

Summer 1963

## Kerygma, Summer 1963

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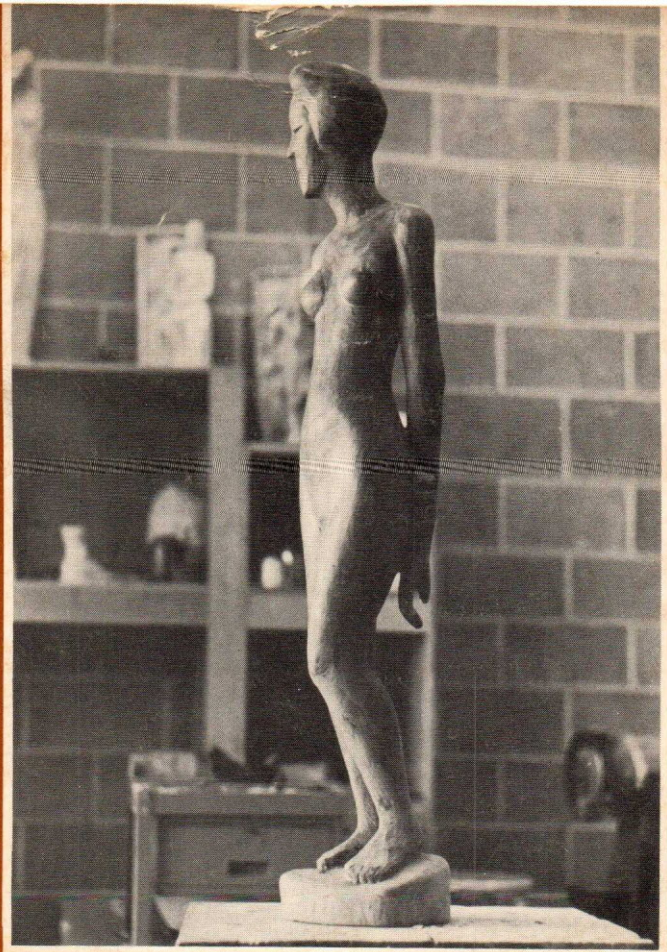
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SUMMER  
1963



THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

# KERYGMA

A JOURNAL OF COMMENT Vol. III, No. 3

KERYGMA is a Greek word meaning "proclamation" or "heralding." It originally designated the action of a herald; in the Gospels it takes on the particular connotation of a declaration of the "glad tidings" of Christ's resurrection.

In our context, however, it is a proclamation on a different level—a cultural one. Our major "proclamation" is the fact of an impending choice between a culture that is totally secular and one that is Christian. We do not pretend that what appears in our magazine will always be complete and finished. Sometimes it will be only in the nature of a "kerygma," an idea which is to be developed and expanded later. Ours will be an exploration, an investigation of the implications of Christianity and the University in society.



A Journal of Comment at

# THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Summer Issue, 1963

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Don Scholl, *Hypatia*, terra cotta, 33"

LOUISE COWAN

## *The Responsibility of The English Professor*

An address given at the luncheon meeting of the Conference of College Teachers of English of Texas, Abilene, March 30, 1963.

Emma Bovary, Flaubert tells us (I am quoting here the Francis Steegmuller translation), "tried to imagine just what was meant, *in life*, by the words 'bliss,' 'passion,' and 'rapture'—words that had seemed so beautiful to her *in books*." Then, in a cutback, we learn something of the books she has read:

She had read *Paul and Virginia* and had dreamed of the bamboo cabin, of the Negro Domingo and the dog Fidele; and especially she dreamed that she, too, had a sweet little brother for a devoted friend and that he climbed trees as tall as church steeples to pluck her their crimson fruit, and came running barefoot over the sand to bring her a bird's nest.

Sent to a convent, Emma surreptitiously devours novels smuggled to her by an old laundress:

They were invariably about love affairs, mistresses, harrassed ladies swooning in remote pavilions. Couriers were killed at every relay, horses ridden to death on every page; there were gloomy forests, broken hearts, vows, sobs, tears and kisses, skiffs in the moonlight, nightingales in thickets . . . .

Later, reading historical novels, "she dreamed about oaken chests and guardrooms and troubadours":

She would have liked to live in some old manor, like those long-waisted chatelaines who spent their days leaning out of fretted Gothic casements, elbows on parapet and chin in hand, watching a white-plumed knight come galloping out of the distance on a black horse. At that time she worshipped Mary Queen of Scots and venerated women illustrious or ill-starred. [They] stood out like comets on the shadowy immensity of history; and here and there (though less clearly outlined than the others against the dim background, and quite unrelated among themselves)

were visible also St. Louis and his oak, the dying Bayard, certain atrocities of Louis XI, bits of the Massacre at St. Bartholomew, the plumed crest of Henry IV . . . .

It is in this manner, Flaubert makes clear, that her goal begins to seem to Emma "like a great rosy-plumaged bird soaring in the splendors of poetic skies"; she has been rendered unable to accept actual human existence and "cannot believe that the uneventful life she was leading was the happiness of which she had dreamed."

Lest we think it is only romantic young French ladies who can be led so far astray by their reading, we may turn to a British novel, Conrad's *Lord Jim*, to find a young Englishman affected in much the same way. We are told that Jim was sent to a training ship for officers of the mercantile marine "after a course of light holiday literature, during which his vocation for the sea had declared itself." On board ship, "with the hazy splendour of the sea in the distance, and the hope of a stirring life in the world of adventure," he could stay for some time in the world of his daydreams:

On the lower deck in the babel of two hundred voices he would forget himself and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked, walking on uncovered reefs in search of shellfish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages in tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean kept up the hearts of despairing men—always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book.

"A hero in a book"—this phrase might be taken as a key to the difference in theme between the novel and the earlier large literary forms. For, if traditionally the heroic flaw was *hybris*, in modern fiction it can be seen to be solipsism, or narcissism, or conceiving of oneself as existing in the ideal realm of the Book.

James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* continues and extends the theme. In this novel we see a sensitive youth succumbing ever more surely to the idealistic delusion that he inhabits some timeless and infinite realm, created, as it were, by language:

Words [he asked himself] Was it their colours? Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured and richly storied than from the con-



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templation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?

Whatever the reason for his progressive withdrawal, Stephen Daedalus can bear less and less the intrusions of actuality into his consciousness. Finally, at the end of the novel, he has walled himself up into the world of the book: his last words to us are in the form of journal entries, spoken chiefly of himself, to himself. An image in one entry is significant: he writes of an old man about whom someone has told him, an Irishman with red eyes and a short pipe, who speaks Stephen's native tongue, Irish. The entry reads:

Old man sat, listened, smoked, spat. Then said: —Ah, there must be terrible queer creatures at the latter end of the world.

Stephen comments:

I fear him. I fear his redrimmed horny eyes. It is with him I must struggle all through this night till day come, till he or I lie dead, gripping him by the sinewy throat till . . . till what? Till he yield to me?

The "devil" with whom Stephen must wrestle, his adversary, is for him, as it was for Emma Bovary, a loathesome figure representative of the concrete actuality he has flouted—what *is*, that which is so terrifyingly solid and refractory that it cannot merely be thought, and thus challenges Stephen's region of ideal beauty. Joyce lets the reader see more than Stephen does, however, and we know that the "terrible queer creature" in the old man's apocalyptic utterance will be something like Stephen, whose denial of the physical order will lead, finally, to monstrous aberration.

If we approach this theme from another angle, we see that what the nineteenth and twentieth-century novels have been chiefly concerned with is education: not merely the *rites de passage* from innocence to experience as we see them in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, but that shaping of a soul that occurs in the encounter between World and Idea in a young and plastic consciousness.

Many of Faulkner's novels concern education in this sense, and though some of the protagonists succumb to the "pure idea," some of them submit "to the destructive element" and learn how to accept a fully responsible adulthood. Faulkner's last novel, *The Reivers*, overtly makes use of this theme (a portion of the novel was published separately as "The Education of Lucius Priest"); in it an eleven-year old boy is "educated" not by books but by a wildly and comically adventurous weekend in a bawdy house where he has been deposited by his friend, the disreputable Boon Hogganbeck.

It is the short novel "The Bear," however, that treats the theme most successfully among Faulkner's works. The boy in this story, Ike McCaslin, is first educated by overhearing the talk of his elders:

For six years now the boy had heard the best of all talking. It was of the wilderness, the big woods, bigger than any recorded document—of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it; of Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his convey. It was of the men, hunters, with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and relieved against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest according to the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter; —the best game of all breathing and forever the best of all listening, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate . . . .

