A science court cannot change the irrational aspects of the political process; no one should be disappointed if court opinions fail to command immediate political assent.

On balance the objections to a science court are not decisive. A cautious trial of the concept is in order. The resulting experience may help to develop mechanisms to assure continual accessibility and use of scientific information into public decision-making.

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Writing About Movies:

The Selznick Case History

Preview of Coming Attractions

FOR SOME OF US WHO GREW up in the shadow of a neighborhood movie house, it remains striking in 1976 how difficult it has become to get accurate film-history of the big-studio days. By “accurate history,” I don’t refer to subtleties and nuances. I’m not concerned, for instance, with how the old movie censorship actually worked in practice nor with such social distinctions as the changing function of actors’ sexual exhibitionism from private prophetic shamanism to public priestly ritual. No, I mean merely, how much films cost and earned, who was responsible, how they were produced, which were best. These seem fundamental queries for any serious film critic or historian. Yet anybody who keeps track of the recent flood of movie books is kept aware not only of the humble best-seller schlock that gets marketed, but of the historical confusion in more serious attempts. Here are some examples:

A professional journalist’s life of Howard Hughes puts one of his important films, the 1931 Milestone Front Page, in the wrong year and—more importantly—the wrong place in Hughes’ production sequence. An “official” biography of Spencer Tracy, well reviewed, gives strong internal evidence that the biographer never checked a print of his subject’s most ambitious film. (This was The Power and the Glory, released in 1933 but available for viewing when the biography was researched.) Lillian Ross in Picture—her famous production history of John Huston’s difficulties directing a version of Red Badge of Courage at MGM—throughout her book labors a parallel between Huston’s film and another of the many films then being shot on the studio lot, the Gene Kelly-Donen Singin’ in the Rain. As it happened, Kelly’s picture is better than Huston’s. But in 1952, the year of release, it was axiomatic for Miss Ross and for the New Yorker readers of her magazine version, that Singin’ was some sort of commercial fake opposing Huston’s purism.

Of my examples, the Tracy life was lazily researched. The other slips mentioned were made by responsible journalists; they seem to arise from a technical problem of the movie-studio historian. This problem is that of combining an exact description of the “political” checks and balances on a studio lot with an independent, cool assessment of the end result, separate from the makers’ intentions. Today the outstanding conflict rests in the historical fact that a big Hollywood film grew from a pool of craft skills and studio-factory needs; whereas 1976 film-critic theology is decisively imprinted with a faith in the single, unifying, responsible “artist.” And for film critics and reviewers this single artist is conveniently the big-name director listed on the picture’s credits.

The film historian will then choose, say, John Ford’s Grapes of Wrath, William Wyler’s Letter, and of course Orson Welles’ Citizen Kane, to represent the rich 1940-1941 production season in Hollywood. Yet all three films were shot by one cameraman,

James Mark Purcell, a publisher’s reader for DAW books, has published a number of articles and reviews in The Cresset.
Gregg Tolland—there I go! Toll­
and had a crew, of course—and the
Welles and Wyler films, at least,
show him consciously exploring
similar technical possibilities.

In the same way—and closer to
my chief producer-subject, Selz
ick—the reader may check a film-
reference book like the 1949 edition
of Paul Rotha and find recommend-
ingat three different studios counting
his own, within a five-year release
period, he sponsored Little Women,
Prisoner of Zenda, and the Dickens
and Tolstoi films mentioned above.

In spring, 1938, there was a famous
"B.O. poison" publicity war by small-
theater exhibitors against the stage
and drawing-room personalities
that Selznick had originally brought
into RKO in the early thirties when
he ran the studio. Such personal-
alties as Fred Astaire and Kath-
erine Hepburn meant something
profitable at RKO's new huge fa-
amous Music Hall theater in New
York City, but they were outside
the social range of the fleapits or the
rural distributors of Gene Autry's
Re­

Travelogue And Cartoon In Full Color

THE SYMBOLIC BIG-STUDIO
film is Gone with the Wind, 1939.
GWTW (its usual nickname) was
produced by David O. Selznick.
This one fact has made him the sub-
ject of three recent film books: a
useful but not important biography
by Bob Thomas and two others more
literate or more valuable as source
material on their subject. Memo,
1972, gives us 555 pages (paperback
reprint) of lectures, correspondence,
and Selznick's famous or notorious
inter-office memoranda—cheeky
to superior production bosses and
arrogant to flunkey-like famous
actors. Selznick's active production
career, 1926-1962, is covered, first
as producer for other studios and
then for his own, and finally as agent
for his second wife, the actress Jen-
ifer Jones. What I say below is
mostly a commentary on Memo; I
make some cross-references to a lite-
erate production account of his most
famous film, written by the British
Gavin Lambert as GWTW, 1973,
and, like this essay, making heavy
use of Memo.

In-print attempts to describe Selz-
nick's cultural importance—at least
these I've read—end up helplessly
listing the titles of forgotten MGM-
RKO films from the thirties, on which
he took production credit. Some-
times these films have the borrowed
immortality of adaptations: Re-
becca, David Copperfield, Anna
Karenina, Dinner at Eight, Little
Women. But such "credits" con-
tradict, as I've mentioned, the film
historian's habit of saying directors,
not producers, make movies. On
GWTW, Selznick fired the original
director and cameraman who had set
the film's style, and Lambert's con-
clusion in his book is that this was
Selznick's means of ensuring that
GWTW would be "his" film and not
that of the finally accredited direc-
tor, Victor Fleming (second of three
or four used).

To explain Selznick's real posi-
tion in American film of the thirties
and of World War II, let me borrow
another man's symbolism. In the
1946 navy-humor best-seller, Mr.
Roberts—the book, not the stage
adaptation—in one minor charac-
terization scene, the villainous cap-
tain swaps films with another cargo
ship. (WW II films often premie-
ered on battlefronts, partly as indus-
trial patriotism and partly because of
the distributors' backlogs.) The captain's
crew is outraged when it becomes
known that he chose a Monogram
studio C effort over Selznick's big
WW II homefront epic, Since You
Went Away, 1944.

