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Above: Fred Nagler, Releasing the Dove, oil on canvas, 30 x 25", Courtesy the Midtown Galleries, N.Y.C.
Cover: Fred Nagler, Christ Raiseth Lazarus(#2), (detail), oil on canvas, 30 x 36", Courtesy the Midtown Galleries, N.Y.C.
What Does Murder Have to Do with the Family?

The horrendous murders in the Houston area, together with their accompanying perversions, have by this time both aroused and dulled the sensibilities of people throughout the country. Those of us who live in the Chicago area have been peppered also by a series of absurd murders in Grant Park, one of downtown Chicago's show places.

The statistics on crime, accompanied by the continuing argument on the method of reporting crimes, serve generally to keep the layman confused about the situation. However, one can hardly escape the impression that conditions are getting worse, and that not too much can be done to remedy them.

In addition to this general impression, there is the widespread assumption that the prime factor in criminal behavior is the environmental factor, the living quarters or conditions, economic conditions, and job opportunities. Surely no one will belittle the role played by the environmental factor, but isn't it time also to go deeper and more fundamentally into the human factors in that environment?

Murder is difficult to control externally. Many murders involve family members, friends, lovers, and acquaintances, or gangs and crime syndicates. In both instances the capacity to control murder externally is limited. And those instances of murder where initial actions (quarreling, robbery, rape) get beyond the control of the perpetrator and end in murder make the external control of murder even more difficult. But most serious of all to control is the murder that arises from the peculiar inner "need" of the murderer, some impulse, the satisfaction of which is "good"; the jaded craving for excitement which has been fed on boredom; the relentless demand for satisfaction by means of drugs or pain.

The point is not to denigrate attempts to control crime, especially murder, but the difficulty to control it externally is a signal to work on deeper issues and problems. The impulse to murder is no stranger to any of us. The words of Jesus are adequate revelation that authenticate themselves in our own experience: out of the deepest inner being of each person comes the drive and impulse to murder. Murder is one of the primordial manifestations of our bent will against God. The impulse, stimulated by the contradiction of our own will, is to eliminate the source of the contradiction. The collision of will against will most often takes place with another human being. Even when the collision of wills, the fundamental limiting of our "freedom," comes in the form of fate or change, the other human being becomes the most likely target of our determination to eradicate the contradiction. It is this factor that makes external control of murder so difficult.

While the quest for effective external controls goes on, there ought to be other activity for control that works in and under the external control. What is to be done? City
planning, "improved" housing conditions, economic investments for training and services have generally shown their bankruptcy precisely because they have worked on the assumption that the environmental factor is the chief factor. The road to hell is paved with good intentions in more than one way. The increase of services through social workers, police, legal aid, and the like (for all their necessity and value) may also be hampered by presuppositional flaws.

The Cresset wants to address itself to some of these issues. Professor Given has something to say in this issue about the training of social workers. In addition to this, we would like to carry on discussions about the presumptions in a society where rehabilitation not punishment is dominant, where servants of the courts frequently seem to serve delayed rather than swift justice, where life is so trivialized that the death penalty is somehow considered barbaric.

But, along with discussion on these (and related) issues, The Cresset will address itself especially to issues about family life. We would like to take our part in the reconstruction of family life, both in the nation and in the church. Our plan is (initially) quite simple. We are going to ask Christian families to comment out of their own life and experience. We want them to talk about the family, its foundations for them, its part in their lives and in the life of society. We are going to ask about the teaching of manners and morals, about discipline, and about that in their family which is Christian, that which goes beyond the morals and values, and lies under them. We would like these families to talk about their worship and their work, about conflicts and resolution of conflicts. Marriage itself will come in for discussion. And in all of this we are asking these people to explore ways they think they can join non-Christian families in the business of reconstruction of family (and human) life.

Our assumptions are simple. Hopefully, some of them are correct. We assume that family (as unit, community) has not been thought about nearly so much as has the individual (especially with problems) within the family. We assume that (among other things) we are suffering a crisis of models: models of father and mother have been debased or caricatured; the model of adulthood has been bent by our upbringing of youth; the model of childhood has been lost by the loss of adulthood, so that adulthood becomes a quest for lost childhood; the model of family as a community within a larger community has been lost in an excessive passion for self-fulfillment. We assume that much of ethical conduct is shaped by the ethos in which people live, and, in turn, that the establishment of an ethos in family life is gained extensively from the models of human life that go on in family life.

Reconstruction of Family Life

Many are going to have to work together to reconstruct old models or invent new ones. Members of the church and citizens of the country ought to have an interest in this activity. In many areas they can and will join in the work. But such activity is itself going to cut across the grain of some of the current fads.

First, quest for the construction or reconstruction of such models calls for pietas, for a reverence of the good that has been in the past and for the good that has been transmitted to us. The passion for instant self-gratification, for the now, without delayed or denied pleasure, does not relish pietas. The conclusion of such passion is that whatever thwarts or collides with that will for self-indulgence must be eliminated. Such assumptions and conclusions must be replaced with controls that operate by a definition of good that does not have merely the passion of self-gratification or its content.

Second, serious challenge must be made to the current passion that all life is for personal self-fulfillment. From such an assumption, it follows that all human relationships, together with work and leisure, must be brought under the governance of this passion. This credo shows itself in marriage and family life when marriage itself is seen as a personal relationship rather than as an institution, or, as the old liturgies described marriage, as "the holy estate of matrimony." According to this credo, "marriage" relationships (actually, a kind of playing house) must be entered as a test of personal adequacy. What actually happens is that each party in the "contract" enters a kind of conspiracy or tyranny, a use of the other party to establish personal adequacy. The tyranny is not lessened by the fact that both are consenting adults. Arthur Miller in After the Fall has summed up this debilitating passion best when Quentin says, "Maggie, we did not love each other. We used each other." Other pathetic consequences follow when choices are made on the basis of this passion. There is, for example, less and less room for celibacy and chastity because it becomes necessary to demonstrate the capacity for personal relationships in certain sexual experiences.

Hence, the old claim must be examined afresh, the claim that marriage is an estate, an institution. It is a condition in which there is status and rank. It is an order into which people enter, an order that participates in the life of a society and a nation. Seen as an order, marriage calls for people to stand beside each other in sharing the collective assets and liabilities of each other. As an estate it gives each a place for spouses to serve each other, and thus to function as an estate, an order, in the society. Seen as personal relationship, marriage becomes the way for spouses to use both marriage and each other for the quest of self-fulfillment.

Finally, when the content of the "good" is formed by what I want, or my wanting it and getting it, and when marriage is conceived as personal relationship rather than institution, there is no ability for people either to fight properly or to make
authentic reconciliation. In place of clean and honest fighting, there is only endless quarreling and the cold indifference of separating from each other. There must be exploration anew of manners, restraints, and rules that do indeed curb violent, exaggerated, and irrelevant fighting. There are and must be proper modes developed for hostility to be manifested and controlled. But far beyond this (and here Christians have a double stake) the grounds and methods of authentic reconciliation must be both explored and used.

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

“Honor thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.” This commandment does not begin with the assumption that, first of all, out of personal relationships, personal worth will be established, whereupon honor then follows as appropriate. Rather, the commandment sets a status, an estate for human life which calls for honor by virtue of the relationships established in that estate. Furthermore, the commandment specifies a quality about human life that is a precondition for living that life. That quality rests on a status and makes it possible for personal relationships to flower. To honor one’s father and mother calls for cherishing them for what they are. Conferring such honor on another is simultaneously the basis for growth toward maturity and parenthood. For this reason, the commandment makes a promise to those who do it, the promise of well-being in their existence on earth. Such activity is the foundation for all community and equips the people in it to grow towards life in community. This commandment is indeed a demand and a curb; it is also a fundamentum for constructing and reconstructing life for our fractured families, life among our aged, our middle-aged, and our young people. This dimension calls for work, exploration, and living, also to deal with the passions and actions of murder.

Buszin: A Son of Repentance is Perfected

Valparaiso University has more than ordinary interest in paying tribute to Dr. Walter E. Buszin, a former professor of theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, who died in Omaha, Nebraska, on June 2. Dr. Buszin had retired from teaching in 1966; in the time immediately preceding his death he was at work cataloging the music materials at Boys Town, Nebraska.

In the early years of the Valparaiso University Church Music Seminar (featured in The Cresset, October 1972), Dr. Buszin lectured with characteristic distinction year after year. In this service to the University and the Seminar, Dr. Buszin played no small part in establishing its quality and reputation. The University took recognition of his contribution when, in 1954, it conferred upon him, honoris causa, the degree Mus.D.

And yet, the part Dr. Buszin played in the Church Music Seminar was but a small part of a very productive life. His membership on commissions and agencies connected with hymns and liturgies reflects his productivity. Beginning in 1940 and ranging widely, his service continued to the formation of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. He helped develop five hymnals, both in America and in Europe, serving on each either as editor or member of the editorial board. He also composed and published liturgical, choral, and organ music in the United States and abroad.

I have additional reason to remember this man with honor. A decade ago I studied liturgics in his seminar. During one of the sessions of that seminar he told us the story of his name, Buszin. That name was taken when his father became a Christian and wanted to say to the world that he was a “son of repentance.” It is surely fitting that this son of repentance should so mightily assist the church to sing the songs of praise which the holy angels sing over one sinner that repents. His productive life was marked by sane judgment in music, liturgy, and hymnology. He treasured the great treasure he had received, and strove with much hard work to see that neither the treasure nor the vessels for carrying it were debauched.

This son of repentance is perfected. In a peculiar way his works do follow him; the music he published continues to be used and it continues to invite the church to sing the songs of joy, the angelic songs, over sinners that repent. We hope his widow, his children, and his grandchildren comfort themselves with this same angelic music, and for their comfort we extend our sympathy and gratitude.

Oestmanns and Boss: Mission Accomplished

We think we can understand the death that came to Dr. Buszin. After a long life of hard work there came the decline of health and powers, and then death. Something about that seems completed. At least in our eyes. But death does not always come that way. There are the startling ways of freak accidents, cutting
down people in their full powers, clipping the wings in full flight.