Long before he is old enough even to approach the big woods, the myth of the bear, constructed from the hunter's tales, runs in his mind:

He had already inherited then, without ever having seen it the big old bear with one trap-ruined foot that in an area almost a hundred miles square had earned for himself a name, a definite designation like a living man . . . It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It loomed and towered in his dreams before he ever saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, tremendous, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big, too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and bullets they fired into it, too big for the very country which was its constricting scope. It was as if the boy had already divined what his senses and intellect had not encompassed yet.

It has been by tales and myth that the boy has *divined* about life something not yet comprehensible to either his senses or his intellect. And, in contrast to Emma's rosy-plumaged bird, the bear possesses an *actuality*, though it is a focus for all the transcendent meaning ordinarily associated with an ideal: it has a trap-ruined foot; it has a name; it is constricted by a country; its pursuit is communal, involving men, dogs, and horses. The Idea, to Ike McCaslin is not in irreconcilable conflict with the World; it is not something to be pursued in isolation and defiance. He must study long years before he is worthy of joining in the corporate quest: he must learn woodcraft and the lore of hunting from an old halfbreed; he must first shoot a deer; his apprenticeship is hard—not merely the expression of his own bent; it requires an ever greater submission of self, an ever greater discipline, an ever greater courage.

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In contrast, book-learning is put in its place by the debased and uncomprehending Boon Hogganbeck, when he tries to urge the boy to leave the hunt and return home so that he will not miss a week of school: "You got to get your education," Boon says. "Where would I be if I didn't have no education?"

What means this criticism of the book in the modern novel? What is its significance to us in our time—a time of new seriousness in education: of enriched reading programs for the young, of easily available paperbacks, of honors programs, of advanced standing?—a time when, as never before, high school teachers are requiring that their students read, when in fact a student may come to us having read for class assignment such diverse books as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Odyssey*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Oedipus Rex*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*? What are we to say of the education of the young by a process of fairly indiscriminate reading, pursued for fun, for excitement, for the purpose of awakening the young to taste for reading? I must admit to some uneasiness on the matter.

I should think the moral evaluation implicit in such incisive novels as *Madame Bovary*, *Lord Jim*, *Portrait of the Artist*, and *The Bear*—and there are others embodying the theme also—would constitute some sort of warning to us; a warning to the effect that wide reading is not necessarily an unmitigated good; that, in fact, some reading can be destructive. It might suggest to us that when the written word is used as a substitute for actuality—as a vehicle for escape, for vicarious experience, for the easily communicated ideal, its effect can be vicious and misleading. These novels might indicate that when the book itself is idolized, is set up on a kind of throne and is taken for the existential reality of which it should speak, it totally incapacitates young minds for dealing with actual experience. They might remind us that the reality to which a book must always refer is a living language, given order and form in the creative process, referring always to an actual and specifically located way of life—and not to a dream. These novels should alert us to the fact that the book has been more able to transmit the dream than any medium previously known to man (it is surpassed now only by the "image industries"—which pander to the very lowest part of our nature: that sluggish, apathetic side of us that is a very glutton for passive, unearned experience.)

What should be the college English professor's responsibility in this matter of more reading for more students? One cannot ask this question, of

course, without ascertaining, first of all the English professor's true subject. What, as a matter of fact, does he profess? In order to discern any sort of answer to this question, one must see the English professor in relation to the whole university, rather than confined to his specialization within the English major program.

When we look at him as he fits into the entity that is a university, we see, I believe, that the college teacher of English should be the guardian of a language for a culture and that his work is, primarily, the enabling of all university students—not merely English majors—to use this language with intelligence and taste in both reading and writing. To be *guardian* of a language implies that instead of being essentially grammarian, linguist, semanticist, or historian of letters, he must be a master of the arts of rhetoric and poetics. His body of knowledge is the poetic, or literary, tradition.

Not mere books, then—but the literary tradition: this is our subject, this is our discipline. And to preserve the vitality of the literary tradition involves several subsidiary duties: to prevent the corruption of the language, to prevent the degradation of the image; to keep alive and vital the human values embodied in literature—what Faulkner has called “the old verities”; and finally, on the highest and most refined level, to preserve taste.

How can the English professor accomplish these tasks, huge and comprehensive as they are? If he is to attempt them at all, he must make the best possible use of the student's two required years of English study, particularly the freshman year. This first year is the most formative of the student's life; during this period he is in pursuit of the elusive ideal; he stands as yet in some awe of college. By a responsibly arranged program of difficult reading and writing, he can be made to submit to that discipline which will make him a fit person to join in the quest for knowledge. The college professor first of all then must refuse to settle for a freshman year made up of a dogged review of grammar and usage, with a little light reading on the side. He has been too easily bullied by the business professor, the engineer, the social scientist—even by our friends in foreign languages—into teaching technical and specialized courses. He must assert his own authority to determine the approaches to composition as being rhetoric and style, quite proper college concerns; he must demand that grammar and logic be studied successfully at the secondary level.

Second: in accepting his task as the guardianship of language and a literary tradition (instead of merely “English”), the English professor can refuse to let the classics die. He can abjure the stereotypes that

inveigh against translations and recognize that college students, like college professors, are sensitive enough to the meta-language—and to good translations—to gain the impact of great works written in other languages. He can abjure, too, the cliché of “world literature,” that vague concept that has implied a kind of collector’s sampling of curiosities from other (and strange) cultures. It is *our* literary tradition (studied in English) of which I speak. Indeed, the college English professor must insist that the masterpieces of Western civilization be the property of the student; for, without them, English and American literature lose their referential significance and become virtually meaningless.

A third course the English professor can follow is to resist any infiltration of the curriculum by the cheap, the flashy, the merely attractive, the middlebrow. He can refuse to act as salesman for the Book of the Month Club and can clear out of his head any nonsense to the effect that mediocre students should be taught mediocre literature. (Most students have always been mediocre; good literature has always been one of the chief influences for making them not mediocre.) It is permissible, of course, for students to read science fiction and best sellers on their own; it is not proper for them to study these works in class. Where is the protest, we might ask ourselves, that should be issuing from English Departments all over the nation against the inclusion of *To Kill A Mockingbird* in so many English programs? Where is our protest against the widespread popularity in college English classes of *Catcher in the Rye* and now *Lord of the Flies*? just as a few decades ago, the uncritical acceptance of *Our Town* and, later, *Death of a Salesman* and *JB* provoked no outcries. Do we not find in ourselves a subtle anti-intellectualism shown by a subtle scorn for the great in our own day, to be found in such opinions as that Eliot is pretentious, Faulkner an obscurantist, Ransom, academic, Flannery O’Connor “emotionally disturbed.”

Do we not have the obligation of making clear to ourselves and to our students that any good literature requires some effort on the part of the reader? that it is likely not to be immediately appealing; that, in fact, the process of acquiring the vision of some of the greatest classics may turn out to be dull and tedious? We have somehow not managed to draw the right conclusions from the fact that Shakespeare is many times obscure, Milton a bit heavy, Keats somewhat enigmatic, Donne esoteric and puzzling. All good literature manages, somehow, to go against the grain, to trouble and perplex, to humiliate us in the process of our studying it. But have we not the responsibility of applying to the literature of our own day the standards we have learned from studying established authors of the past? *As English professors, then, we can have nothing*

*official to do with trivial literature.* (It should be obvious that I am not referring here to the comic, which is a quite serious mode of literary vision.) We must make clear to ourselves and to our students that genuine literature always achieves its heights through a deeper penetration of the finite, the recalcitrant, the actual. Indeed, the theme of all great creative works could be said to be the passage from the Gospel of John quoted at the beginning of *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Except a corn of wheat fall to the earth and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit."

It is this falling to earth and dying that demolishes the narcissistic dream; it is the process of honest drudgery in the acquisition of a creative insight that keeps it from having the terrible clarity of the "pure idea."

Our responsibility as English professors is to make our students read, with discipline and rigor, and in some sort of order, those works making up the great literary tradition that is our heritage.

GEARY BLANKENSHIP

## *Dismemberment*

*(For Robert Dupree)*

When the steins are filled, libations made  
And bread is broken round the table's edge  
Gemütlichkeit grows from the ash-filled hearth;  
Again its fertile trunk begins to braid

The waiting branches into fruitful vine.  
These branches share the sap of Western blood  
Which fed Oedipus and Ishmael;  
And tendril branches squeeze grapes into wine.

But on the vine's thick round a gaping scar  
Is healing slowly, where a great branch fell  
To other earth and made a nutrient loam.  
The scar heals slowly, leaving not a mar  
But medals such as Southern widows tell  
To prove their husbands, Peterlike, fed Rome.