This choice of the two film titles
for such a plot point is sociologi-
cally so precise one suspects it ac-
tually happened. It was not, during
the depression and war, the studio
factories that set production styles
for the adult film audience, but the
big prestige independent film pro-
ducers, Goldwyn and Selznick. As
Memo shows (pp. 380-82), when
Katherine Cornell wished to enter
films, who wrote to Selznick (about
Since You Went Away), not to MGM
or Paramount.

Certain historical "trends" men-
tioned in such standard film ref-
ences as the Griffith-Mayer Movi-
ties, are simply Selznick trends. The

The Cresset
1941 WAS ONLY TWO YEARS after the 1939 production effort that gave us *GWTW*. This one film became Selznick's association with the public; and one can see from one of the memos (15 June 1943) how he coyly resisted the identification, yet encouraged it for promotion purposes on his later films. Lambert's book is more useful than Thomas's even as a straight biography, because Lambert is able to show how Selznick's production habits had been, so to speak, articulated ante-*GWTW*, so that his most famous film simply illustrated his previous practices.

The famous search for an "unknown" actress to play Scarlett O'Hara began, it seems, as a publicity ploy to cover the two years between the 1936 film rights purchase of Margaret Mitchell's novel, and the post-1938 availability of the actor, Clark Gable, which would permit the producer to indulge (commercially) in such an economic risk in casting the heroine. But it also derived from Selznick's previous casting of unknowns: Katherine Hepburn in *Bill of Divorcement*, RKO, 1932, and Freddie Bartholomew in *David Copperfield*, MGM, 1935. These same RKO-MGM films had shown the big commercial potential of "family novels" known to a wide buying public and set in the nineteenth century.

For a viewer of *GWTW* today—not pre-conditioned by the film histories, the stars' reputations, and all the general hoopla—it is the main oddity of Selznick's Civil War film that it is not critically recognized as a family film like his Dickens and Alcott, but treated as some sort of war epic in the style of Homer, Tolstoi, and Griffith's silent features. Selznick's whole previous background, training, and aesthetic conditioning lay in the controlled-budget, set-acted, "indoor" films of the studios. He favored stage-trained directors, in particular John Cromwell and the more famous George Cukor. Cukor was Selznick's most important director during the 1930s; they set up *GWTW* together; and Selznick's later film-making problems may be symbolized by their failure to collaborate again once Cukor was fired off the Civil War film.

In *GWTW*, the big special effects—the Atlanta fire, the wounded at the station, the ballroom dance—are consciously established background effects for a more intimate social story, and specifically for a show-piece performance by the young but experienced Vivien Leigh. One must contradict a mythology to point out that the so-called "glamorous films" of the American depression were comparatively weak in spectacular epics. (In the same way, the silent studios did not make the best Westerns, and Mark Sennett never made a good *feature* comedy. 1976 film-mythology is now based on the so-called "adult" film, whereas the cult films of our campuses are actually very badly written.)

The United States government had not yet broken up the big theater chains, whose rentals enabled the studios to estimate potential earnings of their product before release and hence to make the budget for the product. Because the independents like Selznick and Goldwyn lacked the overhead to run a profitable B-movie program like the big studios then and the TV networks today, such independents bought their "protection" by paying top dollar for Broadway's hits (Goldwyn) or turning to the family-classics market (Selznick). The independents' commitment (a) to adult subject matter and (b) to expensive budgets and salaries, attracted to their lots the best directors, stars, cameramen, and writers.

This Selznick-Goldwyn era, as it can be called, is misunderstood today by the historians and critics for several reasons. One is the notion that adaptations are not "cinematic," held all the more firmly by those who fail to recognize that nearly all films are adapted, technically, from some printed or staged original.

Second, the commercial genres—farce, musical, cowboys, gangsters—which connote "Hollywood" to most people even today, were popular enough in the thirties, but not with critics. Selznick quite sincerely despised the critics. His first act as producer at MGM in the silent days—a typical piece of David O. Selznick chutzpah—was expediting two heroines and two villains to one western-location set, to prove that two "separate" westerns could be shot at .6 their original cost (Memo, p. 35).

More or less for *machismo* reasons, to prove he could do it, Selznick in his career produced a big-budget musical (*Dancing Lady*, 1933, MGM); a typical depression screwball farce (*Nothing Sacred*, 1937, his own studio); and as his last commercial blockbuster, a spectacular Western (*Duel in the Sun*, 1947, once again for himself). In each case, his "commercial" credentials established, he turned to riskier projects that he considered more respectable: *David Copperfield*, *GWTW*, and the post-*Duel* romantic tribute to his second wife, *Portrait of Jenny*, 1949, which broke him as a big-time operator when the costs outreached its buyers' market.

The original reviewers of the hardcover 1972 Memo seized, for instance, on the correspondence (16 July, 1937) in which he rejects the opportunity to produce Ford's *Stagecoach*. As an item for criticism, this judgment is anachronistic. Then and now, a Western can always get itself shot by an urgent director on one of the cheaper lots. That is what Ford did in 1938 with John Wayne cast as the lead to bring in his Saturday afternoon Monogram-Republic fans. For Selznick himself to become involved in such a project would have meant changing his casting policy (the most successful in Hollywood) and his production rhythm. The greatest tribute to Selznick's work on *GWTW*, for instance, is that its production coincided with such other efforts on his lot as Ingrid Bergman's first American film, *Intermezzo*, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca*—this last perhaps a better "Selznick" film than *GWTW*.
About the film-sources of Gone With the Wind, one can, incidentally, go further back than Selznick's personal production experiences or the original novel. The book itself was mostly in manuscript in Mrs. Peggy Mitchell Marsh's Atlanta home by 1931. And my own critical opinion is that its novelies as to such more obvious sources as Georgia family traditions about "the War," or Vanity Fair.

Clark Gable and Leslie Howard, for instance, were being cast against each other as rough lover versus upper-class boy friend, both occupied with a spoiled socialite (Norma Shearer, A Free Soul, 1931, MGM) a decade before GWTW. The contrast of a contaminated, responsible female lead with a poisoned marriage and an innocent, shielded girl friend appears not only in Vanity Fair but in the now forgotten Cukor-Selznick Our Betters, 1933, RKO.

