

motive

february 1962



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FRONT COVER ART: SUPPLICATION by **ROBERT HODGELL** The seeking spirit of man reaches out for blessing, hope and communication with God and the world.

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POWER AS CHRISTIANS

WE who are in the Church must listen to the world. We must do this if we are to know what the world is thinking and saying. Our proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a valid "point of contact" with the world, and should be communicated in such a way as to be relevant to man's everyday life.

As Christians, we bear within our lives the vocation to communicate Christ's gospel. The Church cannot engage in dialogue with the world unless we engage in dialogue with the world. If we instead choose to engage in overlapping monologues with the world, then the Church will be placed in the position of engaging in overlapping monologues with the world.

It is self-contradictory for the Church to pronounce the gospel message to men by means of communications if, by the very process, the individual listener, viewer or reader is thereby reduced to the status of an object, statistic or digit, and finds his personhood in peril. The Church dare not become another agent of dehumanization in a culture which ignores the meaning of humanity and what it means to be a person.

In our communications complex which often resembles a jungle of patchwork mazes, contemporary man needs and yearns for the hard questions. Are these questions being articulated by the churches? Do we duplicate the technicolored success story of our commercial colleagues?

So much that has been labeled "Christian" communications is neither Christian nor communication. Man, stunned and hurt by the realization of this, sometimes finds that the hard questions about the reality of life are being posed more significantly by those outside the Church.

We have the power as Christians not to pronounce judgments on the universe but to live lives of fulfillment, freedom from selves, concerned for justice for all men who have been created alike in the image of God. We can be persons who know love, not as an abstract term, but as a reality which is sharply specific and immediate, demanding yet releasing. The Christian life is not merely individual but social; no hurt, no pain, no suffering anywhere in the world . . . in South Africa or Alabama, Hollywood or New York . . . is without significance in one's own heart, soul, mind, fibre of being. But we can offer this hurt, this pain, this suffering to God in the holy sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. The work of salvation has been won. Let us not treat it as a superficial church-as-usual charade but as the reality underlying and undergirding the whole of life. With all other men, we are loved, accepted, freed; we are children of God, together!

—MALCOLM BOYD

CAPITULATION TO COMMUNICATION

BY ROBERT T. OSBORN

A MERICAN theology seems to have capitulated almost wholly to the enterprise of making Christianity modern for the modern man. The key word is "communication." It is in this spirit that *motive*, for example, has been directed to the relationship between Christianity and the arts. The relevance of Bultmann and the irrelevance of Barth to the average thinking American churchman betokens this concern. We have assumed that the reason for the paradoxical coincidence of the growth of church membership and church irrelevance was due to the failure of the church to get its message across. We charge ourselves with failing to speak in a modern tongue, couching the message in an outdated language that can have no possible bearing on the secular and scientific age in which we live.

Implicit in such thinking is the curious assumption that there is no serious question as to what Christianity is; our problem is simply that of translation. Our generation has apparently plumbed "the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God" and has indeed searched out his "unsearchable judgments" and "inscrutable ways." What Martin Marty recently observed should not surprise us—that "relatively few works in the field of systematic theology are appearing [today] at all." (*Christian Century*, March 29, 1961) We search vainly for contributions to systematic Christological reflection or to Trinitarian understanding; and we must conclude that either we have "arrived" theologically or that we are irresponsible. If it is the case that we are "already full," then is it not altogether possible that our failure to "get it across" and to excite our generation into Christian action, is because we bore it by such attempts? Perhaps the problem is not that the message is veiled by mythological trappings of an age gone by, but that we use the too tried formulae that seem shallow to our sophisticated generation and can hardly be made more delectable by the glaze of modern style.

Gerhard Sczesny, the German skeptic who says that the future of Western civilization lies with unbelief, with those who are unconvinced by the Christian



Weltanschauung, states that "where Christianity still holds uncontested sway over the cultural facade [as in America], the Christian idea has degenerated into a trivial moralism, which has no religious superstructure left at all. . . ." (*The Future of Unbelief*, tr. by Edward B. Garside: New York, Geo. Braziller, 1961, p. 78) Probably we will not want to question his statement about trivial morality, but the judgment that there is no religious superstructure is even more serious. He suggests that "in a certain phase of its decline every religion becomes literature. That is, it tends to make itself esthetically palatable." (p. 81) Is it illegitimate to interpret this latter judgment to mean that a declining religion becomes increasingly occupied with the task of communication? The historians of religion suggest that this is the case, that religions decline as they drift away from the central myths, as they forfeit their own distinctive language for that of the world, as they forfeit theology for communication. Sczesny adds that "it is not any metaphysical claim on the part of Marx and Engels, but the ideological impotence of Christianity" that accounts for the success of the ersatz religious status of communism in the lives of so many people today. (p. 100) In other words, it is the failure of theology.

Those familiar with Sczesny's despair of Christianity will not be impressed with his theological acumen, but they must respect the negative impact made upon him by Christianity, by virtue of which he sees Christianity as an outmoded world view, with no religious superstructure, ideologically impotent. Is this judgment to be met by communication, by literature or liturgics, conversation or consensus? Surely, Sczesny is asking for more; he is asking for religious superstructure, for ideological potency. Has not modern theology agreed too readily that "getting it across" is the task? Sczesny is of the opinion that we have nothing to get across.

Consider the college campus. The student is doubtless more subject to communication than any other group in our society. The effort to communicate with him reaches its summit in the so-called "religious emphasis week." What does such a week mean to the student, especially if he has had some required work in introductory Bible, perhaps also an elective course in Christian ethics? What does he expect to have communicated to him? A descent into the hidden depths of the divine mystery? Perhaps, just slightly, the first time. After that, hardly! He is fortunate to come away with some new quotations from contemporary literature—say from an untranslated volume of Sartre or a love letter to Pasternak. He may even pray to a synopated beat. The church rejoices because it has freed itself from outmoded language and has at last communicated. As for the student? As a freshman he is dazzled. As a sophomore he is a committee member, planning next year's program. As a junior he may not have enough time. As a senior he is uninterested.

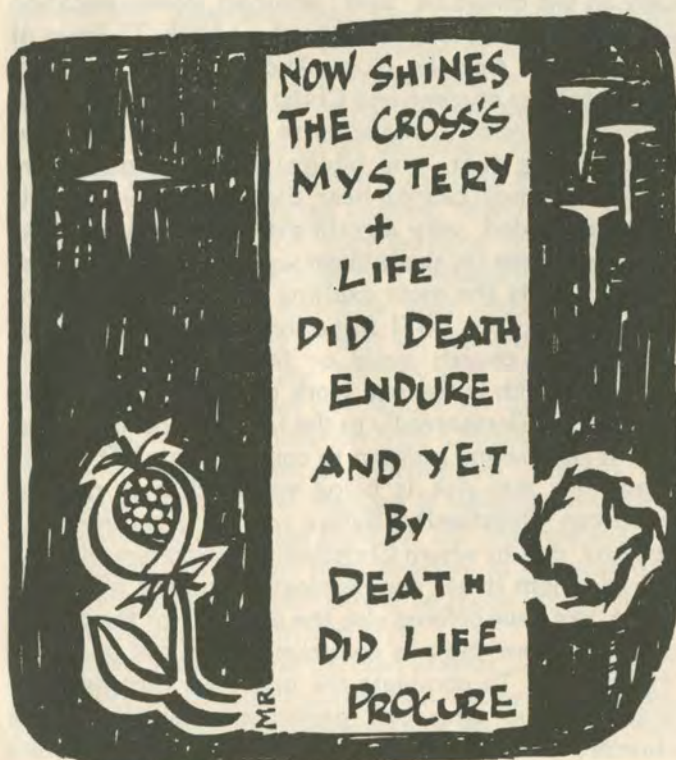
EFFORTS to communicate to the faculty are not too different. They also suggest a certain lack of depth and concern for theological superstructure. As a case in point here is the list of seminars of a faculty conference held last August (the theme of the conference being "The Nature and Mission of the Church in This Revolutionary Age"): 1. Christianity and Contemporary Literature, 2. Play reading, 3. Christianity and the Arts, 4. The Theology of Rudolph Bultmann, 5. The Life and Mission of the Church, 6. History, Sociology and the Christian Church, 7. The Contemporary College Student and Science and Faith. Certainly one should respect the breadth of concern and the ambition this conference represents, but at the same time is it unfair to ask if our church has become sufficiently "inner directed," is its own self-understanding so well-worked out, that only one seminar should be concerned with the life and mission of the church while practically all the others be "and" seminars, communication and conversation seminars? In the March 22 issue of *The Christian Century*, Hugo Thompson, commenting on the college student and Christianity, pointed to the general failure of Christianity to lay claim to the student, stating that "the biblical world seems so far away that they cannot hear the biblical word." He then concluded, very significantly, that "when they dig deeply here [in the biblical world] they are thrilled. Bible study is the most exciting part of student conferences. . . ." (p. 357) But only when they *dig deeply!*