ROBERT DUPREE

## *I Thought As A Child*

When I was still a child, it seemed  
that saintly faces were sunbeamed,  
and every chapel was the temple  
of my eye. The world was ample  
not so much with things of God  
as things invisible, and odd  
as it may sound, the spirit was  
more solid than the flesh because  
my sacred sense refused alloy.

Then I became an altar boy,  
while still a child, and suddenly  
saw the things we shouldn't see:  
the altar dimmed in so much light,  
Christ looked naked at near sight,  
the father coughed some when he said  
his Latin. I wished I were dead.  
My ghostly spirit thought it phony  
To see such things in ceremony.

I lived and learned that priests are men  
as well as saints, and when they sin,  
it's more in fact and less in lesson  
that clergymen require confession.  
I found that churches too get dirty,  
are cleaned and scrubbed, and that if thirty  
pieces paid our Lord away,  
parishes need more to stay.



At length I died, though just before  
I did they had the church's chore  
performed. The oil put on my head  
was the priest's; the lemon, bread,  
and candles all were mine, and these  
were all my dying sense could seize  
before my fanning body saw  
lemon taste and odor thaw  
into their darker, deeper glow.  
I knew when I got up to go  
that spirit has an earthy scent  
if it's dignified and meant.

MADELEINE BECAN

## *The Haymaker*

The fields of earth were never meant to stay  
Spring-green throughout the progress of the battle.  
The weeds and grass were preconceived as hay  
By one who needed fodder for his cattle.

The herd dreams green in spring's content, to graze  
Unconscious of the brevity of pleasure.  
The withered autumn meadow in the phase  
Of death demands a most untimely measure.

Is love, like grass, an act of death to grass,  
Submission to the pain of trampling wages,  
Or is it that the scathing blade must pass  
And cut according to the mower's gauges?

MADELEINE BECAN

## *To The Fisherman*

In winter's flake and flutter of cold  
The sleeping sting huddles under the frost  
And only on the land can I feel lost  
Remembering you grown old  
Like leaves and winds of autumn's trees  
Of many years and seas.

A wind-voice falsely loves the lake  
And lisps in the fright of thunder and tide,  
Snaps its brief accents across the wide  
Sands, wind-whipped, bit by the break  
Of waters hitting the splitting trees  
In dripping lethargies.

The stripped fish scream at the night-tossed bait  
And shore-thrown in the wake of a wave  
The line hangs limp and the sea is a grave  
For you; and the fish still wait  
In the numbness of wet antipathies  
Of dark and wind-finned trees.

RICHARD BAKER

## *The Boy Not For a Horse*

The boy will befriend the horse in the fields  
This summer while the mulberry trees silken  
And the grass grows thin under hoof.  
The man patches the stable and pours  
The grain from the fields to feed the cows  
Too, and the bulls eat the grain  
Which the boy's father or the man might have hand-  
Grown first to facture milk

Which the boy was too big to take from mother

But too twolegged to make by himself

But feeds the stallion by gallons of sweat  
At-a-time, at a time when the worms turn  
The trees to luxury white for weddings

When the boy surreyed from home with her

Who will groom her son in black

And black for carrioncarriages more plumed  
Than those of marriages. The bull will rend the boy.

The fields are the same

Whether there with heather and sheep

Or there with raingrown grain

That old men once

now machines with names

mowed and sowed, themselves

Wheat- or corn-colored, or here

Where fear rides behind a boy

On a horse

Both fed from the same wooden bin

And draped at night the same silken

Or homespun way according to the day

which light as shortshock hay

He will fellow until the first shiny

Yellow shows

Both to the mount and the no-account

Caretaker pouring all the while wheat

From the fields to the cows and bulls and trimming

The trees for this final feat

and the boy learns

A name on the animal his father or the not-

So-old caretaker gave and his mother

Still-seminal grew to have him given,

(The fields are the same) turning shade

As the bulls black like loam for the seed

Sown and grown with only the caretaker

Standing between

Not only standing but handing sown

For one to grown for the other to bring

The boy to the day when the name will be made

And the worms will weave the final cloth—

the bull and the boy.

RICHARD BAKER

## *The Thomas Cat*

The thomas cat no longer rampant rests  
rests his scarred carcass against the once-sapling  
porch of the mansion his masters built by tying  
things together

                  together the different barks  
and grains without the use of nails but strips slipped between  
and around and tight at last

                  at last the sun  
soaked the fluids from the treelings and the feline lying  
all but gutted in the heat and the dust of generations  
upon generations on the iron finally used  
to hold the house against the metallic wind  
coming the alleyway with scraps of papyrus  
and wraps of tramps against the dirty glass.

The thomas cat hesitates his tail and waits  
waits for the mastiff down the dusty alley  
with an eye caught in his claw

                  the cat's light  
an eye the dog an ear in another fight  
or waits with a voice from his starving bowels for a last  
relief to come on three legs

                  come by blind  
to the roofless rooms and broken stairs climbed  
at night by brothers and sisters with one eye red  
the other steady on the clock they wound  
like a wrappingsheet to timeless silence.

The thomas cat waits in the waste of wood  
to meet the oily fishmonger on a cane following  
a whiffet and his wares along the Rue de la Vie  
with one eye to the drying sun the other done  
for long ago when hooks were his trade and nets  
played across the waters and men would wade  
out to catch the fish and listen to the lapping  
waves on the swimming clothes

God only

knows when that was for the red sun's drunk the sea  
and the fishmonger's the only memory of the wet and working  
days.

Now Argus and the Sphinx meet peacefully despite  
the bitter fighting to catch the chips and drips  
the old fisherman

not as old as the mansion but  
torn as tough as the waiting ones

drops  
from hardened hands daily when he stops.

RICHARD BAKER

*Don't Sail a Ship Without a Flag Unless*

Don't sail a ship without a flag unless  
(Greenthumb thanes laugh at whales and stagnant  
merchants don't sell sails.)  
  you trust the wind  
(Three sunburned ants were danced to death  
in banding sand while the wind whistled withered  
wisps of reed.)  
  and the wave  
  (which washed ashore  
more today bodies than yesterday bodies)  
And the sun  
  (Squint your eyes to see the cross  
or shut your eyes and the seaslut will pull taffy  
with your breath.)  
  to be moving hot blue and grave  
For you when the sails are furled and you keel the world.



HAL WOMACK

## *Early Death*

### I.

We avoid touching each other,  
Fearing the shell's implosion onto emptiness,  
But something is there  
There in the dark, behind the bleached facade,  
Something quiet,  
Struggling like a child against the giant's dark inward grip.  
Time passes and we are right.

### II.

Like an empty egg  
The day collapsing reveals  
A little blank void  
Of cars and green lawns,  
Floating faces, disconnected details  
Of inner jellied worlds of self-deceit.

### III.

And leave me, metaphysicians  
    (for truly there was hope) ;  
Bad reasons for worse beliefs  
Are the blinding squid-ink of the noosphere  
Protecting the public counselors  
And private dreams which have strangled love,  
Coming thieflike by night  
In dread loneliness of loss  
To wither warmth of moist mouths  
To mummify once honeyed thighs.

### IV.

    (a green oak leaf dropped in a  
    summer stream is now passing out of sight)  
Passing trivially . . .  
*Autumn is over the long leaves that love us*  
*And over the mice in the barley sheaves . . .*  
I cannot sing from a little gray room.

CAROL ANN BEESLEY

## *The Sound of Darkness*

I have heard the silent sound of darkness  
And I have seen it in a monkey's eye;  
Then have I felt its silent dark caress.