The filmed GWTW is admirable—and also of its period—in the willingness of its makers to jettison spectacle and "action," to subordinate and unify a whole Civil War Reconstruction background to a character study of one flighty cotton belle. Because the great downtown depression film palaces had not been taken over by school dropouts (above or below age 18), the thirties was the great age of the filmed novel of manners. The sharper comedy of wit and verve, of Wilde and Congreve, has conventions of language and style that bothered this 1939 audience, as it bothers some people on campuses in 1976; but the psychological accuracy of the period's good film actresses, of Davis, Hepburn, and Leigh, was commercially acceptable. A 1975 film starring McQueen or Redford, for instance, would never suggest as explicitly as GWTW in 1939, that the heroine sexually prefers another man; and Gable was a bigger star than McQueen or Redford.

When at the end of his account Lambert argues that GWTW has the production style of its period, pre-dating Citizen Kane, he means to be patronizing; but there is no female characterization in Kane with Scarlett's or Vivien Leigh's guts. 1941 camera style and editing did not permit it. Serious actresses in WW II films became neurotics, bitches, or killers, because script and camerawork alike demanded sinister, neurotic, extremist edges to their work.

--- With Selected Short Subjects ---

GWTW (BOOK) ARGUES THAT GWTW (film) inflated Selznick's innate megalomania until there was an explosion. Certainly the power craze is recognizable enough in Memo, a carefully doctored and sympathetic presentation in itself. Most bloodchilling is the letter (pp. 424-29, dated 13 January 1947) drawn up and formally signed by Ingrid Bergman before Selznick would release her from her contract at his studio, which had more or less quit making films at all.

But Lambert unnecessarily interiorizes the real financial difficulties with which a four-million dollar one-movie budget left an independent producer in 1939. Selznick-Goldwyn budgets in the thirties ran ordinarily at the level of costs of second-ranked stars at the most expensive studios. (See the specific figures in Memo, pp. 133-35, in a 16 December 1935 letter addressed to Selznick's main backer.) For lending Gable and for the availability for distribution in its theater chain, Loew's, MGM contributed half the original film budget. But Selznick had doubled this budget.

The domino effect was that his usual distributor, United Artists—deprived thus of the film of the decade—failed, it was generally believed, to promote and bargain seriously enough for Selznick's follow-up, the 1940 Hitchcock Rebecca. Because of taxes and some personal WW II plans, Selznick eventually sold GWTW to his backer, who predictably re-sold it to MGM!

But despite the legend of his decline and collapse after 1939, a Selznick-studio film ran third in Variety's listing for 1940; third in 1944; second in 1945; first in 1947. Memo shows Selznick not only running up this track record, but playing God (or Godfather) at studios like Zanuck's Fox, Louis B. Mayer's MGM, and especially RKO, where a protegée, Dore Schary, held the position equivalent to Selznick's in 1931-33. Pictures were being cast, scripted, and sold as production packages, starring performers whose profitable contracts were Selznick's, and whom he was "renting out."

Selznick was not merely exercising power and accumulating money; the ethos of the WW II "serious" film is Selznick's. People with money; dark, moody camerawork; passionate romanticism in the plots; beautiful longhaired brunette heroines—this is the emotional dominance to which Mr. Roberts' crew and Katherine Cornell alike paid their tribute.

It is an oddity that this whole moral domination was defused by a big commercial success, Duel in the Sun, a lust-in-the-dust Western whose camerawork and blatant sex aside make it attractive to 1976 film intellectuals (who describe it as "King Vidor's film" in tribute to one of its three directors). It was shrewd and quick of Selznick that by July 1947, with his film a big hit economically, he was aware that his prestige in town had been seriously damaged, and that his next film, Portrait of Jenny, needed to be the kind of combined critical and commercial success on which his reputation had been built.

Since it wasn't, and since except for Jennifer Jones his stars walked out to bigger contracts at bigger studios, the "Godfather" disappeared, and in Memo one can see the other production heads gradually putting down the phone and tearing up the famous memos.

Lambert's version downplays the Balzacian economic complexities of his protagonist's operation, and speaks of him as becoming outmoded. Actually, the memos remain
alert enough to what was occurring in the postwar industry. The unsent memo (dated 3 January 1962) for the production head of the Fox studio, making *Tender is the Night* with Jennifer Jones, makes extremely stimulating comments on casting (none of which were followed), and its remarks on decor for a Fitzgerald film almost seem to have dictated the film style of the 1974 *Great Gatsby* picture. Selznick's preferred director, John Frankenheimer, too much an unknown in 1962 for Fox, became one of the great technicians among American directors in the sixties. In the same way, Selznick's first key director, George Cukor, had no difficulty remaining stylistically up-to-date in his post-*GWTW*-work.

Certainly *Gone With the Wind* belongs to the film thirties, but it would be difficult to prove it superior to such other efforts of the producer as *Rebecca* or *David Copperfield*. As an over-all technical effort, in cutting, scripting, and small-part casting, it is doubtful if in the trades it was admitted as superior to Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, released two months earlier.

*GWTW* belongs to the late thirties not because the competition was weak enough to make it outstanding; any American film student can name ten to twenty films released within a year of it, before or after, that are preferable. Rather, the film had the advantage of production at the tail-end of a period when film actresses could be showcased in full-length characterizations and performances, not limited to fashionable neuroticism.

Mr. Lambert should forget the fashionable film history that charts a steady "progress" from the "primitives" (Chaplin, Griffith) through "early" sound (*GWTW*, Capra) to our present peak of film-credit classes and blue films at the nearest off-campus theater. What broke Selznick was not fashion, only a five-million dollar screen tribute to his second wife, the *Jenny* film. It is one of Luis Bunuel's favorite pictures.

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**PLATE EVOKED THE IMAGE**

of Atlantis in *Timaios*; he thought of it as a huge island vaster than Lybia and Asia, ruled by a powerful king who tried to enslave all the islands around Atlantis and even the people on the European continent. But suddenly during one day and one night the earth shook tremendously and these powerful quakes probably caused floods of Biblical scope, and Atlantis was no longer. Plato was certain that this island on which man supposedly reached quite a height of civilized existence (very likely at the expense of other peoples) perished about 9,000 years before Solon, i.e. about 10,000 years before Christ. Aristotle, however, intimated that Atlantis may be little more than a myth; but to this very day Atlantologists maintain that it existed where the Azores are located, which may, or may not, be the remainder of a fabulous empire island, a kind of lost paradise.