Dare the church avoid or take lightly this deep digging, which is the real work of theology, and commit itself so unreservedly to the task of communication that it risk having nothing to communicate? There are signs that this risk is being ventured even now by American Christianity. Before us is the testimony of Sczesny, one to whom Christianity has communicated, but to whom it has communicated nothing of importance. We have offered also the evidence of the college campus where there is communication, but of a very thin variety. To complete the brief, we turn again to Sczesny, who cites one particular example of the church's theological failure and the consequent fact

that in this regard the church has nothing to communicate. The particular example to which he refers is eschatology, and in particular that aspect of Christian teaching which deals with death and with life after death. "As we look around us today," Sczesny writes, "we observe that throughout almost all the Western World, man's attitude toward death leads him to live as if his personal activity were never to come to an end. This gives us the impression, on the one hand, that hardly anyone actually believes in the resurrection of the flesh, and on the other hand that Christian ideas in cold fact are simply not qualified seriously to reconcile mankind to death." (p. 160) How right he is! What has the church to communicate on this subject? Our silence or confusion about this question indicts the church with theological irresponsibility.

PERHAPS 90 per cent of you who read this will not subscribe to the notion of eternal damnation; in other words, ecumenical, American Protestantism is universalistic. This is hardly ever acknowledged, because we have no theology that can contain it. Either we ought not to be universalists, or we ought to become theologically accountable for our universalism. But how can we? Activists that we are, we like Bultmann's existentialism, in which the only meaningful theological statements are existential, belonging to the side of the great divide. Who has ever heard an existentialist preach about life after death? On the other hand, we are also optimists, hence our universalism. One would expect us to turn to Barth, who if he is not a universalist, should be. But we do not like Barth, because his optimism is not activist. Consequently we are crypto-universalists. It is hard to see that any language, mythical or modern, can give the church a meaningful word relevant to this question—the question of what we mean by saying that Christ has overcome death. Accordingly today one will hardly ever hear a preacher with a word for the aged. One should not expect the family to be advised regarding the appropriate funeral arrangements, which are dictated more by geography and local custom than by theological understanding. The primary issue is hardly communication! It is knowledge. It is theology.

Surely there should be some enthusiasm in the American church for the work of scholars like Karl Barth, who have been sufficiently captivated by the mystery of the divine being that they have expended the greater portion of a lifetime and reams of paper to search it out. Can we fail to assume our own full measure of responsibility for understanding and speaking the peculiar language and symbols of our tradition? Especially here in America, which has no Barth or his kin, is it wise or responsible to turn so unreservedly to the communication enterprise? Is not the systematic theological task even more urgent than ever as we face the challenge of communicating to this nuclear age?



CONVERSATION WITHIN THE CHURCH

REFLECTIONS ON THEOLOGY IN THE ERA OF COLD WAR, MOTIVE, JANUARY, 1962.

BY FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

THERE is much that is attractive in the statement of the three members of the Comenius Theology Faculty. Much of it derives directly from the church struggle with Nazism, as the Confessing Church sought to protect the gospel from descending to the status of tribal religion. Statements such as these are in direct descent from the great Barmen Declaration of May, 1934:

Every tying of the gospel to a church, race, nation, culture, civilization, or ideology means a denial of its sovereignty and a compromising of the Christian faith. (p. 25)

Article I of Barmen reads at one point:

We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and must recognize yet other happenings and powers, images and truths as a divine revelation alongside this one Word of God, as a source of her preaching.

In discussing the truncating of the promise of the gospel, Drs. Lochman, Smolik and Heller write:

God's unconditional divine self-giving to man is violated wherever the church usurps Christ's function for itself, wherever it claims divine authority, and wherever it sees its vocation not in service but in domination. (p. 25)

Article IV of Barmen also challenges *Fuhrer* in the churches, Protestant ("Evangelical") as well as Roman Catholic: after reading Matt. 20:25-26 with its warning about the Gentiles who have lords over them, the Confessing Church concluded:

The various offices of the church establish no rule of one over the other but the exercise of the service entrusted and commanded to the whole congregation.

In discussing the truncating of the demand of the gospel, our authors write vividly:

The gospel is the power and strength of the whole human life. This is fatally denied when the Christian life is understood and lived in a dualism, where only some spheres of life are measured and formed by the gospel, whereas in others the word of Jesus is consciously held to be inadmissible and not binding. (p. 27)

In the Barmen Declaration, Article II concludes in a like vein:

We repudiate the false teaching that there are areas of our life in which we belong not to Jesus Christ but another lord, areas



in which we do not need justification and sanctification through him.

One can only admire the determination to keep these lessons of the church struggle alive and wish too that in all parts of Christendom there might be a growing awareness of the need for establishing a vigorous discontinuity between the gospel and *das deutsche Volkswesen* or "the American way of life" or "the Southern way of life"!

Uneasiness arises, however, when we remember that Barmen was written as an appeal to resist evil both immediate and pressing, and that the men of Barmen numbered martyrs, saints, and renewers of the church and her mission. This is *not* the direction of the "peace movement" of the Stockholm, Warran, and Prague conventions. Those who resisted heresy in the Third Reich are known and numbered. Those who resist heresy and culture-religion in South Africa, the United States, yes—Western Europe, too—are identifiable. Where are their counterparts in Eastern Europe? In all openness, and writing in the full awareness of the perversion of the gospel in the widespread "spirituality" and culture-religion of American Protestantism, why is the spirit of accommodation so strong in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary—and precisely, and most dismayingly, among many to whom all honor is due for their one-time resistance? Why are many of those who once came into the arena to wrestle in earthy fashion with "the new Islam" of Nazism now so fixed upon the utter transcendence of the gospel that their words sound like a Gnostic statement of timeless verities?

It is true that Christianity is *not* a "religion"! It is true that Christianity is *not* an "ideology"! It is especially true that "cultivated devotion . . . especially in the sphere of public responsibility, is a caricature of the gospel, a pious restriction of its relevance"! (p. 27) But this does *not* mean that the necessity for witness (*Bekennntnis*) can be abandoned, even in very concrete situations! The spiritualizing of the doctrinal claims can be just as dangerous today as when a spiritualizing of the doctrine of the church was put forward by conservative Lutherans under Nazism. The presentation of doctrinal issues in a speculative and utterly rarified manner, quite apart from concrete political choices, is itself a corruption of the Word which takes on flesh—which is of the earth, earthy. One dimension of that earthiness is the requirement to stand fast against false ideologies—whether Nazi, communist, or American nativist.

It is true that the gospel may not be identified with "traditional forms and orders of church life." (p. 26) But at this point the words of the Formula of Concord, reaffirmed during the church struggle with Nazism, become acutely relevant: In time of church struggle, there are no adiaphora. Robes are not impor-

tant, but the church cannot grant to government the right to determine when and where and what it wears in its services. The communist East German government last spring offered, let us assume for the moment in good faith, Leipzig as alternative site to the Berlin Kirchentag. The only requirement was that four bishops be prevented from participating in the program. Bishops are not that important, over against the many reasons for an East German Kirchentag! But the church, when she is true to her principle of spiritual government, cannot consider even bishops adiaphoristic (nonessential).

Further, and this is more fatal: The New Testament is not completely ambiguous as to the style of life of Christians in their corporate life. There is just as much said about this, about the style and patterns of church government, as about doctrinal issues. Every seminary professor and pastor in Czechoslovakia is a state employee, paid by tax money and subject to a system of tight control that Constantine, Theodosius and Justinian would have envied. Is not that, like white tribal religion in Natal or Alabama, to be condemned *in the name of the gospel*? What is the Word of God if it does not speak to particular men in particular places with special responsibilities? The Barmen Declaration announced the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all life and also proclaimed the liberty of the church to be true to her Lord. Is a new pattern of Caesaro-papism any less dangerous than the culture religion which expresses itself in CDU/CSU, MRP, *Demokrazia cristiana*, Christian Anti-Revolutionary Party, or the surge of piety in American politics?