It was a freak traffic accident that cut off the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Oestmann, Mr. and Mrs. August Dietz (the aunt and uncle of Mrs. Oestmann), and Sister Martha Boss, deaconess-nurse, stationed (since 1949) in Hong Kong.

Walter and Helen Oestmann had served as short-term missionaries in Hong Kong. In fact, it was in Hong Kong that the Oestmanns met. Sister Martha and each other. Walter had served as a lay volunteer in the Hong Kong Lutheran Mission and did special supervisory work on the construction of the Hong Kong International School. Sister Martha, long active in that mission, was in the United States for a three-month furlough to do special work in preparation for establishing a deaconess training program in Hong Kong.

Mr. Oestmann brought his great experience, his many gifts, and his strong personality to the service of Valparaiso University in 1971. He served as Director of Corporation and Foundation Relations in the University's Public and Alumni Affairs Office. From what we knew here, his mission had only had a good beginning. Despite the strain it puts on our eyesight, on what we can see of people's lives, we confess that the mission was accomplished.

To make such a confession about Sister Martha calls for even more strain on our eyesight. Sister Martha was on her way to the Lutheran Deaconess Association Conference, held on our campus. She was stopping for celebration (her thirty-fifth year as a Deaconess), for further preparations for the establishment of diaconate training in Hong Kong (by our sights, a key development in the churches of the East), and for that final refreshment with her sisters before she returned to Hong Kong in mid-August.

Instead of all this, there was a memorial service at the Deaconess Conference. Some dismay there was, wondering out loud who would pick up the strategic work she had begun. But there was more an outpouring of evidences of the impact this tiny woman had made, not only in Hong Kong, but also in America. Young deaconesses spoke of the model she had been for them; old deaconesses narrated moments of insight, renewal, and refreshment from a meeting with Sister Martha. That which had strained our eyesight because it was a blurred, incomprehensible event had been illuminated by bright and clear testimony about her mission. Her mission is accomplished. Like good seed, we have planted her in the ground. And, like her Lord and Master, the result of whose work she was in such sparkling clarity, she will spring up and grow. As we have believed and therefore seen the growth of the One, we believe and hope to see the growth of the other.

Though for no other cause, yet for this; that posterity may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men's information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same.

Charity is not a governmental program. Problems arise for people if social welfare and social work conducted by the governments and supported by taxation are seen as synonymous with charity.

SEEMINGLY, SOMEONE IS slipping up on the job. From a wide range of circles, the impression is that the system—or someone in the system—is not working. In politics, Watergate has entered the American vocabulary to symbolize political scandal and a threat to the right to privacy. The "enemy list, bugging, and plumbers" are now synonymous terms for distrust. Even in the realm of the church, distrust arises as a synodical convention splits on church teachings with bitter feelings present on both sides of the issue. Should one simply choose to retreat to the boundaries of his own home, he is touched in some way by Phase IV, a dismal result of a two-year attempt to structure the American economy.

Even a traditional vacation to "get away from it all" may be curtailed due to the energy crisis. For all the efforts that these systems have put into the task of meeting the political, spiritual, or economic needs of the people they service, hardly anyone touched by the system feels very comfortable with what the system is doing. Someone is most definitely slipping up on the job.

Recently two articles have appeared in The Cresset arguing that the welfare system, organized to meet the needs of the poor, wasn't working and that the poor people were not having their needs met. The articles expressed their authors' frustrations and despair with a welfare system that wasn't working and their own efforts to apply band-aid relief. Paradoxical as it seems with Skylab technology, we manage the technicalities of reaching distant planets, but seem unable to manage the technicalities of effective social service systems. Possibly we place more technical know-how on the problems of reaching the moon than in reaching solutions for social problems. But it is also important to realize that only trained professionals who know what they are doing venture out in an attempt to reach the moon. When it comes to helping his fellowman, however, everybody has an idea of how to do it. Some reach out with a compulsion to "do unto others" and often reach tragic results.

I would like to suggest through the following paragraphs that we re-examine the concern for "doing-good" in the manner in which it is currently being carried out and look at the university's role in producing professional technically and personally competent persons to deal with human needs and problems.

The Problem

All about us there are apparently masses of people, even ourselves if we count honestly, who are failing to get their own needs met from the system. They live with the feeling of failure in communicating with their social, religious, political, or economic environment. Psychological passivity, "What can you expect?"; "We're trying"; or "After all, we're only human; nobody knows all the answers" is rampant. No one ever reached the moon with that kind of thinking. It is the kind of thinking
Lucille Turner, a grandmother in her 40’s living on Chicago’s near west side, whose plight was described in *The Cresset* (February, 1973), is an example of how the system victimizes the client. Mrs. Turner hasn’t seen any improvement in her circumstances. Continually, she is getting kicked by the bureaucratic structure, is subjected to others “studying” her plight, and is made aware that “Welfare is one of the programs designed to keep other people in power.” Meanwhile, the providers, according to Mrs. Reiner’s article in *The Cresset* (May, 1973), aren’t appreciated either. Mrs. Reiner bitterly complains that “there is no glamor or glory connected with ferreting out a house” and that “in spite of my support of those institutions reputed as poor, poor people keep getting through to me. Somebody is slipping up on the job.”

That somebody is slipping up on the job is apparently what John Ehrlichman believed when he made the statement quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* of October 18, 1972 that “the President . . . will feel very comfortable in saying to a vested interest group, such as the Social Workers, ‘Look, your social program of the 1960s isn’t working and we’re going to dismantle it, so you’ll just have to go out and find honest labor somewhere else.’”

Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Reiner, and Mr. Ehrlichman share a common confusion. They each experienced the anger, frustration, and problems of dealing with persons manifesting an “impulse to do good” who, without knowledge of what they were doing, came out doing it poorly and often with bad results. People like Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Reiner, and Mr. Ehrlichman don’t like to be deceived. Their plight is similar to that of Dorothy and her friends when they finally meet the Wizard of Oz. As Dorothy discovers that the Wizard is really a little man with a lot of gadgets, she angrily exclaims “You’re a very bad man!” “No, my dear,” the Wizard replies, “I’m really a very good man, just a very bad wizard.” It seems that if people are slipping up on the job, it is not because they are bad people. Unfortunately they are just good people who make bad wizards.

But Lucille Turner is only one example of the result of a good person/bad wizard doing his own thing. Recently in Alabama two black children were sterilized at age 12 and 14 with Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) funds through the efforts of a non-professional do-gooder. In Indiana a Youth Services Bureau designated as a coordinating agency for services to Youth, focuses a “treatment” program for kids having problems at home and using drugs. Due to the limited but well-intentioned staff, there is little follow-up and kids return home to problems. There is no on-going work with parents and the family structure to solve the problems. All across the country people with good intentions work their wizadry with bad results. It becomes increasingly difficult for the client-consumer and the provider-consumer to know who’s who with what skills to perform what service.

The Diagnosis

Man, being a creature with a need to be needed or recognized, meets that need in a variety of ways. One of those ways used by individ-
weathered finish, it perks up the appearance and gives the surface a reflecting smile. Charity is no more meant to solve social problems than car polish is to solve the problems of an internal combustion engine. Diligently polishing the engine won’t solve a leaky valve. And you’d be highly ignant if the factory-trained mechanic at mechanic’s wages spent his time polishing the car in the hope of correcting the mechanical problem. What is necessary is somebody who assesses the situation and deploys the appropriate man-power; someone who knows what is needed, when, where, and how much; and someone with the g skill and personal ability to do the job needed.

A further difference between charity and social work exists: charity—or love in the Romans 13 context—makes no demands and imposes no conditions. A trained social worker in the process of assessment determines a client’s motivation, capacity, and opportunity to use a social work service, how much and when and where. There are conditions under which social workers provide services; and there are conditions under which honest, capable social workers with integrity will not dupe the public into believing that services can or should be provided. There is no purpose to a client-consumer or a provider-consumer wasting time, money, and energy indiscriminately on problems or on problems ignorantly attacked.

The reality is that social work and social service delivery— to be successful in our economic milieu—need to be consistent with that milieu. In the free enterprise tradition, financial success has been the measure to ascertain the value and worth of the product or service. Public relations and advertising have played an important role in successful business operations. The public has accorded success to those products which they wanted or thought they wanted. They have also chanted the death knell to those products which even Madison Avenue couldn’t sell.

What we have in today’s social service delivery system is a service similar to an Edsel: something that hardly anybody wants. And why should they? Hardly anybody benefits: the clients are worse, the providers are unappreciated, the government abhors the welfare lobby, and the citizen is kept in the dark, always paying for an Edsel that he doesn’t want.

“What is necessary is somebody who assesses the situation and deploys the appropriate man-power; someone who knows what is needed when, where, and how much, and someone with the training skill and personal ability to do the job needed.”

The Treatment

IF SOMEBODY IS SLIPPING up on the job, and most certainly somebody is, and Mrs. Reiner wants to know why, that is easy to answer. Somebody is slipping up on the job because that’s the way the “system” wants it. And if we allow or aid that system to continue as it is, that’s the way we want it too. Answering the whys of the system’s failure may not be as difficult as answering the “what do we do about it.”

First, we have to realize that changes in the service delivery system require a system of accountability for the service delivered. If the service is inappropriate, the delivery ineffective, or the client abused in some manner, someone must be held accountable for the services being delivered. Such accountability requires legal regulation of social work practice, including a registration of those individuals volunteering to help others and a licensing for practice of those who are paid to perform people-helping social services.

Accountability requires that the individual not only know what to do, when and where, but that he also have the synergy to put the theory into practice. It is important, therefore, not only for the individual practitioner or student to have knowledge of human behavior, social systems, political and economic realities, but also to be significantly secure and aggressive in his own right to understand the issues, encapsulate them, and pursue them.

