

Valparaiso University

ValpoScholar

The Cresset (archived issues)

10-1968

The Cresset (Vol. XXXI, No. 10)

Valparaiso University

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



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Cresset (archived issues) by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

The
Cresset

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,
THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS



TWENTY CENTS

Vol. XXXI, No. 10

OCTOBER 1968

The Cresset

ALBERT G. HUEGLI, *Editor*
O. P. KRETZMANN, *Editor Emeritus*
JOHN STRIETELMEIER, *Managing Editor*
RICHARD LEE, *Assistant Managing Editor*

Departmental Editors

Communications Arts	Don A. Affeldt
General Books	Kenneth F. Korby
Music	William F. Eifrig, Jr.
Poetry	Walter G. Sanders
Religion Books	Richard P. Baepler
Science	Leslie M. Zoss
Sports	Carl F. Galow
Theatre	Walter Sorell
Visual Arts	Richard H. W. Brauer

Consulting Editors

Walter G. Friedrich
Victor F. Hoffmann
Adalbert Raphael Kretzmann
Alfred R. Looman
Donald C. Mundinger
Norman E. Nagel
Andrew Schulze
Anne Springsteen
Herbert H. Umbach

WILBUR H. HUTCHINS, *Business Manager*

IN THE OCTOBER CRESSET - - -

IN LUCE TUA	<i>The Editors</i>	3
AD LIB.: THE OTHER HALF OF THE TRUTH	<i>Alfred R. Looman</i>	7
THE McLUHAN UNDERSTANDING OF MAN AND HISTORY	<i>Richard Lee</i>	8
BOOK OF THE MONTH		
CONTEXTS OF DRYDEN'S THOUGHT	<i>Herbert H. Umbach</i>	19
FROM THE CHAPEL:		
THE GOOD (WHATEVER THAT MEANS) SAMARITAN	<i>Alan Graebner</i>	20
MUSIC: WITH RINGS AND BELLS	<i>William F. Eifrig, Jr.</i>	22
THE THEATRE: LONDON REVISITED	<i>Walter Sorell</i>	23
THE VISUAL ARTS: PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS IN RELIGIOUS ART	<i>Richard H. W. Brauer</i>	24
EDITOR-AT-LARGE: MAN WILL PREVAIL	<i>Victor F. Hoffmann</i>	26
THE MASS MEDIA: BLACK ASPIRIN FOR WHITE HEADACHES	<i>Don A. Affeldt</i>	27
THE PILGRIM: CRICKET AND CATHEDRAL	<i>O. P. Kretzmann</i>	28

THE CRESSET is published monthly September through June by the Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Indiana, 46383, as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University or within the editorial board. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Subscription rates: One year — \$2.00; two years — \$3.75; three years — \$5.50. Single copy 20 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1968 by the Valparaiso University Press, without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part and for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.

The Cresset

Vol. XXXI, No. 10

October, 1968

In Luce Tua

Comment on the Significant News by the Editors

The Candidates

We have no doubt that in quieter times either Richard Nixon or Hubert Humphrey could serve our country well as its president. Both have impressive records of public service. Both are intelligent, vigorous, and politically adept. Both have been matured by the bitter experience of defeat. Both are aware of the many difficult problems that face us as a people.

But these are not quiet times. These are times of change so rapid that we can not, with any great degree of confidence, trust the counsels of past experience. Many of our people have become so disaffected that they mistrust not only our most basic institutions but even the principles on which those institutions were founded. There is a credibility gap which extends far beyond any individual president to the whole structure of our government. The poor, the black, and the young are not sure that there is any effective way, within the present system, for them to get a piece of the action; many of them have come to the conclusion that their choice lies between smashing the system and opting out of it.

In these circumstances, neither of the nominees of the two major parties seems likely to capture the imagination of our tired and dispirited people. Good and decent men they are — but there are times when goodness and decency are not enough. We need, at this moment, someone who can dream things that never were and say, "Why not?" But if either Mr. Nixon or Mr. Humphrey has done any dreaming lately, they have not chosen to share them with us.

And yet we hold onto one reasonable and lively hope which we believe is justified by the long history of the Republic. A little more than a century ago, at a time when the very Union was breaking up, the confused currents of politics washed into the White House an equivocating, small-time politician from Illinois who grew to the dimensions of the tragedy of his day

and became our greatest president. Many of us can still remember a pampered mama's boy who came to the presidency at the depths of a depression which threatened the fundamental structure of our economy and, after scrapping the platform on which he had run, laid the foundations for that participatory capitalism which is so largely responsible for our present affluence. Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt seemed, at the time of their nomination, no more adequate to their hour than do Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey. But when one is most sorely tempted to write off those words, "one nation under God," as so much pious cant, one remembers the miracles by which we have been saved in the past. Perhaps it will happen again in this our day when, as so many of us feel, nothing less than a miracle can save us.

The Conventions

The Republican Convention in Miami Beach was such a crashing bore that even we, inveterate politics-watcher that we are, could not stay awake through the whole dreary proceedings. The Republicans had gone to Miami Beach to nominate Richard Nixon, to adopt a pabulum plat-form, to soak up some sun and sea air, and then go home and wait for the Democrats to chop each other to bits in Chicago.

Which they did. Very few of us, probably, slept through the sessions of Richard J. Daley's convention. Some of us, indeed, have not slept very well since. One can understand, even if he can not approve, the resort to muscle in a tight situation when there is a real and present danger of getting it in the groin. But the Johnson-Humphrey-Daley combine had everything sewn up before the first delegate arrived in Chicago. They could have afforded to be generous to the point of permissiveness. They chose to be brutal.

And for this they deserve the gratitude of the na-

tion. For now we know, beyond all doubt, that there is no hope for the country in the old politics. Chicago was the last hurrah for Lyndon Johnson, Richard Daley, the southern barons, the ward-heelers, and the tin-horn pols who, in the past, have been both the joke and the despair of the country. The future belongs to the new breed of men to whom politics is a means rather than an end — men like Lindsay and Hatfield, like McCarthy and McGovern who care too deeply about peace and freedom and human dignity to speak easily about them in the flowery rhetoric of the old pols. We have felt the first shocks of an earthquake that will change the whole political landscape of this country by 1972.

Perhaps one of the first casualties of the new politics will be the convention system itself. After Miami Beach and Chicago, it is not difficult to work up a certain amount of enthusiasm for the idea of a national presidential primary with a run-off, if necessary, between the two leading candidates in each party. After the presidential nominee has been chosen he would, as he does now, choose his running mate and explain, in so far as that may be possible, what on earth possessed him to choose the man. As for the platform, forget it. There is enough cynicism abroad in the country as it is without compounding it with statements of high purpose which are forgotten even before they are in print.

Looking Toward Denver

Speaking of conventions, the church body to which we belong (The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod) will be meeting in convention next June in Denver, which means that a great deal of the preliminary work for the convention is already getting under way. We hope to comment from time to time in the months ahead on the necessary and constructive actions which our church should take at that convention to continue to play the role which she has so often played in the past — that of a bold, evangelical, and often lonely voice earnestly contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

But before we or anyone else can make any positive contribution to this enterprise it will be necessary for us to re-establish among us a spirit of love and a willingness to try to understand each other — both of which seem to be sadly lacking at the moment. There is an atmosphere of nastiness in the church, observable both among “liberals” and “conservatives” and wholly inconsistent with our calling as ministers of reconciliation. In such an atmosphere we can not speak *to* each other; we speak *past* each other. And too often we give the appearance of being more concerned to score points for “our side” than to ascertain and clarify the truth. Worse still, in our preoccupation with internal matters, we forget that our first re-

sponsibility is to take the good news which has been given to us out into a world which is in despair because it has not heard it.

So perhaps the first thing we need to do is return to Square One, defending each other, speaking well of each other, and putting the best construction on each other's words and actions. We even dare to believe that, as we scrupulously respect both the letter and the spirit of the Eighth Commandment, we will find that the things that unite us far outweigh, both in number and in significance, those few and relatively inconsequential things which divide us. At least this is the way it appears to brethren outside our fellowship, and that is why we so fervently hope that we shall not allow ourselves to get bogged down in irrelevancies or courthouse politics in Denver when we could be contributing our not inconsiderable strength to that dwindling and beleaguered band of the faithful which is still fighting the good fight in an age of galloping apostasy.

The Unwelcome Call

Certainly one matter which must be high on the agenda of any church body in convention assembled is the pressing question of how it can minister meaningfully and sympathetically to its young people. As of this past summer, the median age of our people was 27.7 years. In another couple of years this figure will be down to around twenty-five. The great majority of these young people couldn't care less about some of the questions (such as pulpit and altar fellowship with other church bodies) that trouble their elders. They do care — and deeply — about many problems which seem to bother their elders little if at all — problems of war, of racial justice, of poverty, of personal ethics, of maintaining their personhood in an impersonal world.

There is still time — although it must perhaps be measured in months rather than years — for the churches to address themselves to these gut concerns of their young people. The great question is: Will they? One senses a disposition within the ecclesiastical establishment to write off these concerns as a kind of intellectual and spiritual acne which will clear up with the passing of time. And the truly tragic thing is that they probably will, but for the wrong reasons. Without any help from the church, without any illumination by the Spirit of God, men can strike those compromises which are necessary for survival in a sub-Christian or even anti-Christian society. We know it can be done, for most of us have done it. But the church is not, or at least ought not to be, content to see its young people settle down and make their peace with a world of evil and injustice. We are they who have turned the world upside down and our calling is to continue the struggle against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

In the present tumult of the younger generation the church can, if it is sensitive to the voice of its Master, hear a new call to battle. A young, bearded (!) Galilean is shouting: "Look, I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword." It's all in the Bible, that same Bible which is being scrutinized word by word to see whether it allows Missouri Lutherans and American Lutherans to participate in love-ins (agape meals) at the Lord's altar. If the call goes unheeded by the organized, institutional church, it will create new forms, new associations, new fellowships which will respond and act. For the word does not return void. It accomplishes that which it pleases. That, too, is in the Bible, and it was written for our warning, upon whom the end of an age has come.

The Tyranny of Power

The people of Czechoslovakia, in their gallant but futile attempt to recover the freedoms which they lost a generation ago, have won the admiration of millions of people on both sides of the Iron Curtain. And at the same time they have defined, as sharply as it has been defined in our times, the tyranny of power — not so much the tyranny which power exercises over its unwilling victims as that tyranny which it exercises over those who possess it.

It was clear from the moment Russian tanks and personnel carriers moved into Czechoslovakia that the brave people of that little country had lost their struggle for freedom. But no one would have ever guessed it from the television reports from Prague and Bratislava. There were the Russian troops, looking embarrassed and nonplussed, and there were the Czechs and the Slovaks, looking for all the world like masters of the situation, taunting their oppressors and daring them to crush them under the treads of their tanks.

And in the Kremlin, the men who control enough destructive power to wipe all life from the face of the earth were sitting down with the aged president of Czechoslovakia and the young secretary of its dissident Communist party to try to work out some sort of face-saving solution that would allow them to clamp the lid on without shattering the image which they have so painstakingly been trying to create of reasonable and responsible men. The Russian leaders were driven to the necessity of playing the part of the bully. But they wanted what bullies always want and can never hope to enjoy, respectability. In the end, forced to choose between power and the respect of mankind, they made the choice which men of power always make; they chose power.

Meanwhile, in another great country, many of us

thought that we had caught, just for a moment, a glimpse of ourselves in the mirror of world public opinion. What we saw in Prague made it a little harder for us to feel comfortable about what we are doing in Saigon. It is not that we cannot rationalize what we are doing there, but whatever we say sounds so much like what Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin and Podgorny have been saying lately. And so many eyes in Europe and Africa and Asia look at us with the same suspicion, the same unspoken contempt, the same smoldering hostility. Perhaps, at this strange, mad moment in history, only we and the Russians can really understand each other.

The View from the Bus

There are many ways to see the United States, most of them guaranteed not to offend the eye or disturb the conscience of the affluent. Superhighways and expressways will take one at seventy miles an hour through the worst slums of our big cities without even hinting at the filthy streets and mouldering houses that lie beyond their sodded banks. Airlines will put six to seven miles of haze and cloud between us and the hot pavements where the megalopolitan poor gasp for air and hope. Trains thread their way through ugly parts of towns, but trackside ugliness is mostly commercial and industrial rather than residential. To see the "other America" — the America of rotting neighborhoods and hollow-eyed people — one needs to take the bus. This we did one weekend last summer and what we saw still haunts us.

We are well aware, of course, that the slums through which we passed are no more typical of America than are the posh suburbs which we sometimes have occasion to visit. From what we have seen in fairly extensive travel around the country, we would guess that the level of material comfort on which our people live breaks down to approximately the same proportions as the normal grade-distribution curve: five per cent on the A level of great luxury, twenty per cent on the B level of affluence, fifty per cent on the C level of solid comfort, twenty per cent on the D level of poverty, and five per cent on the F level of absolute squalor. And maybe there is some natural law that that's the way it has to be: five per cent clear winners and five per cent clear losers with the rest of us strewn somewhere along the line between these extremes. But we doubt it, or, at least, we are not ready to buy any such pat answer until we have made an all-out effort to see whether there might not be some way to flatten out the curve.