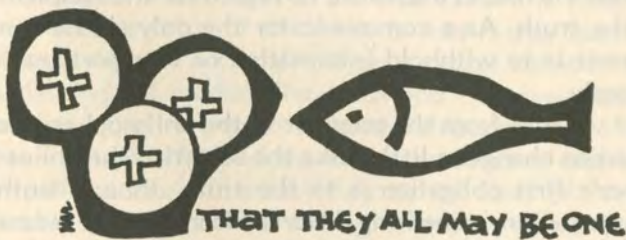
Possibly, with communist totalitarianism as ruthless as it is, only a partial gospel can be maintained. For a thousand years, the Christian ghettos in Moslem lands kept the memory of Christianity alive by emphasizing liturgy and legend. For nearly as long, Eastern Orthodoxy, leading cramped existence under despots, accomplished the same end by concentrating on the internal aspects of the faith: liturgical moments, adoration, meditation. It may be that in communist territory the gospel can only be kept alive by doing the same—in this case by concentrating on the preservation of a form of doctrinal orthodoxy. In all such cases, however, the Christian ghettos become social fossils—perpetuating a truncated gospel, "wintering through" by suspending for the time the declaration of the "Crown Rights" of the King.

Confessionalism, if only defending past forms of institution or creed, is deadly and sterile. (p. 26) But there is no Christianity apart from incarnation in "definite historical types of churchliness, institution, ideology, or confession." (p. 28) Our authors have neglected the lessons of the church struggle on the importance of the church, i.e., a concrete community of witness. "A purely spiritual relationship is not only dangerous but also an altogether abnormal thing." "He who loves his dream of a community more than the

THE PRAYER OF CHRIST AMONG MEN

ut
Omnes
unum
sint...

JOHN 17:21



Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial." Bonhoeffer: *Life Together*, pp. 38, 27) Our writers do not seem to understand the role of "confession" in the life of the church. A new confession of faith may be, indeed should be, put forward "bindingly"; at the same time, it may be intended as a genuine communication—i.e., as a contribution to the process of dialogue by which the whole church in time reaches a consensus. The "spirit of self-justification and self-righteousness" is all too common, to be sure; but surely our authors do not espouse a "confessionless Christianity"!

FINALLY, and perhaps most seriously, there is no discussion of *justice* whatever. And yet justice is precisely the goal of politics (*not* Koinonia). They are so busy condemning the perversions of clerical politics that they fail altogether to present a real politics. Significantly, the only real error in the article has to do with law. They identify "law" with "the word of our own reason." (p. 27) Is it really true that the condemnation of totalitarianism, whether Nazi or communist, can only derive from the spirit of the cold war? There is a law which applies to the affairs of nations, even unbaptized peoples, which is more than a human construct. (Exodus 20:2-17) To a simplistic political use of the Easter word, "peace," which in effect means peace without righteousness, one can only reply, "... they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace; when there is no peace.'" (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11) It is distressing to note that the Governor of Alabama, in a silly statement about the law of the land on justice to all races, recently appealed to the same principle here implied by the Prague professors: that law is only human construct, dependent upon consent. This is a profoundly unbiblical view of that law by which nations and generations are judged. On that law, totalitarian tyrants and corrupt western politicians both shall break their teeth!

God in Jesus Christ is not encompassed by a system of theological orthodoxy (abstracted and irrelevant). Neither is he a domesticated household god, to be used by us like those of the old Roman or Chinese religions. Of the nations he requires justice and righteousness; to his Church he has given grace and peace. We are grateful to our brethren in Prague for reminding us of the latter. Let us not hesitate to say that he by whom all worlds that are or ever shall be were created (John 1:3) comes as Judge as well as Redeemer.

TONGUES OF MEN & ANGELS

truth, power and love in the act of communication

BY TOM F. DRIVER

WE live in an age devoted to the overcoming of distance. Not content to overcome geographical distance, our age is devoted also to overcoming psychological distance: between men of various cultures, philosophies, and levels of education; or even between members of the same group, which we call alienation.

If the way to overcome geographical distance is to invent new modes of transportation, the way to overcome psychological distance, so it is thought, is to invent new modes of communication. One may hear on every hand the question, "How shall we communicate?" At bottom this question means how shall we maintain community—organic community—in an age increasingly dominated by the machine? Since most of our communications media are mechanical, they usually serve only to compound the problem.

There are three elements that seem to me always involved when there is communication: truth, power and love.

We must begin by realizing that there are different sorts of communication according to the different aims of men, and that in the several sorts of communication one or the other of our trinity of truth, power and love assumes a primary place.

The scientist, the philosopher and the artist for instance are all persons whose usefulness to us is measurable by the degree of their devotion to the discovery of *truth*. Yet each is also a communicator, since there is

no point in discovering the truth if you tell no one about it.

Let us call the scientist the man devoted to knowledge about the natural world, and let us call this knowledge truth. The scientist has an obligation to communicate, but it extends only to the accurate publication of his data, the description of his methods and results, and possibly some implications for future research. He has, *as a scientist*, no regard for the recipient of the truth. As a communicator the only sin he can commit is to withhold information or to report inaccurately.

If we turn from the scientist to the philosopher, the situation changes a little. Like the scientist, the philosopher's first obligation is to the truth, though truth means for him something different from what it means to the natural scientist. But although the philosopher is a discoverer of the truth, he is not a philosopher unless he succeeds in communicating his truth to someone else. It is in the nature of his work that he must engage another mind. If he cannot cause another mind to engage in the same thought-process he himself engages in, he is not philosophizing. Hence, though his obligation to truth is as great as the scientist's, his obligation to communicate is much greater.

The artist has an obligation to the truth equal to that of the scientist and the philosopher. Here again, the definition of truth may change, and it is very hard to define truth of the sort the artist reveals; but truth



it is, and the artist is no good unless he is devoted to it.

The goal of the artist is the creation of the work of art, and the value of the work is that it may become the occasion of a kind of communication between the artist and the reader. The artist and the viewer meet in the work of art, and the relationship established between them is love—love not in the sense of *eros* but of *philia*, friendship established on the basis of things held in common. What the artist and his viewer have in common is the work of art, the experience it causes in one who views it, and the truth which it expresses.

We may say, then, that in the work of the scientist, the philosopher, and the artist the most important of our three elements is the truth. But notice:

First, the process of communication becomes more difficult as one goes from the scientist to the artist. It becomes more ambiguous. Ambiguity in the report of a scientist is a vice. In the writing of a philosopher it is a problem. In the poet it may be a virtue.

Second, the quality called love becomes more important as the difficulty of communication increases, because the nature of the material and the nature of

the pursuit call for a more intimate connection to be established between the thinker and the one with whom he would communicate. The scientist, we may say to put it briefly, *publishes* his findings, the philosopher *engages* the mind of his reader, and the artist *communes* with his viewer. As the relationship becomes more intimate, the number of things shared increases, and the element of love becomes more important.

LOVE is the most important factor involved in all forms of person-to-person communication. I have in mind four kinds of person-to-person communication: 1) that which is the most spontaneous, as between lovers and friends; 2) that in which the intimacy is almost as great but in which the element of spontaneity is lessened, namely, family relationships; 3) structured relationships outside the family; and 4) the relationship between man and God.

We would all agree that communication is important in each of these sorts of relationships, and the lack of it in our modern society is what the psychologists, novelists and playwrights call alienation. In these relationships communication is made possible by love. Where love is lacking in one degree or another, so communication becomes impeded.

What about truth in these settings? It has two meanings. Its primary meaning is frankness. Personal relationships flourish according to the amount of self-revelation that the participants are able to give each other. Its second meaning is honesty about the things that transcend the personal relationships themselves.

In the four kinds of personal relationships mentioned, truth as self-revelation is important to all, but it becomes more difficult as one goes further along the scale. Assuming that real love is present in each of the stages, it still is more difficult to reveal oneself in the family than in spontaneous friendships and love affairs, more difficult in structured relationships outside the family than within the family, most difficult of all in one's relationship with God. The wider the circle of community, the more pressing become the claims of truth and justice.

The third element in the act of communication is power. Power is present in all forms of communication. It is that which draws us into the circle where communication is fulfilled. It is that which arrests us, turns us, and makes us attend to that which is being said. It is also that which exalts, terrifies, or cleanses us in the course of the communicative act.