This kind of accountability and expertise means that a student or a provider of service must be able to take his place competitively in the business world with the stance that this service is worth something and it is of comparable value to services in other fields. Al Raby, a dynamic spokesman for the black Chicago community, in a speech to social work students at the University of Chicago in the mid-sixties, stated that social workers would do the poor people a favor by getting themselves good jobs with money and power. The poor people don’t need a poor model to follow; they’ve had enough of that. A person in the midst of a socially debilitating problem needs a service provider who doesn’t have client status himself. Rather someone is needed who has proven an ability to assess, understand challenge, and conquer opposition or problems. To do that requires more than an impulse to help.

Finally, the experience in meeting and conquering problems begins with individuals being people of intelligence, integrity, and independence. The “how to do it” needs to be taught by the faculty, through example, to students. If we expect that we at a university will teach students honesty, integrity, and principles, along with a professional stance in problem-solving, we must expect that the effective teaching of these principles will be the exposure to the principles in application rather than the notes copied from the board and crammed for an exam. Principled action, to cite but a few of the current campus issues, is to assure that the student gets a dollar’s worth of education for a dollar paid,
that the parents, students, alumni and other contributors know where their educational dollar goes, that students have a voice in the educational exposure as well as the community life of a university, that faculty be treated as human beings rather than technicians employed to deploy knowledge and that the individual departments negotiate with the administration for professional, economic self-determination. Principled action is not to allow ourselves to slip up on the job of taking care of ourselves first, in order to have the clarity, experience, and solidarity to help take care of the needs of others.

Fantasy would have us believe that our words of wisdom, scholarly and profound as they may be, will solve the world’s problems. But such fantasy, in the light of the present crisis, will betray that very wisdom and profound thought, unless the theory itself becomes part of the practice. The practicalities of personal growth and involvement require skillful learning in putting theory into practice. Thus, the growth arising from encountering another human being, group, or institution with truth, honesty, and the determination to arrive at an effective resolution of conflicts can happen without causing injury to the parties of the encounter. Thus, both theory and practice must be put to work on our own campus. If this union of the two is not working on the campus, where the training is going on, it will never work in other places. We will have successfully produced another generation of individuals who effectively know how to slip up on the job.

James Mark Purcell

Kenneth Rexroth: Poetics, Populism, and the Chicago Kid

"Rexroth's Autobiographical Novel is perhaps the most deliberate attempt to employ the memoir-form to define an artistic program."

The naive assumption about liberal-arts activities on campus would be that they contribute the theoretical values to our contemporary life of the mind. In practice, academic essays and reviews do not seem to provide our modern aesthetic summas and apologias. The assumptions behind our arts appear much more coherently in such practitioners' records as Ezra Pound's 1970-41 Letters (1950) and the autobiographies of Agnes De Mille (1952) and the poet Kenneth Rexroth (1966). An absolute belief in pure aesthetic values has an unfashionable Platonic swing to it that drives away our educated class—unless, like a Pound or a Martha Graham, they are actually in the arena and fighting for their careers.

Rexroth's Autobiographical Novel (New Directions, 1969) is perhaps the most deliberate attempt to employ the memoir-form to define an artistic program. His book therefore becomes the logical centerpiece for a general discussion of his ideas. Since I regard it as a minor American prose classic and the successor to Lincoln Steffens' 1931 Autobiography, I begin with a straight review. Hopefully, I can here sound all the main themes of my essay.

First, the 1966 date is misleading as regards either subject matter or composition. Autobiographical Novel, the whole book, was actually broadcast over San Francisco's famous station KPFA in 1964. It is the story of Rexroth's hyperactive youth, first comfortably in northern Indiana, then as an orphaned intellectual adolescent fighting his way into acceptance as a social equal in the Bohemian Chicago of the early jazz-Front Page-Leopold and Loeb twenties. The reader is supposed to recognize the original historical scenes later recreated in Public Enemy, Roxie Hart, Preston Sturges' (a rich Chicago boy) 1947 Harold Lloyd film, and of course Hecht and MacArthur's newspaper farce. A host of people are described in their pre-celebrity days; the reader is expected to recognize, from AN's anonymous sketches, the pre-celebrity appearances of Dorothy Parker, Lee...
Pressman, Lupe Velez, A.E. Van Vogt, and at least six to ten others.

But AN is not a local-color book. It is rather a serious intellectual history of America, 1905-1927, when Rexroth's marriage and removal to San Francisco suddenly ends the book. Like Steffens' Autobiography, AN has the theme of an American Wasp intellectual—brighter, younger, and more literate, in Rexroth's case—defining his own values by systematically attaching himself to every active avant-garde movement in contemporary thought. Books cohere by finding their own stylistic world. Rexroth's is humorously anecdotal, based on the Twain-Mencken-Rogers tradition. A sales pitch he used to hustle his way across the Southwest in the early twenties is rather proudly quoted in full over pp. 322-324.

This semi-hardboiled con-man veneer is, of course, part of the survival personality that Rexroth developed, first in open-city Toledo and then in postwar Chicago. If it reassures academic reviewers that Rexroth's book is only entertaining intellectual gossip, they miss the point that this carefully offhand, anecdotal personality was invented by a poet to carry the weight of an enormous amount of sociological data without boring the reader.

I

Rexroth's prose has been steadily collected in book form since 1959, and there is no point in reading AN in isolation from these other works. Let's cite a few examples. AN's key aesthetic remarks on cubism (pp. 144-45, 148) receive their literary expansion in the 1969 preface to his Pierre Reverdy translations, Selected Poems. AN's structurally important Chapter 24—about a frameup Chicago arrest and imprisonment—has its San Francisco counterweight, more theoretical and less painful, in the "Fuzz" essay he wrote for Playboy (1967) about the urban faceoff of the sixties between the police and the Western intelligentsia. This is the essay that, Rexroth said in a later interview, cost him three jobs in San Francisco and finally forced him to accept our poets' ritual teaching post—just in time for the campus events of 1968-69!

"Modern poet" still connotes for an American reader the famous Modernist generation birthed back in the 1880s: Eliot-Stevens-Pound-Miss Moore-Dr. Williams. These gentlemen shared or unconsciously assumed (even Pound) the gentlemanly Ivy-League Republicanism of a pre-World War I generation. But Rexroth's autobiography is the story of a youngster who absorbed, alongside the technical upheaval of this group's art, a populist Wobbly socialism. Chapters on Chicago cubism or a decadent Crowleyite cell of Anglican New Yorkers confront stories and characterizations from the heroic age of the illegal union movement of the American west, or a disquisition on the social function of a Chicago-stool-pigeon couple of his acquaintance.

To repeat, these contrasts do not appear in AN for the purpose of local color. The glamorous writers of this period, Fitzgerald and Hart Crane, wrote about its sex and art through the haze of a romanticizing ignorance. Rexroth was Crane's New York apartment neighbor when Crane was inspiring himself to compose one of his best lyrics with what Crane considered a jazz-race record—Bert Williams singing one of his vaudeville turns! (p. 332) Like Fitzgerald, Rexroth knew the new hard-living world of the twenties, commercial advertising; but Rexroth's advertising girl was a former exhibition dancer, who knew things about jazz rhythms that Fitzgerald thought he could learn from Gershwin or Paul Whiteman. Rexroth's poetry and prose do not improve on Crane's and Fitzgerald's; but they have the technical advantage of his having been a participant in the first jazz-folksong collecting generation. This is the technical pay-off from Rexroth's anarchist socialism, although of course he would not admit the term "technical" as I use it here.

II

This intimate experience with a socially revolutionary Bohemia—or with the socially revolutionary youth, we might say, of our establishment power class—leads to continual contradictions in Rexroth's books with the accepted canons of our cultural history. I do not mean such stock banalities as the fiery Chicago radical who later went rightwing or became a political hack. When Rexroth finally wrote his American Poetry in the 20th Century (1971), for instance, he did not merely have a different emphasis or value-system than do our Modern Literature texts; his data was different.

Laura Riding was an important poet, critic, and catalyst first in the famous Vanderbilt group of the twenties (Davidson-Tate-Ransom), then in London and Majorca as Robert Graves' White Goddess. Rexroth's is the only recent poetic history to let the reader know this. American Poetry... also broke the seal of silence about the postwar Black Mountain (North Carolina) educational experiment, floated on temporary G.I. Bill funds, and still influential in modern dance, music, and writing via its graduates.

But we may use a more publicized example. The Beat Movement of the fifties gave Rexroth his only serious advertising either in the mass media or the academic reviews. For these media and campuses, it is unsurprising that the key figures in the movement were northeastern exiles, Ginsberg and Kerouac, condescending to bestow the wisdom of the East (i.e., Brooklyn and Madison Avenue) on the California hinterlands. But for Rexroth, Ginsberg was an underpaid advertising flunky whom he encouraged to become a Pacific seaman, so that he could make a decent income—due to wage rates established by the great 1948 Frisco dock strike (which presumably involved Rexroth). And Kerouac. The subject of one of Rexroth's repeated anecdotes, he visited California to instruct the natives as a self-nominated 

September, 1978
living room, where he, Kerouac, was the only one present with no knowledge of Oriental languages and literature.

Actually, Rexroth wrote friendly reviews of the poetry and prose of these Whitmanic disciples; but in his notices the postwar San Francisco intellectual movement remained centered within the area. The Ivy League's leadership was not essential. Two outstanding writers of the Ivy League, the poets Gary Snyder and William Everson,* had, in Rexroth's version, escaped Eastern influences, including specifically Whitman's.

Everson came from Steinbeck's Salinas Valley; his literary guru is Robinson Jeffers, as unfashionable with the Eastern beats as with the Eastern campuses, brooding out on Big Sur. Snyder worked for the same Rocky Mountain Forest Service ranger as the young Rexroth (p. 279), and in Japan has since taken what a Western intellectual like myself would call graduate course work in Zen. His poetry derives mainly from Pound, Rexroth, and Rexroth's own chosen poetic sources in classical Oriental literature.

The reader will have guessed the cowboy plot in our most recent Modern Poetry texts, which makes Kerouac, Ginsberg, Snyder, and Everson associated members of one hairy redskin tribe. Rexroth, of course, feels free to reclaim the last two as poetic godsons, participating in the same effort as AN's Chicago Bohemia, to change the hardrock basis of our literary past.