The view from the bus is only one view of America, but for perhaps a quarter of our people it is the whole American landscape as they see it and experience it in their daily lives. These are the people in whose behalf we once promised to launch a war on poverty. These are the people whom we betrayed

when we diverted our resources and energies into an overseas adventure in which, to compound their misery, a disproportionately large number of their sons have been killed or maimed. It is time these people got at least a few of the breaks. And it should be the first order of business of the new administration to see to it that they do get them. Even if it means pulling out of Viet Nam. Even if it means doubling the income tax surcharge. Even if it means the total mobilization of our manpower and resources for the next generation.

Postscript to Chicago

After the Daley convention in Chicago, there can be no more honest doubt that there is such a thing as police brutality. The television pictures from Grant Park and the Conrad Hilton Hotel were not old film clips of Berlin in the nineteen thirties; they were videotape reports of clubbings and beatings that had taken place on a particular street corner of a particular American city within the past half hour.

How common this brutality may be is, of course, still a matter of legitimate disagreement. But let us take things one step at a time. Let us first of all firmly nail down the solid fact that there is such a thing as police brutality so that when the charge is made hereafter there will be no more of this knee-jerk reaction that, of course, it can't be true because things like that don't happen in America. They do happen. We saw them happen. We know people to whom they have happened.

But then let us go on to the second step. Let us nail down the equally solid fact that there is, within the various protest movements which are trying to rectify ancient wrongs and create a new and better order of things in our country, a hard and disciplined core of anarchists and nihilists which is committed not to reform but to destruction. We did not see them on television because the broadcasting code forbids airing their profanity and obscenity. Had we seen the provocations of this nihilistic minority we might have been less shocked than we were by the reaction of the police. Without condoning it, we might nevertheless have understood why it happened.

The tragedy of it all is that the great majority of peaceful and responsible dissenters got caught in the middle between these extremes of anarchistic provocation and police over-reaction. For this we can not help feeling that the burden of responsibility must lie upon the police. We are entitled to hold them responsible because we have given them our confidence and have entrusted them with weapons that can hurt and kill. They bear these weapons as defenders of our rights, one of the most vital of which, particularly in a day of controversy, is the right of peaceful dissent. It is, admittedly, asking a great deal of them to distinguish, under conditions of confusion and dan-

ger, between those who are exercising their right to dissent peacefully and those who are bent on anarchy. But in these perilous times the man who can not make such distinctions under pressure can not be safely trusted with a truncheon and a gun.

Letter from Psychodelia College

Dear Alumnum:

How do you like that neuter noun? Great, eh? Shows how far good old Psychodelia has come these past four years since we went unisex.

The purpose of this letter is like, you know, to tell you that there will be a Home-in the second weekend in October in case this sort of thing is your bag. The ad hoc committee has been working up some happenings which we think you might like, you know, want to get in on — nothing structured, of course, but there for those who may want them.

We do need like, you know, a little information on your plans. That's why we are enclosing the two mineographed forms. The first of these is an application for a placard for the Home-in Demonstration against the County Board of Commissioners. The big demonstration is always like, you know, the high point of the Home-in Weekend and we hope that we can get out a big crowd. The Commissioners are always tough competition and this year they have a new man from the South District who voted for Goldwater in '64, so it should be an exciting demonstration. Please check also whether you want to make the scene at the pot party in the Grove after the demonstration.

The second form is for the old-timers who attended Psychodelia when it was still Southwest Texas Christian College and Bible Institute. So if you are like, you know, over thirty and sort of up-tight we will try to give you a chance to do your thing, too. We have reserved thirty rooms at the Shadyside Convalescent Home just three blocks from campus and we have enlisted a group of faculty members (only we call them resource people now) to organize some things that might grab you — a croquet tournament at Reservoir Park and a tea at the Kozy Korner Tea Room. As a special concession to you old-timers we are going to permit President Fairweather to leave his house for an evening to do a speech-in for you. We ask you to remember that President Fairweather is forty-five years old and therefore should not be kept up beyond ten o'clock.

One more thing. The package cost for all of the Home-in happenings is \$45.00. If you are going to like, you know, come, let us know at least two weeks in advance which of your parents we should bill.

Peace,
Rudi Lynd
Alumni Secretary

AD LIB.

The Other Half of the Truth

By ALFRED R. LOOMAN



"What is truth, said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer." The question in these lines from Bacon's *Of Truth* is not one that is asked with any frequency in advertising agencies or, if it is, the account executives apparently, like Pilate, do not stick around for the answer. The advertising agencies insist they stick with the facts, but, unless all the facts are given, there is little hope of finding the truth about a product.

One could question that they give the facts. Even Congress has not been able to change cigarette advertising. It may be true that one cigarette can give me the impression of being "Springtime fresh" and another can transform me into a he-man out in Marlboro country, but I doubt it. And such attributes of a cigarette as "taste" and "mildness" are matters of opinion, not fact. The only fact is that smoking cigarettes may be harmful to my health, but this element of truth has never been stated in any commercials I have seen.

What motivates a person to buy one product rather than another is a mystery to me. It is not because of the facts advertised. It seems impossible, but it must be true, that a woman would purchase a particular brand of lipstick on the basis of a promise in the advertising that it will make her more kissable. If she was homely to start with, how could the lipstick help; and if she was beautiful, what difference would the lipstick make?

Undoubtedly millions of customers purchase a particular brand of deodorant or mouth wash, on the basis of an implied promise that suddenly they will become popular, be the life of the party, or make hundreds of new friends. In motivating individuals to make these purchases, the advertising must avoid facts or truth and take advantage of the hope that lies in each of us there is some magic way of becoming something we want to be but aren't.

All of us have succumbed to the subtleties in advertising at some time or another. The number of men who have fallen for the power mower ads must be legion. In these ads, the photographs show not the husband or a husky son pushing the mower, but an attractive wife in red shorts. Not only is she pushing the mower, she is enjoying herself, as evidenced by the wide smile she is wearing. I wonder how many of us have purchased a power mower in the forlorn hope that this chore will be taken over by our wives.

This type of advertising is particularly beguiling because it helps to ease the male conscience, since, as the ad shows, should the wife start cutting the lawn she would enjoy the experience.

Another example of the lack of facts and downright truth in advertising happened to me this past summer. I wanted to paint a few walls, as well as refinish a floor and several pieces of furniture. I got into this project by noting the ease with which these tasks could be performed according to the advertisements concerning several of the wonder products I would be using. One coat would do the job, everything would go on easily, and professional results could be expected. Here again, the photographs showed well dressed young ladies looking cool and happy, doing what I planned to do.

When I purchased these products and read the information on the cans, however, I was in for something of a surprise. Before using these preparations I was supposed to apply a base coat to the walls, fill the cracks with something else, take the finish off the furniture, use esoteric grades of sandpaper and steel wool, and, in general, spend weeks getting everything ready. Even then, the instructions said, if the walls or furniture, or floor had previously had some substance or other on them, or if they were of a certain type of wood, or in a peculiar type of condition, I could not expect the best results.

As if this were not enough to discourage any amateur, at the bottom of the can was a WARNING. This had to do with the nature of the contents. The names of the chemical substances in these products had an ominous sound, and I was warned these preparations were highly poisonous and should not be used within a 100 yards of children, that they were highly volatile, apparently to the point where it would be necessary to turn off the pilot in our gas stove, and that they were so lethal I should by no means breathe the vapor, which necessitated, I presumed, painting in a gas mask. Should I swallow any of the contents or get any on my skin, I was told to use several preparations which our medicine cabinet does not contain. before rushing to the hospital.

None of these deathly important facts appeared in any of the advertisements. What facts they did furnish were true. But if I had known the other half of the truth, they would have lost a sale, because I would never have risked my life on those projects.

The McLuhan Understanding of Man and History

By RICHARD LEE
Assistant Professor of Humanities
Valparaiso University

The purpose of this article is the presentation of the understanding of man and history in the thought of Marshall McLuhan. At least four observations need to be made at the outset of such a presentation.

Marshall McLuhan is neither a philosopher nor a theologian in the formal sense. His academic discipline is modern English literature. His major publications, however, are in the field of communications media. His thought ranges so widely and idiosyncratically in the field of communications media that he has been called a "pop" philosopher and an "oracle" for the electric age. It is the oracular and "pop" philosophical character of his work which makes it of interest to the theologian of culture. His major work, *Understanding Media*, for example, carries the subtitle, "The Extensions of Man," which alerts his readers at the outset that more is at issue in his work than the understanding of radio and television, motion pictures, telephones and telegraphs, and the like.

We all know that radio, the movies, the press do things to us. For McLuhan they also are us. "They that make them," he quotes the *Psalms*, "Shall be like unto them." So *Understanding Media* is nothing less than a book about humanity as it has been shaped by the means used in this and earlier ages to deliver information.¹

Harold Rosenberg, in the passage above from "Philosophy in a Pop Key," is extreme to say that McLuhan says: "Media are us," but it is true that McLuhan treats communications media so intimately with man himself that the line between man and media is exceedingly fine. Actually, in the passage cited, McLuhan is quoted as saying man is "like unto" his media, suggesting analogy rather than identity. The tendency for McLuhan to treat his analogies as identities, however, does arouse confusion, not only with respect to man and media, but in his thought generally.*

*For example, when McLuhan writes "The electric light is pure information," he means that electric light is a medium without content. One does not read a light bulb, but, say, a newspaper in the light of a light bulb. The electric light is pure information, conveying no content. For McLuhan, the medium is the message, or information in the sense of the *formation* of man. The content is not the message, or information in that radical sense. This is an example of the difficulties in understanding his identities. One Roman Catholic critic believes that his transformation of analogies into identities is itself the nub of his thought and not something to be cleared up to get at the nub.² Religiously, this could mean that my effort in this article will be a Protestant interpretation of McLuhan.

Style and Scope

The first observation is that McLuhan is writing about man when he writes about media. An interpreter cannot isolate McLuhan's own interpretation of man and history from his interpretation of media. Media are not man, but they are very *like* man, the *extensions* of man, the *re-presentations* of man to himself.

The second observation is that McLuhan's style of writing is almost opaque or, as he might put it, a style of "low definition." Already the term "McLuhanism" has been struck for any obscure expression. One needs to read McLuhan as one would piece together stubs of a partially overheard conversation.

It's interesting to note that most of McLuhan's current "writings" are actually transcriptions of his dictation — a fact which affects the structure of his books. They read like books that were actually spoken, rather than written. One might call his books *transcripts* rather than manuscripts. If a reviewer walked into this type of discussion, he'd be more inclined to get involved in it than to review it.³

McLuhan's first major work, *The Mechanical Bride*, is a succession of reproduced advertisements, cartoons, and newspaper clippings around which he has written exegetical chapters. His latest book, *The Medium is the Massage*, is a much wilder collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, cartoons, and geometric designs around which he has written short paragraphs or exclamatory sentences, some upside down, some at angles and perpendiculars to the unpaginated pages, and some in type which must be held up to a mirror to be read. It is what some have come to call a non-book, a judgment which would not displease McLuhan very much. His major work, *Understanding Media*, follows a literally more prosaic form, but is filled with puns, aphorisms, numerous quotations and thoughts which pile up on one another like concentric circles. The chapters need not be read in any particular sequence. "It is not possible to give a rational summary of McLuhan's ideas," George Elliott declares, "His writing is deliberately antilogical, circular, repetitious, unqualified, gnomic, outrageous."⁴ A *Newsweek* essayist quotes one Columbia coed to the effect that reading McLuhan is like taking LSD. "It can turn you on," she says. "LSD doesn't mean anything until you consume it — Likewise McLuhan."⁵

This writer does indeed find reading McLuhan a

disorienting, if not a mind-manifesting, experience. One sometimes thinks pages have stuck together when the thought does not follow from page to page, only to find the thought picked up again pages later or not at all. Some of his words and phrases are very fanciful free-associations, like his combination of "remedy" and "media" into "remedial" to speak about the programming possibilities of man's environment, and his use of "massage" interchangeably with "message" when he wishes to emphasize his thesis that the message of any medium is the medium itself and the change it works upon the psyche. Sometimes McLuhan simply puns horribly. He refers to advertisements for nasal nostrums as "adnoise" or to the integrating effect of motion pictures upon the senses as the "reel world." One feels that whatever he has grasped after reading and re-reading McLuhan depends upon how well he has handled a foreign language.

As strange as his vocabulary is his syntax. A relatively clear sentence will be followed by one which must be puzzled out with some pains. For example, the sentence, "It would be difficult to exaggerate the bond between print and movie in terms of their power to generate phantasy in the viewer or reader," is followed with the sentence, "Cervantes devoted his *Don Quixote* entirely to this aspect of the printed word and its power to create what James Joyce throughout *Finnegan's Wake* designates as the 'ABCED-minded,' which can be taken as 'ab-said' or 'ab-sent,' or just alphabetically controlled."⁶ One must do some quick jumps in his thought to connect all the references and puzzle out the connections.