It matters little whether it was or was not. Ever since Plato—and very likely long before him—Atlantis has existed in the imagination of man as an expression of fear that he and the world around him with all its splendor might one day slowly disintegrate or suddenly vanish. Now that our own doing often seems to invite mankind's doom, the fate of fading away is perhaps always a torturing thought behind our thoughts. And, moreover, now that we must fear for Venice, a steadily sinking part of our world, it is tempting to use this island city as the dramatic symbol of our self-made destruction. Jürg Amann, a young Swiss dramatist of not yet thirty years, did just that. His *The End of Venice* was produced at the experimental studio of the Schauspielhaus Zurich. There was no intermission in this evening-long play. The destruction, figuratively speaking, was meant to be relentless and total. The spectators were seated in a semi-amphitheatrical manner. The scenic design evoked the impression of rising water and a constantly sinking city in which only a few spots were left to which man could still hold on. So far, so good.

The aforementioned Aristotle told us that "the historian reports what has happened, the poet what could have happened." We may expect the dramatist to be a man with a poetic vision. But how does one envision
and portray in the theater an image of a doomed and dying city as a reminder of the fate probably waiting for all of us in the wings? Jürg Amann’s play proved that he may dare tackle the most serious and difficult problems. But mental courage alone does not suffice. Anything can happen on a stage, but whatever happens ought to give us the feeling of another dimension bigger than reality.

Amann’s Venice is in the final stages of its doom. What we can expect is a last cry. Who ought to articulate this cry to make it credible and significant? The choice of the characters and what they may express during that last moment which must cover about two hours is all that matters. It would be a nice game to guess which characters would have been chosen by Samuel Beckett or Ionesco, by Arthur Miller or Tennessee Williams, if they had chosen this theme at all.

**The Characters of The End of Venice** are not human beings, they are types. The Artist: he paints and draws incessantly, wanting to immortalize what he envisions. Should it be symbolic for all contemporary art that its creative efforts are doomed to vanish, or that, whatever may happen, the artist has only the one task to chronicle the destruction of the world? The Stranger: An elderly man coming from nowhere and stumbling into the horror of a dying world. In fact, he is an innocent observer who becomes a participant in the process of dying. The Blind and the Dumb Man, symbolic figures who, in their obviousness, only a Ghele­delle­ dell’ Arte. It never became clear to what purpose. At the very end of the play we hear a voice: “And God said, Let it be night, I take the world back!” Now, I forgot who said it, but it may have been in keeping with the play’s concept if the Dumb Man’s tongue would have suddenly articulated these final words.

It would be easy to say that Jürg Amann is a promising young dramatist and should be encouraged. Some critics praised him—at least for trying. I praise him only for having set into motion many thoughts that have haunted me ever since I saw the play. He did succeed, even though his play failed miserably. Perhaps this theme can be treated only in a graphic way. Subconsciously, Amann may have felt so too, since one of his main characters is a painter. On the other hand, such a topic can only be treated by a composer. I can see it as a requiem with Bachlike music and with words used sparingly.

IT IS, HOWEVER, THE TOPIC of our time in which man has begun to realize how mercilessly he has exploited nature and man, too, to the point of no return; a time in which his own daring and greatness is leading him to ever new and greater deeds and his self-destruction; a time in which too much is foul in the state of his soul. The young are despairing over the world they have inherited from their fathers and escape into empty noise in order to drown their own voices. Yesterday they ran away from the shallowness of a consuming society; today they embrace it and celebrate the most hedonistic materialism. People who will once rediscover this world may then decipher twentieth-century-man’s scribble on all walls: After us the deluge!

A personal postscriptum: I have thought about this play’s theme. It has made me sad and restless for many days, and I procrastinated writing about it. I left Zürich to spend Christmas in my native Vienna with a few old friends who, fortunately, have survived the last fifty years. This city reminded me of my youth and the great satirist Karl Kraus who, at that time, greatly influenced my development. Karl Kraus wrote—after World War I—a documentary play, The Last Days of Mankind. It runs to 800 printed pages and its production would take about ten evenings. It is a dramatized monument to man’s monstrous stupidity, cruelty, and corruptibility. It was written long before Venice, whose splendor was eaten up by our technological madness, began to sink in a suicidal mood. Karl Kraus foresaw the future development of mankind. His words, powerful and poetic, remained like Cassandra cries unheard and unheeded. Mankind was busy preparing all possible ways and means for its self-destruction in installments.
The Great Thanksgiving of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship:

IT IS THE CHRISTIANS’ SUPPER
AND NOT THE LORD’S SUPPER

GOTTFRIED G. KRODEL
Professor of Church History and History
Valparaiso University

Luther: We know, however, that it is the Lord’s Supper, in name and in reality, not the supper of the Christians. For the Lord not only instituted it, but also prepares and gives it himself, and is himself, cook, butler, food, and drink.

Zwingli: The Eucharist is never bread or the body of Christ but the action of giving thanks.

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CLASH OF TITANS: Africa and U.S. Foreign Policy.

As a survey of the relations between the United States and the African continent, this book makes a giant step toward filling a large void in the annals of American diplomatic history. In one volume, Chester has provided a remarkable synthesis of information ranging from topics as diverse and chronologically separated as colonial American involvement in the African slave trade to the contemporary problems posed by newly independent African nations for American foreign policy. Needless to say, this is a formidable task and Chester deserves congratulations if for no other reason than that his effort marks the first attempt by a diplomatic historian to wade through almost a century's worth of the State Department's compiled correspondence, The Foreign Relations of the United States, in search of materials pertinent to the entire African continent.