III

Because of the exposed social and intellectual positions he has chosen to occupy, Rexroth regularly expresses fear in his prose of a kind of anti-Rexroth, who will tempt him to live the "social lie." Early in the Chicago section of AN, a simple version of this doppelgänger appears (pp. 113-14). He is offered the chance of a safe future as a wholesale drug executive, and rejects it so that he can become a professional artist and man of letters. More specifically, as the next two hundred pages make clear, he rejects a white-collar job, on the twenties assumption that he could always earn a handyman living doing independent skilled labor — cooking as opposed to pearl-diving — and not break his lifeline connection with the industrial working class. So Rexroth made a conscious decision (he did not back into his career) and this is the source of his later impatience and irritation with the Stevens and Eliots who made no qualms about clerking, publishing, or peddling insurance, with their verse a sideline.

*During the beat's most publicized period, Everson came to some prominence as the Roman Catholic "Brother Antoninus." Previously, as "Everson," he had had a long career of California small-press activity going back to his depression farm-marriage thirties and his C.O. detention-camp forties. In San Francisco he became godfather to Rexroth's daughters. Recently, it seems, he left the order and is presumably "Everson" again. Except in our library catalogues, he appears unrelated to the British "William Everson" who writes authoritative factual guides to the American film.

This Tempter, who will trade our serious-minded young author riches for amateurism, has the flavor of the free-spending twenties. The depression brought in another anti-Rexroth: the gentlemanly faculty poet who teaches Creative Writing in place of more demanding courses. This chap rather despised the Hearst-paper Chicago journalism which Rexroth himself thinks became a colorful trap for his fellows of the twenties who chose to remain within its midwest circuit. A cautiously arranged tenure enabled our faculty author to avoid developing a rhetoric that was appealing to the liberal and liberally unemployed public that read Edmund Wilson, Mencken, Malcolm Cowley, and, later, Rexroth. This faculty movement was spearheaded, of course, by the Southern Review—"Brooks and Warren" Agrarian generation in American letters. Polemically, Rexroth has never admitted the legitimacy of such a rural conservative critique of our system, so that the Agrarian movement represents for him only a social ignorance for our history and a sellout of international modernism in the arts.

His critical prose expresses these attitudes plainly enough. What comes through, however, in the "plot" of AN or in the (then unpublished) Chicago poem he later titled Homestead Called Damascus, are his emotional leanings towards these Enemy anti-Rexroths. The poem expresses this by inventing polar heroes called Sebastian and Thomas; in his 1968 introduction to the Collected Longer Poems, he says (p. vii) both brothers represent one personality. But the invention of these two characters seems to represent his adolescent problem, that the only young men who shared his poetic interests were limp, sexually ambivalent types, if not candid fairies. However uni-, bi-, or tri-sexual, at least the painters, musicians, dancers, and especially the girls of 1920-1925 Chicago and the American West all strike the reader as more virile than the poets and other verbal intellectuals.

Rexroth's solution — both in the "real life" of AN and "imaginatively" in Homestead — was to align himself against such temperamental opposites as the mellifluous Olaf Olson of Green Bay and The Dial. One of his Chicago-survival habits is not to reject people or their works openly, but to absorb them as models of How Not To Do It.

IV

The most extended example of this temptation/education by contrast in AN is, of course, the Katherine-Mansfieldish social worker he calls "Shirley Johnson." (As an Englewood High dropout, he had been assigned to her caseload!) Whereas Rexroth was the first abstractionist
she had ever met—he thinks he may have been the first one in the country—"Shirley," her sister, and their exurbanite Illinois social group modeled their cultural lifestyle on the contemporary British literary set: *Wheels*, Edward Thomas, Charlotte Mew, Mansfield, et al. This squishy *rite de passage* society smoothed off his social edges and loosened up his paintings. It also wrecked his poems temporarily, he says, but he charged it off to experience.

Because he is here trying to discriminate between his own respect for the affair (perhaps more important to him than to "Shirley") and the very mixed effects it had on his values, *AN*'s chapters about the affair (like 21) represent the most careful, delicate prose in the whole Chicago section. Its literary equivalent in Part I, on his Indiana childhood, is the treatment of his parents' marriage. Rexroth's adult *persona*, writing style, and platform personality are very down-to-earth; it is, however an important theme in his prose that moral toughness is earned, not mimicked by a literary Bogart act that rejects emotional awareness. And just as his boyhood refusal (in *AN*) of business security makes his adult criticism underrate Stevens, the "Shirley" affair has since made him over-suspicious of Henry James, Proust, and the whole Edwardian tradition of analysis of nuances.

It is an important conviction of Rexroth, one of *AN*'s main themes, that for a professional artist a technical breakthrough is not narrowly specialized but represents a long-range advance in what we would call his emotional life. The mature Rexroth tends to underrate the superiority derived from simple technical mastery of one's medium, whether words, steps, notes, or forms. This later attitude is in reaction against his eagerly experimental Chicago youth; the key chapter (15) on aesthetics in *AN* conveys the close connection of modernism with the scientific ferment of the time. However, the reader ought not associate this connection with contemporary scientific theories as much as with the technological detective stories of Arthur Reeve and R. Austin Freeman.

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This left the older Rexroth with a permanently negative reaction to the formal rhetorical tradition in Western verse. His excellent middlebrow series for *Saturday Review*, "The Classics Revisited," has nothing intelligent to say about the Virgilian tradition, either at its Latin fountainhead or in its British Milton-Dryden-Pope version. In his *American Poetry* text, his attitude remains rigidly consistent. He always prefers the Athenian lyric tradition to Roman public verse, so that he naturally prefers Dr. Williams, Pound's *Cathay*, Eberhart, Whittier, and H.D. to (respectively) Stevens, Pound's *Sixtus Proprietius*, Empson, Longfellow, and Edna Millay. As I say, such preferences are consistent. They have gradually infiltrated academic taste, but I think for reasons more faddish and less reasoned than Rexroth's. My own reaction is simple incredulity at the inference (to take a plain case) that either H.D. or Dr. Williams show any verbal mastery comparable to the use of the iambic pentameter by Stevens or (the unfashionable) Millay.

Rexroth's own choice of literary father is, however, neither American nor Western, but one of the classical Chinese poets, Tu Fu. After he read *Cathay*, he began, at the age of fifteen, with interlinear translations (p. 154), but he credits his development as an Oriental translator mainly to an hour's conversation under the *Taos* sun with the older poet, Witter Bynner (pp. 318-19). If Rexroth believed in writing technical criticism for the lay reader, he might have added that (whether sound linguistics or not) English-speaking verse readers 'scan' Chinese poetry syllabically, just as they would the experimental French verse of the period or the later poetry of W.C. Williams and Rexroth himself.

The mellow Horatian balance of Tu Fu (Rexroth's *Tu Fu*) would not be the obvious first preference of an ordinary adolescent American. But the moral poise and balance Rexroth finds in Tu Fu's poems (not in the Chinese bureaucrat's ideas or "character") are not mentioned in *AN* to provide the reader with a little literary appreciation. This ideal thematizes the balancing off of a whole set of crises and experiences undergone by the "Novel's" hero, beginning with his mother's death (p. 77). "Shirley Johnson," cafe jazz, *The Waste Land* 's appearance in *The Dial*, the black ward of a Chicago prison, a pre-Studs Farrell reading Proust and pumping gas, a Massachusetts interview with Sacco and Vanzetti, the chemical experiments with the color spectrum—these are not separable local-color anecdotes in *AN*, but the refraction of different kinds of experience through one mental universe.

V

The autobiography's original reviewers suffered a kind of biological disturbance at the presentation of the girls in the book. Rexroth's style is chaste enough, but the general suggestion that he had had a swinging time was resented. First of all, such a reaction misses the theme of moral balance. The author has strong feelings about the national sex war and our general misogyny. With one exception in a many-charactered book about
self-indulgent extraverts, he never explicitly insults a woman. This would offend, not chivalry, but his private sense of sexual poise. Furthermore, it was essential to his early survival code to adapt to people as they are, or else avoid them. So his mental picture of himself with his girls is much more passive and less forceful than seems likely to have been the case in the twenties.

The two most important women in the "Novel," mother and mistress, are seen in the round, not through a haze. As for the more sex-dreamish figures who play bit roles in the story, Rexroth appeared to them at the time as young, vigorous, presentable, a good dancer, with ready cash, sexually initiated yet not socially capable of making serious marriage demands on these semi-career types. He says they generally married "above" him into the professional middle class, unless they wound up supporting their husbands. "Shirley" became a surgeon's wife, for instance.

Rexroth was sexually successful according to the American reviewers' code. Since by his later marriages he has had daughters but no son and heir, a patriarch in an Andes or African village would be baffled by the reviewers' jealousy. But one sociological theme of _AN_ is that its America was not a workable patriarchy. There was apparently never any question on Rexroth's Edwardian-Indiana father determining his son's education or freethinking religious beliefs, for instance (though his mother did not believe in women's voting). And _AN_ must be the first piece of literate social criticism to see into the professional middle class, unless they wound up supporting their husbands. "Shirley" became a surgeon's wife, for instance.

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Actually, many of the girls have a noticeably hard-boiled edge, and my hypothetical reviewer from Africa or the Andes would notice the competitive sexual relationships. It is emotionally important to the author of _AN_ "now," at the time of the book's composition, that his old girls have been — not gracious, charming, domestic, tactful, receptive, alluring — but successfully talented. Otherwise the affair is a swindle.

Example: he tells of re-meeting "Shirley" years later, now a surgeon's wife. It developed her old "Mansfield" poems and stories were still boxed up and unsold. She got them out for him; he still liked them. But there is a strikingly tense passage on page 242 (where he's awaiting her return from upstairs with her MSS.) which says explicitly that this material had to be good to verify a whole section of his youth.

This is the kind of attitude taken for granted by our educated classes, by our reviewers and poets, in the conduct of their private lives. Now if Dante had come across an old boxful of sonnets by Beatrice — yes, I know he married another Italian girl! — if Dante had made such a discovery, can one picture him not being pleased and grateful? — even if in his formidable editorial judgment it might be wiser not to submit them to some Florentian equivalent of _Dial or Partisan Review_?