If power is present in all communication, there is one place where it comes to the fore and becomes the special object of attention: in the communications media, those machines and their attendant institutions which offer themselves to us as providing the techniques of mass communication. Here we tend to put aside considerations of truth—is not the machine itself neutral?—and we put aside questions of love—is not

the machine impersonal?—and we focus upon the power which makes communication possible.

Concentration upon communication *per se* is new in the world, new in the concentration upon techniques of communication separated from attendance upon the meaning of the symbols whereby communication is achieved. The question usually asked in discussions of communication is *how* the communication is to be carried out; not what is the truth and what kind of love is appropriate?

Since the results of the communication process are expected to be measurable, we see that concentration upon the act of communication itself leads to a concern for power. I do not mean necessarily that the communicators are themselves power-mad, but that they measure themselves by the amount of power generated by their communications.

The more the medium in question is a *mass* medium, the more important the question of power becomes. By contrast, the more the medium in question approaches the condition of *art*, the more important are truth and love.

The lust for communicative power is demonic. It is the enemy of freedom. It is destructive of both truth and love, and it is destructive of the forms of human association and the human endeavors that are associated with truth and love. The mass media overcome distances in space and time, but they also tend to erode genuine community.

On the basis of these criteria, it is possible to see the various forms of communication today in America on a scale ranging from the worst to the best in terms of genuine communication. The standard is the renunciation of power, or at least the lack of the possession of power. While the following rating is necessarily oversimplified, it is illustrative:

TV and AM radio. They are committed to the widest audience possible and therefore to the maximum extension of power.

The motion picture. Since the advent of TV it has had to retreat from the widest possible audience. In Europe and America the film is becoming more mature as it has been forced to yield some of its aspirations to power.

Newspapers and mass circulation magazines. While there are a few excellent newspapers in this country, there are only a few. Most give very little space to national and world affairs. They regard themselves as guardians of the public conscience, which means strong editorial bias, not to say propaganda. Magazines vary in quality, but the trend is to maximum circulation in order to serve the power interests of advertising.

The theater. There was a time when theater could

have been ranked higher in the scale than now, but the economics of the theater, especially in this country, are such that it is trying harder and harder to become a mass medium.

FM radio. It is a surprising development of the last five years that FM radio has entered the communications field in a significant way. More sense is broadcast over FM radio than over any other broadcasting medium and more than in publications, except perhaps some learned journals.

The learned journals. Their only *raison d'être* is the publication of quality material, and while not all of them are good, they are indispensable to such communal life as still exists among the intelligentsia of this country.

The novel. Reference here is not to the bulk of popular fiction sold, which is on the level of the mass magazines, but to the so-called serious novel with literary aspirations. Here some of the most truthful examination of contemporary life is to be found.

Poetry. We are living in a great age of poetry. Its excellence is partly the result of its having lost its mass audience and its consequent having to content itself with speaking the truth which few wanted to hear.

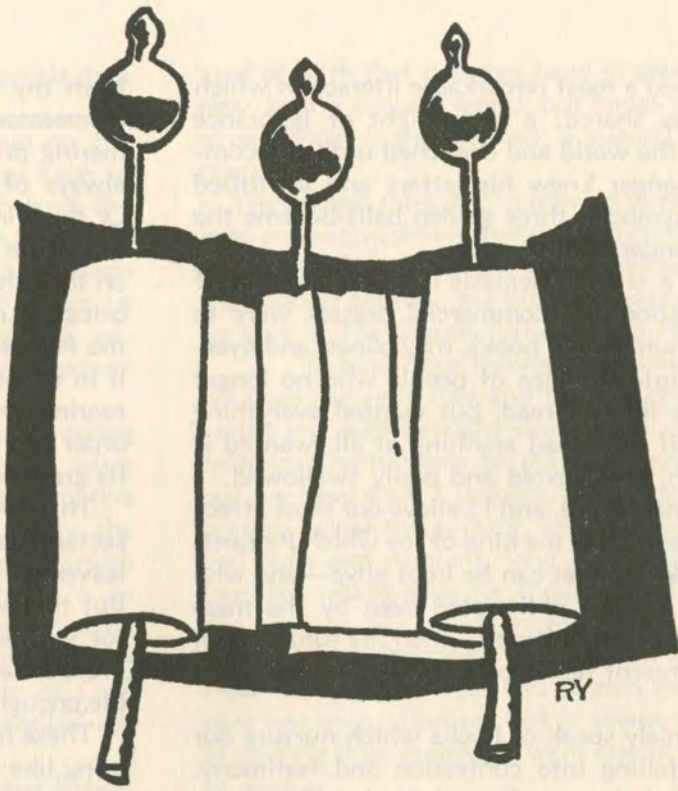
MY argument about the necessity of renouncing power in order to gain truth and love does not solve the problem for those engaged in mass communications. Perhaps to see the problem in relation to other forms of communication may suggest some ways of protecting mass communication from the most egregious errors.

The problem is acute for a reason I have not yet mentioned. The Western World today faces in communism an adversary which is frighteningly demonic in its use of power in the communications media. Russian propaganda is diabolically clever and is not hampered by the considerations of truth and love that I have been advocating.

Even in the face of the communist challenge, however, I believe that our best hope lies in rejecting the means which totalitarianism employs so skilfully. This I believe. But I cannot prove it. It has been said that if we seek first the kingdom of heaven, all other needful things will be added unto us. That is, of course, a counsel of perfection and may be of little help. But it might be worth the gamble to follow it at least as far as to give up seeking the kingdom of power for its own sake.

Adapted from *Counsellor*, Fall, 1961, published by the National Religious Publicity Council.

THE NURTURE OF FAITH BY THE USE OF BOOKS



BY SAMUEL H. MILLER

THERE IS a curious story about Petrarch used by the *Reporter* in an advertising letter, and whether it be true or false I cannot say. The Bishop of Cavailon thought that he read too much and so he locked him out of the bookroom. For Petrarch the first day away from his books seemed longer than a year. On the second day, he suffered a headache from morning till night, and on the third he began to show signs of fever—whereupon the Bishop restored the key and Petrarch recovered his health.

Whether or not the students of our day would show the same symptoms of book-hunger were they deprived of books for three whole days, I cannot say. I am willing, however, to guess that generally the danger facing us is not a surfeit of reading as much as it is a fever of activity so compelling that we would not notice that we were locked out from the bookroom at all—at least not for a long, long time. Our real danger today is not a bookish campus, it is an illiterate one.

Yet I do know that a profound hunger exists—here and there. I know several men who, forced to make a choice, have chosen books instead of cars—not an easy choice when one faces calling in a scattered community. Certainly the spate of books now flowing from the world's presses, good books old and new, is both refreshing and overwhelming. One is astonished at the extraordinary number of the classics in all fields now being published in paperbacks by a large number of companies. It seems impossible in the light of such a phenomenon that we could slip back very easily into a dark night of illiteracy.

Yet it did happen in Greece and Rome after they

had accomplished a most remarkable literacy in which all their classes shared; a dark night of ignorance came down on the world and deepened until the common man no longer knew his letters and identified everything by symbol—three golden balls became the sign of moneylenders, and so on.

It would be a strange nemesis if a combination of universal education and commercial presses were to pour fantastic numbers of books, magazines, and overweight papers into the laps of people who no longer wanted to take time to read, but wanted everything in pictures, or if they read anything at all, wanted it in capsule form, predigested and easily swallowed.

This is a dismal future, and I believe our most effective weapon against it is the kind of joy which Petrarch knew with books. If that can be kept alive—and who can imagine it can be obliterated even by the mass homogenization of our culture?—then the future is not lost, and the present has doors into greatness beyond itself.

One can scarcely speak of books which nurture our faith without falling into confession and testimony. The sheer fun of the search, and the bright wonder which breaks like dawn in the mind when a book's pages open suddenly into a new world of truth or beauty unseen before, and when the whole soul of man sings with delight—these moments are unforgettable.

In a barber shop on the coast of Maine, where I sat waiting for a shave with several days of scraggly beard grown during a sailing trip, I picked up Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. That moment is anchored as deeply as life and death itself.

Or again, to paraphrase Kant, when I was awakened

from my very undogmatic slumber by Karl Barth's *Commentary on the Romans*. The thunder of that hammering prose and the tenacity of speaking only and always of God's godliness—that I shall not forget. Or the winter when I read Dante in the Temple Classics, little books with Italian on one page and English on the other, in the subway back and forth from Cambridge, a right good place for reading the *Inferno* and the *Purgatoria*, and not unlikely for even the *Paradiso*, if in no other way, at least by contrast. There in the roaring where speech was impossible, the vast vision of order was spelled out by which Christian faith attested its grasp on the meaning of life.