The fruit of Chester's labors is, understandably, an extraordinarily broad-ranging work. Most of his twelve chapters could easily provide— and indeed many have provided— ample subject matter for book-length treatment in their own right. Nonetheless, as a panoramic overview of the course of African-American diplomatic history, Chester's book is well suited. Each chapter concludes with a bibliographic note to help the uninitiated student or the interested scholar find his way through an imposing and often fugitive literature on topics as broad and expansive as one would expect from a survey of the chronological course of African-American diplomatic, economic, cultural, educational, and religious contacts. As a scholarly reference, however, the book's value is compromised considerably by a mere technical omission: no footnotes are used— hence making it difficult if not impossible to track down conveniently original sources where one would be so inclined.

In the pre-World War II treatment of U.S.-African relations, Chester has done an excellent job of compiling and, to the extent that it is possible, synthesizing the available information bearing on American-African dealings (in economic, educational, cultural, and religious, as well as diplomatic spheres) prior to the era of political independence movements in Africa. That these chapters would suffer from a lack of integration is not surprising: given the heterogenous nature of such early experiences it would be unrealistic to expect a more orderly treatment in place of the somewhat disconnected, episodic accounts of these activities provided by Chester. In some instances, as Chester observes, these early contacts were crucial in conditioning later policy postures toward the areas involved. The role of the Firestone Rubber Company in Liberia and of American investment more generally in South African and Congo areas are cases in point where early economic relations affected the tone and direction of subsequent foreign policy positions.

In a sense, though, most of these episodes loom as "pre-history" in any consideration of American foreign policy toward contemporary Africa. For, as Chester notes, it was not until 1950 and thereafter that the U.S. for the first time formulated a general policy toward the African continent. What this general policy is (aside from a rhetorical affirmation of the traditional American faith in the principle of self-determination) Chester does not specify, although he does note that in 1950 the U.S. was a signatory party to the London Conference's pledge of a three-point program of political development for the African peoples.

Discussing America's "emergent African policy" in the post-war era, Chester points out that during its relatively brief period of independence, Africa— especially sub-Saharan black Africa— has occupied a low priority position in the minds of America's key foreign policy makers. Immediately after the war, of course, Europe (the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO) was center stage, followed
shortly thereafter by Korea as a geographical fixation for American foreign policy. Between Korea and the mid-1960s' escalation in Vietnam, however, policy makers began to become conscious of an independent Africa emerging from the waning stages of colonialism and, as a consequence, posing a number of policy-relevant problems. Yet, despite the lessons of the Congo (where the termination and aftermath of colonial rule led to domestic instability that was quickly transformed into an East-West conflict) and notwithstanding the warnings of a few isolated politicians (Robert Kennedy, for instance, remarked after touring South and East Africa in 1966 that the American government had been neglecting Africa and he would not be surprised if a number of Vietnamese developed there!), no unified policy toward Africa comparable to policies toward other continents (e.g., Open Door, Good Neighbor, or Monroe Doctrine) has been developed.

To be sure, American policy has been consistently supportive of self-determination and the orderly transition from colonial to independent rule. And, as Chester points out, there is evidence of increasing concern for Africa in (at least up to 1966) increased American foreign aid appropriations for African states. To refer to the various loans, grants, and technical assistance arrangements underwritten by the American government as evidence of an emerging general policy toward Africa would be unfair, however, as Chester himself suggests. The objectives and the rationale for who received what and why were never clearly articulated; certainly the formulae for such aid disbursements were not manifest in any coherent policy framework. Moreover, although foreign aid figures show an absolute rise during the post-war era, comparison with allocations for other areas reveals that "since World War II Africa has received less U.S. foreign aid than any of the other continents—an index of its standing among American diplomatic priorities" (p. 250).

Having established Africa's lowly position on the totem pole of American foreign policy priorities, it would appear that Chester had set the stage for an argument to the effect that America had been neglecting its role there and was, in fact, guilty of a failure to appreciate the potential policy import of such a vast portion of the globe. Indeed, in reading of his account of America's "non-policy" (my term) vis-à-vis Africa, one is prepared to expect a call for an "agonizing reappraisal"—or, at the very least, a more forward-looking approach to the potential import of Africa to U.S. foreign policy. There is, however, no such call. Chester is just not interested in assessing possible importance or in urging more serious consideration of the consequences of presently ill-defined policies. He is simply not interested in possible changes or alternative courses. His purpose: merely to chart the past.

To express disappointment over the absence of such proposals is, in a strict sense, to criticize Chester for not doing what he did not purport to do. Beyond this omission, however, there is still something lacking in his concluding attempt to account for the absence of a general unified American foreign policy toward Africa. Noting, first, that since Africa itself is not a whole, he indicates that it is not completely reasonable to expect American policy to be a coherent whole. Indeed, he says, "for African-American diplomacy to have developed as haphazardly as it did was only natural" (p. 271). What is more interesting, if not persuasive, is the other explanation for this advanced by Chester: "There has never been a crisis of sufficient magnitude to crystallize a general policy as was the case with Europe, Latin America, and Asia" (p. 271). Hence: "Thus to conclude that African-U.S. policy has been necessarily vague and complex is to miss the point that had conditions ne-cessitated the adoption of a clear and unified policy, doubtless the American government would have formulated one" (p. 271).

As representatives from the legislative and executive branches debated the appropriate American position and extent of commitment to anti-Soviet parties in the Angolan conflict, we were reminded once again of the excruciatingly complex and interdependent character of world politics. At issue in Angola, of course, were matters that extend far beyond the borders of that newly-independent nation. To be sure, only hindsight will be able to establish the effect of this crisis on the subsequent shape and direction of a still embryonic détente.

In light of the stakes, though, what more would one require in the way of a "crisis of sufficient magnitude" to crystallize a more coherent and forward-looking foreign policy toward Africa? If the lessons of historical inquiry suggest that crises, and not foresight and creative statesmanship, serve as the necessary if not sufficient cause of policy innovation, then current history may just provide that cause. But, lest Chester's title prove to be inadvertently prophetic, one can hope that other lessons can be learned from history as well.

DANI B. THOMAS

VISION AND BETRAYAL IN AMERICA.

John B. Anderson represents the Sixteenth Congressional District of Illinois, and has since 1960. He is the third most powerful Republican in Congress, chairing the House Republican Conference. Universally regarded as one of the most eloquent orators on Capitol Hill, Anderson's decision to support the impeachment of Richard Nixon is widely believed to be the factor which prompted Nixon's resigna-
reforms in the wake of Watergate, and is generally considered one of the most important spokesmen for conservatism in the United States today.