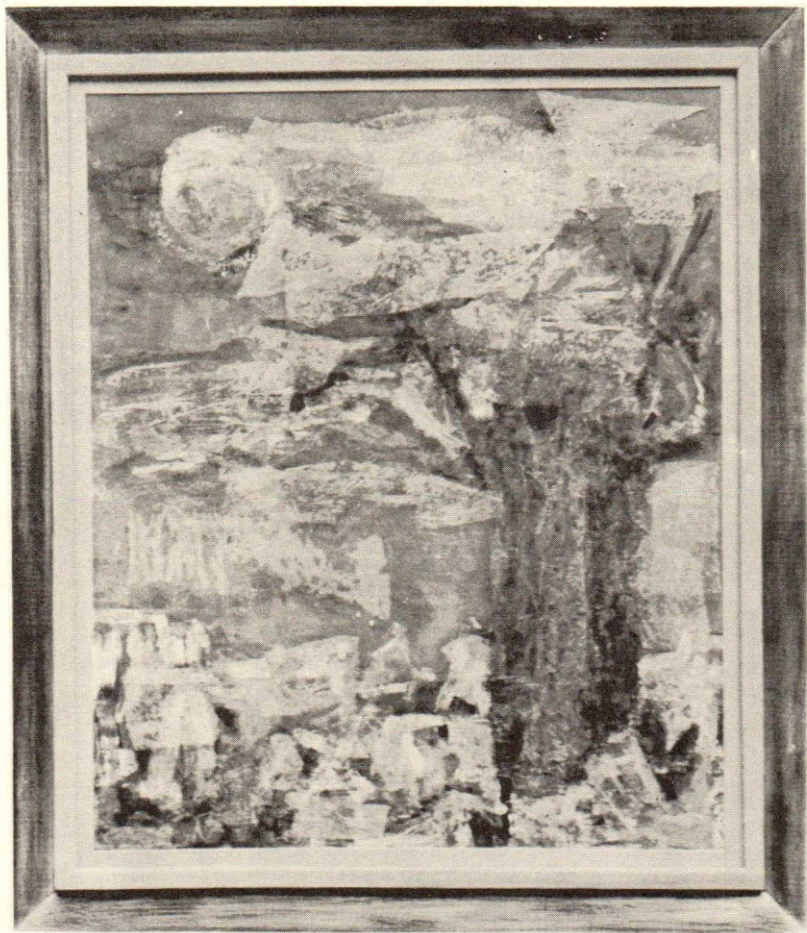
The severed vein Identity bloodless  
Floods inside and in this lullaby  
I have heard the silent sound of darkness.

When the trees the browning leaves dispossess  
And in the ticking of my time's last tie  
Then have I felt its silent dark caress.

As the stained-grey storm clouds coalesce  
And whispers come of the reaper scything rye,  
I have heard the silent sound of darkness.

In pawn shops full of things all matterless—  
The rings, guitars, and coo-coo clocks that sigh,  
Then have I felt its silent dark caress.

In all the hours alone, alone and faithless  
To wake at night and cry: "Eli! Eli!"  
Then have I felt its silent dark caress;  
I have heard the silent sound of darkness.



Clemance Romanet, *Retreat*, collage and watercolor, 18" x 24"



Clemance Romaneet, *The Second Coming*, colored lithoplate, 8" x 16"

JAMES HAFLEY

## *The Human Image in Contemporary Art*

O! now, for ever  
Farewell the Tranquill minde; farewell Content!  
Farewell the plumed Troope and the bigge Warres  
That make Ambition Virtue! O, farewell!  
Farewell the neighing Steed, and the Shrill Trumpe,  
The spirit-stirring Drum, the eare-piercing Fife,  
The Royall banner, and all Quality,  
Pride, Pomp and Circumstance of glorious Warre!  
And, O you mortall Engines, whose rude throates  
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,  
Farewell! Othello's Occupation's gone!

In this celebrated passage Shakespeare's great tragic hero, preoccupied to the point of outrage by the possibility of his wife's infidelity, bids a farewell to arms—to the dignity, the order, the certainty, the purpose and direction that have until now informed his life. In utter anguish he takes his leave of “the bigge Warres / That make Ambition Virtue,” the “Pride, Pomp and Circumstance of glorious Warre.” Let us see what happens when we compare Othello here with two famous twentieth-century literary heroes in irresistibly similar situations: they too are involved in warfare and they too have discovered grave difficulties in aligning their occupations with discordant elements in their personal lives. The first of these is Frederic Henry, hero of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, a title meant to remind us not only of Othello but also of another Renaissance figure, the speaker of a lyric by George Peele, who says in part

NOTE: Between December 1962 and April 1963 this essay was given in somewhat extended form, as a lecture, at De La Salle College, The Catholic Sisters College, Immaculata College, Dunbarton College, the University of Dallas, and the Laurel, Maryland, Branch of the American Association of University Women. Readers of Harold Rosenberg's *The Tradition of the New* and B. H. Friedman's *School of New York* will recognize my indebtedness to those excellent volumes; and I am also indebted, for at least one valuable insight, to Benjamin Lucow of the University of Colorado. The essay is printed here at the gracious request of Professor Louise S. Cowan, and is dedicated to my esteemed friend Professor Richard Zacha.

that "Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen, / Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green." Frederic Henry takes no such sad farewell as does Othello; instead he decides to desert and shortly before doing so he has this to say:

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignitv. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

Othello's speech is marked by elevation of style, frequency of exclamation points and a number of abstract words which for him have meaning; Frederic Henry's monologue is exactly different: understatement, colloquial rhythms, a spurning of abstract words for concrete ones which "were all you could say and have them mean anything." Henry's tone is ironic, Othello's sublime.

The second modern hero is Yossarian, from Joseph Heller's impressive novel *Catch-22*, published in 1961 and just now being widely discussed. Yossarian also deserts: even more than Frederic Henry, he is strikingly different from Othello, for whereas Othello associates the military with his richest identity, Yossarian associates it with a sham self he rejects. When Major Danby advises him that "Ideals are good, but people are sometimes not so good. You must try to look up at the big picture," "Yossarian rejected the advice with a skeptical shake of his head. "When I look up, I see people cashing in. I don't see heaven or saints or angels. I see people cashing in on every decent impulse and every human tragedy'." But here is Yossarian being psychoanalyzed:

"Well, do you know what you are? You're a frustrated, unhappy, disillusioned, undisciplined, maladjusted young man!" Major Sanderson's disposition seemed to mellow as he reeled off the uncomplimentary adjectives.

"Yes, sir," Yossarian agreed carefully. "I guess you're right."

"Of course I'm right. You're immature. You've been unable to adjust to the idea of war."

"Yes, sir."

"You have a morbid aversion to dying. You probably resent the fact that you're at war and might get your head blown off any second."

"I more than resent it, sir. I'm absolutely incensed."

"You have deep-seated survival anxieties. And you don't like bigots, bullies, snobs, or hypocrites. Subconsciously there are many people you hate."

"Consciously, sir, consciously," Yossarian corrected in an effort to help. "I hate them consciously."

"You're antagonistic to the idea of being robbed, exploited, degraded, humiliated or deceived. Misery depresses you. Ignorance depresses you. Persecution depresses you. Violence depresses you. Slums depress you. Greed depresses you. Crime depresses you. Corruption depresses you. You know, it wouldn't surprise me if you're a manic-depressive!"

"Yes, sir, perhaps I am."

"Don't try to deny it."

"I'm not denying it, sir," said Yossarian, pleased with the miraculous rapport that finally existed between them. "I agree with all you've said."

"Then you admit you're crazy, do you?"

"Crazy?" Yossarian was shocked. "What are you talking about? Why am I crazy? You're the one who's crazy!"

Major Sanderson turned red with indignation again and crashed both fists down upon his thighs. "Calling me crazy," he shouted in a sputtering rage, "is a typically sadistic and vindictive paranoiac reaction! You really are crazy!"

The chaplain in this novel rather summarizes what has been going on here when he reflects that "it was almost no trick at all . . . to turn vice into virtue and slander into truth, impotence into abstinence, arrogance into humility, plunder into philanthropy, thievery into honor, blasphemy into wisdom, brutality into patriotism, and sadism into justice. Anybody could do it; it required no brains at all. It merely required no character." Much later in *Catch-22*, when what has at first appeared to be macabre farce has become sheer horror, Yossarian hears a man surrounded by police nevertheless crying "Police! Help! Police!" "Yossarian smiled wryly at the futile and ridiculous cry for aid, then saw with a start that the words were ambiguous, realized with alarm that they were not, perhaps, intended as a call for police but as a heroic warning from the grave by a doomed friend to everyone who was *not* a policeman with a club and a gun and a mob of other policemen with clubs and guns to back him up. 'Help! Police!' the man had cried, and he could have been shouting of danger." Walking through Rome at night, confronted every-

where with brutality, hysteria and misery in the Eternal City, Yossarian "thought he knew how Christ must have felt as he walked through the world, like a psychiatrist through a ward full of nuts, like a victim through a prison full of thieves. What a welcome sight a leper must have been."