In the same way the bright Chicago girl who became the first Mrs. Rexroth is described as the "most highly skilled painter I have ever met" (p. 348). Rexroth's "off-Chicago" theater work was lively, experimental, and honorable, no doubt; but it is conspicuously difficult from his own descriptions (pp. 137, 273) to get a critical account of what occurred onstage. What earlier I called a survival attitude towards the value of his own activities is more conspicuous than any sexual braggadocio.

VI

Rexroth seems to me to have been a relatively more important American man of letters than, say, the late Edmund Wilson. This is not merely a matter of Rexroth's being an established poet. As competitive polymaths, they chose to master different areas of thought and literature. Since obviously this discussion concerns Rexroth, let me cite a specialized area where Rexroth has the advantage. It is Rexroth's religious-theological interests that let him range back over cultures which have become very distant for both Wilson and the academic liberal.

Based on specific statements in _AN_ (pp. 292, 337), a British reviewer baptized him Roman Catholic. The biographical reference in Gale's new _Contemporary Authors_ series says "Anglican." Chapter 35 of _AN_ describes a totally successful participation in the Lenten rites of the Anglo-Catholic order at Holy Cross Monastery, Hudson River. Another revealing choice, the marriage rite in _AN_ was an Anglo-Catholic Solemn High Nuptial Mass (pp. 347-48).

This seems explicit enough. Rexroth professes a Catholic Christianity according to the Anglican definition, familiar to literary intellectuals through the pre-Roman careers of men like Newman, Chesterton, and Ronald Knox. (None of these men arouses Rexroth's critical admiration, though he has lately published magazine material on the Tractarians.) But we haven't teased out the thread of _AN_ 's theological position as yet.

He disbelieves in theistic religion (p. 319). Presumably this includes the personal deity, but Roxroth would probably argue that semantically "God" is an undefined term in our culture. At any rate, he reverses the Plus early church-Minus medieval church position. His "Catholicism" is European culture's anthropological artifact for passing its people through the great rites: birth-marriage-death. A San Francisco Anglican, he identifies himself culturally with the desert Indian converts of Ch. 35, who have absorbed the missionary's Mass and vestments into their own way of life. The lengthy
exploration of medieval scholasticism described in \textit{AN},
arrives at the same conclusion; he accepts philosophical
Christianity "because" it explores Aristotle's mind,
not Jesus' (p. 335).

A shorthand account like this, in an analytic essay,
may make it seem that Rexroth's autobiography divides
itself into separate boxes labeled: Religion, Politics, Sex,
Aesthetics. Rexroth obviously would be reluctant to admit
such divisions. Somewhere in \textit{AN}'s remarks on aesthetic theory — maddeningly, the publisher cheated on
having an index — Rexroth emphasizes the influence on
his mind, of the conversion of the anthropologist, Edward Sapir.
Based on his professional work, Sapir
preached his own poetics, but only implied it in print.
I think Sapir's gospel is recognizable in the different
passages of \textit{AN} I have treated as literary, aesthetic,
"sexual," or religious.

\textbf{AN APPENDIX}

A few years after the autobiography's official close
with the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti (1927), the
young experimentalist and theorist ran into the depression. The long-range effect was that he did not put
out a first book of poems, \textit{In What Hour}, until 1940,
when he was 35 years old. This was a collection, deservedly treated as a minor effort, of his more recent work. The long (c. 1925) Chicago poem described in \textit{AN} did not even reach periodical publication until 1957. It was published as a paperback in 1963 and then became one of the \textit{Collected Longer Poems} (1968). It is unclear how many of his short \textit{AN}-period lyrics have survived. His work of the twenties and early thirties, minus \textit{Homestead}, appeared as his fifth book, \textit{Art of Worldly Wisdom}, in 1949. The "Wisdom" poems are now available separately
as sections of the \textit{Collected Longer} (1968) and \textit{Shorter Poems} (1966). His books are conveniently checklisted in
Morgan Gibson's \textit{Kenneth Rexroth}, 1972; this necessarily
omits the more recent \textit{Orchid Boat}, a collaborative book of translations of works of Chinese women poets. This exposition makes only slight mention of Zumwinkle's bibliography (1967) and does not have space for treating many other important points of Rexroth's career.

\hfill

\textbf{INK FACTORY}

\textbf{Three Etudes and a Rejoinder}

O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the boll?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

W. B. Yeats

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{I}
\end{flushright}

\textbf{Pythagoras}

An aching glut of forms oppresses me.
Circles, polyproliferate, multiply here:
Driveshafts, dials, barrels stacked up
Ceiling-high below the rounded skylights,
Murky triangles weave and interweave
Like stars across the girdered ceiling,
Wallblock, conduits, pipelines, tools, machines
All cross and recross under cloudy light
That twists among the crucificial roofbeams
(Gyres without motion) falling heavy and grey
On shards, monotonies of mythless clay.
Dreaming of mandalas and prisms
I watch, but feel no watching eyes,
Familiars in this forest of blind symbols.
Unfelt force and repetition shape
The sad splenetic ache of Being here,
Where lights and outlines, juxtaposed, recall
A cosmos lost in ancient formulas,
Certainties of sun, and parables
Within some woodscape's clear transparent wall.

II

Dionysius

From the high yellowed skylights
A grey wash of sun falls!
Riding the bolts of bright neon
Down, through the shop's thundered rhythms,
Petrol exhaust and pollinate
Foulings of air, to the floor's
Glowing lignite, spotted with oil waste,
Drifted with carbon and dye
Blown fallow in corners, like humus
Or wine lees, winnowings,
Chaff from the loud wine presses.
Barrels of moist dye, brilliant as April earth,
Ploughed by blue-overalled workers
Into the mixing vats, threshed into oil
Are poured out, compact of sunlight
Water and earth, into shipping drums,
Promising wordy new wine:
Vintages, transports of newsprint,
Logoi of orchids or hellfire,
Here
In the heart of the sun's great denial.

III

Hephaestus

Boccioni!
A tangle of pipes driving upward
Twisting in parallel, circling, dropping
Dynamic in harness to bright bars of neon,
Bathed in the thick organic ozone
Of carbon, grey sunlight, steam, neon, exhaust
All roaring and pulsing, futurity's pistons
At one, here, at work.
Moving among them: ourselves, the purposive centers,
Nodes of willed action, blue-robed, unique
And catalyst forms continuous in space,
Flowing out sanguine into the steel veins,
Reining the great dumb-muscled machines
Thro' tenor-board nerve ends and bright gangliar conduits,
Filling objectives, clearing the last scrubs
Till nature turns plastic and nominal.

With this continuum, this godlike plenum, then
Whose law defines us and whose freedom we define
(Though freedom's inefficient, here), why must each face
Wear such a ritual and helpless irony?
Why should the Efficient, the Impersonal
Fragment the deep and rooted order, or erase
The foliate communion of that Tree?

Fortuna, Answering

Well, what it's all about basically is to make ink
And sell it.
That's all, man.
Nothing else.
Don't complicate things.

Theodore W. Loeppert
NOT SKY-GAZERS, 
BUT HEARERS AND DOERS!

NORMAN E. NAGEL

“What on earth are you looking up into the heavens for?” The obviously wrong thing to do is to gaze upwards into the bright blue yonder. Nothing to see there except the sky, which isn’t really there either. Ah, but those simple-minded men of Galilee did not know that. They must have thought the world had three stories like most people did in their day. We know better. We can shoot men right through the sky. Since there has been such an enormous advance in cosmology (if we compare theirs with ours) there must be a similar advance in the way we think about the Ascension. So let us remove the items of antiquated cosmology from the text. Having done so, let us count them up and see how many we get. The answer is nil. Before you can get any antiquated cosmology out of the text you must first put it in. This is not to say that the men of Galilee may not have had some curious cosmological notions in their heads. We are not told about these, and can only infer them from what was generally thought about the world in their day. And even if we could give a precise account of the cosmology held by Philip and Nathaniel we would be no nearer the heart of the Ascension, which in no way depends on whether the world has three or a dozen stories, or whether it is flat, round, square, or pearshaped.

A boundary is drawn against all that thinking which calculates the speed of ascent and the distance to be covered. Luther made great sport of such calculation by pointing out that if Christ ascended at a constant speed then he could not yet have arrived at a place where heaven might be supposed to be located. Psalm 139 should have kept people from such nonsense, and so not in need of the liberation of those wiseacres who advance the view that until recently Christians thought of God as up there or out there. Matthew tells of Jesus’ promise to the disciples that wherever they may be he will be with them, and they were not up or out there, but in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and various other places. They were reproved for gaping up at the sky and so of entertaining any notion that that was where Jesus was located. The same Jesus who gave the promise keeps it. The Ascension does not undo the Incarnation.

The cloud is the boundary just mentioned. It was not nimbus, cirrus, or cumulus, but the sort of cloud that made its statement of the presence of God’s glory at the Transfiguration, and at various times in the Old Testament. This bright and impenetrable cloud marks the boundary of a range of reality we are incompetent to grasp, a range of reality which our ordinary categories
cannot contain. And the angels tell the disciples that it is folly to try, and us too, for we are prone to gaze up into heaven and speculate about the transcendent, ultimate being, and all that sort of thing. We have no competence beyond the human dimension, and we only fool ourselves if we talk as if we had.

When the disciples look in that direction they are blocked by the cloud and recalled by the angels. No more seeing Jesus until he shows himself again to wind up the whole show. He is not there for them up or out there, not in the sky. He promised to be with them wherever they would be, and the first place they were to be was Jerusalem for they had his word, his bidding to wait there for the enablement of the Spirit for the work he had for them to do. What a job he gave them: to carry his redemption, reconciliation, and victory through the world.

It is perhaps the impossibility of this task that is rather closer to our hesitancy in celebrating the Ascension than questions of cosmology, angels, levitation, and the bright cloud. Jesus does a magnificent job of Calvary and Resurrection. We are all for that, and for having what he achieved for us. But then he gives us this impossible task. “Now you carry on. It’s up to you.” And we pull back. “Oh, no, not me.” In receiving the Christ of Calvary and Easter we receive also the task of showing, sharing, and carrying his work and victory through the world. There is no Christ by half.