That we have lost it in the mad scramble of our sectarianism and the fury of industrial production leaves us the poorer though we think we are richer. But that vision, no longer tenable, I shall not forget, for without something like it, something larger and profounder, we shall not have peace nor a world sensible enough to seek it seriously.

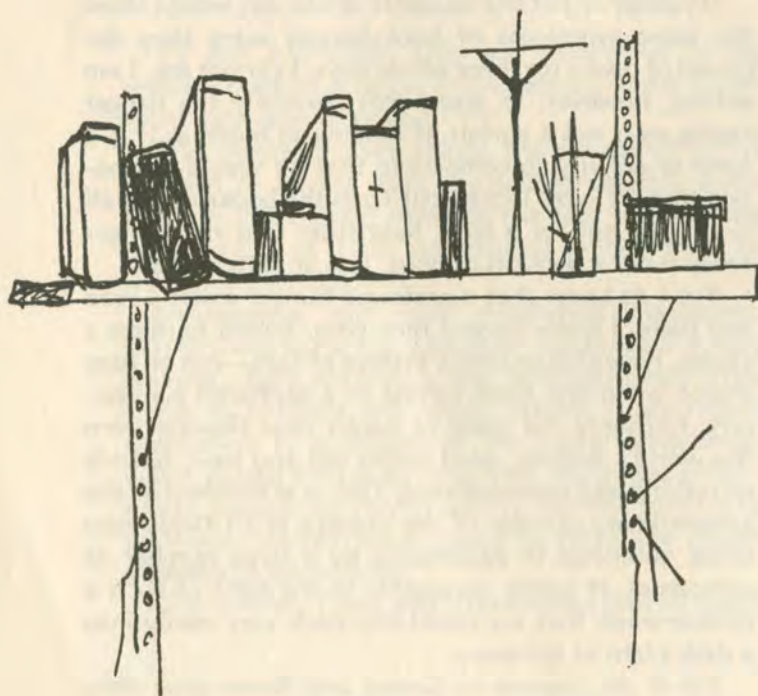
These memories, and others, were not flashes flickering like summer lightning in the sky at evening, but once seen they changed the course and purpose of my path and strengthened my steps toward a larger vision. They nurtured my faith, strengthened the foundations, and immeasurably increased the quality as well as the dimensions of my world.

By books nurturing faith I do not mean those which extract all the saccharine juices of life and serve them up as the elixir of eternity. I do not mean the books which side-step the tragic, repress the ugly, exclude the contradictions of our mortal lot or the shame of human embarrassment. I do not mean the books which offer us solutions without going through the anguish of asking the questions; I do not mean books which save us without the cross and try to glorify us with the promise of greater prosperity than that which has already ruined us.

I do not mean that whole sickening mess of sweetened piety commonly denominated as devotional literature which nauseated Teresa of Avila and continues to make the gospel look and taste like soggy confections of a child's candy store. I am not thinking of books of sermon fodder or illustrations or the easy lessons in prayer, or, how to find God or your money back.

I am thinking of books which dig into hard ground, turn the soil over, break open the mind and cut deep into the living quick, that flash like lightning in the dark skies of our mortal pilgrimage, letting us know for a moment where we are, that tear open the immemorial scandal of our humanity and lift our eyes to heights incredibly beyond us but so firmly part of our hope that we can wish nothing less than to turn in their direction and ascend, though we may not reach, their summits.

I am thinking of books which keep alive the frontier in a man, the edge where darkness begins, where dullness settles down like a fog to cover the bright bur-



geoning of our freedom, and a man must shape his days with fear and trembling.

I am thinking of books that fall like rain on the inner life of men anxious to grow, trying to keep in touch with the thrust of creation, moving through the crust of hardened habit, to keep in touch with the elusive quality of reality which forever slips between our fingers, evaporates from our ideas, and leaves us going through motions which have no meaning, enduring existence without a buoyant sense of its power and glory.

I am thinking of books as revelation—revealing what is waiting, what was lost, what is possible, what has always been. I am thinking of books as redemptive—redeeming us from the indifferent trance of life, the routine of exhausting repetitions, and the mad dervish of actions which have no substance in the spirit. I am thinking of books which break the heart into rejoicing because they pick up old experiences and uncover the treasure, the hidden gold, the living grace of God, within their plain earthy, sometimes outlandish appearance.

I am thinking of books that constitute what Robert Frost in his poem about the crow shaking the snow down from a pine branch said had given his heart a change of mood—a *change of mood*—shattering the deadlock, opening the sluice gates of the imagination, breaking the log jam by putting one's foot on a single insight; such books bring the stars back into heaven, loosen the shackles of torpid habit, widen and deepen the common day, putting color into a world gone gray.

There are three things a book may do, among many others, to nurture faith. The first is to "name" experience. What happens out there in the world is only half a reality. Its counterpart is what man does with it, how he interprets it, how he shapes it to his use, how he fulfills its possibilities. Things are incomplete until he names them; life is blind until he puts it into words. If in Christian thought, the "word was made flesh," it is equally true that solid events have an inner compulsion to become words, to be identified and named.

Life is forever in need of interpretation. Its mysteries need to be articulated, to be put into poetry, drama, theology—and only then do we begin to see what they are. When anything happens, it is only the beginning of what it is; someone must take the raw material, shape it imaginatively with insight, develop its potential significance, reveal its intention—then, in the fullness of time we know what really happened.

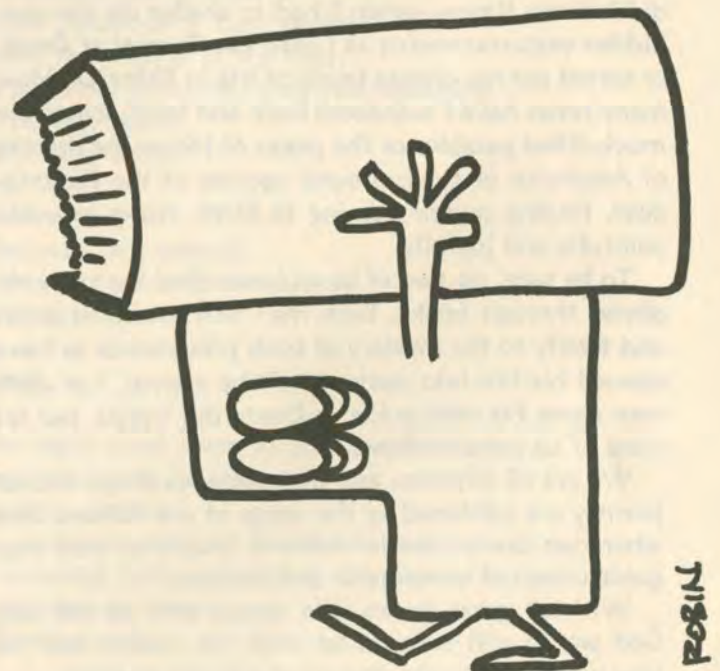
This is what Augustine did for the fourth century, Nietzsche and Dostoevski for the nineteenth, and Faulkner and Camus for the twentieth. They took the whole bloc of perplexing human experience with its thousand-and-one conflicting strands and made sense of it. They embodied in a scheme of words, in a literary vision, the meaning of being human under the conditions of their times. There simply is no other basis for faith than this. The avoidance of it by seeking some

kind of faith that does not have to stand on this earth now, in this present world, but hangs from some kind of sky hook, is sheer deceit, a superstitious appeal to magic.

The second thing books may do to nurture our faith is to resurrect certain levels or dimensions of our consciousness from their dormant condition. It is to this that Gilbert Murray, the English classicist, refers when he says in *The Classical Tradition in Poetry*:

"... in plays like *Hamlet* or *Agamemnon* or *Electra* we have certainly fine and flexible character study, a varied and well-wrought story, a full command of the technical instruments of the poet and the dramatist; but we have also, I suspect, a strange unanalyzed vibration below the surface, an undercurrent of desires and fears and passions, long slumbering yet eternally familiar, which have for thousands of years lain near the root of our most intimate emotions and been wrought into the fabric of our most magical dreams. How far into past ages this stream may reach back I dare not even surmise; but it seems as if the power of stirring it or moving it were one of the last secrets of genius."