It requires no great acumen to realize that in each of these three literary works the army is in some way representative of society or social man, and that although for Othello the fullest individual expression is attainable through this social agency, for Frederic Henry and Yossarian occupation has threatened to destroy identity, to substitute empty abstraction for concrete fulfillment and formless conformity for some thoughtful realization of the individual self. These modern heroes are, on the face of things, cowards: they run away from combat, from social responsibility; they would pretty obviously steer clear of supermarkets and conventions and Madison Avenue and the Easter Parade. Othello is dramatic because he may lose his identity—and he very nearly does. Our two contemporary heroes, and of course I have chosen them as typical, are dramatic because they have no identity to lose, or at least no sense of one. They are exciting because they may find identity. They have nothing to lose by trying. The human image in contemporary literature, and in all contemporary art, can perhaps be described as the image of a person fully dressed in a recognizable uniform, and lacking only one thing: a face.

In fact, that is exactly the description of a well-known painting by Larry Rivers. It was done four years ago and is called "The Next to Last Confederate Soldier." He is seated before a Confederate flag, he is wearing a uniform and several medals, but he has no face; and he seems to be saying, as one looks at him, "Why should you want to see a face here? You have no face yourself."

Men without faces, novels and plays and films without plots, paintings and sculptures without subjects, dance without conventional positions, music without melody, presentation without representation: this is "the illusion of disillusion." I read recently about an art object that was made in the following way. The artist took a piece of white paper, splashed it with green paint, and fastened it to a wall. He then rolled a lawn-mower up to the base of the wall and leaned its handle against the paper. Finally, he splashed some of the same green paint onto the handle of the mower. One's first tendency, especially when one hasn't seen the work in question (and I haven't), is to laugh; but notice that this artist has performed the two requisites for an art work. First, he has selected: white paper, paint of a certain shade of green, and a lawn-mower—those three things from billions possible. Second, he has composed—he has placed these things



together and made, or attempted to make, one thing of them. In fact, he has attempted a complex fusion of two sorts of reality: the indoors, other-reality of a picture on the wall, and the outdoors, here-reality of a workaday lawn-mower. Had he simply wheeled in the mower, he would be no artist: the manufacturer of the mower was responsible for its composition and for the selection that preceded composition. Yet we may still laugh and ask, But what does it *mean*? Is the green paint supposed to be grass? No, probably not; for had he wanted grass, an artist who used a real mower would have used real grass — even grass pasted onto the paper and the handle. Well, then, what *does* it mean? I suspect (and I feel comfortably free to take liberties of fancy with this unseen work) that it “means” nothing in the sense in which “meaning” is conceptual signification. It resists that: it refuses to be equated and thus lost in abstract words just as Frederic Henry did. Explicated into terms other than itself, it would begin to lose its identity — and identity is what it triumphantly *has* as it is. It “means,” then, that paper — the world of art — and lawn-mower — the world of utility — have been made into one thing with the addition of paint (as in pictures) that is green (as in grass). Looking at it, we could contemplate a fusion of two normally separated areas of experience which, though fused, still retain their separateness. It means more in the way the marriage of two persons does than in the way a passage of Aristotle does.

Here is another dimension of the human image as one sees it reflected in contemporary art. There tends to be a distrust of intellectual knowledge and a reliance upon sorts of knowledge (intuitive, call them, or psychic or symbolic or imaginative) with which the intellect ultimately cannot cope on its own grounds. Then can it be shared, as the same experience, by two persons or many—or will it be a different, because conceptually incommunicable, experience for each? Well, theoretically it cannot be shared; but then theoretically nothing *can*. But for practical purposes we may suppose that it can be shared as the feel of a cold wind, or the touch of a hot stove, or the taste of brussels sprouts are shared. Indeed, what I have said about the lawn-mower art work at least begins to communicate; whereas who on earth could describe the taste of brussels sprouts save by analogy to other tastes equally indescribable? Contemporary art is not half so difficult as spinach. The modern artist tends, then, to feel that the intellect may betray other ways of knowing, and so to appeal to extra-intellectual ways primarily, just as absolute music has always done.

For the choreographer, painter and sculptor, and in slightly different ways for the writer, symbol and abstraction are the two most common modes of working beyond concept or representation. The paintings of

Joan Miro are an ideal example of the blending of symbol with abstraction — his “Red Sun” at the Phillips Gallery in Washington is an instance of esoteric, cabalistic symbol composed in abstraction — but for the past fifteen years or so painters have tended towards what has been variously called “abstract expressionism” or “action painting.” The paintings of Franz Kline or Grace Hartigan, for example, are characteristically not imitations of actions but themselves the actions: subject and object become one, as the action of painting the picture (and I mean here the movements, often of a nature involving the whole body) becomes, as object, the subject of the painting. The unique experience of producing the painting—one to which the artist has committed his inner self and identity—becomes, as the painting itself, a sort of inscape for that identity and a means of discovering and exploring it. The debt to existentialism, with its notion that there is “no reality except in action,” is fairly obvious; but the pictorial effect is—and the artists tell us that they strive for this—of process rather than “content,” event rather than object. The paintings are dynamic, open forms, and the movement that produces them becomes, in them, an energy sometimes profoundly powerful. We have all heard stories of how, say, Jackson Pollock created his paintings, spreading great canvases out upon the floor, and then throwing, or dribbling, or pouring, or scattering, pigment and virtually any other adhesive material upon them; finally cutting them up into paintings. What we sometimes fail to remember is the initial selection of colors, textures and forms, and the final discarding of any but successful canvases or portions of canvases. The great Pollack painting in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, “Autumn Rhythm,” is, for example, composed of autumn colors in abstract forms that nevertheless suggest violent swirling movement as of leaves in an October wind. Yet we do not see leaves; we see instead a controlled movement, a static movement after all, and the triumph of a spatial art over its static limitations.

While I was looking at this painting, one afternoon last summer, a woman who had also been looking at it asked me if I liked it. When I said that I did, she asked “What do you see in it?” Since that is an ambiguous question, I asked her what she herself wanted to see in it. “Well, *something*,” she said; “but I can’t make anything *out*.” She was clearly wanting the representation of some object from outside the world of the painting, and very soon indeed, with a shrug of her shoulders, she made a notation in her notebook and walked away. Later, I saw her gazing with obvious satisfaction at a painting of a young girl by Titian; or rather, not at the painting, but at the girl—certainly a girl—whom she was re-creating from some pigment on a canvas. Yet children looking at the Pollack—and at a show of twentieth-century abstract painting

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across at the Guggenheim—appeared to be quite satisfied. It is always adults who say that they know five-year-old children who can paint as well as Raymond Parker or Mark Rothko: I have never heard a child comment in this way. Children, for whom many shapes “known” to us—that is, shapes which we have ceased to see except in conceptual terms—have no such “known” meaning, can very much enjoy abstraction, which they experience as a dynamic immediacy of color, form, and texture; they do not approach a painting with pre-conceived notions of what they wish to see, and so they see what is *there*, however simply. Children, similarly, can enjoy—even if they miss its pattern—some contemporary music (that, for instance, which is atonal or polychromatic) much more than can adults who by listening impatiently for what is *not* there miss what *is*. And if, in this abstraction, the artist finds means of expressing identity, of imaging man as I have already suggested, so too he images man the artist, the maker; the maker, perhaps, in Emily Dennis’s phrase, of an “ordered creation of chaos.”

As we have all noticed in recent issues of the newspapers, *Pravda* has, following Premier Khrushchev’s complaints about Russian abstract painting, attacked “abstractionist aberrations” as “the ideal of jaded businessmen, of the Philistine who goes for escapist art.” Considering the strongly didactic flavor of most contemporary Russian art—think of Pasternak or Yevtushenko among the writers—it is not surprising that Russia would abjure abstraction: if it is “aberration,” what is implied is that there exists some universal norm to which each individual artist must adjust (remember that if the Russians don’t like our art, they do like our supermarkets); if it is “escapist,” what is meant is evidently that it does not depict happy peasants or ulcerous capitalists, or otherwise engage itself in behalf of a cultural-political cause. A totalitarian regime is for obvious reasons not going to sympathize with the search for identity.

But you may also have noticed in recent newspapers that the director of the Baltimore Zoo has gone to the pains of testing Premier Khrushchev’s critique that “one isn’t able to tell if [abstractions] were drawn by the hand of a man or smeared by the tail of a donkey.” Mr. Arthur Watson, the Zoo’s director, brought supplies to a resident Mexican burro named Jack, who produced a painting called “Black Whisk,” described by an innocent art instructor as possessing a Chinese delicacy and sensitivity. Or did Jack produce the painting? Who selected the materials? Who chose a paintbrush by dipping Jack’s tail into black paint? Who set up the easel within meaningful distance of that tail? Who, finally, after who knows how many whisks, selected this one canvas and decided upon it as satisfactory? I feel quite certain that Jack cannot be considered the artist

in this case, any more than a conventional camel-hair paint brush could be in another, although I am not prepared to say that the painting wasn't in fact produced by a jackass. Mr. Watson, in any event, will be in for trouble enough if the House Committee on Un-American Activities hears that his views coincide with Premier Khrushchev's on this subject.