When such a man authors a book which propounds not only to identify the basic problem existing in American democracy today, but also offers solutions to that problem, that book deserves serious attention. Such is the objective of *Vision and Betrayal in America*.

Anderson sees the United States as losing contact with her fundamental morality—losing contact with her "civic religion": "There has been a collapse," writes Anderson, "of belief in and acceptance of some of the moral presuppositions which constitute the anchor of our democratic faith. We do need a rediscovery . . . of that essential civic religion which helps bond a contemporary society to its historic purpose."

Three basic dimensions are presented which, it is argued, are the symptoms of this lost contact: (1) the collapse of moral values in the society as a whole; (2) the crisis of government—that is, the inability of government to see to the needs of its citizens; and (3) the crisis of integrity in leadership. Investigating each of these symptoms, Anderson views the problem as "[t]he collapse of American ideals from which the nation has received its inspiration, the failure of American institutions to operate effectively and deliberately, and the betrayal of individuals assigned leadership in government . . . ." In response, Anderson calls for an American "vision."

This vision seeks to return to the ideals of the American experience, the streamlining and reform of structures of government, and the rise of leaders possessing integrity to lead a nation which is desperately trying to re-find itself.

The objective of *Vision and Betrayal in America* is an important one. The volume is well timed—coming on the eve of the American Bicentennial. There is no question but that Anderson is serious and concerned about the fabric of American life and the goals established therein. *Vision and Betrayal in America* on the whole, however, succeeds neither in sufficiently isolating problems nor in sufficiently projecting solutions.

Anderson quickly sketches the development of American ideals culminating in the inalienable rights of the Declaration of Independence. While it is unquestionably true that John Locke had a pronounced influence on the founding fathers, Anderson's brief examination explains neither the reason for this influence nor its overall effect upon American ideals. Anderson considers the development of "natural law" in political thought, placing almost his entire discussion of the lineage of political thought upon a natural law basis.

The specific problem here is that Anderson argues the "natural law—through Locke—to the American ideals" in moral and religious terms. Aside from his misreading of Cicero and Locke on this point, there exists the important, and neglected, observation that the classical connection of morality and politics is not shared by the modern approach to political theory—an approach which includes not only Locke, but also James Madison. Madison, both the architect of the United States Constitution and the political theorist generally regarded as the most important single figure during the Founding Period in this country, is never seriously discussed by Anderson. No understanding of American ideals is possible without a thorough analysis of Madison's contribution. Anderson, in his desire to describe the "civic religion" he sees as necessary, seriously skews and disfigures the essential elements of political theory which he chooses to discuss. Any examination of Madison's *Federalist Paper No. 10*, clearly indicates that the American theorist who shaped the parameters of American political thought does not share Anderson's approach.

With regard to American institutions, Anderson suggests three reforms which, he argues, would make those institutions more accountable: election reform; committee reorganization; and professional staffing for Congress. Anderson's comments on election reform are exclusively comments on campaign financing reforms. Since Anderson is one of the leading figures on Capitol Hill in financing reforms, this is not surprising. What is surprising, however, is that he believes public financing of campaign expenditures is the sole solution. No mention is ever made of ancillary, yet essential, restrictions on how money is to be spent. There is, as well, no explanation of how such reforms will make American institutions more accountable to the people.

With regard to Congressional committee reform, Anderson never specifically discusses what structural reforms he is talking about. The only substantive point to arise from this discussion is a call for budgetary restraint—a serious weighing of competing priorities—a "biting the bullet" approach as Anderson calls it. The relationship between this restraint and the structure of Congressional committees, however, is left to the imagination of the reader. It is apparent that the seniority system is basic to committee structure. Anderson notes this fact, and seems to offer some criticism of it, but gives us absolutely no solutions. Further, he makes no mention of the obvious position committee considerations have on the eventual passage of legislation, nor does he call, as one might expect, for more public accountability in committee considerations. We are left, thus, with a call for committee reform, but not a single suggested guideline on how these reforms should take place.

Finally, the argument for professional staffing in Congress leaves some very important questions unanswered. It is quite true that
the executive department's bureaucracy allows it considerable leverage over Congress, and it is certainly this fact that Anderson has in mind when he suggests staffing for Congress. Yet, does it follow that the inefficiency and complications caused by one bureaucracy can be offset by the construction of a second bureaucracy? Is there any reason to suspect that this second bureaucracy will be any more accountable to the American people than that of the executive department?

Anderson concludes his examination of American institutions with some observations on the court system and political party reform. In the first case, Anderson decries the inability of courts to punish offenders. The dilemma of American courts is a serious and disturbing element in contemporary society. Anderson identifies a problem, but offers no solutions. Finally, the political party reform offered by Anderson is one which already exists in New York State. It seeks to give political party leaders more control in the selection of candidates, while the final decision remains with the voters. Anderson's dislike of certain "Progressive Movement" reforms is evident here. Despite his contention that more qualified individuals will run for office under such a system, neither his arguments, nor the experience in New York, give any reason to suspect that such a reform produces better accountability. If anything, it places the citizenry one step removed from the political party selection of candidates.

The problem of individuals in the American political system gravitates about the Presidency. The shadow of Watergate is apparent in Anderson's discussion. Despite his examination of the controversy surrounding the affair, Anderson refuses to place the blame on Richard Nixon. There is here no discussion that the lack of principle on the part of the President was responsible for the debacle. Anderson does, however, place the lack of principle on the shoulders of other individuals in the White House. When he proposes a solution for this difficulty, however, Anderson suggests that we should seek men of principle to lead the nation. There is no suggestion, however, as to how one can identify those with principle and those without. There is the further problem, however, that none of the individuals involved in the Watergate affair, save the President, was elected. There is absolutely no way to promise principle in non-elected officials, and absolutely no way in which the nation can effectively identify principle in elected officials. Despite the laudable objectives which Anderson pursues, his analysis offers no positive solutions.