Yet well may we hesitate. What folly is Jesus perpetrating: he gives his mission into the hands of disciples who were getting things backwards right up to the Ascension. They dreamt of Jesus meaning political achievement and glory. They gazed up at the sky, and the bright cloud cut off any recourse to cosmological or scientific demonstration. No more visible Jesus to hang on to. They were left in their little human dimension. They turned and headed for Jerusalem, Jerusalem so full of memories, with only a promise, and there they waited. They waited until all that was within them of Jesus caught fire and burst from them with a boldness and a power that was given them by the Spirit, but that is Pentecost.

The Ascension left them with nothing to rely on but the promises: the promise of the Spirit, the promise of his being with them, the promise of his coming again in a way that could be seen. Now, no more seeing and nothing to go on with but his word, the message of him, and with nothing but words of Christ they were to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching as Jesus commissioned them.

We must learn with the disciples: there is no just standing and looking. Selecting from Jesus what we like and shirking his task are excluded. The role of spectator is no disciple’s option. Spectator and disciple are mutually exclusive terms. There is no real harm in the spectator games you may play in theology courses so long as you know what you are up to. The Ascension has taken place, but he has not left us groping about with invisibles, gaping at the sky. He is tangible with us in his words and with the water, the wine and bread. By way of them he is present and gives of himself and his gifts.

And there is a still more tangible Jesus for us. By word and sacrament we are made alive and energized, and this life and energy are not just to swirl around inside ourselves or dissipate toward invisibles. Jesus put himself as the destination of these in our neighbor, whom he has appointed to receive our service as his substitute. Whatever we do for one another he takes as done to himself. “I was hungry and you gave me food.” “When did we see you hungry?” “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

So there is Jesus enough within our dimension as we receive from him and do him service. No Jesus in the sky but in word and sacrament, and the gifts received from him there have their life and fruition as we serve our neighbor who stands in for Jesus to receive our loving service.

The task he left us is enormous and the equipment seems derisory. Yet that is what Jesus left us with, and there is no more reliability about it than Jesus.

We have come to celebrate his Ascension as people who have found him reliable, or with the hope that he may be that reliability in our lives without which everything flows uncertainly in relativity, fashions, points of view, and opinions. Take hold of what he has left us, not any transcendent or scientific demonstration, no ocular proof. He has left us in our human dimension with things of that dimension. We have his promises, we have his word. Him we do not see, but we hear his word. We are baptized, we come to his table, and by these he brings us to receive of him and his gifts; by way of these so small, so untranscendent, so him and his, so us and ours. So near our Ascended Lord; he did not go away for he gives us for this our Ascension feast his body and blood and waits in our neighbor to receive our service.

We do not see through the cloud, yet he is not on the other side of that cloud for us but on this side, our side. His word to your eardrum, and his body and blood to your mouth. So he is with us as he promised. He enables and guides, fitting things together for blessing for his disciples. He exercises the loving power of God for us for he sits at the right hand of God, and in the folly of his love he gives us to serve and to suffer for his sake and the Gospel’s, and to win his victories in the world, and the last victory won, we see him. He brings it all to completion.

Ascended Lord, most near, you foolishly give your work to us to do. Keep us from redeveloping the task, and lusting after more impressive equipment. Give us the lowliness and certainty of your word that receiving what it says and imparts we may bravely share in your work in the world, serve you in our neighbor, and so come to the final triumph, and our eyes behold you and not another. Amen.
PAINTINGS ON
BIBLICAL SUBJECTS
by FRED NAGLER

FRED NAGLER was born at Springfield, Mass., in 1891 where he first studied wood carving. He later came to New York to study at the Art Students League under Robert Henri, Frank Du Mond, and others. His paintings of religious subjects for the past forty years have been seen in the nation’s exhibitions where they have commanded attention for their sincerity and truly felt emotional quality. Twenty of his paintings are presently on view at Valparaiso University.
Below: They Also Labored, o/c, 30 x 48", Midtown Galleries, N.Y.C.

Above: Fisherman, o/c, 30 x 36", Midtown Galleries, N.Y.C.
LONDON REVISITED

Robert Brustein was guest critic at the London Observer for the last nine months and, before returning to his post as the Dean of the Yale Drama School, gave his general verdict on the present state of the British stage. It seems that his judgment was one of disappointment in the theatre's qualitative daring, not in its quantitative capacity. When Broadway may claim twenty productions at any given time, we can be certain that during that same time the London theater will have close to sixty productions. Today the fringe or experimental theater here is more active than our off- and off-off-Broadway stages. And yet Brustein felt that what is seriously missing from the British theater at present is "not a great creative talent—these are always in short supply—but rather an intelligent and fertile theatrical imagination."

In the short time I was able to overlook the theatrical scene I had similar impressions, even though I would word them differently. There is no getting around it: the last season was rather disappointing. The commercial theater has always been of little distinction, but it has never failed to entertain with its polished productions, with its brilliant acting. And so it continued its tradition. Two of its outstanding examples were Crown Matrimonial by Royce Ryton, and Alan Bennett's Habeas Corpus with unmistakable stress on the human corpus.

Since Walter Sorell will be spending the next year in Europe, living in Zurich, we have asked him to write a "Letter from Abroad," turning his wide-ranging interest to a variety of themes and art forms.

I went to see Crown Matrimonial because sometimes while being in Rome I like to act like a Roman, and to see this play proffered the opportunity to realize how a real Britisher feels about his royal family. Another reason for spending an evening at the Theatre Royal Haymarket was to see Wendy Hiller whom I had occasion to admire previously. She created an impressive portrait of Queen Mary trying to convince her son, Prince Edward of Wales, not to abdicate because of such an consequential fact as being in love with a twice-divorced woman. Since the audience knew from the beginning that Edward would rather relinquish the throne of a then yet huge empire than leave a woman with whom he wanted to live, there was little suspense. In the pallid dramatization of a well-known story the dramatic impact remained localized within the framework of sentimental interest in the royal family itself. All I learned was that Queen Mary did not pour milk before pouring the tea into her cup. I thought that only British actors could speak such nonlines with the relish they did. When at the end the anthem was heard and everyone stood listening with incredible awe, I felt overwhelmed by the audience reaction—but not by the play, which was the second worst thing I have ever seen onstage. The first I luckily forgot. Poor Wendy Hiller! On second thought: she may have liked the part as much as the audience liked her in it.

Alan Bennett was one of the authors and performers of the unforgettable revue Beyond the Fringe which, as everyone else, I enjoyed no end. A few years ago I saw his first play, Forty Years On, in which John Gielgud starred. Many people raved about it, and I blamed myself and the fact that I never went to a British school for my lack of enthusiasm. Not even Gielgud helped me over the light weight of that play. Neither did Alec Guinness really succeed in giving substance or an inkling of depth to the sophomoric concept of Habeas Corpus.

Humor which resorts to such cheap Boulevard-comedy tricks as having an actor lose his trousers onstage or appear without them, is rather blatant and poor. Repeating this gimmick several times only proves lack of taste and talent. On the other hand, the cabaret-like lightness of the scenic effects in this play reveal Bennett's histrionic skill beyond the fringe of any doubt. The most worn theatrical threads are freshly tied and made to look daring. Alec Guinness seemed to enjoy the quick pace and gave his lines an almost choreographic image. In describing his acting brio I can only think of the cliche of how wonderful it was to watch him, which, in turn, demonstrates the shallowness of a skillful concoction. Guinness has always been admirable in making even the tasteless palatable. However, this master of the make-believe could not make me believe in Bennett's play.

The focal points of London's great theaters for many decades now have been the National, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the experimental Court Theatre. The National proved its potentialities with a few restagings: John Dexter's updating of The Misanthrope, Michael Blakemore's interest in the American semiclassics, A Long Day's Journey Into Night, The Front Page, followed by Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard which were all brilliant productions well worth seeing. But there was not a single new play, none of the caliber of Tom Stoppard's Jumpers which I saw and about which I reported last season. The production gave this highbrow play a theatrical excitement as memorable as that which, some years back, Peter Brook

The Cresset
accomplished with his version of Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade*.

Well, Peter Brook is no longer with the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych (he does some experimental work with nonliterary and mostly nonverbal productions against an Oriental background or in his Paris theater). Also Peter Hall had left the Royal Shakespeare Company to become the guiding spirit at the National, and Trevor Nunn took his place with a more conciliatory, middle-of-the-road formula, trying a distinctly non-Brechtian trend, which so far has taken some of the excitement out of the RSC.

Christopher Hampton, whose *The Philanthropist* pleasantly entertained me with its wit and cleverness a few seasons ago, had strengthened the Royal Court's reputation with his new *Savages*, in which he repeated his verbal elegance and misanthropic thoughts and in which Paul Scofield excelled in his performance of a detached British diplomat. The Royal Court gave the season that final triumphant touch (which this season badly needed) with Edward Bond's *The Sea*.

Those earlier Bonds—-*The Pope's Wedding, Saved, Narrow Road to the Deep North, or Lear*—may not have been everybody's cup of tea. They were rather savage attempts showing the most cruel, gruesome, seedy side of life, cutting mercilessly into the silence of our guilt. Now, as he claimed, with *The Sea*, Bond thought he had written a comedy. It is a comedy only in comparison to the previous wild excesses of his imagination or to the concept of "without tragedy no one can laugh."

The setting is eerie: a small seaside town early this century. An imperiously dominating *grande dame* of the town is pitted against a mad draper, who sees his world invaded by creatures from out of space and organizes a group of vigilantes to defend his world. His mind is running away with him as the sea gets out of hand and one of two young men, caught by the storm, is drowned.

Man's mind and the sea are compared. The *grande dame* humiliates and cuts the draper to his almost nonexistent size in her bickering over a few yards of drapery (Bond's finest and most vicious dialogue and social satire). The draper stabs the lady without being able to hurt her, then stabs the drowned boy he finds washed to the shore with the mad feeling of victory over the invaders from another inimical world.