If, in some ways, then, abstract expressionism in art, an "ordered creation of chaos," images man as engaged in an extra-intellectual, concrete quest for his identity—if he is there trying to catch himself in the act—it bears some relation to such literary phenomena as the theater of the absurd or the novel of the *nouvelle vague*, where conventional plot and characterization are replaced by ambiguities which at once question the certainty with which any event or person can be "known" and seek to break through set patterns of behavior to reveal the human energy, the human spirit, imprisoned within them. The plays of Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter; the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Claude Simon, Michel Butor; the films of Robbe-Grillet and Ingmar Bergman: different as these are, they seem to have in common themes of quest and question; and although they may at times suggest man as hopelessly confused, they also show him as, by the very fact of searching, usually positing something to be found. It is almost impossible for literature to be abstract (the very word *abstract* has a literary meaning much different from its pictorial one) because words cannot ultimately be divorced from their referents even if at times we may have the illusion of feeling them so divorced.

Five themes, five sources of dramatic conflict, seem to dominate contemporary literature; they are (1) alienation, of all sorts; (2) failure in communion or communication on any significant level; (3) the value and values of democracy; (4) the exploration of meaningful or possibly meaningful rationales of human experience; (5) fear for an unresolved animality in man. (One might add a sixth: the attempt at reconciliation of opposing parts of the self.) All of these can be seen together in what seems to me one of the great plays of the age, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*; and here all of them are exercised dramatically as Vladimir struggles to discover his identity and the identity of Godot (a name significantly composed of God and Nothingness). At the end of the play Vladimir is asked, by the boy who may or may not have seen Godot, if he has any message for Godot. "Tell him that you saw me," Vladimir answers; and he adds "You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me tomorrow that you never saw me!" Without Godot, Vladimir cannot be certain of anything — even really of his own existence much less of his individual identity. This is a hideous world, in which nothing at all is

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certain; yet, despite speaking of suicide, Vladimir and Estragon continue to wait, and their waiting is a vindication of the dignity of man; it reminds me always of T. S. Eliot's lines

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

And elsewhere in this experimental literature — in which the characters are often not named at all, and in which very often we have no idea, as we read, even of how many persons are involved in a particular scene, much less of who is at any one point speaking; in which no one, certainly not the reader, can be sure of what has occurred or is occurring, and thus no one can be sure of what response is called for by any situation — in this literature there emerges an image of man as either wearing a mask or having no face whatsoever, either playing someone else's role or having no role to play. Yet despite this rather uncomfortable state of affairs, contemporary art is not basically doleful or very often morbid: it is the excitement of the challenge, on the part of those willing to accept it, that the artist emphasizes; and the certainty, amid all of these uncertainties, that one must rejoice to find himself not accounted for simply in terms of the contents of his supermarket cart.

If, as I have been suggesting, contemporary art is in many ways quite different from that of the Renaissance, it is in many ways quite similar to that of the Middle Ages. The paintings of Giotto, with their symbolic distortion of the human figure; those of, say, Gaddi, with their diminution of the human figure so that it is sparse and colorless against backgrounds of ornate grandeur and glowing color — these reflect the human image much as it seems today when man is confronted with the vastnesses of space in relation to which he can feel, as a character in Flannery O'Connor's latest work has suggested, something like the first fish who managed to crawl out of the water and lay gasping on the shores of an unknown world. Hemingway's hero, in a 1929 novel, is defeated and exhausted by his isolation and lack of sustained commitment; Heller's, in 1960, simply refuses to submit or be exhausted.

I have spent most of my time upon one type — albeit the major type decidedly — of contemporary art: that in which the work gives us not so much an account of a subject as a symbol of a subject, that in which a calculated incompleteness suggests the incompleteness, hence the dynamic nature, of life itself. Even here, I have grossly neglected, as you may have noticed, the art of music — and that is because music tends usually to be a generation behind the other arts as far as "schools" are concerned. I can

mention, however, that the concern of much modern music with the neo-primitive (and we can include music ranging from the symphonic work of Chavez, Villa-Lobos, Ginastera, and the jazz of Dave Brubeck, all the way to the commercial dislocations of folk music committed by a certain loud-shirted trio on the campus circuit) parallels the interest of all the other arts in the neo-primitive — symbolic, radical, extra-intellectual, mysterious, incantatory. Also, however, I may have seemed to be neglecting what some of you know as *neo-realism*: novels like *Room at the Top* and those of others of the so-called Angry Young Men; plays like *Look Back in Anger*; films like “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner”; paintings like those of Edward Hopper or Joseph Hirsch. These, however, as far as the human image is concerned, simply show one the other side of the coin: here are emphasized the sterility, the vacancy and deadliness of the life without identity or of the phony search for self that is actually no more than an assertion of sheer stereotype. In these works usually, realistic techniques are used to break through the limitations of a realistic attitude — to represent finally, not the fullness of the surface, but the emptiness of the depths beyond that, and of people without at least some awareness of the possibilities of the existence of those depths. Elder Olson, in a recent set of epigrammatic little verses called “Exhibition of Modern Art,” has nicely — if with a great debt to Wallace Stevens — delineated certain attitudes towards modern art that also suggest the samenesses between humans and their artistic reflections even when they are unaware of these. For instance,

The girl with orange hair complains  
 (one of her eyes is blue, the other brown)  
 Because the hair of the painted girl is green.

We are at least as strange as the “strange” art we sometimes encounter. And again,

“Nothing looks like that! What’s it called?”  
 “Nothing.”

What seems “obscure” to us in contemporary art of some sorts is very possibly our *own* obscurity, which the artist has successfully expressed: it is *we* who are difficult, and hence the poem or the music or the painting seems to be; it is *we* who look like the products of a five-year-old, or who seem to have no order, no pattern, nothing *there*. And — though I do not consider this to be a major purpose of art — our examining an art-work with a view to seeing ourselves as others see us is perhaps not, at any rate, the most horrifying way in which we can manhandle poor Beauty, though it may very well be the worst way in which Beauty can manhandle us.

DAMIAN FANDAL, O.P.

## *The Necessity of Creativity*

A convocation address to the graduating seniors at the University of Dallas, May 21, 1963.

“ . . . A life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before.”

The words are thirteen years old now, but they express a perennial truth, as valid for today and tomorrow as on the day in 1950 when, in acceptance of his Nobel Prize for Literature, William Faulkner spoke them. The great American novelist left to mankind a larger achievement than will be possible for most individuals in their respective fields. Genius is rare and productive genius rarer still. But each man is called to be a maker, “to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before”; and with due apology for such fragile embroidery, I should like to suggest some of the implications of Mr. Faulkner's credo.

On Saturday next, when the University of Dallas offers to you, its graduating seniors, the certification of its diploma, you may very well heave the customary sigh of satisfaction. While no one will wonder at your exhalation, you should reflect in the very moment of your justifiable pride of accomplishment, at the meaning of the diploma which you clutch so greedily. Because, of course, the sheepskin *will* have been awarded you at a commencement! Of that diploma, then, you must understand that it is more than a testimony to the past four years. Rather it is a precept — a commission, if you will, given by the University for the future, obligating you to be creative, to be a maker “of something which did not exist before.”

How often have you heard during the past four years that man can only be satisfactorily defined as a rational animal. Uniting within himself the intangible wonders of God's unseen, spiritual creation and the fascinating palpability of the material cosmos, the human being is an ever-changing, pulsating unity, devised of paradoxical components: of the

spiritual and the material, of the infinite and the finite, of the changeless and the changeable, of the rational and the animal. Given a reach beyond the visible universe, he is obviously equipped to be its master. Given a rationality, he is evidently endowed to impress his likeness upon the surroundings which he governs. By reason of intellect and will, every man is destined to seek the true and to pursue the good, a destiny which he must fulfill within a human setting, using the things of the material kingdom which he rules and the situations and events which confront him.