Throughout Vision and Betrayal in America, one essential distinction is lacking. It may be suggested that the distinction is the basis of any concerted attempt to explain the contemporary political situation in the United States. One must discriminate between governmental practice on the one hand, and governmental essence on the other. The former speaks of specific policies instituted by specific administrations. Americans have traditionally occupied all segments of the political spectrum from ultra-conservative to ultra-liberal over governmental practice. Governmental essence, however, addresses the fundamental elements of the American polity—the principles of our political enterprise. While Americans can have virtually any political disposition with regard to governmental practice, Americans have overwhelmingly been quite conservative when it comes to governmental essence. Regardless of one's politics, the essence of government in this country is usually accepted—that is, we rarely compete about the regime form in the United States; rather, political adversaries accept the regime as constituting the limits, the boundaries, of political competition.

It is quite difficult to alter governmental essence in this country. Witness the infrequent amending of the Constitution, or Franklin Roosevelt's inability to alter the Supreme Court, despite his overwhelming support among the nation for other policies. The very fact that Watergate, despite its damaging blow to the Presidency, was unveiled and adamantly pursued gives strong testimony to the vibrance of governmental essence in the United States. We must seriously examine the principles of government before any conclusion can be made as to whether or not this country is being betrayed. It is imperative that we compare the functioning of government against the standards for government contained in the Constitution. A well-designed system can survive periods of great instability—and we certainly have had in our history periods of greater instability than what is experienced presently. This nation has survived a Civil War, great economic and social unrest and inequality, world wars, and domestic hostilities largely because of the regime's system and the type of men who have risen to leadership during crises. It is with the essence of government, therefore, with the principles of our enterprise, that one must begin such a study. One should not, as has Anderson, develop analysis predicated upon subjective ideas and fears.

KENT F. MOORE

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORLD.

It would be easy to caricature The Spirit and the World as an argument for acknowledging charismatic communalism as the unique Christian virtue or, perhaps, as the true higher righteousness of the Church, replacing Protestant "tongues" or Catholic asceticism. While Jones comes much closer to the higher
Christian communities are free to serve the world through other channels such as medicine or politics and to acknowledge the rule of God in the orders of creation and providence even while those orders are yet awaiting transformation. There is a fine balance here and a happy resemblance between Jones's approach to these matters and Luther's distinction between the work of God's "right hand" and "left hand."

Though Jones never explicitly discusses the problem of the Spirit's communities being simultaneously righteous and sinful, he avoids any suggestion that Christian koinonia is likely to overcome the world before God intervenes in a special act of fulfillment; thus he seems to have taken warning from Luther and the Niebuhrs.

My problem with the exposition arise when Jones restricts the principle of sola gratia and emphasizes a narrowed conception of koinonia. First the interpretation of grace. In a passage that is simultaneously one of the strongest and one of the most shaky in the book, Jones declares,

"We cannot create community no matter how hard we try. . . . The paradox of the practice of community is that it cannot be practiced. The experience of koinonia is a gift. It is something given to us, not something we create" (pp. 42,44).

It is clear that this teaching refers to special experiences, granted to limited groups of Christians, and thus comes close to a doctrine of a higher righteousness, communal rather than individual, of course. Thus it stands in tension with earlier passages which proclaim that the community the Spirit creates between a believer and God is inseparable from the community the Spirit creates among fellow-believers.

Application of the special-experience approach seems to lead ultimately to some of the worst features of Anabaptist or American Pentecostalist experience, in spite of Jones's efforts to avoid all the other paths that lead to such problems. I am thinking of such miseries as doubt whether the apparent special experiences are valid, and if they are, how long they legitimate a specific community; disputes whether new recruits may fail under the original dispensation, together with conflicting claims for one historical experience over against another.

Would it not be better to "Lutheranize" the teaching, emphasizing that baptism places all Christians in community, not so much by a special experience—though that may accompany baptism—as by "naturalization," i.e., imputation in orthodox Lutheran jargon or ascription in mainstream social science jargon. One could then go on to say that Christians cannot transcend themselves and their cultures in the practice of special forms of koinonia unless special experiences are first given by the Spirit. Jones's paradox would remain but not in a form that leaves some genuine paradox would remain but not in a form that leaves some genuine Christians dangling outside koinonia.

Now for the interpretation of koinonia. Much as I admire a number of charismatic Christian households, and much as I wish Jones had provided more than one page of suggestive models for Christian communes, I cannot be persuaded that communal living with non-relatives is the Spirit's natural form of koinonia unless special experiences are first given by the Spirit. Jones does not actually claim that, but he mentions no alternatives. There are Christians whose spouses will not go along, Christians whose occupations require frequent moving, Christians burdened under mortgages, and so on. Indeed most Christians in New Testament times seem to have been constrained in similar ways and so could not live communally. Koinonia, the practical transcendence of self, must find expression for the great majority of Christians in other ways, some of them embarrassingly fa-
miliar but often not well developed, the conjugal family, for example, or liturgical fellowships complete with mutual assistance and common social outreach.

The larger koinonia of Christendom in America will be indebted to Jones for doing his homework in Spirit, koinonia, and kingdom very well and stating his position so gracefully that one need not grope through fog but can clarify his own understanding or grow in the process of challenging and expanding the argument where it falls short.

LEROY MARTINSON

SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU.
SMILE, JESUS IS LORD.


The rationale for the writing of these two little volumes of children's sermons is Lavern Franzen's observation that "It is not easy to be a child in church." To make it easier, Franzen suggests the introduction into the Sunday service of a special children's message—"their message," he calls it. The 109 visual preachments in the two volumes are offered as more than object lessons. "Hopefully," he says, "they illustrate the law/gospel concepts essential to kerygmatic preaching."

Franzen sets for himself the rather ambitious task of a simplified proclamation of the human condition and of the sharing of Jesus Christ as God's answer to that condition.

Every parish pastor who has tried the "children's sermon" approach has undoubtedly done so out of a firm conviction that children ought to be more happily involved in worship. If he has given up the approach it is probably because of the extreme difficulty faced in shortening and simplifying the message of a scriptural pericope, matching it with an uncomplicated object lesson which is powerful enough to serve as a vehicle for the message, and still keeping the content with which he began. To his credit, Franzen has not backed away from this task. He has taken it on with care, and the results, unlike those of many similar volumes, are satisfying and easily used.