One critic suggests that McLuhan's literary style is that of a television picture, a concatenation of images made up of little dots which the reader must put together to get the pattern. Since McLuhan believes that print is no longer an adequate medium to involve the reader as he has been conditioned to be involved by other media, he has invented a mosaic writing.* It attempts "to stimulate the disconnected, low definition, coolness of television — and thus capture the reader."⁷

His books demand a high degree of involvement from the reader. They are poetic and intuitive rather than logical and analytic. Structurally, his unit is the sentence. Most of them are topic sentences — which are left undeveloped. The style is oral and breathless and frequently obscure. It's a different kind of medium.⁸

In short, McLuhan's style is highly complex, and it may well be that his thought about man and history cannot be separated from it without losing it, anymore than one can paraphrase a poem.

The third observation to be made concerns the wide scope of McLuhan's thought. What begins as a theory of communications ends as nothing less than an at-

tempt to explain all of Western culture, past, present, and future.

The sweep of McLuhan's thesis [The medium is the message] not only touches the deepest levels of man's psychic life — his senses, thoughts — but also leads us across the realms of sciences, art, history, philosophy, and theology.⁹

The scope of McLuhan's thought is intimately related to his literary style discussed above. "I learned my style from the symbolists;" he has said, "they suggest but do not say all."¹⁰ McLuhan indeed "suggests all." He expresses his thoughts in a literary collage of bits of information gathered from nearly every avenue of human inquiry and reflection brought into new and suggestive relationships. He believes that it is a style faithful to an age of discontinuity when all things are being brought into hitherto unsuspected connections. The symbolists are McLuhan's grammarians; most of the known world his vocabulary.

"This artistic discovery for achieving rich implication by withholding the syntactical connections," McLuhan writes in *The Mechanical Bride*, "is stated as a principle of modern physics by A. N. Whitehead in *Science in the Modern World*. 'In being aware of the bodily experience, we must thereby be aware of aspects of the spatio-temporal world as mirrored with the bodily life. . . my theory involves the entire abandonment of the notion that simple location is the primary way in which things are involved in space-time.'" Which is to say, among other things, that there can be symbolic unity among the most diverse and externally unconnected facts or situations.¹¹

McLuhan's thought brings into symbolic union such diverse phenomena, for example, as the rise of typography and Western nationalism, the rise of telegraphy and the age of anxiety, and the rise of television and college student ferment. In the first case, McLuhan asserts that nationalism was unknown until "print made it possible to see the mother tongue in uniform dress;" in the second case, that telegraphy "initiated that outerring of or extension of man's central nervous system. . . which is to initiate a situation of dread;" and in the last case, that young people raised on television — a highly tactile, mosaic, and all-at-once-medium — are frustrated when their educational media are visual, linear, segmented, and sequential.

Our new gang of kids raised on TV face the world in a spirit antithetic to literacy. They bring to print all their senses, only to find that print rejects them.

Print asks for the isolated and stripped-down visual faculty, not for the unified sensorium.¹²

These connections of diverse phenomena are not closely argued and carefully qualified, but bold assertions of symbolic unities. McLuhan says that he offers "themes" not theses, and that he does not explain but probes. All things may be seen in some symbolic harmony if no longer along the "lines" of mechanical unity.

*A growing McLuhan cult will possibly capitalize "mosaic writing."

A. N. Whitehead states the procedures of modern physics somewhat in the same way in *Science in the Modern World*. In place of a single mechanical unity in all phenomena, "some theory of discontinuous existence is required." But discontinuity, whether in cultures or physics, unavoidably invokes the ancient notion of harmony. And it is out of the extreme discontinuity of modern existence, with its mingling of many cultures and periods, that there is being born today the vision of a rich and complex harmony. We do not have a single, coherent present to live in, and so we need a multiple vision in order to see at all.¹³

McLuhan's "multiple vision" is the viewing of all things as shaped by technologies of communication, from speech to space vehicles as the extensions of man. The "multiple vision," learned from the symbolists, he directs not only at literature, painting, and architecture, but at the lowly stuff of everyday life, like clothes and clotheslines, cars and cartoons. The scope of his thought is so wide because there are few things he does not consider communications media and still fewer human experiences he does not consider shaped by them.

While McLuhan is an aesthete, he is also an ideologue — one ready to spin out his metaphor of [media as] "extensions" [of man] until its web covers the universe; if clothes are media, and trees and policemen are, too, if — in short, all of creation "speaks" to us — McLuhan is discussing as media what used to be called "nature," and his notion of the "sensuously orchestrated" man of the future is a version of the pantheistic hero.¹⁴

The fourth observation to be made is McLuhan's optimism. He is a humanist happy to be living in an age of technology. The tone in his books is not the grim note sounded by many critics of popular culture. If anything, the tone is manic. He holds out hope for the increasing humanization of man by means of the very mass media and automated machinery others fear.

What distinguishes Marshall McLuhan from most other grand theorists of the technological society is his avoidance of the paranoid style. For McLuhan joyously welcomes the technological and cultural changes that other writers fear or criticize, and has succeeded in changing the terms of the debate over what is happening to man in this era of radical change.¹⁵

"Changing the terms" is McLuhan's wont in whatever he writes, but it is especially evident in the ways he delights in what others deplore. Is individuality being lost? Yes, but for the sake of the desirable retribalizing of men. Are humane letters in decline? Yes, but for the sake of the desirable, more humane, more balanced use of all human senses instead of the eye alone. Is automation ending jobs? Yes, but for the sake of creating more comprehensive "roles" for men and the more meaningful activities of learning a living. Is "pop" art a banality? Yes, but for the sake of pushing the

past into archetypal form so men are able to live more consciously of present clichés.

The theme of his forthcoming book, *From Cliche to Archetype*, is that non-artists always look at the present through the spectacles of the preceding age. The changes going on around us are too blatant to be visible. We always have the illusion of seeing the old environment when we really see the new. The cliché is that which is pervasive, accepted totally in the present environment. The new environment is constantly pushing the old into archetypal form as in the case of Batman.¹⁶

The more literate, "literally lettered," a person is, the more pessimistic he will be about the "irrationality" of contemporary culture. This writer also observes that the more literate are also more likely to misunderstand and attack McLuhan. Moira Walsh in her article, "McLuhanisms," says that he really acknowledges the greater importance of content when he says our best hope for illumination is to look to the artists for guidance into the present and future.¹⁷ On the contrary, McLuhan seriously and consistently means the medium is the message; it is, for example, the passing of the mechanical age we see when an artist uses old automobile parts as his medium and not whatever the printed title under them may say is the content of his creation. Philip Wylie in an angry article, "Nation of Idiots," believes McLuhan must believe that had Gutenberg first printed the Koran rather than the Bible, the Western world would be Moslem.¹⁸ On the contrary, McLuhan only believes that segmented, linear, and sequential extensions of our senses into the whole of our environment follow upon the extension of our eyes into printed books, regardless of their contents. When Wylie strikes his parting blow that he will believe McLuhan only if he can prove "The violin is the music," he gives away the fact that he has not touched McLuhan at any depth at all. Wylie, one supposes, isn't "with it." This writer would suppose that Wylie doesn't hear or comprehend the meaning of the electric guitar, the recession of the waltz and bowed strings (hot and continuous), and the rise of jazz and plucked and strummed strings (cool and discontinuous). Many of the more literate critics of McLuhan that this writer read are simply uninstructed in "pop" culture and unable to contribute to the discussion.

McLuhan's optimism about popular culture and technology is qualified, for reasons we shall be presenting later in a section on ethics, but he remains optimistic about the very things which cause others tremors. The very structures of human existence are changing, but, for McLuhan, they are restoring to man what he once was and lost.

Of all the crisis philosophers, McLuhan is by far the coolest. Though his notion of the "externalization" or numbness induced in the consumers of today's popular culture accords with Eliot's "hollow men," Riesman's "other-directedness," and Arendt's

"banality," he is utterly unsympathetic to any concept of "decline." The collective trance of his contemporaries is to his mind a transitional phenomenon — one that recurs in all great historic shifts from one dominant medium to another.¹⁹

It is, therefore, not only McLuhan's style that appeals to those who are most involved with popular culture — particularly the young, the artistic, and some of the religious "renewalers" — but also his optimism. Those who share his "multiple vision," especially his understanding of media as the extensions of man into a fuller sense life, are not pessimistic. Neil Hurley suggests "they realize that perhaps history is the arch-medium that models the human race and its destiny in terms not of the absurd but rather of some statement of meaning discernable even to man."²⁰

Man and History

We make these four observations about McLuhan's style and scope, and of his inclusive logic, strange themes, and positive tone to point up the difficulties in reaching a systematic presentation of his understanding of man and history. The usual difficulties of making explicit what lies implicit in highly imaginative, symbolic, and poetic language are obvious. What may be less obvious is that the effort to lay out in some sequential, if not possibly a systematic, way what McLuhan is saying about man and history is at odds with McLuhan himself. He does not believe that printed, sequential, and linear media (of which an article submitted to the *Cresset* as a means of a communication between the writer and readers is an example) are able to convey the modern sensibility and what is "happening" to man. In his own books he wars against the very print on the page with pictures, designs, and wild typography, and his logic is circular and given to provocative lapses in the thought he does commit to print. Yet, we make the effort because there is something in his thought about man and history which is not to be found elsewhere in a medium more congenial to the research and writing of articles.

From his earliest works on, McLuhan most often speaks of man in terms of the senses. Man is a sensorium. While McLuhan often speaks about man mentally transcending his senses, he does not clearly explain such transcendence. Rather, he is more often at work asserting that many of the other things said about man are special relationships of the senses and not something in addition to the senses. Consciousness, for example, is most often spoken of as itself a ratio or proportion among sense experiences and not as something added to sense experience. McLuhan sees subrational beings as being subrational in the sense that they are below the means of achieving such a ratio of consciousness in their sense lives. They are "wired for fixed wave lengths, as it were, having infallibility in their own area of experience."²¹ Since human consciousness is a special

ratio of the senses, very subtle and complex, it can be altered, impaired, or even ended by the increase or decrease of any one sense intensity over a long period of time. Even in a short period of time, such as the time taken for hypnosis, one can observe an alteration of consciousness by stepping up some sense intensities and dimming down others. Over a longer period of time, McLuhan believes, the intensification of one sense by a new medium can hypnotize an entire community and culture. The point is that human consciousness is dependent upon the balance of our sense experience; when the senses are stimulated in certain balances over a period of time, human consciousness changes.

The "common sense" (consensus) was for many centuries held to be the peculiar human power of translating one kind of experience of one sense into all the senses, and presenting the result continuously as a unified image to the mind. In fact, this image of a unified ratio among the senses was long held to be the mark of *rationality*, and may in the computer age become so again. For it is now possible to program ratios among the senses that approach the condition of consciousness.²²

There is in McLuhan's understanding of man some distinction between consciousness and the mind. The mind is something more than a particular ratio of our senses. The latter, as a unified image, is "presented" to the mind, which is able, if moved by the will, to contemplate, scan, and criticize the image. This is a rare activity, but the activity upon which McLuhan hangs all his greatest hopes for man. In one sense, McLuhan is a rationalist, for the transcendent element in man is *minding* the unified image given him in consciousness. It is not simply mind over the senses, but mind over the ratio of the senses and the particular image such a ratio forms. Marvin Kitman, in a scathing review of McLuhan's latest book, writes: "Apparently he has been rendering the fat out of the definitive work, *Understanding Media*. In the current rendition, I have it on good authority he has boiled down the message to seventeen words. The Message, and why it had to get out now, is on page 25."²³ When we turn to that page, we read: "There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening."²⁴ For McLuhan, what is "happening" always means the particular ratio of sense experience in a given moment or, for that matter, a millennium. To summarize, McLuhan's man is a sensorium; his consciousness is the proportion of his sense experiences; his mind is somehow sufficiently free of his senses to receive the various proportions, or images, and reflect upon them. The penchant of mankind, however, is simply to live on unreflected and uncriticized images. Most men presume that their way of perceiving the world is *the way of perceiving the world*.²⁵

Why this blindness to the ways we sense is so leads us to the heart of McLuhan's thought. There is, as such,

no "doctrine of sin" in his thought, but there is something of a villain. What bewitches man is his preoccupation with the content of his media rather than with the media themselves. What we sense is not nearly so important as how we sense. The significant images we present to the mind are not the images of content but the images which are the ratios of the senses. The book is the extension of eye, clothing an extension of the skin, the telephone an extension of the ear, television an extension of touch!, electric circuitry an extension of the central nervous system, and so on. Media, being alterations of our environment, cause us new and unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters our consciousness and the way we perceive the world. "When these ratios change," writes McLuhan, "men change."²⁶

Thus, as far as the structure of human existence is concerned, it is more important to note whether aural-ity, tactility, visuality, or some other weightings of the sensorium are dominant and are the determinants of consciousness. For example, it is more important to note that man reads print as his primary intercourse with the world than it is to note what he reads, for his sensorium is weighted toward visuality, sequences, segments, and presents a linear image to his mind.