The boy is buried at the top of a cliff overlooking the sea in what turns out to be a mock ceremony. The *grande dame* has a piano brought to the top of the cliff to have the choir accompanied in the open air. In this hilarious scene one of the suppressed companions of the dominating lady breaks out into a show-off descant as if this were the only camouflaged moment in which her squashed soul could fly to its freedom.

It is a play consisting of types within a loose framework of scenes dominated by feuilletonistic notions. It is a dramaturgically poor play, held together by a thin thread and some fascinating juxtapositions and ideas. The ending is somewhat pat. A drunken drop-out philosophizes about life and gives the young man who survived the storm the most ironically scathing reasons for going on living.

There is bleak poetry blended with social comedy in visions of man's and nature's madness, of the individual's battle against society and its laws of conformity, of the absurdity of it all. There are a few poems and drawings by Edward Bond published in the program bill. The drawings are rather conventional, the poems the opposite. One of the poems describes *A Mad Man* and ends with the lines:

- Everything caught in a net
- Looks and tastes and moves
- like wet bread
- And smells of the sea's old age.

*State of Siege*

*O Lucky Man!*

*American Graffiti*

Put some movie promoters to work on the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) and they might come up with these lurid blurbs for the ads:

- Take the Money and Run! . . .
- The Morning After the Orgy. . . .
- The Last Love for the Living Dead!
- Slaughter of Laughter! . . . Brother Set against Brother. . . .

With any luck, some hustling public servant might help the promotion peak by denouncing the parable as the "pablum of permissive parenthood" and a "perversion of the Protestant ethic."

I somewhat exaggerate. My modest point is that the promotions and public reputations of many movies
only loosely tally with the actual films—and often are more offensive than the films. A soft sell for a film is possible if a hard sell can be assumed. *Jesus Christ Superstar,* for example, needs only one blurb—"And Now the Film"—to link it with the publicity invested in the record and play.*

It doesn't bother me as much as it probably should that lurid promotions draw prurients—and prudes—to some movies. Often enough they get their due reward in the films themselves. But it does irk me that decent films sometimes get the same promotions—and discerning audiences are put off from the very films they want to see.

Take State of Siege. This worthy film was denied an American Film Institute screening in Washington because—according to the cover story—it "justifies violence and revolution." The charge is so absurd one could wonder whether the Declaration of Independence is still exhibited in Washington. The political ban, however, was roughly a half million dollars worth of free, if dubious, publicity.

Upon viewing this spuriously notorious film one finds it a thoughtful, semi-documentary "problem picture." *Siege* explores the role of American government personnel and our AID tax dollars in the training of the Uruguayan police in torture and other terrorist tactics. (Scenes of torture comprise about twenty second of the film and are muted; *Siege* is a film about violence, not a film of violence.)

Whilejustifying revolutionary violence could be a fair film theme, *Siege* prefers to unfold the pathos of that violence. When a popular liberation cadre, the Tupamaros, kidnap an American AID operative, the government decides to refuse ransom and sacrifice the prisoner. The government calculates shrewdly and the Tupamaros position is pitiable. If they execute their prisoner, they appear impotent in the face of the government which can more easily and far more callously sacrifice life. If they release him, their cause appears impotent. If they hold him further, they appear impotent for their cruelty. *Siege* is hardly a film which takes even the most justified revolutionary violence lightly.

When the brouhaha surrounding *Siege* settles, the film emerges as one of the more serious films about violence in a violent decade. The "message" of *Siege* is: violence is always pathetic, sometimes tragic, never glorious. One is almost grateful the film was so mindlessly attacked in Washington and larger audiences thus assured for that ancient truth. Ordinarily "problem films" close quickly or barely eke out an existence in small communities of conscience.

The promotion of Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* might bring audiences in for a merry musical romp. The radio and record promotion of the peppy songs dotting the film make the soundtrack a known quantity before the film is seen. When seen, *Man* contains actually some of the darkest humor *noir* in recent years. Few of its rollicking send-ups are without a dying fall. *Man* is a mock epic, a series of episodes in the travels of a young innocent getting his knocks in the modern world. Malcolm McDowell, everybody's favorite (*Long Ago Tomorrow, If, A Clockwork Orange*) film victim, deadpans the picareseque role ably and is buoyantly supported by the repertoire company of the Royal Court Theatre. That company is, in effect, also Anderson's film repertoire company; the players carry their same roles from his *If* and *The White Bus* to *O Lucky Man!*

As the movie unwinds (the most apt word for a film so protracted and episodic) much of the decadence and chicanery in contemporary life gets lanced. The choicest targets for Anderson's satire are advertising experts (!), pornographic movies, the sleeping church, the warfare establishment, the "national security" state, sorcerous medical research, neo-colonial businessmen, uncorrected correctional institutions, and the devious and undeserving poor.* Lest *Man* sound merely bitchy on this scant telling, it should be added that the film opens with a delicious send-up of serious film-making (a parody of Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico*, "the greatest film never made") and closes with a self-mocking appearance of Anderson himself as a director in search of a film star to do his work for him. Anderson is an angry old man, but he is not humorless about himself.

Unfortunately, only about half of the satire in *Man* works, at least for American audiences; the other half fails to rise above spoof. Anderson is, however, up against the increasing difficulty of satire in an age of normal excess, when outrages are fresh occasions for yawning. After a morning at TV watching the senate hearings on the Watergate fascism, *Man* at the movies that evening may seem tame. Nevertheless, *O Lucky Man!* is hardly the frothy frolic of its advertisements.

As I write these reviews in summer, *American Graffiti* has not yet been released. The film is ready; *most of Anderson's satire is visual. When our modern Everyman staggers into a church, more dead than alive from his last misadventure, the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. As the vicar's wife gathers the offerings the congregation goes blithely on with the harvest festival. 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the promotion is not. I fear this fall we may see ads for this film set with shots of hot rods and sock hops and studded with blurbs like “He Busted His Bones to Get His RPM's Up” and other sophomoric titillations. Universal is distributing this independent film, and any studio which can bury Two-Lane Blacktop as a teen-age dragstrip film for drive-ins could do it again.

I hope I’m wrong and the film is promoted decently. Otherwise discriminating audiences may miss one of the funnier, more humanistic and affirming films made in some time. Francis Ford Coppola put a portion of his profits from The Godfather into producing this touching nostalgia film for the (barely) under-thirties. George Lukas, the young director of Graffiti, is already a skilled craftsman and subordinates his personal expression to artistic expression like a master.

Graffiti is about real American high school graduates in 1961, and it should send frissons of recognition, laughter, and tears through those in the audience now descending the nether side of thirty. It’s a more artful nostalgia film than Summer of '42 and A Separate Peace were nostalgia films for the 50's. Graffiti takes the cliches of youth films in the late 50's and early 60's and pushes them into the realm of archetype.

The grinding cliches of those old “youth films” were the ever-present rock-and-roll dances and hot rods. Such flesh and steel in a hundred films—from Beach Blanket Bingo to Red Ball 500—functioned as, say, Astaire and Rogers dance numbers functioned in movies for an earlier generation. They helped the young learn the new songs, steps, and styles and had little to do with the slim plots of the schlocky films.

A dozen years later it is possible to turn that trash of popular culture toward myth and, in Lukas' hands, toward art. He sets his characters in the cars endlessly circling a city one long night and moves them ritually to and from the dance. (The liturgy is complete when the voice of the omniscient disc jockey and the songs are carried away over the car radios.) Against this horizon of ritual cruising, the real life of ordinary young people is warmly set forth in all its pathos, humor, absurdity, and dignity.

Those far over thirty may also enjoy Graffiti, even if we cannot share in its nostalgia for the early 60's. At that time the prevailing movie models of our youth were mindless hedonists and juvenile delinquents. The real young, of course, were readying themselves to take jobs, fight a war, raise their kids, vote Republican, and be more like us than different from us. There is that comfortl€ sadness in the film too, something for all ages.

The hyping of movies is as old as the film industry. (Looking back on certain American film classics lends perspective. Citizen Kane, for example, was pushed as a torrid love story and swashbuckling adventure film in its time. Would anybody recognize it under the blur, “One Man against Millions for the Love of One Woman”? ) Honesty in movie promotions occurs rarely—and only when “honesty is the best policy.” That minimal, already compromised ethic is probably the best we can hope for east of Eden.

And that means the discerning filmgoer must often peer through some inflated and lurid promotions to see some decent and creditable movies.

Johannes Brahms: Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Opus 100 and Sonata in E-Flat Major, Opus 120, No. 2, for Violin and Piano.

Isaac Stern, violin, and Alexander Zakin, piano. Columbia M 3228. $5.98.

Here we are dealing with two sonatas. The first was originally written for the violin; the second is an adaptation and rewriting of a clarinet sonata. The Opus 100 Sonata was written as a gesture of reconciliation toward Joachim (Brahms had taken the side of the violinist's wife in their divorce) and the Opus 120 was written originally for that excellent clarinetist, Richard Muehlfeld, and later adapted for Joachim.

The A Major Sonata is an expressively lyric work in contrast to the powerfully masculine Opus 99 for cello which preceded it. The first movement is full of the lyric writing that we associate with Brahms. The second movement, in an amazingly compact 170 bars, combines a slow section with a scherzo. The final movement is completely atypical in that it substitutes a dreamy rondo for an energetic fast movement.

The E-Flat Sonata opens with an allegro amabile which makes it similar to the aforementioned sonata. In the writing one can see a great deal of the high-low writing that was intended for the original clarinet.
Brahms again flaunts tradition and turns the second movement to an impassioned allegro appassionata, but with the touch of a master, provides marked contrast to the first movement. It is fitting that Brahms should close his final chamber music production with the variations form in which he so eminently excelled.

The two artists of this recording play with beautiful tone, musicianship, and a complete mastery of the Brahms' style. The recorded sound is clean, aurally beautiful. The sounds suggest the intimacy of a private music room. There are a few places where the recording engineer could have increased the piano sound for better balance. Although I prefer the Opus 120 sonata in the clarinet version this is indeed a lovely record to have!