To seek the true and pursue the good is to be a maker. Genuinely to accomplish his destiny, the individual personality must create. The imperative here must not be overlooked. It is a natural imperative, arising from the very consequences of what a man is and is meant to be. So complete is this imperative that it can have no opposition except its own contradiction. A man must be a maker, or he is a destroyer. If he does not create, he perforce annihilates. One hears a great deal in the contemporary period of *mediocrity*, a word that can be taken in different senses. "Moderate ability," "ordinary," or "disinterestedness towards an issue" may be among its legitimate meanings. But if "mediocrity" implies — as so often it seems to imply — a neutrality with regard to basic human values, then the validity of this meaning must be denied. Wherever a man's humanness is at stake, by reason of the natural imperative involved, one cannot be neutral. One must be a maker or a destroyer. The individual who cares but little for important political issues is a destroyer; the person who is not a humble patron of the arts is a destroyer; the man of affairs who will take the business world as he finds it, leaving it unaffected by his presence, is a destroyer; the citizen who is simply not interested in the racial, or moral, or educational issues of the day is a destroyer. (And all of this, with his higher vision of faith, the Christian should know very well because he can reflect upon the Savior's warning: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." [Mt. 12:30].)

But to be a maker one does not need the talents or the opportunities of a successful genius. Each man has a personal capacity, differing in kind and in measure from the capacity of his peers. Each man has a personal capacity that is unique, identical to that of no other man. And each is placed into an identity of circumstances shared with no other human being. Each man's talent, therefore, conditioned by his highly individualized circumstances offer him an opportunity to be a creator, to produce like Charles Peguy's Joan of Arc, a something new, something no one has ever seen, something no one has ever heard of — at least, within his own surroundings and in the realm of his own commitment.



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With Mr. Faulkner one must insist that a man's creativity must proceed "out of the materials of the human spirit," from the depths of a personal dedication to the true and the good, from the resources of knowledge and love. The human paradox is nowhere so apparent as here. The man who creates must employ the people and the things which surround him in all that he produces, and yet his creation must truly be from within. The external objects which the maker employs are not unimportant. But they are quite secondary to the materials of the spirit. Almost anyone can arrange sounds, but only the artist's native genius creates music; many people preside in classrooms, but only the teacher who has an inner devotion to a discipline and to human values is a maker; many technicians occupy the laboratory, but only the scientist whose eagerness stems from an interior excitement can manifest creativity. One can see the same sort of thing in the process of learning. This, too, is a creation that is wrought ultimately from within the individual (as indicated by the very word *education*; a drawing out, a leading forth). An instructor can remove many impediments to knowledge, can dramatize the true, demonstrate the false, or obviate the valueless. But, in the end, learning is an interior process, a vital activity that is only conditioned by the efforts of the professor.

"To create out of the materials of the human spirit." There must always be new things, not only because created, material nature is a cyclical process of new beginnings, not only because primal matter is ceaselessly giving up its forms in search of newer and better ones, not only because the dead of winter is ever succeeded by revitalizing spring. New things there must always be because the mind and will of man are never quiet. In the constant flow of time and circumstance, each individual has his opportunity for new discoveries, new applications of old lessons, new emphasis of an ancient truth — however limited in scope and restricted in place and time the newness of these things might be. Man is made to be a maker; not a manipulator of people and things; but an employer of them with docility to his own limitations and theirs. Why do artists keep painting pictures, or philosophers continue inquiry, or businessmen unceasingly seek new methods? Why can we not be content with the art and the philosophy of antiquity or the "proven" methods of past decades? We cannot be because life is a movement — a movement from within — and human life is principally the life of the spirit, the movement of rationality which must be concerned with the make-up of material things and with the ever-changing relationships of these things among themselves; but which, most importantly, must be concerned with the make-up of individual human personalities and the undulating inter-relationships

which bind them together. About all of this, a man must be creatively active or else, because he cannot call life-movement to a halt, he will bring decay and destruction to the things toward which he is indifferent.

Here, then, is the reason for the experience in the humanities which the University has offered to you. With all of its flaws, its shortcomings, its failures in the achievement of ideals, the University's program has been an opportunity for you, in restricted, controlled circumstances, to begin the work of creativity which is yours. You leave the campus better than when you arrived in the degree in which you have made yourself better, according as you have utilized the climate and the social buffers, the order and experience of this institution and its personnel. Now you are apprenticed to your culture (Cf. *The Initial Self-Study Report of The University of Dallas* [Dallas, Texas, 1962], p. 11), equipped with an interior discipline, a fund of knowledge, the beginnings of intellectual order with which you may undertake to evolve yourself into the whole man and, at the same time, impress the distinctiveness of your personality upon the people and things of your surroundings.

Whether, consequently, you have elected to enter the professional world of law, or medicine, or business, or education, or art, or athletics; or whether you plan to devote yourself to the rearing of a family, the University *will* impose upon you next Saturday not a privilege only but an obligation: the obligation to contribute with originality to the society in which you live.

"Not for glory and least of all for profit . . ." This obligation embraces both your mind and your will, knowledge and love. It is not enough to be an intellectual, a knower. How many perversions have been injected into our culture by those who were great cultivators of the mind, who sought nothing but the acclaim of others or who strove to create new things only for themselves! "The materials of the human spirit" include the action of the will which we call love. For love leads a man forth from the captivity of selfishness, inclining him to focus not upon himself but upon other personalities. The contemporary writer, Gerald Vann, has everywhere insisted on the inseparability of knowledge and love if one is to be free for creative action in the world:

Truth makes us free, (he writes) but love makes us willing servants. Every human being is unique, and has a sort of infinity about him: every human being has a divine destiny, and society exists to serve it. On the other hand, every human being is a part of society, and must serve society. There seems to be an insoluble contradiction, but there is not; for the divine destiny is to love, and love means the will to serve. If we think of the two things as separate we shall think them contradictory; on the one

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side, we shall have selfishness preying on society, on the other, we shall have tyranny degrading men and women. But if we know what it means to be possessed by the truth, we shall know what love means; and then we shall not keep the two things separate, we shall, of necessity, put them together; and we shall have neither selfishness nor tyranny, but a (society). (*The Heart of Man* (New York: Longmans, 1945) p. 120).

The possibility of your contributing substantially to your society may seem to be out of the question. In truth, you might argue that you have only meager gifts. You *should* argue that a dedicated love is never meager, that an inner devotion to the truths we call humanities can wholly transform moderate talent and intellectual ability. In tendering each of you a diploma, it is the hope of the men and women who exercise this University's responsibilities that you shall, each in his own proportion, undertake "a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before."



Don Scholl, *Christ Meets the Women of Jerusalem*, terra cotta, 13" x 18"



Don Scholl, *Head of Christ*, terra cotta, 18"

SISTER FRANCIS MARIE, S.S.M.N.

## *History As A Moral Lesson*

A Review of M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty*, Chicago: St. Martin Press, 1961.

An age that laments "managed news," considering it an encroachment on a fundamental principle of freedom and democracy, will find sheer whimsicality in a time four centuries ago when writers of history had to be cautious in their very choice of subject. Sir Walter Raleigh knew, however, that "who-so-ever in writing a modern History, shall follow truth too near the heels, [shall find] it may happily strike out his teeth." Raleigh took precaution and chose as his scope, not Elizabethan England, but the world of the "eldest times." But even "the eldest times" were not always safe subjects. As a matter of fact a passage of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* was expunged in 1598 for anti-patriotic criticism in a situation that pertained to a time two hundred years before. To the Elizabethan, history was a living force, a mirror wherein the present might see itself and predict its future by its past.

M. M. Reese in his admirable study of Shakespeare's history plays, *The Cease of Majesty*, examines the didactic duty imposed on Shakespeare and other writers of the Tudor age. He offers his book as a "modest corrective" to the misinformed view that Shakespeare was indifferent to politics. His book is concerned with the period chosen by Shakespeare to investigate the nature of political power — England from Richard II to Richard III, from 1377 to 1485. Reese summarizes the Renaissance belief that history has functions beyond the mere recording of events: it was "the interplay of moral forces; the nurse of statesmen and a mirror to contemporary life; a storehouse of examples; the study of the self-determining individual; a spur to patriotic emulation and endeavor; a demonstration of God's providence." (p. 88) Such was the common heritage of the Elizabethan that Shakespeare acknowledged and enriched in his English history plays. His quest was not the simple one of merely ascertaining what had happened in the past. His was an age before

scientism had invaded the realm of the humanities, an age that could condone some liberty in the interpretation of history for the sake of the creative work that its writers were producing, which its populace was accepting as a guide for living. Shakespeare believed, Reese points out, that the poet-historian's mission was in very fact the interpretation of the past for the enlightenment of the present; but that enlightenment had necessarily to be a revelation of the effects of a ruler's evil choices as well as of his heroic and inspiring action. In all his plays on English history, Shakespeare is plumbing the nature of kingship and the duties of a monarch to his subjects.