Whether one uses the medium of print to say that *God is dead* or that *God is love* (--- -- ---), the structure of the medium remains unchanged. Nine little black marks with no intrinsic meaning of their own are strung along a line with spaces left after the third and fifth marks. . . [Print] mediates, eye dropper fashion, one thing at a time, in an abstract, linear, fragmented, sequential way. That is the essential structure of print. And once a culture uses such a medium for a few centuries, it begins to perceive the world in a one-thing-at-a-time, abstract, linear, fragmented way.²⁷

To follow out the example above, a God who speaks, if He were not dead, would at least be in beleaguered health in a print and visually oriented culture long before the line "God is dead" is set in print. "Hearing," writes Rudolph Bultmann, "is the means by which God is apprehended." Bultmann does not mean an acoustical apprehension any more than seeing God would be an optical apprehension. But, just as seeing, whether physical or spiritual, means perceiving at a distance, thus ascertaining shape and measurements, "so hearing is a sense of being encountered, of the distance being bridged, the acknowledgement of a speaker's claim on us."²⁸ When Bultmann points up the prevailing importance of the sense of hearing in Hebrew culture, he is also pointing up the way in which oral and aural media weighted the balance of the sensorium and produced what might be called the "religious consciousness." The eye, for McLuhan, distances, detaches, segments, and neutralizes the world, and he observes that societies in which the sacred played a greater role than it does in ours were those ruled by media of communi-

cation more aural and oral than visual. While McLuhan does not say it, one can infer that a religion of a God who speaks undergoes great tribulations in a culture moving beyond earshot.

We are *enveloped* by sound. It forms a seamless web around us. We say, "Music shall fill the air." We never say, "Music shall fill a *particular* segment of the air." We hear sounds from everywhere, without ever having to focus. Sounds come from "above," from "below," from in "front" of us, from "behind" us, from our "right" and from our "left." We can't shut out sound automatically. We simply are not equipped with earlids. Where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniform connected kind, the ear world is world of simultaneous relationships.²⁹

Similarly, a culture moving within earshot again and generally toward a more balanced use of the senses is a culture capable of divine address, encounter, envelopment. The God who is dead today is the God of the eye dominated sensorium. For McLuhan, "the phrase 'God is dead' applies aptly, correctly, validly to the Newtonian universe which is dead."³⁰ This eye-dominated universe is giving way, and Western man is becoming more tactile, kinetic, auditory, and guttural, configuring a new sensory ratio, one presumes, potentially more like that human consciousness in which the living God "makes more sense."

This extended example points up the plasticity of man in McLuhan's thought. Man is not everywhere and at all times the same. Human consciousness is a highly relative thing. Man is in the closest possible interaction with his environment, and, in McLuhan's scheme, is ambiguously involved in changing and being changed by it. This writer sees McLuhan's man pervasively determined by his environment with a precious element of freedom over it, although McLuhan's thoughts are so scattered and slippery at this point that the emphasis can fall in various proportions of freedom and determinism in different statements. McLuhan's voice is surely among those which dispute the notion that man has mastered his environment and stress instead that "for a century or more we have been ignoring man's dependence upon his environment with consequences that we cannot yet foresee."³¹ At the same time he is one to speak of "programming" the environment, an act of freedom in itself, in order to create an environment upon which dependence would mean greater freedom.

Man's relationship to his environment in McLuhan's thought is best seen in his now famous slogan with which all his thought is captioned: "The medium is the message." Media are the environment man makes and, in turn, make man. Man is aware of the first activity, the making of media, but the second activity, the media making man, is subliminal. "Everybody experiences far more than he understands," observes McLuhan, "yet it is experience, rather than understanding,

that influences behavior, especially in collective matters of media and technology where the individual is almost inevitably unaware of their effects upon him."^{3 2} "Almost inevitably unaware" is a phrase typical of the way in which McLuhan fogs the relationship between environmental determinism and freedom.

All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the way media work as environments. All media are extensions of some human faculty — psychic or physical.^{3 3}

The Slogan

The slogan, "The medium is the message, or as McLuhan lately prefers to say more boldly, "The medium is the message," may be understood at three different levels. First, it is something of a flag to wave to draw attention away from the content of media to media themselves. To see what is happening to man, "the human conditioned," one must pay attention to form, structure, framework, in short, media, to get the message. Ultimately the content of the medium could be understood to be the medium himself. Such an understanding is either inscrutable or it actually means what one critic deduces it means, this writer thinks erroneously, that "people watch movies primarily for the pleasures offered by a kinetic screen accompanied by relevant sound, just as people like reading for the joy of watching print pass before their eyes."^{3 4} McLuhan can often be interpreted many ways with evidence marshalled on every side, but here this writer's judgment must be that McLuhan is saying that the medium is one of two messages, or the co-message, with whatever message it carries as content. Such an interpretation would square with his belief that the content of any contemporary medium is a medium of the previous age. Man, McLuhan is fond of saying, goes through life looking in a rear-view mirror, seeing the media of a previous age as the content of contemporary media, but not the contemporary media themselves. Thus, if one ignores the flag, "The medium is the message," he looks through, say, his television set to "Bonanza-land" and to the old media of wagon wheels and wide open spaces. Meanwhile, the television itself is having its subliminal effects in creating a new ratio of his senses and the social effect of creating a new environment in which residual thinking in terms of wide open spaces and the speed of wagon wheels is dangerous. Erik Erikson speaks to this psychic situation which McLuhan describes:

Historical change has reached a coercive universality and a global acceleration which is experienced

as a threat to the emerging American identity. It seems to devalue the vigorous conviction that this nation, by definition, is always so far ahead of the rest of the world in inexhaustible reserves, in vision and planning, in freedom of action, and in tempo of progress that there is unlimited space and endless time in which to develop, to test, and to complete her social experiments. The difficulties met in the attempt to integrate this old image of insulated spaciousness with the image of explosive global closeness are deeply disquieting.^{3 5}

Secondly, the slogan means that not only is the medium the co-message in need of notice, but one is to notice that media have preferences for the kinds of contents with which they will co-operate. A given environment prepares the questions we can ask, the answers we can receive. Media have screening and categorizing functions.

The insight is neatly summed up by Dr. Edward Carpenter: "English is a mass medium. All languages are mass media. The new mass media — film, radio, TV — are new languages, their grammars as yet unknown. Each codifies reality differently; each conceals a unique metaphysics."^{3 6}

An environment, the media of a given age, is an active translation of reality. Most importantly, media are translating the reality that is man in a special way. McLuhan frequently speaks of the environment "processing" man, creating new versions and revisions, and even in terms which sound like the interaction of the extensions of our senses (media) with our senses (man) is itself a self-transcending process.

In this electric age we see ourselves being translated more and more into the form of information, moving toward the technological extension of consciousness. That is what is meant when we say that we daily know more and more about man. We mean that we can translate more and more of ourselves into other forms of expression that exceed ourselves. Man is a form of expression who is traditionally expected to repeat himself and echo the praise of his creator.^{3 7}

Just who is man's "creator" in the passage above is unclear. In its larger context McLuhan means God in traditional terms, but the "creator" can in the passage itself and in McLuhan's larger logic mean us, who "can translate more and more of ourselves," or the "creator" can mean electric age media by which "we see ourselves being translated." The active and passive elements in this passage, the "translating" and "being translated," are typical of the complex way man and his environment interact. "Translation" is a mild word for the effects McLuhan describes; "new creation" is closer to them. The media of our present age are translating more and more of the reality that is man, but it is not altogether clear in McLuhan's thought where that basic reality resides before the translation. When man is turned into the spiritual form of information, that trans-

lation is so radical as to be seen as a new creation.

Our environment "brackets out" and represses less of that reality that is man than did previous environments. For McLuhan this freer and fuller translation means a more and more balanced sensorium — and ultimately an environment into which consciousness itself may be extended, that is, not just the senses but the senses in some special balance which he never specifies. The beginning of such an extension can be vaguely seen in computers. The end of man, for McLuhan is integral knowledge and synesthesia, and that end is nearer now than when we first perceived. As one critic put it, McLuhan immanentizes every eschaton in sight. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp or what's a metaphor?" is the way McLuhan himself would put it.^{3 8}

All media are active metaphors in their power to translate human experience. Some of the excesses in current excursions into aural, oral, tactile, and kinetic experience may be directly responsive to the sensory deprivation of our passing environment. All the experience isn't in yet on what it means to be a balanced human being, and some teetering is necessary to bring it in. This side of McLuhan's thought has been picked up by educators especially. Some are increasingly suspecting that one is now more likely to be better educated into one's humanity outside of school than within school due to the narrowing media within and the expanding media without. If one wants a good translation of reality, school is possibly the last place to go for it.

We are only beginning to realize what a tiny slice of human possibilities we now educate. In fragmenting all of existence, Western civilization hit upon one aspect, the literate and rational, to develop at the expense of the rest. Along with this went a lopsided development of the senses, the visual. Such personal and sensory specialization was useful in a mechanical age, but is fast becoming outmoded. Education will be more concerned with training the senses and perceptions than with stuffing brains. And this will be at no loss for the intellect. Studies show a high correlation between sensory, bodily development — now largely neglected — and intelligence.^{3 9}

The whole range of past and present human experience that McLuhan explains by means of various media as translations of man is immense, wild, and unwieldy, and impossible to discuss in this article. Actually, McLuhan says he does not explain at all but just perceives patterns. He has been grouped with Herman Kahn and Norman O. Brown as another thinker who is exploratory and speculative, rather than substantive and definite, and who does not necessarily believe in his thoughts.^{4 0}

The third level of meaning of the slogan is emphasized in the interchangeable use of "message" and "massage" in its formulation. Once attention is drawn to the medium and to its translating activity, the effects of media on the individual psyche and the whole

of society may be seen, effects to which we have already alluded elsewhere in this paper and will do so again when we consider McLuhan's interpretation of history and social change. Here, however, we turn to the ethical implications of the "massage."

Ethical Implications

McLuhan innocently omits economic need, sexual desire, political and military force, religious beliefs and morals in his probing of man. They have a secondary, if any, role in determining the human condition. "Human conditioning," the "massage" of media, is his exclusive way of grasping psychic and social phenomena. The major "massage" of media with the greatest ethical implications is the diminution of individuality and the retribalization of man. Individuality declines in proportion to the increase of psychic and social exposure.

All men are totally involved in the insides of all men. There is no privacy and no private parts. In a world in which we are all ingesting and digesting one another, there can be no obscenity or pornography or decency. Such is the law of electric media which stretch the nerves to form a global membrane of enclosure.^{4 1}

The technological extension of man in the electric age involves "an act of collective cannibalism." Our previous environment with all its private and social values is "swallowed by the new environment and processed for whatever values are digestible."^{4 2} What is indigestibly voided is individuality. "Too many people know too much about each other;" says McLuhan, "our new environment compels commitment and participation. We have become irrevocably involved with, and responsible for, each other."^{4 3} This writer, however, would question whether the heightening of human involvement by electric media necessarily means that men *will* take increasing responsibility for one another, however much McLuhan may think man is now one organism globally sharing one central nervous system and seeking the welfare of its parts. McLuhan confuses the loss of isolation and privacy with the loss of individuality; while they are related, they are not identical. McLuhan himself, in a better moment, shows how the implosion of man upon man can arouse helplessness and anxiety as much as responsibility.

Tradition, in a word, is the sense of the total past as *now*. Its awakening is a natural result of radio impact and of electric information in general. For the intensely literate population, however, radio engendered a profound unlocalizable sense of guilt that sometimes expressed itself in the fellow traveler attitude. A newly found human involvement bred anxiety and insecurity and unpredictability. Since literacy had fostered on extreme individualism, and radio had done just the opposite in reviving the ancient experience of kinship webs of deep tribal involvement, the literate West tried to find

some sort of compromise in a larger sense of collective responsibility."⁴⁴

The achievement of a larger *sense* of "collective responsibility" out of an act of "collective cannibalism" by electric media is McLuhan's judgment of the way our psyches have been massaged. The declining hegemony of detaching and localizing media is connected with the rise of an unlocalizable sense of guilt and collective responsibility. McLuhan here confuses the rise of the number of psychic responses we must now make to more men more often with a larger sense of responsibility in a moral sense. Simply accelerating responses does not accelerate their moral quality. The fact that there isn't time to pity or succor all the human tragedies one is "in touch with" by electric media may indeed harden one's feelings. One may be so overcome with stimuli that he cannot cope with his own responses and turn to different means for some surcease of such distress. If the technique of invention was the discovery of the nineteenth century, the technique of the suspended judgment is the discovery of the twentieth. Many men are aware of neither.

Perhaps the most significant of the gifts of typography to man is that of detachment and non-involvement — the power to act without reacting. Science since the Renaissance has exalted this gift which has become an embarrassment in the electric age, in which all people are involved in all others at all times. The very word, "disinterested," expressing the loftiest detachment and ethical integrity of typographic man, has in the past decade been increasingly used to mean: "He couldn't care less."⁴⁵

When McLuhan moves beyond electric media themselves to say that at the theatre, at a ball or ball game, or in church, individuals enjoy all others present out of a sheer sense of joy in the multiplication of numbers, he is being highly selective in his examples. Wars, brawls, gang rumbles, and riots also qualify as "multiplications of numbers," but the sense of joy and the quality of the responses to one another in them is of a different character. The difference lies in the content, not the medium, of the activity in which individuality declines. Every time media overcome "the separation of the individual from the group (privacy), and in thought ('point of view'), and in work (specialism),"⁴⁶ the consequence is not necessarily increasing responsibility for the mass in a moral sense. McLuhan was more vocal about the possibilities for mischief in our "ingesting and digesting" one another in his earliest work, *The Mechanical Bride*.