A perplexing but understandable result of the "children's sermon movement" is the enthusiasm with which it is embraced by adults—not simply for the children, but for themselves. So many parishioners have claimed to "get more out of" the children's message than from the usual sermon that preachers are raising many serious questions about the ability of the spoken sermon to communicate the message of the gospel. In the preface to the second volume, *Smile, Jesus is Lord*, Franzen suggests that his little talks may be "extended" to provide adult message material. It may be precisely to the question of the communication of the Word of God as proclamation that the "children's sermon movement" addresses its most serious challenges.

Certainly, the expanded children's message is not an adequate answer to a long-standing adult problem. The children's sermon approach to making church easier too often results in a watered down Biblical proclamation to people who need to be more rather than less informed. Franzen has succeeded in maintaining the kernel of the content where others have failed, and the criticisms of his efforts are not so much with the product as with the "children's sermon movement" itself. Let us remember that it was the methodology of Jesus that he blessed the children and taught the adults. For too long the church has reversed the process. We have put our efforts and energies into teaching the child. While this is not to be ignored we need to recognize that our neglect of adult communication has resulted in a Christian proclamation that is unintelligible to adults when it is intelligent, and childish when it is understandable.

The first of the two volumes, *Smile, God Loves You*, contains fifty nine messages based on the ancient Gospel pericopes of the church year. Since most congregations have changed to the three year cycle of lessons, this volume is of rather limited value.

The second volume, *Smile, Jesus is Lord*, contains fifty talks based upon random texts. While all of the texts fit somewhere in the church's worship life, there is no way to discover the kind of material you might want other than to go through the table of contents text by text.

Franzen has done a creditable job, but the movement away from the ancient pericopes and the decline of the "children's sermon movement" itself raises serious questions about the long term use of these volumes.

DONALD H. WILLIAMS

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(Continued from page 28) (Presidential Ethics) ...

sensus in our country. The fact that he could make such principles an issue suggests a deep need for a moral renaissance.

Since we live in an imperfect world to which President Carter is no exception, it is predictable that he will sometimes fall short of his promises. Those who are poised and ready to point out his failings will not be totally disappointed. However, at this time in our history we cannot afford a president who stands for less and we as a people cannot afford to simply stand by with an attitude of suspicion and indifference.

St. Paul's admonition is relevant: "... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." There is hope for us in this word. It is not a hope in America's intrinsic morality or in the myth that God is on our side but in the Augustinian insight that God stands behind our efforts to seek what he commands.
PRESIDENTIAL ETHICS

AMERICA APPEARS READY for a renaissance of high moral principle in the conduct and policies of its government. In this latter half of the twentieth century the American dream has turned into a nightmare. We have been made more aware than ever of our incipient racism. We have learned from Viet Nam that we are capable of waging an unjust, senseless and self-serving war. We have come face to face with the crises of environment and energy that our unchecked expansion of technology and consumption has produced—we are paying the price of equating “can” with “ought”. In the minds of some at least, our society’s growing permissiveness in matters of sexual relations, divorce and abortion is clear evidence of the severe erosion of its moral base. And, of course, most recently, we have witnessed widespread corruption and deceit at the highest levels of the federal government. The catalogue of our disenchantment is extensive indeed.

Throughout his campaign and in the early days of his administration, President Carter has promised a new spirit in American government born of a revitalized recovery of the noblest principles of our country’s past. He has successfully tapped our corporate longing for the recovery of American integrity. Consequently, high-minded and responsible ethics has become a key feature of the image which the new President seeks to project. Already we have heard a considerable amount of discussion on at least three aspects of ethics and the presidency: Mr. Carter’s personal Christian morality, the ethical dimensions of his emerging domestic and foreign policies, and the “code of ethics” which he is implementing for the conduct of his own office and of that of his extensions in the executive branch.

Since Mr. Carter has himself brought his personal Christian faith and morality into the public awareness, it is not surprising that many observers, both inside and outside the Church, have expressed concern that this aspect of ethics and the presidency be kept separate from the other two. If President Carter does not make a functional distinction between personal morality and what is morally possible in government, it is argued that he may suffer serious setbacks in pursuing an overly idealistic course of action that is blind to the realities of politics in a hard and complex world. After all, Reinhold Niebuhr and bitter experience have both taught us that societies are incapable of the high level of moral achievement that individuals frequently are. What the individual insists upon in his personal conduct may well have to be compromised at the level of public affairs.

There is truth to what Niebuhr has taught us and there is ample evidence that President Carter appreciates his basic insight. However, Niebuhr also taught us that moral ideals, though never fully realized in corporate behavior, can nonetheless serve to inspire that behavior toward higher levels of the good. Perhaps Mr. Carter is appreciative of this insight as well. Perhaps he realizes that his presidential ethics, his principles for the conduct of the office of the presidency and of the executive, are crucial to his opportunities for maximizing the truth of this Niebuhrian dictum on the influence of the ideal on the real.

The ethical principles of conduct in office to which a president aspires stand on the interface between personal ethics and public policy. They afford the president an opportunity to bring his personal morality to expression in responsible public service. At the same time, they inspire public trust which, in turn, makes people more open to presidential appeals to their better instincts. Presidential ethics, when nobly conceived and sincerely pursued, incarcate at least certain moral ideals which may have a salutary influence on the actions of the government and the society as a whole.

THE SUBSTANCE OF PRESIDENT Carter’s presidential ethics is a threefold promise: he will not lie to the people, he will keep his promises to the people, and he will serve the people. The last of these pledges is comprehended in the code of ethics Mr. Carter has proclaimed for himself and his executive branch appointees. The code seeks to prevent conflict of interest and the sort of collusion in which appointments are used as a stepping-stone to high-level positions in private industry. These measures constitute an emphasis on service to the people as an end in itself. They are complemented by other more visible and symbolic actions such as cutting back on the accoutrements of high office that connote privilege rather than service.

These three planks in the president’s ethical platform, truth-telling, promise-keeping, and the integrity of public service, are not only consistent with his personal Christian ethics but they are principles with which all Americans can identify. The fact that the president could campaign successfully on such promises suggests a considerable residue of moral concern.