One of the most elusive tasks of the human venture is to understand ourselves. To see ourselves in *Hamlet* or in *Faust* recovers much which is repressed and often neglected. The present shift in human sensibilities, the changing shape of modern emotions and mores, the disturbing emergence of moral dirt and the outright disappearance of grace from the fiction of our country are indeed problems to be pondered. To have faith is to



LAW KEEPER

know ourselves honestly or our faith is scarcely more than a cover-up.

It is here that writers like Eliot in *The Wasteland*, Camus in *The Fall*, and Beckett in *Waiting for Godot*, have all revealed the precarious ground on which we stand and the critical need for a new vision of faith. Nor is it different with the philosophers—Berdyayev, Jaspers, Marcel—all have sounded the warning, and with care and precision marked the dangerous frictions in man's own being.

Finally, it is in the province of books to encourage our reflective ability. What I mean by this, I suppose, can best be put by saying that I expect a book to be bigger, deeper, higher, greater than I am. Unless it has a depth which baffles me, unless it embraces what I have left outside, unless it impudently dares to reach for heights I have not attained, it is of no use to me or my faith. It ought to startle me, frighten me, shock me, humiliate me, lure me and unsettle me. It should make me work intellectually, imaginatively, existentially, in order to make room in my own experience for it.

It should tease me out of my habit, push me beyond the safe periphery, force me to rethink my opinions, and bring me face to face with things I never thought before. It should induce currents of aliveness in areas quite dead or dormant or dull. A book should provide a resurrection from death into life, if it is really worth its salt.

I remember well how sentence by sentence Martin Buber's *I and Thou* did that for me once. The same thing happened, Oh so differently, with the long, meandering prose of Charles Peguy. Soren Kierkegaard did it many times—when I had to dredge up my own hidden embarrassments as I read *The Concept of Dread*, or sorted out my diverse levels of life in *Either/Or*. How many times have I wandered back and forth across the much-tilled parables or the pages of Job or the dramas of Aeschylus or the profound agonies of the Karamazovs, finding myself coming to birth, rising into life painfully and joyfully.

To be sure, no two of us will ever find the same *via glorie* through books. Each man will name his own; and testify to the mystery of such providences as have opened his life into pastures of the eternal. Let each man name his own guide as Dante did Vergil, but let none of us remain silent.

We are all pilgrims, and the mysteries of our mortal journey are lightened by the songs of our fellows, and where we cannot see for tears or stupidity, they may guide us out of compassion and wisdom.

Without great books, life would still be life and God would still surprise us with his mercy, but the way would be stonier, the waymarks not so plain.

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the pied piper of you-know-where

*Fat rats ran in the cellars of Hamlen-town,
scurried in the drains and sewers
rattled on the cellar steps,
sneaked from the light of day to hide in rubbish heaps
in the musty dark,
cavorted and squealed
in the commerce of the night,
blinking their beady eyes from black niches
at all intruding beams of light.*

Then the Piper came.

*And the citizenry heard the news
(appropriately horrified)
"Rodents underneath these splendid homes?"
(They heard them every day and feared them in the night,
lurking,
blinking beadily
in the night)*

*"The idea!"
"Run him out of town!"
"Hang the knave!"
"Crucify him!"
The Piper turned to leave.
The golden flute
Held mute in his hands.*

*Hamlen-town had never heard him play
had not one man come weeping to his feet
"Deliver my house!"*

*Notes of silver moonlight,
Tones of golden sunlight,
Gleaming light streamed flashing out.
Out of the flute
 out of the lips
 out of the skillful fingertips,
Burst blazing into the night,
into the beady eyes
 into the musty dark
 of the black niches,
and into the watching windows of the homes of
Hamlen-town,*

They saw them.



*A ridiculous sight at the town's edge
The piper, the man and all his rats behind.
(Rats! Right out in the open!
Shamefull)*

*When they were out of sight
the citizens came out of their shelters,
 convened the council of the wise,
 and solemnly concurred they had witnessed
 a notable scene.
So quickly they voted,
 elected,
 appointed,
 designed and erected
At the center of the town, a statue
of imperishable stone.*

Thenceforth,

*When the night came down in Hamlen-town
and every man lay in his bed,
the moonlight gleamed
from the white stone top of the Piper's head,
and the weeping, upturned face of the man at his feet,
forever together in stone
in the Hamlen park,*

*And gleamed in a million beady eyes
in the musty dark.*

—DON HALL

the communication of

LEONARD BASKIN

BY AUGUST L. FREUNDLICH

THIS is a New England college town; the young tweedy professor is friendly. He invites you to lunch at his house after class is over. The car is a battered old Plymouth; the big old house speaks of past grandeur.

The inside of the house is not too different from what you might expect in any teacher's home except that the pictures on the wall are originals, here a handsome Eakins, there a personally inscribed Shahn, and a poetically expressive head by Baskin.

It is a gift to his wife he says. Leonard Baskin is an artist. This is the home where he lives with his wife and child. This is where he has his studio.

From here come these strangely beautiful and haunting forms. In recent years, they have brought Baskin great popularity and critical acclaim. His shows are sellouts. His work is reproduced in books and magazines.

Baskin is of a philosophical bent. He likes to ask the whys. He is a well-read man, a scholar who makes his conclusions known to the public in visual form.

He is a sensitive human being who has learned to transmit what he cares about, through prints and sculpture. He has the skill to create a kind of visual order.

As he carves away at a huge column of maple you can see in his deliberate strokes that he has patience. A carved figure, like "Youth" requires many months of arduous labor to complete. This artist knows how to make compli-

cated notions seem simple. He is a skilled craftsman.

If you want to know more about his work—look at it. Study it. There is a lot to learn of man and his condition in the world, of pathos and humility, of the unconquered human spirit. The wood carving "Youth" is typical of some phases of Baskin's art. Such a time-consuming medium is unusual in a day when the quicker technique of welding or junk picking pays off so well. He develops his haunting effigy painstakingly with the skill of a craftsman. This figure is both stoically calm and suffering.

Baskin often refers to human suffering to death and poetry. "John Donne in his Winding Cloth" * reminds us of the inevitable end to which our bodies must come. Is there another goal to life, does the spirit live on?

In his drawing and graphics Baskin seems to be less deliberate. His brush strokes and lines are full of energy. They are placed with the deliberate Freedom that only a careful student of Form achieves.

Baskin maintains the image, in the great traditions of art but he speaks forcefully in the idiom of our day. He speaks of the things in our lives which concern him and us. His work once seen is not easily forgotten. Baskin is truly a man of our time, one of the crowd in many outward ways yet different, sensitively hauntingly biting different.

* A Bronze casting of the English poet.



OMINOUS CROW DRAWING 1960 40"x26"
GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY / 1018 MADISON AVE., N.Y. 21, N.Y.

February 1962



BRONZE 1955
GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY, N.Y.