Ours is the first age in which thousands of the best-trained individual minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind. To get inside in order to manipulate, exploit, control is the object now. . . . Since so many minds are engaged in bringing about the condition of public helplessness, and since these programs of commercial [McLuhan intends the pun] education are so

much more expensive and influential than the relatively puny offerings sponsored by schools and colleges, it seemed fitting to devise a method for reversing the process. Why not use the new commercial education as means to enlightening its intended prey?⁴⁷

In his recent writings, McLuhan continues to speak of the loss of individuality in characteristic overstatements. What he really means, if any balance can be seen in the light of his other statements, is that there is a decline in the *extreme* individuality of men from the mechanical age to the electric age. The relatively sudden passage from the one to the other has "momentarily" dulled our senses, but "integral" man, as opposed to "individualized" man, is in the process of formation. "The mechanical age is departing, and with it the division of man within himself and his separation from his fellows."⁴⁸ If typographical man thought the world existed to end in a book, integral man would have it end in a computer. The translation of our lives into the spiritual form of information seems to form the human family into one world and a single world consciousness.⁴⁹ The private consciousness, the secluded sensorium, the individual who may act without reacting at once to the whole of human experience, is an extreme shaped by our preceding, print environment which is being chastened and rounded by the new.

Electromagnetic technology requires utter human docility. . . such as befits an organism that now wears its brain outside its skull and its nerves outside its hide. Man must serve his electric technology with the same servo-mechanistic fidelity with which he served. . . all other extensions of his organs. But there is this difference, that previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electric is total and inclusive. An external consensus or conscience is now as necessary as private consciousness.⁵⁰

This writer, however, must note that private consciousness remains the basis of ethical activity in McLuhan's thought. As much as he would appear to be a radical technological determinist, entirely effacing the individual and the powers of the single will against media's "ingesting and digesting," he yet appeals to the individual "willingness" to contemplate what is "happening" and implicitly assumes some human transcendence of the "massage" and some capacities for moral judgments independent of "massaged" values.

Ours is the first society in history, McLuhan believes, to have the opportunity to escape technological determinism; this belief is the major source of his optimism. (It is not the only source. McLuhan is nothing if not contradictory, and frequently he seems to be saying the technological determinism is inescapable — but that the culture being produced by the new technology is superior to the old.) 'Hitherto most people have accepted their cultures as a fate, like climate or vernacular. . . We can free

ourselves from fate, however, for we can transcend the limitations of our own assumptions by a critique of them."⁵¹

The ethical implications of McLuhan's understanding of man cannot be simply drawn. On the one hand he speaks as if the new electric media, by virtue of the particular prism of reality they form, are themselves improving man by their massage, regardless of his willing any such improvement if that is what it is. Thus, if one were to feel any reluctance about what is "happening," this is a reactionary, mechanical rear-view "point of view" which ought to be laid to rest. What is "happening" is good. On the other hand he speaks as if what is "happening" is ambiguous — and dangerous if it is not highly reflected and subjected to thorough criticism on the basis of values, this writer must observe, he ascribes to the psychic massage we received in our previous, mechanical, Newtonian environment. He implicitly would also have our old values do some "ingesting and digesting" of the new environment at the same time that the new environment is processing our old values. Our need is some transcendence of media for the sake of evaluation and control, much in the same way our scientists seek to become aware of the bias of their instruments of research in order to correct that bias.

McLuhan's insight brings the subliminal operations of media into conscious awareness and shows how cultural values depend on the prism of the communications system. . . . Man will always need media and thus be subject to their macro-mythic [formal structure, as opposed to micro-mythic, or content] powers. Today, however, he can reflect on the assumptions that hitherto were smuggled into his unconscious psyche. The contraband of perceptual biases and emotionally charged values can now enter the custom gate of our conscious mind.⁵²

To summarize, McLuhan makes his appeal to evaluate media to the very man whose values are being shaped by media and his appeal for an increasing consciousness of their effects to that very consciousness which is a ratio of their effects upon his senses. The mind apparently transcends this circle and has "stored values" by which it can judge both the past and present, but this critical capacity is not made clear in his writings. If what is presented to the mind is the image of a particular balance of the senses at any one time, it is unclear as to where contrasting or normative images are "stored" as criteria for judgment. Unless, of course, the content is the message, and those values man has stored in his books can be used to judge what television may be doing to them.

McLuhan is more than a modernist; he is a futurist. "The world wide clash between the new and the old arouses him to enthusiasm, since 'the meeting of two media is a moment of truth and revelation from which new form is born.'"⁵³ The clash of media does not occur apart from a clash of values, social orders, and

severe psychic clashes in individual men. Part of McLuhan's optimism would evaporate if his understanding of man were sharpened, especially of man's limits in making moral responses when his very psyche is being "massaged." Needless to say, his optimism in the face of a revolution going clear down to the roots of civilization in psychic life and attendant moral values is not universally shared. As one Oxford don, coming away from one of McLuhan's lectures, was heard to mutter: "That man is dangerous, for the same reason Hitler was dangerous."⁵⁴

History Within and Without Time

McLuhan sees man nearing a time in which the experience of man will be a decreasing sense of time as a dimension of personal existence. His approach to history is as in all else, by means of media. McLuhan is nothing if not monocausal. Man is entering a new primitivism of immediacy in which the technology of instantaneous communications is the maker and icon of his historical experience. To understand history in terms of ages and epochs, look to media as the makers and icons for what is "happening" to man in terms of his experience of time itself. Our time may be the beginning of the end of the "ages" of man — the end of sequences and the beginning of all-at-onceness — if we get the message of our media aright and take the comfort or warning depending upon our judgments of such a massage.

In his *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell compares our dilemma with that of primitive men: "For the primitive hunting people of those remotest human millenniums when the sabertooth tiger, the mammoth, and the lesser presences of the animal kingdom were the primary manifestations of what was alien — the source at once of danger and sustenance — the great human problem was to become linked psychologically to the task of sharing the wilderness with these beings. An unconscious identification took place, and this was finally rendered conscious in the half-animal, half-human figures of the totem ancestors. . . through acts of literal imitation. . . an effective annihilation of the human ego was accomplished and society achieved a cohesive organization." It is precisely the same annihilation of the human ego that we are witnessing today. Only whereas men in those ages of terror got into animal strait jackets, we are unconsciously doing the same *vis a vis* the machine. And our. . . [media] promote insight into the totem images we are daily contriving in order to express this process. But technology is an abstract tyrant that carries its ravages into deeper recesses of the psyche than did the sabertooth tiger or the grizzly bear.⁵⁵

McLuhan sees mankind being retribalized by a tech-

nology — “the source at once of danger and sustenance” — which moves information at a speed approaching the instantaneous, simultaneous, timeless and has the psychic effect of primitivizing our sensoria and society. His basic premise is that there have been three ages of man — the pre-literate or Tribal, the Gutenberg or Individual, and the electric or Retribalized.⁵⁶ Each age is shaped by the form in which information about man is available and the ways he extends himself to obtain himself. For McLuhan, the invention of such media as tools and language among the hominids led to the larger development of the brain and the differentiation of man from the other species of life — and not the reverse. McLuhan considers it one of the ironies of Western man that he has never felt concern about invention as a possible change in his humanity and history, a consideration this writer believes to be historically dubious unless McLuhan means, as he might, the act of invention itself and not particular inventions for all of which some concern was probably registered in the time of their first appearance. Man rises into historical life by the act of invention. Until recent times, new media have always meant a scattering of man from man; today, however, we are experiencing an implosion, a situation in which media are throwing man back upon man. From the alphabet to the automobile is roughly the age of explosion; from the time of the telegraph to the present is the age of implosion. Western man, writes McLuhan, has begun “with Nietzschean insouciance to play the movie of a 2500 year explosion backward.”⁵⁷ Thus, McLuhan looks to primitive man, to the world of the oral and simultaneous, of emotion and sensory expression, for our present directions and destination. He values such primitivism positively, indeed, romantically.

His view of history goes something like this: Prior to the invention of the phonetic alphabet, man existed within a “tribal and oral pattern with its seamless web of kinship and interdependence.” The chief medium for the exchange of information was speech, in effect a natural resource made equally available to all. No individual, therefore, knew appreciably more or less than the rest of the tribe. Hence there was no individualism, very little specialization, and therefore nothing comparable to that most dreaded and prevalent of modern disorders, alienation. In McLuhan’s version of life among the noble savages there was no difference between work and play, the idea of a high culture and a low culture unheard of. Culture was simply culture in the full anthropological sense of the word. . . It probably had a sense of community we might envy and, McLuhan implies, an inner life responsive to myth, to the iconic, to the unseen patterns of the natural world, quite a bit richer than our own.⁵⁸

The retribalization of man in McLuhan’s thought has been seen as the synthesis in a dialectical vision of history. His continual references to pre-print ex-

perience (thesis) for his images of the present and future (synthesis) contrast with the presently passing age of print (antithesis).⁵⁹ This writer’s interpretation, however, is that the Gutenberg age is reversed rather than consummated, finished and fulfilled, “taken up into a higher plane,” etc. in the new primitivism. McLuhan’s metaphor of the motion picture film is not so much to emphasize that now we run the individual, segmented, still-life, frames so fast we have the physchic effect of continuous motion and configuration, although that is metaphorically true enough in another respect, but rather that the film is being played backward. We are doing away, he is saying, with individuality, segmented reality, frames and “points of view” altogether. The kind of historical sense that arises when the past experience of man is written down in books is not overcome by speed-reading; it may be overcome by media which enable men to sense history in the making.

[McLuhan]. . . predicts the end of man’s slavery to segmented time; for future man will have less awareness of past and future. “Both time (as measured visually and segmentally) and space (as uniform, pictorial, and enclosed) disappear in the electric age of instant information.” . . . McLuhan conjectures that the electronic media will return man to the pre-print perspective that views death as not a termination of existence but an extension of life into a different realm — literally a life after life. (Indicatively, only non-print cultures can accept the idea of reincarnation.)⁶⁰

When man no longer beholds time linearly and segmentally, death cannot be seen as a period, question mark, or exclamation point. There is no *line* to punctuate. One might here ask whether there is any *life* to sum up in any human way at all.

McLuhan’s romanticism about the future as a return to the past is built upon his location of the source of human distress not in man but in his environment. His thought in some ways parallels that of Norman O. Brown. The abolition of repression — an act which Brown gathers up in the Christian symbol of the resurrection of the body but by which he means a more fully libidinal existence⁶¹ — is an implicit expectation of McLuhan in retribalized society. Mechanized society, derived in principle from print, alienates man from his environment, but electric media in McLuhan’s scheme usher in the end of alienation by extending man’s senses into his surroundings, by favoring more participational, low definition experiences, and by recreating that oral bond that tied primitive society together.

Brown and McLuhan imagine a future similar to, as its participants describe it, the hallucinogen experience on a grand scale; and all together, these radical thinkers and actors suggest a future utopia on earth not unlike our traditional conception of heaven.⁶²

“Heaven on earth” is too strong an expression for what McLuhan means by the retribalization of man, but it

is an understandable excess into which he leads his critics. McLuhan gives more emphasis to the favorable and unfettered effects of social change than to what he sometimes considers to be the necessary controls of change. He is more easily interpreted to say history makes man than man makes history, and what man may do to change or control the course of history is never specified. The most general counsel for the control of history is given, namely, not only to "get with it" but to get ahead of it and deflect it. He points out that on the moving highway of history, the man who backs up is accelerating in relation to the highway. When the trend is one way, resistance or reversal only speed change.⁶³ The way in which men "get ahead" of the history that is making and taking him is only as clearly explained as the way human transcendence of the senses is possible for the sake of contemplation, that is, not explained very clearly at all.

The Sabertooth and the Cybernetic

If man is to "share the wilderness" with what is to him "alien — the source at once of danger and sustenance," then the movement from the imitation of the sabertooth tiger to the imitation of the electric computer may be his way of coping with his historical destiny. As Lewis Mumford points out, "Men made themselves into collective machines (primarily by the division of labor hardened into castes and classes) thousands of years before they acquired sufficient technical skills to make machines into working counterparts of their collective selves."⁶⁴ For McLuhan, this is a much less baleful note to sound than it is for Mumford, and he is not inclined to stress concepts of social biology, as he believes Mumford does, to offset the individual and social effects of technology. The distinction between the vital and organic and the electrical and cybernetic is not so sharp for McLuhan, who sees man entering an age in which the vitalism of the sabertooth tiger will seem pale in comparison to the vitalism of the computer.⁶⁵ When man fully puts on his electric age environment, as primitive man put on the sabertooth tiger, he will become aware of the mythic and iconic dimensions of his existence in a way which approaches religion.