The phrase Reese chose for the title of his study of kingship is culled from a speech of Rosencrantz to Claudius. The speech, which the politic Claudius chooses to ignore, makes patent the essence of majesty — "that instinct in mankind," Reese epitomizes, "that unites them not just for their own preservation but for the attainment of virtue." (p. viii) In examining the nature of this union and of aberrations from it, Shakespeare demonstrates its universality and its pertinence to Elizabethan England, although his investigations ostensibly inquire into an age two centuries earlier. Reese then considers Shakespeare's close adherence to the belief of the reciprocity of "majesty" and notes the boundaries imposed on artistic expression by the facts of history. After *Henry V* Shakespeare wrote no more history; but, Reese maintains, "the great political virtues of obedience, love, and disciplined dedication have a strength and permanence that carry them triumphantly through the disordered world of Shakespearean tragedy." (p. 334) The tensions set up in Shakespeare's poetic vision of history do not resolve, then, but rather distill into the purer essence of tragedy.

Mr. Reese's study is a capable and penetrating rediscovery of a theme pervasive not only in the history plays as such, but in all of Shakespeare's works. Mr. Reese does not fail to call into account his own contemporary society. He points out that Shakespeare's rebels of the caliber of Cade are untrained leaders who misuse power; these men easily lead astray the populace, whose "innocence delivers them hand and foot to any adventurer with enough native wit to make the right promises and find a few appropriate sacrifices." The modern reader need not read the epithet "Big brother" to know the pertinence of the situation to our own times. Mr. Reese pursues the point: "The difference [between the men of the sixteenth century and of the twentieth] is that they took for granted the existence of legal and customary restraints that have largely disappeared in the highly centralized communities of the modern world." (p. 129)

The book has relevance to the current of criticism which has flowed

in steady stream from the pens of those who, unperturbed by the flood of print that questions the very existence of the man Shakespeare, still find satisfaction in plumbing the depths of the genius of the dramatist. The history plays contributed greatly to the making of that great artist, contributed in ways that Mr. Reese has delineated and in ways that other writers from Tillyard and Ribner to Traversi and Knight have suggested and explored. This present volume should become an honored part of that growing reservoir of criticism.



RICHARD McNALLY

## *Agrarianism Reconsidered*

A Review of Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962.

In 1930 twelve men, Southerners of various callings, published a group of essays entitled *I'll Take My Stand*. Their stand defended the Agrarian way of life as opposed to the Industrial. The book met with only moderate success, and was subsequently overlooked in the confusion and despair of the Depression, the very event which it sought to mitigate.

Thirty-three years have passed since the Agrarians published their manifesto. Industrialism and its accompanying standardization have continued to make paralyzing inroads into traditional American culture, even in the Agrarian stronghold, the South. American life has become impersonal and mechanically routine, its culture largely centered around a ceaseless search for sensation. To the few who view this situation with fear, little remains except to be guided by the wisdom of the past in creating an atmosphere from which insights about the present situation may be drawn. The re-publication of *I'll Take My Stand* is an attempt to create such an atmosphere.

The basic argument of the Agrarians, explained in the Introduction, is that Industrialism—"the decision of society to invest its economic resources in the applied sciences"—renders non-human any society which commits itself to such a decision; for it re-orientates natural, human tendencies such as work, religion, the arts, and the amenities of life—"manners, conversation, hospitality"—to an unnatural end, an unstable, infinite process of consumption. Once consumption is the end of labor, the laborer is cheated of pride in his work, for it is no longer a question of "how well," but "how much." Moreover, since consumption is subject to the law of supply and demand, a false demand must be inculcated in the mind of the consumer; otherwise, the system is repudiated by the consumer. Such inculcation is the realm of applied science or technology with its alleged power over nature. And in conquering nature, it conquers also religion and art. Last, the amenities of life, the availability and transparency of

one man to another disappear as a result of the de-personalization by technology and the hurried aimlessness of an infinite process of consumption.

Opposed to Industrialism, the essayists place agrarian society—"one in which agriculture is the leading vocation, whether for wealth, for pleasure, or for prestige." The attributes and ramifications of an agrarian society are the basis of their essays, though in a later comment (Shenandoah, Summer, 1952) most of the former Agrarians admitted that their concern in 1930 was not so much with the specifically economic as with the battle between an invading secularism and a traditionally religious way of life.

Of the twelve essays, two may be said to keynote the belief, beloved and lived by the twelve Southerners contributing to the symposium: "Reconstructed But Unregenerate" by John Crowe Ransom and "Not In Memoriam, But In Defense" by Stark Young.

In the first essay, Mr. Ransom seeks to defend the thesis: "The South is unique on this continent for having founded and defended a culture which was according to the European principles of culture." He further specifies that the South based its culture on that of England which, after centuries of experimentation, settled on an establishment, thus providing a measure of security and leisure for the inhabitants. Against this, he opposes the Progressivist doctrine and its team-mate, Service; the former he terms a "masculine" ambition and the latter, a "feminine." To the extent that these two doctrines never define their goal and strive for the subduing of nature, they are terms for non-human occupations, productive of enslavement. The South, he adds, was not, in its beginnings, seduced by the Progressivist and Service doctrine. It pioneered an establishment and:

The establishment had a sufficient economic base, it was meant to be stable rather than provisional, it had got beyond the pioneering stage, it provided leisure, and its benefits were already being enjoyed.

But the war between the North and South destroyed this establishment so that it was never completely rebuilt. The economic, and thus cultural, vacuum began to be filled by Industrialism to such an extent that the Southern establishment, existing more in memory than in an actual Georgia or Alabama or Mississippi, lost and is losing support. To combat this loss, Mr. Ransom offers two solutions: Southerners could arouse themselves to a heated resistance, or they could band together with other agrarian sections such as the West and with dedicated statesmanship stop any industrial encroachment. Of the two, Mr. Ransom would consider the second as less practicable, but also less conducive to demagogery.

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And his instrument, he concludes, would be the Democratic party as "agrarian, conservative, anti-industrial."

Stark Young's essay, "Not In Memoriam, But In Defense," like John Crowe Ransom's, defends a thesis of consciousness of the past: "the defense of what we have drawn not from theory but from an actual civilization, and believe it necessary to remember. "Realizing the renewed, uncritical interest being taken in the South by historians and those spent ones who seek a relief from the American way of life, Mr. Young sees an opening for a campaign by Southerners in defense of this consciousness of the past. He points out that the South and its characteristics developed, for the most part, from the landed class downwards which, as he is careful to clarify, was not responsible for the "chapel-going virtues," i.e., "a certain degradation of a once austere Puritanism, a whining on certain pious excellences that arise from goodness combined with natural dullness, and a certain half-conscious jealousy of all distinction."

Following from this recognition of distinction among the landed class are the questions of education and religion. For the South, as Mr. Young says, education was not aimed toward "the success idea"—"the belief that mechanical surface and the outer powers of money are the prime things in living." Nor was religion a function of economics. Instead, it had a quality leading to "dignity, decent formality, and tolerant social balance."

The basis of such a Southern campaign as Ransom and Young propose, however, is conceptual; it must begin with attitudes such as a willing provincialism, or a feeling of direction and friendliness derived from knowing where one's home is; a feeling of "kin and family;" and aristocracy; all of which can be reduced to a love of and respect for the land. Such conceptions lead, not only to greater clarification for the Industrialist *ignoscenti*, but to deeper conviction on the part of the Southerner. It would be through this awareness of identity combined with the fact that the South was in 1930 only lately beset with Industrialism (thus able to profit from others' past experiences) that, as Mr. Young says, it could "accept the machine, but create [its] own attitude toward it."

*I'll Take My Stand* was either not heard or disregarded in 1930; in 1963 the evils it condemned have woven a beguiling web of frustration around each person who listened to the siren-song of passivity and equalitarianism. No doubt the Agrarians have been and will be criticized for their provincialism by those who equate it with a selfish sectionalism, but the insight of Ransom, Young, and the others has been proved correct. Some of the solutions proposed by the Twelve Southerners in *I'll Take My Stand* must not be denied out of hand any more than they should

be taken as entirely relevant to the South's position today. The amazingly fruitful crop produced by Agrarian Thought has issued, not in economics and sociology, but in literature and its relation to culture. The first publication of the essays was a valiant attempt to stop a still Reconstruction-motivated mentality from totally destroying the Southern culture; the re-publication of *I'll Take My Stand* serves a less defensive, but similar purpose: the maintenance of an atmosphere of leisure in the modern world. Without leisure, the question raised by industrialism and technology can never be answered; and, more importantly, the vocation of man as a theocentric creature can never be perfected.