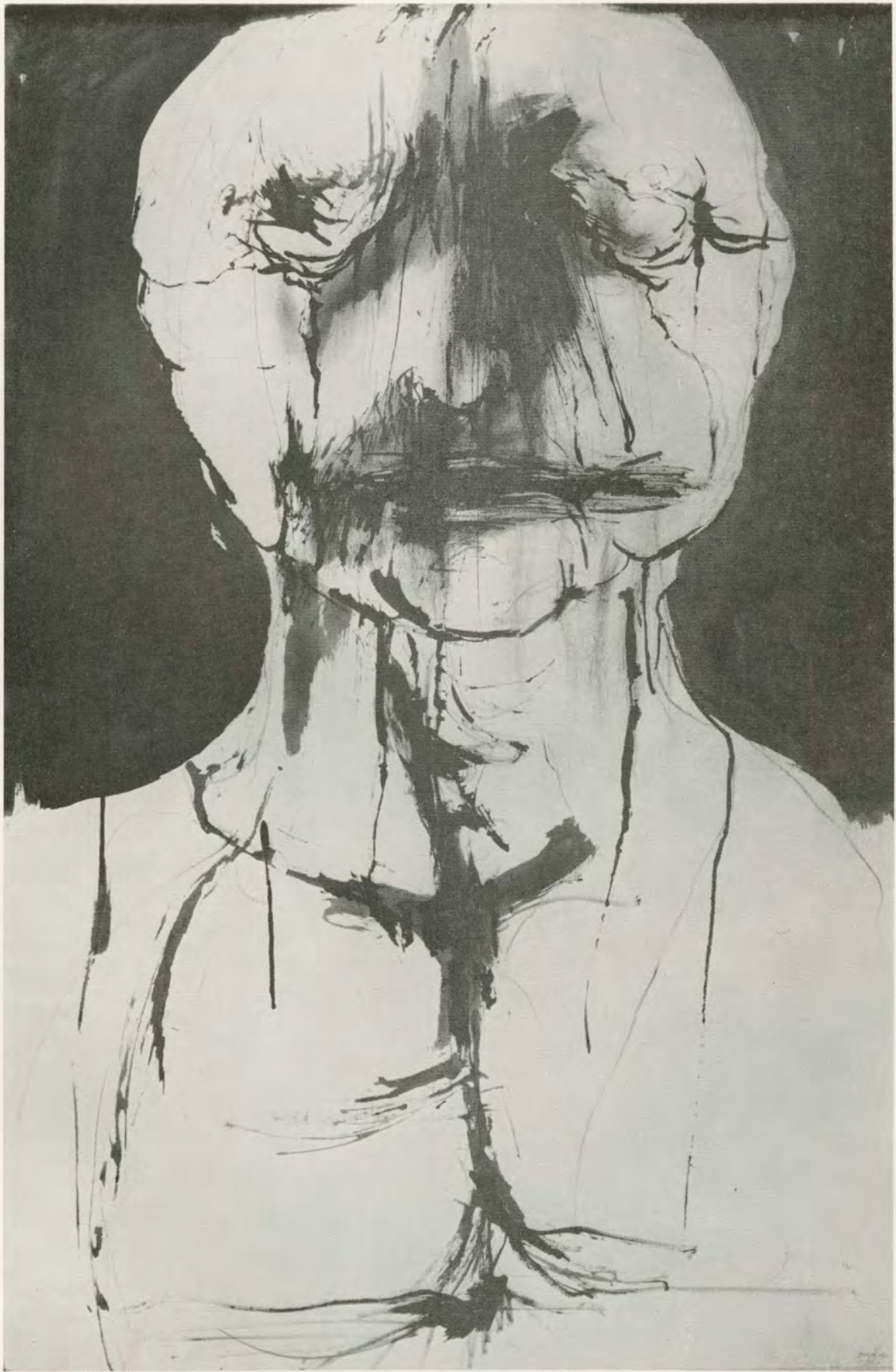
EQUALLY proficient in both sculpture and printmaking, Leonard Baskin has won so many awards in both media the list is far too long to include. It is interesting to note that his drawing facility in pencil, ink and wash is as powerful as his printmaking and follows in the long tradition of artists who have found great resources in the discipline of drawing.

Baskin's sculpture figures appeared in the 1960 *New Images of Man* show at the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., keeping company with the most violently abstract and distorted of contemporary figurative art. His style, for all its careful detail, presents a final image which is total. His directness and vision draw admiring response from artists, critics and laymen alike. Baskin always in deepest conversation with modern man in a broken world, is aware of both the grandeur and the misery of man—and the disorders of the spirit.

BASKIN was born in New Brunswick, N.J., August, 1922. He studied at New York University, 1939-1941, Yale University School of Fine Arts, 1941-1945, and the New School for Social Research, where he took his B.A. in 1949. In addition, he studied at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, Paris, France, in 1950, and the Academy of Fine Arts, Florence, Italy, 1951. Since 1953, Baskin has taught printmaking and sculpture at Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

—MARGARET RIGG

JOB IN HIS WINDING CLOTH



GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY, N.Y.

INK 1960 INJURED MAN

February 1962

19

COLLECTION: M. J. STEWART



GLUTTED DEATH INK 1959 40"x26"

THERE seems to be a new interest in subject matter in contemporary American painting and sculpture, wrote the University of Illinois committee to artists included in their biannual exhibition in 1961. Baskin, like the other artists who exhibited, was asked whether art is returning to figurative subject matter. . . .

"The human being is paramount. The blazing center is man. To have toppled nature's crown into the organized dust was the fabled stupidity of the last decade. "Heaven help us when these hands lay hold on to the figure. Father forgive them."

—LEONARD BASKIN 1961



GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY, N.Y.

YOUTH

OAK 1956

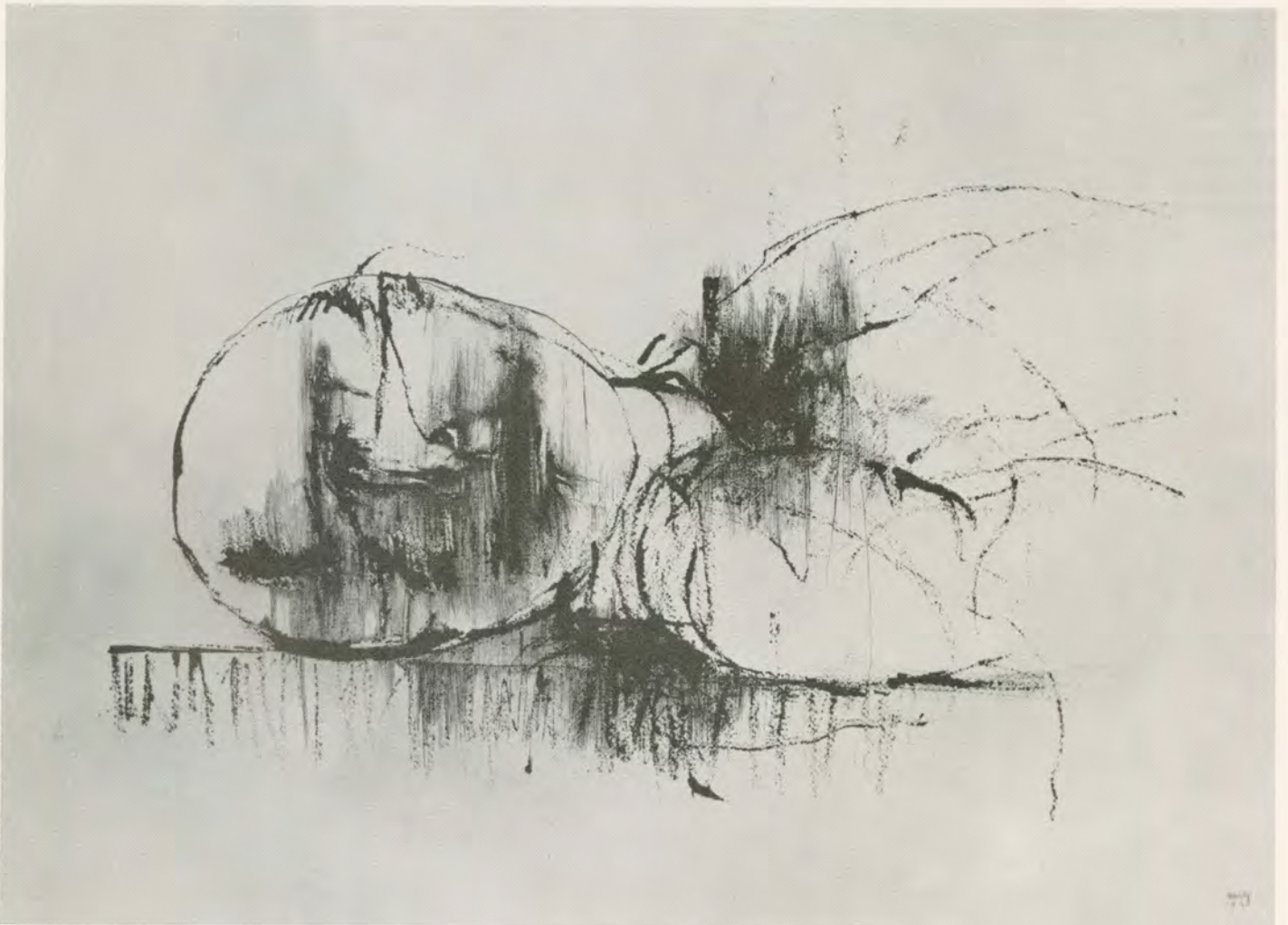
COLLECTION: JAY LEFF



IN MEMORY OF LEWIS BLACK

BRONZE RELIEF 1959

COLLECTION: MALCOLM GOLDSTEIN



"BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER" INK 1958



COLLECTION: MARGARET RIGG

DEATH AMONG THE THISTLES

WOODCUT 1959



GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY, N.Y.