One cannot but wonder — is the power of our media similar, in the most profound sense, to that of religion? Is this why our secular intellectual establishment reacts with such frenzy to it or someone who like McLuhan tries to comprehend them on their own terms? Is McLuhan, perhaps, creating a new iconography to serve as the basis for a new catholicity, one which will serve modern man. . . ? So far, McLuhan has remained silent on these points. But they represent the ultimate implications of his work and it is in his character for him to speak to them before he is finished.⁶⁶

NOTES

1. Rosenberg, Harold, "Philosophy in a Pop Key," *New Yorker* 41:129-136, February 27, 1965, p. 129.
2. Kostelanetz, Richard, "Marshall McLuhan," *Commonweal* 85:420-426, January 20, 1967, p. 424.
3. Schwartz, Anthony, "Old Wine in New Bottles," *Popular Photography* 59:50, November, 1966, p. 50.
4. "The Message of Marshall McLuhan," *Newsweek* March 6, 1967, p. 53.
5. *Ibid.*
6. McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Company, 1964), p. 285.
7. "The Message of Marshall McLuhan," p. 57.
8. Culkin, John M., "A Schoolman's Guide to Marshall McLuhan," *Saturday Review*, March 18, 1967, p. 52.
9. Hurley, Neil P., "Marshall McLuhan: Communications Explorer," *America* 116:241-3, February 18, 1967, p. 241.
10. "The Message of Marshall McLuhan," p. 54.
11. McLuhan, Marshall, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951), p. 80.
12. Howard, Jane, "Oracle of the Electric Age, *Life* 60:91-92ff., February 25, 1966, p. 42.
13. McLuhan, *Bride*, p. 97.
14. Rosenberg, p. 135.
15. Silberman, Charles E., "Is Technology Taking Over?," *Fortune* 73:112-115ff., February, 1966, p. 115.
16. Howard, p. 96.
17. Walsh, Maira, "McLuhanisms," *America* 114:784-785, May 28, 1966, p. 784.
18. Wylie, Philip, "Nation of Idiots," *Dare*, February, 1967, p. 8.
19. Rosenberg, p. 130.
20. Hurley, p. 243.
21. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 112.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
23. Kitman, Marvin, "Get the Message?," *New York Times Book Review*, March 26, 1967, p. 7.
24. McLuhan, Marshall and Flore, Quentin, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 25.
25. Culkin, p. 53.
26. McLuhan, *Message*, p. 41.
27. Culkin, p. 70.
28. Bultmann, Rudolph, *Primitive Christianity* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1956), p. 23.
29. McLuhan, *Message*, p. 111.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
31. Bartlett, Charles, "The Most Urgent Problem: To Invent a Good Future," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1967, p. 5, section 2.
32. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 318.
33. McLuhan, *Message*, p. 26.
34. Kostelanetz, p. 423.
35. Erikson, Erik, "Identity and the Life Cycle," *Psychological Issues* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1959, p. 44.
36. Culkin, p. 52.
37. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 27.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
39. McLuhan, Marshall and Leonard, George B., "The Future of Education," *Look*, February 21, 1967, p. 25.
40. Kostelanetz, p. 422.
41. McLuhan, Marshall, "Notes on Burroughs," *The Nation* 199:517-519, December 28, 1964, p. 518.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 517.
43. McLuhan, *Message*, p. 24.
44. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 301.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
47. McLuhan, *Bride*, p. V.
48. Rosenberg, p. 133.
49. Kenner, Hugh, "Understanding McLuhan," *National Review* 18:1224-1225, November 29, 1966, p. 1225.
50. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 58.
51. Silberman, p. 220.
52. Hurley, p. 4.
53. Rosenberg, p. 131.
54. Schickel, Richard, "Marshall McLuhan: Canada's Intellectual Comet," *Harpers* 231:62-68, November, 1965, p. 63.
55. McLuhan, *Bride*, p. 33.
56. "The Message of Marshall McLuhan," p. 55.
57. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 270.
58. Schickel, p. 65.
59. Kostelanetz, p. 425.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 423.
61. Brown, Norman O., *Life Against Death* (New York: Vintage Press, 1959), pp. 307 ff.
62. Schickel, p. 423.
63. McLuhan, *Understanding*, p. 199.
64. Mumford, Lewis, *The Transformation of Man* (New York: Collier, 1956), p. 49.
65. McLuhan, *Bride*, p. 34.
66. Schickel, p. 68.

Contexts of Dryden's Thought

By Phillip Harth (University of Chicago Press, \$8.50).

Of the greater English poet-critics, John Dryden most has stood in need of the balanced judgment or the informed re-appraisal that our place in time now makes possible. His was a mind clear and vigorous, truly capable of setting the literary pace for his generation — yes, a genuine writer with considerable range and real versatility; yet he has regularly been charged with having been a turncoat in politics and religion, of vacillating from one camp to another without principle. Accordingly the need for fresh research as is now shown, for instance, in this long book by Dr. Phillip Harth, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin and already the author of another Eighteenth Century study, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of "A Tale of a Tub."*

A few decades ago, Professor Louis I. Bredvold explored this problem and accepted — in *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* — Dryden's skeptical temperament as the basic explanation of the development of his ideas, mostly because of its bearing on conservatism and the reverse. Harth now features the two polemical poems by Dryden, namely "Religio Laici" and "The Hind and the Panther," but with this caution (p. 54):

We can infer a great deal about his religious ideas from these poems, but we must be constantly alert to rhetorical strategy and recognize that the demands of a work of religious apologetics, whether in poetry or prose, are very different from those of a carefully weighed exposition of personal belief. The forceful arguments of a debate are not to be equated with the judicious statements of a dispassionate discourse.

From this new study, readers will gain a deeper understanding of Dryden's poetic workmanship as well as of his rhetorical art, a dust-jacket promise which indeed is kept. Actually, we receive a superior interpretation of those two important long poems already mentioned, supplemented by interesting historical and biographic data. A glance at the chapter headings indicates this latest critic's approach. The opening theme is The Sceptical Critic — balanced out at book's ending with Enigmatic Convert and (last chapter) Spokesman for a Minority. My own favorites are the middle units of this lengthy exposition, which not only

are presented in parallel form but likewise are best penned with simple use of meaningful, specific details. The Table of Contents tags used descriptively are: The Christian Apologist (Challenge, plus Response), followed by Defender of the Faith (Latitudinarian vs. Calvinist, and Anglican vs. Catholic). I think the weakest of the eight chapters is the second one, A Kind of Lawgiver, essentially in its relative brevity which seemingly repeats standard conclusions such as this one (p. 46):

Any good rhetorician, of course, must have his audience constantly in mind. . . . Dryden gives careful consideration to his audience in all of his rhetorical poetry. In each of his two poems on religion, the poetic form he adopts is admirably suited to his prospective audience, to his own relationship with these readers, and to the persuasive purpose for which the poem is designed.

Inasmuch as religious questions are naturally linked with problems of the respective claims of reason and revelation, *Contexts of Dryden's Thought* shows recognition of three quite different ways of procedure by Dryden. As the Preface indicates, although Dryden did make dramatic use of religious ideas in several of his plays (notably in "The Indian Emperor" and in "Tyrannic Love"), in that type of composition they customarily supply merely the motivation for dramatic action; Harth sidesteps them in our book. Again, on particular religious questions Dryden the Poet Laureate briefly expresses his own ideas in a number of his "Lives of . . ." and in the "Prefaces to . . .". Such incidental notions rather than beliefs, because they are penned in the course of discussing other matters, are usually not systematic nor especially important — although sometimes they are revealing and can prove useful for additional light on certain areas of an author's more systematic thoughts. But again Harth avoids becoming sidetracked into this minor approach. Consequently, with full recognition of The Restoration world's total contexts, this book preferentially gives its critical analysis space to "Religio Laici" and "The Hind and the Panther" in order to feature the logical (sometimes psychological, and often theological) contexts, together with the artistic ("as the material ingredients of carefully planned formal structures") contexts, thereby to reinforce the naturally basic historical context.

No wonder Dryden is that rare kind of

phenomenon, the commanding literary figure during the last four decades of the Seventeenth Century, the man of letters whose works reflect the image of his age! Somewhere in his words, every important aspect of his era finds expression: political, religious, philosophic, artistic. Even his original nondramatic poems are eligible for the contextual study that Professor Harth indulges in; occasional though their topics be, and written to celebrate particular events of a public character such as a coronation, a military victory, a royal death, a state crisis (the prize example is Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis" as a crystallization of the big events in 1666), such ceremonial and social lyrics are vital "contexts" which require of the writer tact as well as talent. For Dryden, admittedly the least personal of British poets, is not merely the solitary, subjective poet who is preoccupied with his own view of experience while listening dully to the murmur of his own voice, but rather a citizen of the world who comments publicly on matters of general concern.

And all of this vitality we see focused in *Contexts of Dryden's Thought*, when we keep in mind that his literary career spanned the Restoration Era and largely was determined by the changing currents of those times. A Puritan by birth and rearing, successively he became an Anglican, a Roman Catholic, a Cromwellian panegyrist, and a Tory laureate under Kings Charles II and James II. Sound at heart, Dryden primarily was a man of intellect blessed with critical acumen, a member of the Royal Society from 1662 onward, and heartily in accord with the tendencies of this rationalist age. As its literary spokesman for one-third of a century, he was in benevolent or hostile touch with its various writers, fads, and schools. He himself wrote brilliantly in almost all of its prevailing literary forms: letters, translations, critical essays, political and personal satire, lyric poetry, and heroic drama with its fabulous heroic couplets. I myself feel that his drama prefaces and other of his critical essays will endure longest because of their facility and exuberance. One could go on further, enlarging the "contexts"; instead, I shall let William Congreve's contemporary tribute express Harth's and my opinion: "No man hath written in our language so much and so various matter, and in so various manner so well."

HERBERT H. UMBACH

The Good (Whatever that Means) Samaritan

By ALAN GRAEBNER

Department of History

Concordia College (Moorhead, Minnesota)

Then a certain teacher of the Law came up and tried to trap Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?" The man answered: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind"; and, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." "Your answer is correct," replied Jesus; "do this and you will live."

But the teacher of the Law wanted to put himself in the right, so he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road; when he saw the man he walked on by, on the other side. In the same way a Levite also came there, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by, on the other side. But a certain Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon him and when he saw the man his heart was filled with pity. He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Take care of him,' he told the innkeeper, 'and when I come back this way I will pay you back whatever you spend on him.'" And Jesus concluded, "Which one of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the man attacked by the robbers?" The teacher of the Law answered, "The one who was kind to him." Jesus replied, "You go, then, and do the same."

Saint Luke 10:25-37

The parable is a simple and moving one. It is also a very familiar one, so much a part of our culture that the term "good Samaritan" is even used in informal legal language. But that very familiarity poses problems because it may so dull our perception that we no longer see clearly what the parable says and what it does not say. Sometimes a different translation is sufficient to awaken us again. But in this case even that is not enough.

Let's consider, though, what might happen if, during a performance of this parable, we experiment with audience participation as was done at Expo in Mon-

treau in 1967. Perhaps you read, as I did, that in one of the theaters there the action was stopped at critical points and the viewers selected the next sequence from various alternatives by pressing buttons at their seats. A blond wrapped in a towel appears at a neighbor's apartment door to tell him she is locked out of her apartment and to appeal for help. Should he invite her in or close the door in her face? The audience votes and the play continues according to majority opinion. What might happen if we had such a vote during a performance of the parable of the Good Samaritan?

A man went down to Jericho and on his journey was waylaid by thieves, beaten, robbed, and left for dead.

There is no use pushing buttons here unless one is resolutely opposed to all plot thickening. But the story continues. Along the road comes a priest. He sees the wounded man and is moved. He also knows that numerous thieves cannot be far off. He does not feel like a hero and he is carrying a substantial sum of money.

Now here is a place for an audience to vote. What should he do? Your seats are not wired, so permit me to vote for you. Since we know what happens if the priest passes by on the other side, let's vote for another alternative.

This priest stops. He gives first aid and begins to help the man to the nearest inn. Unfortunately, in this sequence, the temptation of a double target is too much, and thieves reappear to rob and kill both men. The thieves find it a pretty lucrative day because the priest was carrying with him a large amount of money which had been collected with considerable sacrifice in Jerusalem in order to begin a new seminary at Jericho. As a result the church finds a desperately needed training institution badly delayed.

Such a disastrous end may prompt us to go back to reverse our vote and allow the priest to pass — unhelpful, but also unharmed. In due course, as we know, a Levite arrives on the scene. He, too, sees the grievously wounded man, knows that murderous thieves are in the vicinity, and hesitates because he is already late for an important appointment in Jericho. What should he do?

Permit me once again to vote against the expected action. The Levite stops. He assists the wounded man.

To avoid the thieves and to get the man to the best medical specialists instead of leaving him in the care of some grubby innkeeper, the Levite must turn back to Jerusalem. He does avoid the thieves and gets the man to the proper doctor for a complete recovery. But the story does not have a completely happy ending, for in doing all this the Levite regrettably missed his Jericho appointment. He was to have served as mediator over bitter labor grievances at Jericho. The camel drivers are out on strike. Without the Levite's presence and timely efforts the strike continues for months, causing much suffering and even death in the resulting violence.

At this rate, if we again go back to the original script, we have not the heart to vote nay when the good Samaritan at last arrives on the scene. He binds up the man's wounds and takes him to an inn to provide for him. However, on his promised return trip the Samaritan finds that he has obligated himself to such ruinous medical bills that he is unable to provide for his own family at home and he faces legal action in a strange land.