GEORGE ROCHBERG: STRING QUARTET, NO. 3.


George Rochberg is a teacher of composition at the University of Pennsylvania and former Director of Publications for the Theodore Presser Company. He was early a practitioner and advocate of serialism, but came to find the intensity of expressionism to be too restrictive in portraying the more graceful and energetic side of music. He now professes a kind of "Darwinism" of musical expression, saying that no musician can successfully avoid the musical heritage of the past completely. Of course, it took him some time to work out a reconciliation with the past that would at the same time allow him to be creative.

In his Third String Quartet, composed between December 1971 and February 1972, Rochberg considers that he has turned his techniques from an egocentric originality to creative consciousness of past musical heritage. The first movement, Introduction: Fantasia, contains tonal and atonal ideas in blocks of stress and relaxation in fantastic arrangement of texture and layering reminiscent of the late Beethoven quartets. (The latter are examples of concentrated musical thought which have never been surpassed in their intellectual complexity.) In the second movement expressionistic devices dominate, using a march rhythm to create cohesion. The third movement takes us back with the composer to Nineteenth-century Romanticism. But what a lusciously beautiful and lyric movement this is! Here Rochberg proves that the vocabulary of the Romantics is not exhausted. The fourth movement is an atonal, energetic, and frenetic march punctuated with rough pizzicati and occasionally interrupted by fragments of bitter-sweet lyricism.

The fifth movement, Finale, is classical in form: scherzo: serenade: scherzo: serenade: scherzo. Here we have a juxtaposition of the athletic and the romantic in a male-female statement. There is strong use of an upward turn-type theme. Toward the end the energetic material of the first movement returns.

The Concord String Quartet must be one of the finest quartets playing before the public today. The members are young, vital, musical, and seemingly possess a limitless amount of string technique. In the liner notes the composer says that they have given him a definitive reading in this recording. The Third Quartet is certainly a welcome addition to quartet literature, particularly the sonically lovely third movement. The recording is well made and the Dolby surface was velvety smooth.

BOOKS

JOSEPH CONRAD: THE MAKING OF A MORALIST


Between the Man Who Suffers and the Mind Which Creates should lie, as Eliot reminds us, a fair amount of uncharted territory. No writer has been more jealous of his territorial imperative in this respect than Joseph Conrad, and yet, ironically, very few writers have had more attention paid to their philosophical, psychological, even psychoanalytical landscape. Professor Saveson's Joseph Conrad: The Making of a Moralist is yet a further attempt to define at least some of the influences acting upon Conrad—specifically, it is an attempt to demonstrate the extent to which Conrad's early works (and one later work, The Secret Agent) reflect various psychological theories predominant in turn-of-the-century England and, further, to postulate the terms of Conrad's moral development in reaction to these ideas. Most of these psychological concepts, as Saveson observes, owed their basic theories to evolutionary thought as popularized by Spencer. Since Conrad's almost sole fictional concern up to about 1900 is with primitive peoples of one sort or another (the
atavistic crew of the "Narcissus" would be included here), Saveson sees evidence of a cordial affiliation with late nineteenth-century psychological thinking which itself often tended to focus attention on the primitive mind.

Psychological studies of Conrad are nothing new, as those familiar with Albert Guerard's and Bernard Meyer's work on Conrad already know. The difference lies in whose particular psychological theory one is attracted to, and depends too, to some extent at least, on whether one prefers to view his Conrad as looking backward or forward, as a Post-Victorian or an early Modern. While Guerard and Meyer regard Conrad as occasionally anticipating the general theories of Freud and Jung, Saveson joins another more recent critic of Conrad, Bruce Johnson (Conrad's Models of Mind), in examining Conrad's work not in terms of subsequent psychological theory but rather in light of the theories Conrad appears to have had in mind at the time of composition.

Sources or influences of this kind are difficult to prove in the case of any writer, but doubly difficult in the case of Conrad, who left few traces of the sources of his particular insights into the human condition. Nonetheless, we do know with certainty that H. G. Wells was intensely interested in contemporary psychological thought. Since Conrad and Wells were exceptionally close during the early years of Conrad's writing career, it follows for Saveson that Conrad could not have been completely ignorant of these theories without being ignorant at the same time of the subject occupying the rapt attention of his intimate associate, Wells. On these grounds Professor Saveson constructs a view of Conrad as a writer "affected unmistakably by evolutionary theory" as it emerged in the psychological concepts of British Utilitarianism and, contrapuntally, German Pessimism.

What Saveson demonstrates in relation to Conrad's early novels is that emphasis on such apparently commonplace words as "imagination," "sympathy," "idealism," "altruism," and so on may reflect quite specifically the usage of these terms in the Utilitarian, Spencer, and the Pessimist, Hartmann. If Saveson is correct in making this assumption, then the effusive, fin de siécle rhetoric of Conrad's first two novels, Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, may well stem from his attempts to differentiate in a pseudo-scientific way between savage and civilized modes of perceiving experience, savage and civilized ways, that is, of mediating between the "inner" and "outer" life. What complicates this hypothesis, however, is Conrad's counter-evolutionary affection for displaying the inabilities of civilized, "evolved," men when placed in uncivilized contexts while the supposed savages display an amazing degree of restraint, as in Heart of Darkness. If Conrad is indeed following Spencer at all here, then he is doing so, as Saveson admits, in a "reverse Spencerian way," suggesting, as he does so well in both Heart of Darkness and "An Outpost of Progress," the erosion of so-called "fixed standards of conduct" once the milieu in which they were formed is far, far away.

It would be misleading, however, to intimate that the general purpose of this study is to aimlessly trace "influences." The governing intention of Professor Saveson's study, as the title might suggest, is to trace Conrad's early moral development, which it does by demonstrating how Conrad's vacillation between the Utilitarian psychology of Spencer and the Pessimistic philosophy of Hartmann led him to adopt a moral posture somewhere between the two. I personally find this last section of the study, "Conrad as Moralist," the best part since it offers an historical-critical shoring up of recent estimates of Conrad's moral ambivalence and his general skepticism of a priori moral standards. In Heart of Darkness, Saveson proposes, Marlow's work philosophy and Kurtz's "Horror!" might well be regarded as poles of Spencerian optimism and Hartmann-like pessimism, respectively. Thus: "The interaction of Marlow and Kurtz's ethics leads to an ascendency of one ethic over another but does not lead to an ascendency of one conception of the cosmic process over another. It leads there to a kind of optimistically tinged indefiniteness. Marlow's use of language creates that effect. In his broadest judgments, the intention of the wilderness is 'inscrutable; or again, life is a 'mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose.' 'Mysterious' reduces the Hartmann-like suggestion of 'futile' to optimistic obscurity." This last phrase, "optimistic obscurity," is a thoughtful one, and suggests a good deal not only of Conrad's philosophy, finally, but of his technique as well.

JOHN FEASTER
Reflections

After

Rivergate

In the aftermath of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s convention this past summer, my moderate brethren seem to be in a state of shock and disarray. The more knowledgeable of them had gone to New Orleans prepared to lose; they had not expected to lose so decisively. The less knowledgeable had gone in the fond hope that once brethren were assembled in one place and could talk to each other face to face there might be at least the beginnings of consensus; what they found was an insistence upon conformity. And so, many concerned Lutherans, especially among the so-called moderates, are asking: “What next?”

There has been talk of mass migrations out of the Missouri Synod into other Lutheran bodies or into a new denomination. I can envision a time when such a tragic withdrawal from the church of our fathers might become necessary, as a protest and testimony to our larger loyalty to the Gospel. But the time is surely not yet, not with somewhere between 40 and 45 per cent of the delegate strength in the recent convention voting, and recording their vote, against the majority. We who have been accused, among other things, of being “high” churchmen ought, especially at this time, to remember what we have said about the oneness of the church and avoid like the plague all talk of schism and separateness. The Christian community needs fewer, not more, denominations.

As for moving to more congenial churches such as the ALC or the LCA, one can see many advantages to making the move and getting on with one’s Christian work, unhindered by the need to participate in the kinds of quarrels that have wracked the Missouri Synod these past twenty years or more. But I, for one, refuse to believe that Missouri said its last word in New Orleans. I believe that there is still a heritage which has been passed down through the Missouri Synod which must not be lost, either to the Synod or to the larger Christian community. And for that reason I am convinced that in the long sweep of history, New Orleans will be seen as an aberration, rather than as the dawn of a new day.

It has been suggested also that “moderates,” while remaining within the Missouri Synod, withhold their contributions to Synod or place them in escrow until a more congenial administration comes to power. This counsel, too, I would reject—at least for the predictable future. What we may overlook, in our quite understandable dismay at the doctrinal authoritarianism that was imposed upon Synod at New Orleans, is that there were also signs that the Spirit is still alive and working in the church. Example: Dr. Preus’s clear and unequivocal call to root out racism in the church and to take with new seriousness the social responsibilities which are implicit in our Christian profession. Or the unanimous reaffirmation of the excellent Mission Affirmations which the church had adopted in Detroit in 1965. So long as the church is clearly engaged in its primary business of bringing Christ to the nations, I would urge all of our people to continue to support it with prayers and money. It was not too long ago that we “moderates” were condemning the subtle blackmail of super-orthodox brethren who were holding back on their synodical contributions because they didn’t like the way things were going. I would hate to think we had dropped to that level.

A British statesman of the Nineteenth century said that “the function of the opposition is to oppose.” The Missouri Synod is our church—for some of us the church of our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. The call of the minority now is to bring about a change in the climate of this church—not by stubborn obstructionism but by faithful witness to the Gospel. Our most immediate job is to rally in every practical way around those courageous witnesses who are in danger, one by one, of being silenced—both because they are brothers beloved in Christ and because they are gifts to the Church Catholic.

But for the moment, perhaps, what we need most is simply ventilation. Get the tears and the anger and the frustration out of our systems as privately as we can and then wait for the directing Word—which is inerrant at least in the sense that it always accomplishes the purpose for which it is spoken.