Now you may respond to all this by saying that it is just mischievous and disrespectful playing with Holy Writ. Playing it is, but with a purpose. At least it may bring home how rigorously straightforward a story our Lord tells. It is a story in which the most radical example of selflessness seems obviously the one to be emulated. Here, in fact, our Lord is commanding us to send medical supplies to our Asiatic neighbor in North Vietnam, and to march beside our Negro neighbor for open housing, and to offer asylum to our white student neighbor who finds military service against his conscience.

But that's a bit strong, you say. Maybe Christ did not mean exactly that. In fact, maybe we ought to look again at those hypothetical variants on the parable. At least they follow true to life. In real life, as distinguished from the make-believe life of the parables, so often the noble deed turns out to be valueless because there are no positive results. Or we quickly recognize the Christian version of Don Quixote, the professional do-gooder who fortunately never gets very far because society is wise enough not to give him much power.

But this, too, is pretty shaky ground. We come too close to implying that Jesus was God and all that, but when you come right down to it, he was impractical. As the parable demonstrates, Jesus was politically naive.

Perhaps our only escape from the dilemma is to look again at the question to which the parable is a dramatic rebuff. Christ is here answering the query, *Who is my neighbor?* The parable identifies the neighbor: who the man is we are to love as ourselves. He is everyone. But there it leaves us. It does not tell us exactly *how* we are to go about loving him.

We are left, in other words, with problems of ap-

plication, knotty problems indeed in a world of nuclear weapons, racial hatred, and guerrilla warfare. These present questions demand answers, direct and effective answers. Just because the issues are complicated and the implications often ominous, that does not mean the Christian can beg off them, any more than the student can beg off answering questions on a final examination.

We must give answers, for even an attempt to remain uninvolved, even silence, is an answer in itself. It is a negative answer from the Christian.

But because the issues are complicated and implications ominous, and because we are all imperfect, our answers must be given in humility. Life is too complicated even for the Christian to say that any specific answer to the questions we face is *the* rather than *a* Christian witness. The questions we face will therefore produce different, sometimes even contradictory, answers from men with consciences sensitized by their response to Christ's love. One may not say that the most conservative alternative is by definition the most Christian any more than one can say that about the most radical solution.

This then, is a plea for tolerance of fellow Christians, for careful listening, for well-considered response. It is not a suggestion, though, that every and any answer is to be valued just because it comes from someone who claims to be a Christian or even a Lutheran. The basis for the answer may be completely secular despite the religious affiliation of the spokesman. And this is just as true of the most conservative answers as it is of the radical ones.

We must frequently respond to a situation with the anguish which is part of the knowledge that we cannot see clearly, that we may only be doing the least of evils. But we must be as sure as possible that it really is the least of evils.

And here the Christian college has an important role to play. In addition to vocational equipment, students must do their best to acquire the tools with which to make informed, intelligent responses of Christian conscience to the world they find and will find around them. It may be that in the end the combined resources of the humanities, social sciences, and the scientific method will not be sufficient for the task. But God has given us no other tools. In other words, the acquisition of those intellectual tools is itself a part of Christian love and concern. Education is itself a part of Christian love because high intellectual fulfillment is necessary to express our love for our fellow man in the best way possible.

Students must do their best to acquire the tools they need. And their intellectual partners, the faculty, must do their best to confront the students with the problems we all face. The faculty must do its best to provide the techniques by which Christian solutions to those problems may be found, to enable the students to do what they will have to do.

With Rings and Bells

By WILLIAM F. EIFRIG, JR.

While dining recently I became aware that my surroundings were in some way noteworthy. A few moments of attention were enough to discover the reason. The sounds reaching my ear were only those of people dining: the ringing of glass, china, and silver; the steps of waiters passing by the table or halting to serve and clear; the shuffle of chairs being moved to more comfortable positions; and over all the hum of conversation stimulated by good food. It was the absence of a familiar sound which seemed so remarkable. There was no blanket of electronically broadcast music to cover the comfortable sounds of dinner or to compete with pleasant talk, no "Music for Dining."

This was not, of course, the first of such happy experiences. Over the years of my older age I have found my ear making informal surveys of the acoustic worlds in which it must exist because of the commercial and social obligations of the rest of the body. In restaurants as in banks, in department stores as in living rooms the ever-present, all-pervasive sounds of music "piped-in" complicate the sounds of living, and the simpler sounds of an activity without ornament or distraction become rare aural events.

The author of the nursery rhyme could hardly have suspected in his day that what was an enviable status would become a commonplace, a pleasant delight become an almost inescapable assault on the sensibilities.

Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross

To see a fine lady upon a white horse.

With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes

She shall have music wherever she goes.

Today there is music for all wherever we go — fine ladies, common ladies, and men of all varieties, young, old, crowds, individuals — everybody. But delight has palled.

Not so very long ago music was still an occupation of the mind and soul that required the activities of human beings in the presence of other human beings. The activities were quite natural but at the same time quite special. There was no storing up of sounds for redistribution at convenient moments. Music making required a conscious effort on the part of performer and listener.

For the Greeks and Romans music was inseparably part of rhetoric. The special nature of speeches and ceremonial plays demanded careful use of the musical instinct. For the Church the music of worship was a meritorious service requiring expertise. The medieval noble gathered about him poets and singers who could make courtly evenings both edifying and plea-

surable. The Renaissance man, as Castiglione and Moreley tell us, was expected to read his part in a madrigal for after-dinner recreation. When not busy with the performance of a cantata Sundays, Bach often held *Musikabenden* in his home where relatives and friends delighted to entertain and challenge one another.

Aristocratic society in the age of the grand monarchs held music a necessary adjunct of courtly splendor. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the last flowering of the aristocracy, music was often the gilt upon the elaborate frame of fashion and manners. The operatic style of social behavior used music to maintain the illusion of the best of all worlds.

It was the coincidence of technological invention with aesthetic revolution that created the concept of background music. When the entrepreneur valued music primarily for its ability to affect mood and atmosphere and could program musical types of whatever sort whenever and as long as he desired, music — at least music on recording — became a tool to be used either for the satisfaction of clients or for the exploitation of unsuspecting ears. For the first time in human history the decision to have music made rests neither with the performer nor the listener.

Nor can one balance musical background with foreground activity at will. It used to be that the salon orchestra remained on its podium and one chose to be seated nearby or at a distance. A pleasure rarely found today is that of hearing from a side room light tunes playing merrily in the main dining room. More often every table is under a speaker intruding its impersonal sounds with invariable intensity.

That dining room which caused these fulminations was remarkable also for its high ceiling. Many persons conversed easily with none of the spiralling noise levels encountered in newer rooms ten feet high. There was no need to argue for a musical blanket covering unpleasant noises. Such an argument is certainly the ultimate Wagnerian confusion of arts: music called to the rescue of architectural infelicities.

Beware then, gentle reader, of assaults upon your auditory independence.

Hearing is a God-given sense as worthy of refinement and development as all other of man's capacities. Rejoice in occasions for its exercise but resent indignantly unwarranted impositions of music upon other kinds of auditory experience.

Perhaps we can hope for the publication of a *Cresset Guide to Living Without Music Background*. I can suggest at least one dining place deserving of four stars.

London Revisited

By WALTER SORELL

Because of the relatively low costs of a production in the London theatres, minor successes which could not live to see a second week on Broadway have a run of many months there. One such play is the new comedy of Frank Marcus, "Mrs. Mouse Are You Within?" It has everything that his successful play, "The Killing of Sister George," has: whimsical humor, broad satire, good dialogue, and a bit of a message. Nevertheless, his new comedy is more diffuse, perhaps because of its more poignant message. In a clever and witty manner he deals with the Negro question and ridicules a rich landlord who loves to give himself the air of being a Communist. Although it doesn't quite make it, the play has integrity, and a third-act climax and surprise which give it a very serious twist.

John Osborne's "Time Present," in which an angry young lady's tirades could hardly overcome our boredom, takes place in the milieu of the theatre. Osborne peopled his latest play, "The Hotel in Amsterdam," with characters from movie land and pictures the disintegration of society. Three couples who escaped their omnipotent boss, K.L., meet in a luxurious hotel in Amsterdam and exemplify boredom par excellence. Cascades of alcohol flow down the conversation, which pivots around the monster K.L., the disappointments and the futility of their own existences. It is a sharp critique of a smart society which seems to outsmart itself. Osborne's play proves that it remains one of the most difficult things to dramatize boredom. "I know I'm a bore," says one of the whiskey-soaked characters. "Don't bore us by enlarging on the fact," replies his intoxicated confrere. But John Osborne enlarged upon this subject without finding its dramatic image.

The National Theatre has come out with its summer fare, "Triple Bill," which was brushed aside by most critics but which filled the house. As its title indicates, it consists of three one-acters, and as it is with such evenings, they are uneven. "In His Own Write" is based on the literary works of Beatle John Lennon. We see a provincial boy brought up in the post-war world. His family is glued to the TV set and cannot understand why the boy laughs all the time and scribbles. "I want to be a golfer," he dreams. "You must go into the brummer stryving business," his parents insist. "It is a fast dying trade which is dying fast."

Before he apparently succumbs to the brummer stryving business, he visits clubs where the narcotic traffic blooms, he imagines himself dead and hears his last will and testicle being read, he acquaint himself with the lowest sex orgies, watches a Shakespeare

play writhing in contortions, hears Churchill, and listens to the BBC. These shreds of memories and bleeding fantasies are wrapped in an ingenious, jazzy production and played against cartoons, colored lights and projection stills which have the power of militant nowness. It is occasionally hilarious, sometimes too obvious, but, in general, quite entertaining.

This one-actor is accompanied by two period pieces. Henry Fielding's "The Covent Garden Tragedy" is a bordello burlesque in the vein of John Gay's "The Beggar's Opera" without its biting satire. We are shown a tapestry of the moral climate of that period which somehow consoles us for our own immorality. The middle play was the Victorian trifle, "A Most Unwarranted Intrusion," by John Maddison Morton. It was so bland and soaked in coyness that I thought of how preferable the eighteenth century was and our own time is to the Victorian period.

A rejected and unjustly neglected, a quarrelsome and misanthropic writer of the Edwardian Chelsea was Frederick William Rolfe. A writer of great quality, apparently defeated by his character, an eccentric painter, a wasted genius, an unhappy Catholic vagabond, all this and more can be said about the man who had said about himself: "One day posterity will be interested in my letters and in everything I have written." Posterity is, indeed.

This literary freak was dismissed from a seminary for showing no vocation for the priesthood, but he ordained himself by abbreviating his given name Frederick to Fr., and ennobled himself by calling himself Baron Corvo. Fr. Rolfe had a wish-dream. He saw himself as Pope and mixed reality with his dreams in his novel "Hadrian the Seventh" which has now been dramatized by Peter Luke effectively. He erases reality without ever quite leaving it, he recreates the despairing anguish of a near-genius as he looked into the mirror and saw the phantasmagoria of a twisted, thwarted image, crowned by himself with purple glory which is finally shattered by a petty flaw in the pattern of his past.

The result is a fascinating play of a fascinating character. In this nightmarish self-portrait of Fr. Rolfe as he visualized himself as "Hadrian the Seventh" Alec McCowen glorifies self-styled martyrdom convincingly. The Mermaid Theatre gave the play a stunning production. If there had been no other reason for visiting London in this fateful year of 1968, then it was to escape the nightmare of reality and to exchange it for the reality of a nightmare, highly and beautifully theatricalized.

Personal Perception in Religious Art

By RICHARD H. W. BRAUER

Recently on a trip into Chicago with a new colleague in the art department, a discussion developed regarding the increased need among artists and people in general today to develop for themselves their own personal, first-hand perceptions of life. We noted that somehow for each of us, for instance, religious beliefs must become more pointedly our own; that our sensory perceptions must stay more personally alive and not be dulled by habit or convention; that when a convention such as perspective realism dominates the beholder, he may be blinded from seeing textures and patterns in art and life, or from attending to his own subjective responses; that when rote adherence to unexamined conventions is followed independent understandings are hard to achieve. Yet because individual responsibility in the church, in government, in work, and in private life seems to be greater than ever before such independent, first-hand understandings are needed more. As the designer, Richard Schickel, has said, "Never before have so many people had to make so many decisions on their own."

It is important to see therefore, that one of the functions of religious art is to help people towards a more

personal awareness of life and faith; and so it would be instructive to glance at some examples of the religious art of the past one hundred fifty years to see to what extent they actually do encourage personal perceptions.

The *Birth of Christ* by J. Schnorr von Carolsfeld is one of two hundred fifty pictures from his very popular nineteenth century *Bible in Pictures*. Creating this Bible was a lifetime project for this German Lutheran artist, who was a member of a group of artists called The Nazarenes. They lived in Rome in the 1820's painting together as medieval monks, wearing robes, letting their hair grow long, and devoutly dedicating their art to Biblical subjects and to a return to the fifteenth century Renaissance conventions of simple, idealized forms. As this print shows, almost all details are fully three-dimensional and completely outlined. The conventions of classic repose and gesture are evident along with the symmetri-



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, Wood-engraving, 8 1/2" x 10". No. 166 of the *Bible in Pictures*, 1860. Valparaiso University Library.



W. Holman Hunt, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, 1853, oil on canvas, City of Manchester Art Galleries, England.

cal composition, the idealized pillared, arcaded stable, the long bridgeless noses, and winged angels, etc. The picture is an image of idealized conventions.

The Light of the World by Holman Hunt is a mid-nineteenth century painting of a Christian subject that was created out of quite a different attitude. Holman Hunt was one of the three founders of the English movement called the Pre-Raphaelites. Many of these artists did not so much want to go back to the conventions of art before the time of the painter Raphael as to throw off what they felt were the artificialities that had entered into art since Raphael. Holman Hunt's approach, especially, was one of an impartial, direct documentation of how things in the world looked. He went to extreme lengths to avoid preconceptions about the appearance of a scene. Rather he wanted to paint it as he saw it for himself, the ordinary and the ideal. For instance, in his allegorical Biblical work, *The Light of the World*, Hunt actually painted the scene outdoors from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. on cool, late autumn, moonlight nights. He explained: "In making it a night scene, lit mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I had followed metaphorical explana-



Howard Sanden, REST ON THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, 1967, Augsburg Publishing House.

tion in the Psalms. 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,' with also the accordant allusions by St. Paul to the sleeping soul, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand.'" The work is an expression of his own invention and almost scientific observation. Yet strangely this combination of invention and realism results in an image that is stiff and artificial. Its completeness of detail and high finish requires little imagination or personal perception of the viewer except in the realm of symbolism.

The Rest on the Flight into Egypt by Howard Sanden continues the conventions of representing the Biblical figures as three-dimensional forms in three-dimensional space. However, the figures no longer follow classical ideals nor show fresh photographic observation. Instead, Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus reflect the latest advertising fashion in suburban types (making proper allowance for the hippy get-ups, of course).

Finally, the scene from *Jesus is Born* by de Kort breaks sharply from the realistic conventions of the previous three works. Figures are represented with a minimum of characterization and idealization. Marshall McLuhan would call the imagery "cool" because of its few details and high opportunity for the beholder to fill out the imagery himself; that is, to read into it his own feelings and experiences and ideals. Certainly, a person from a city ghetto, a New Guinea village, a white suburb, or Dutch Europe (where the picture was made) might each be served equally well. Cultural features are minimized. Pretentious learning or superiority in the art techniques or in the people represented are not suggested. Instead, modest, almost child-like humans are depicted quietly holding to themselves a happy trust in the Christ-child. Such art can aid greatly the beholder in his important search for personal perceptions.

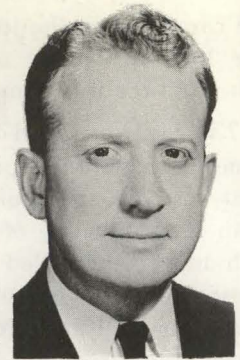


de Kort, JESUS IS BORN, 1966, Augsburg Publishing House.

Editor-At-Large

Man Will Prevail

By VICTOR F. HOFFMANN



Many sensitive souls are floating about in this universe. At the moment a good share of them are unhappy about the state of the universe and what I consider to be tragedies almost anywhere in the world: Czechoslovakia, Vietnam, Biafra, Detroit, Watts, Romania, and Chicago. Large or small, these places are currently all armed camps to one degree or another.

And why should these sensitive souls be anything but unhappy? It seems so crazy for humans to fight one another, so "kooky" to send our kids to Vietnam, to the bloodbath. Why should they not pursue less warlike alternatives to the dilemmas and problems of human existence? To write the situation down as simply being a matter of "there will always be wars and rumors of wars" seems to open the doors to an immoral and inhuman acquiescence to evil and apathy. So the paradox confronts us: sensitive souls must fight for peace and justice.

By the time this issue of *The Cresset* reaches the reader, hundreds and thousands of university kids will be moving in on the country's colleges and universities. Many of them are sick and tired of our "cracker boxes of education" and of the world to which they have been introduced. Without much fear or favor, these kids are asking many important questions.

One fact we are beginning to understand about many of these kids — seventeen or eighteen or twenty or whatever — they are no longer "kids" in the conventional sense of the term. They are making judgments and appraisals that stretch beyond the shortness of their years, are raising questions that speed like arrows to the heart of society, and are asking for change and honesty.

Peace and love, no matter how much we pursue them, are always just beyond us and the pursuit often involves us in hate and conflict. What the hell kind of world is this anyway?

In the bargain, our student friends have discovered, as they did at the Chicago Democratic convention, what our civil rights leaders have known for a long time: the power structures that send people to war, that run universities, that maintain white racism do not give in very easily to the future and certainly not to the ideals of peace and love except on their own terms. Hundreds and hundreds of people have hammered away at the American power struc-

tures in the hope of humanizing human society and, on the surface at least, so very little happens, sometimes nothing.

The easiest way out is the way many Christians take, that is, to confess their sins. This takes the form of admitting to the finitude of man and to insist that man is man, not God, and we should not expect miracles from him. After all, and people will accept that proposition, to err is human. There are, of course, Bible passages to be quoted at this time: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same suffering befalls your brethren all over the world." (I Peter 5); "My soul is weary of my life, I will let go my speech against myself, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God: Do not condemn me; tell me why thou judgest me so. Doth it seem good to thee that thou shouldest calumniate me, and oppress me, the work of thy hands, and help the counsel of the wicked?" (Job 10)

Christians can preach hellfire and brimstone to themselves for so long they begin to think that they are worth nothing, can do nothing, and, as a result, they have little confidence about their role in the world. Some of the preaching, whether from the Old or the New Testament, has rung the changes so much on this theme that hearers have sunk into a kind of inhuman attitude about themselves.

Man as man, finite and with all his weaknesses, has many talents and capacities. He has written music and novels. He has built bridges and buildings. He has resisted evil and fought injustice. He has accomplished. He has created. Man is worthwhile. He is a dignified and splendid creation.

Speaking primarily from a Christian perspective, A. J. Ungersma, the author of *The Search for Meaning: A New Approach in Psychotherapy*, urges: "Man is distinguished from all the rest of nature by unique capacities that in Christian thought are gathered up in the expression 'made in the image of God'" Man will prevail in the sense of being able "to organize his own creativity in dealing with nature" and the human adventure.

Man does not always have to apologize for what he is. He can and does argue from a position of strength. We do not have to put out our lights with our tears.

Black Aspirin for White Headaches

By DON A. AFFELDT

The camera pans a baseball field, showing game in progress and fans cheering in the stands. Camera zooms in on one spectator, a young Negro, who is not cheering and happy but frowning and sad. Narrator speaks: "Baseball games are fun to watch. But some days a headache will spoil all your fun. That's the time for Bayer aspirin. For Bayer contains twice the amount of pain reliever found in. . . ."

Just another headache-producing commercial, you say. Yes, but with a difference. This commercial shows a Black man with a headache, points out what he did to get rid of the headache, and shows him happy and cheering at the ballgame in the dissolve. Though there are Whites in the background of the grandstand, no White face puts in an obvious appearance during the entire commercial. Even the hand holding the pills is black. It's enough to jar one.

The commercial is surprising, for until very recently Black people have been omitted from commercials and mass media advertising — or, if present at all, their presence was obvious window-dressing, tokenism in its clearest form. In the past year, tokenism has spread considerably; one out of three high-fashion models in the AT&T commercials (fashions by Bill Blass) is a Negro, and Vicks is shown to work effectively on Black throats as well as White. But the all-out, straightforward Black commercial is a novelty.

Using a Black man or woman in a commercial leading role is a practice in which we may expect advertisers to engage with great caution. Indeed, it is surprising that companies are allowing the practice at all. There is the risk, after all, that the product may become too closely associated with some feature of the person shown using it, and because of this association, may be avoided by people who react negatively to the personal features of the actors or models. Beer bellies are hard to find in beer commercials, and the woman who shows what Lady Clairol hair-coloring can do is carefully posed with her little daughter, so that we don't mistake her for that sexy siren down the street. Bayer, of course, doesn't want to be thought of as the maker of Negro aspirins, so we can be sure that there will still be a preponderance of Whites in Bayer commercials. Then too, it's a safe bet that this commercial will not be run as a companion to local Southern programs. Still, with the identification problem being what it is, one must respect companies which gamble even a part of their advertising budgets on ads which run significant avoidance-risks.

But why should the appearance of non-Whites in featured and leading roles in advertisements even be worth our notice? Simply because this device, per-

haps better than most others, points the way toward greater understanding between the races, and offers the hope for an eventual end to racial problems in the country.

It seems safe to say that ignorance is the steady companion of prejudice — if not its cause. The ignorance which lies at the bottom of the racial prejudices which most of us exhibit from time to time is a very simple ignorance; we do not know, or refuse to believe, that the other person is in most essential respects exactly similar to ourselves. We don't know, or don't believe, that he is just like us because we've never gotten to know him — or if we have, we don't know him nearly so well as we know ourselves. At the critical juncture, then, a doubt creeps into our minds: Is he as industrious as (I think) I am? Does he have the same simple wants in life as (I think) I do? Does he feel as other men do? These doubts arise due to lack of simple knowledge, or failure to bring our beliefs into line with what we know is so.

Putting Black persons into ordinary commercials is a potent weapon in the War Against Ignorance. Here, even in situations which we know full well are contrived, we can see Blacks having headaches, and finding a cure for their headaches in the very same bottle which we have in our own medicine cabinet. Here we can see Blacks wanting the very car we want, and buying — not stealing — it. Here we can see that even pearly teeth can be helped against cavities with Crest or Gleem. Simple, everyday facts — yet facts we needn't face unless we see them flashed on the screen or in full color in the magazine.

Not many Whites have much chance to have Blacks in their homes, even if they'd want them. But they can have Negro guests aplenty, whether they want to have them or not, if more companies will follow the Bayer example. The average man watches television well over three hours a day; the mind boggles at how many commercials he must see every week, or how many other ads he encounters in the newspaper, or on the radio as he drives to work, in magazines or on billboards. If even ten per cent of these advertisements used Blacks exclusively instead of Whites, it seems safe to suppose that White attitudes about Blacks would undergo a significant shift. Even self-styled liberals might learn enough to make them genuinely blind to racial gradations, instead of consciously and carefully inattentive to racial distinctions.

Who knows — maybe one day we will even be ready to see the black car get the Platformate and win the race. . . .

The Pilgrim



"All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side"

—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

By O. P. KRETZMANN

Cricket and Cathedral

I have discovered lately that there are some compensations for senility. . . . For example, I have learned that my aging eyes make it imperative that I — together with all flying things — must head for home shortly after sunset. . . . Travel in the gathering darkness can become dangerous if not impossible. . . . The clock of my days now keeps time with the rhythm of night and day. . . . I see and note the failing light with the obedient acceptance of the sparrow on the telephone wire. . . . I need an artificial clock as little as he does. . . .

Other matters become clearer, too. . . . I know now, more clearly than ever, that the chirp of the cricket strikes a lower note after darkness comes. . . . His acceptance of the night is dynamic. . . . It changes his life. . . .

I was therefore very pleased to read somewhere that my new sense of slow inevitability, vague and formless, has been reduced to mathematics. . . . The cricket beyond my window, as I return home, is now not only a clock but also a thermometer. . . . If you let X equal the number of chirps per minute then X minus 40 over 4 plus 50 equals the temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. . . . There is a strange but sure comfort in that. . . .

The waning summer of 1968 has been marked by quadrennial conventions. . . . A typical delegate is Colonel Bilge whom I met in August. He was slightly pink around the eyes, and he confessed to the remains of a dark brown taste in his mouth. . . . "But it was a great convention," he declared, mopping his brow with a souvenir handkerchief. "The greatest I've ever attended."

"Yes, yes," I said heartily, "but do you feel that limiting production is really the best way to increase employment?"

The colonel looked blank for a moment. . . . Then his jaw set in the stern mold it assumes when he rises to a point of order. . . . "The citadel of privilege will fall before the onslaught of an embattled people," he said firmly. . . .

I tried again. "What is your position, and that of the party, in the matter of technological unemployment?" I queried. . . .

A mist seemed to form over the eyes of Colonel Bilge, but it quickly cleared. . . . "The party (and he pointed to his convention badges) has never wavered in its devotion to the cause of the common man," he murmured reverently. . . . And he added, with a little catch in his voice: "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute. *Nihil nisi bonum*." . . .

Still in the mood of evening but in another day. . . . It is good to put the cricket and the cathedral under one overriding arch. . . . I am sure there is one chirping now outside the choir windows at Chartres. . . . Here are a few words I read more than thirty years ago. . . .

"The day is ending and the evening calls us home. We turn reluctantly from the darkened windows of the chevet and descend the wide nave to the Western portals. Long shadows are gathering in the vault, beneath the arches, and around the columns; level rays from the setting sun are pouring through the Western Rose Window while, here or there, a candle shines. . . with a brilliance that is borrowed from the growing dusk.

"We have the cathedral to ourselves; and yet we are not and never again shall be, quite alone within these aisles, for whisperings come to us from right and left; they rise behind us and follow us; they descend from above — from vault, clerestory, triforium, arch, capital, and column; they rumble up from the crypt, and come to meet us from the portals. They fill the church like the music of a great chord; *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oeil*; Teuton, Celt and Lombard; Latin and Greek; Syrian and Arab; Scythian and Sarmatian; Persian and Babylonian; while, beneath them all, like the inarticulate murmurings of a great multitude, come distant voices from the world's childhood, and even from its infancy."