DEATH

BRONZE 1961

LEONARD BASKIN

SIXTY YEARS TO GET READY

death, destruction and failure in Hollywood film fare

BY ROBERT STEELE

EITHER a renaissance of the film is taking place or a stillborn infant has begun to breathe. Perhaps we are experiencing the rebirth of an art form begun many years ago in the imaginative, technical explorations of pioneers like George Melies, Edwin S. Porter, David Wark Griffith, and Sergei Eisenstein. Those unaware of this inheritance may feel the film is just beginning. Audiences who judged past films to be rubbish are discovering through new, fine films that they have never really seen anything worthy of being called films. They have been offended or disillusioned by the millions of miles of repetitious celluloid garbage which has left viewers empty or nauseated. Audiences whose birth coincided with the second world war now seem to have sufficient taste and intelligence to search out the good films.

Since the turn of the century, film has been a medium of communication. We have had occasionally films that gave promise of a new art form. Film is an especially exciting art form because it is the only one to be born since the dawn of civilization, and the only one which became possible because of the mechanical advances of the Industrial Revolution. Film is our sole machine-age art form.

The lone men who had a vision of the potential beauty, importance, and value of the medium are not "sleeping with the stars" at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Los Angeles. Usually, they have been Hollywood rejects who died poor and unhonored. Many were broken persons whose talent and worth are just now being sufficiently recognized.

Too many of the "offspring" of film-makers have been retarded and some have been idiots and monsters. Fortunately, nature and the evolution of art take care of the freaks by forgetfulness, and happily, the bulk of films produced over a span of sixty years has sunk into oblivion. Perhaps it was necessary to go through many deaths, massive waste and destruction, smelly decay in order to arrive at a renewal and maturation of film's form, sense, purpose, values, vision, and audiences.

Much of the clean up in the film field occurred because of the growth of television which has siphoned



off some of the inanity which has handicapped films. The time-wasting populace now stay home by their televisions to see time-wasting programs. But more cleaning up is yet to be done for film to get on its way as a great medium of communication and form of art.

The moguls of Hollywood have usually been smart men who have known what they wanted and how to get it. They have wilfully hoodwinked "the peasants out there" by a planned dumping upon them of tasteless eroticism, saccharine children, anthropomorphized animals, pointless violence, sadism, degradation, and profane values. This was the sure-fire way to keep audiences coming back for more. Give a person enough sickness and he becomes sick. Play on his vulnerabilities, fears, baseness, ignorance, and because he has had a laxative rather than catharsis, innocently he will keep returning for more. Give him so much burlesque and corn and he becomes indistinguishable from his environment. Soon "Merton of the Movies" unknowingly stands only on celluloid.

The use of the film medium to make money at the cost of its other possibilities is the most important explanation for its giving us destruction instead of creation. Film became a speedway to fortune-making. Edison expected it to be a medium of education. Had he known Plato's thought, he might have expected the medium also to be one of entertainment. Plato believed the best education provides the best of entertainment and the best entertainment educates.

HOLLYWOOD might have been a cinema, gallery, university, or cathedral, but it was not because money is made in factories. Film production became a successful industry. Industries give us redder tomatoes, soap chips that get our clothes whiter, and automobiles that get us there in a ritzier style. They manufacture commodities to be sold by advertising to customers. Films have been commodities sold by advertising to customers. We know when we are satiated with ordinary products, and we can laugh at monogrammed, gold toothpicks, but the nature of film fools many of us into not knowing when we have had enough.

The film industry sells prefabricated dreams. The dreams of someone else become our dreams. These dreams can be pernicious in that we have them with our eyes wide open and do not perceive them as dreams. Dreams go into the subconscious. They can make and keep us sick as well as free and heal us. Hollywood's dream commodities of a way of life—the good life—with values such as *amour*, *amour*, and more *amour*, have nurtured emotional misfits. Cinema's womblike security and darkness permit persons permanently to withdraw from the light of reality.

Long before Mary Pickford cut off her curls, Hollywood dream factories discovered its *modus operandi* in the formula film. If the formula succeeded at the box office once, it insured future successes. These staple ingredients were combined in light miles of film.

The "threat" of television goaded a few film-makers to change the formula, but the solution of many has been to enlarge certain portions of the formula's ingredients. Thus, we have had an increase of blood, breasts, and bathos. The dimensions, sizes, and shapes of the cookie cutters have been changed, but the stamping out continues unabated. The formula film continues to guillotine originality.

Making the Hollywood moguls the sole scapegoats for our degradation via the film is unjust. Others all over our nation have contributed. The distributors of the dream-factory products have evaluated the films solely by the extent to which they have warmed the pavement in front of the box offices. If the distributors' trade journals report that the film did well in Poughkeepsie, then it is booked for Syracuse. If it failed to rake in money in Canton, it will never get to Akron. Films are not judged and booked for what they are. The take in a city is the single arbiter. If the take is insufficient, the film will not be booked, and minority audiences may see the film if ever they happen to be in New York city at the *New Yorker* or *Thalia* on the right day.

The film industry was still in diapers when shrewd men saw they would do well to monopolize the retailing as well as the manufacturing of films. The financiers who own the major studios bought up cinemas and locations for cinemas throughout the nation. These are largely bound together by a steel chain, so that audiences from Topeka to Tokyo are captured before cameras start rolling. The film houses are so controlled by monopolies that an independent film-maker—should he manage to make a film outside a major studio—cannot get it shown. Thus, he cannot get income from his work and the making of a second film is an impossibility. Large cities have had their breakthroughs, but the lone cinema like the lone film-maker is battling Goliath with a paper wad.

To keep the formula intact and the pavements warm, stars have provided systematized sex. Writers, directors, and technicians have become conjurers of star magnetism. Collusions of gossip columnists, fan magazines, and press agents provide the warm-up for a star's conquest. *Haute couture*, hairdressers, advertisements of cigarettes, beer, nail polish, grow-hair-on-the-chest ointments, guns and tatoos conspire as satellites to grow and reflect star heat.

America became a monarchy of stars functioning as a royal family, and in private life stars took to playing



Henry VIII and Louis XIV. Commoners, on their ways home to lonely beds, adored, worshiped, and dreamed they were nonlonely—that they, too, were princesses and gods not to be touched by human hands. Until *Marty* life in films was largely that of an aristocracy or the upper classes. Stars and supporting actors and actresses created characters who lived apparently without working, so they could live only for love. They lived “graciously” and were not of the reality we know. Because the characters played were ersatz upper class and aristocracy, Orson Welles took them down a peg. As he left for Europe, after the critical triumph of *Citizen Kane* and his failure to be permitted to direct another picture, he said that Hollywood films show the lower-middle class what the upper-middle class was doing yesterday. Welles followed the exodus of European talent who refused to say yes to Hollywood moguls, formulas, and stars.

YOUNG and fecund writing and directing talent was washed out of Hollywood during the twenties, thirties, and forties. These were hands writing on studio walls for all to read who would read: “Your days are numbered. Do a turn-about-face or you are doomed. Transform this industry into an art form or you are lost.” They were thought to be snooty, eccentric, and “incompatible.” Probably more talent has been pillaged in Hollywood than in any other city in the world. More talent left Hollywood than remained there. The talented artists who remained have frequently been so shelved and eschewed, that they have become outcasts and paupers. (When called into court for not paying his alimony, Eric von Stroheim, after he had made his great epics, confessed to the judge that he had only the \$8 in his pocket.)

Even calamitous television, which has turned Hollywood's studios into ghost towns, was insufficiently clear writing to reveal Hollywood's failure to find a meaningful and respected place in the lives of American people. The year 1945 divided Hollywood into those who joined the enemy—television—and those who resolved to represent the formula in larger-sized packages. This “solution” is still being tried, but it is failing to salvage what was lost. It's hard to have sympathy for these terminal cases. Death gasps echo a life that had meaninglessness and meanness at its core.

Yesterday, today, and probably tomorrow the excuse for this travesty will be, “All we did was to give the public what it wanted.” The public did take it in weekly doses for about six hundred months, but that is not proof that the public wanted it. From the early forties on Hollywood lost most of its adult audience and cinema seats were filled mostly with teenagers and bachelors. George Bernard Shaw exposed the lie in this half-truth: “Get what you want or before long you'll begin to like what you get.” Film, radio, and television audience polls agree that the public is inarticulate about what it wants. The public is vague and unknow-

ing about its wants and the most frequent reply is, “Oh, it's all right.”

When a person has little idea of what he might have, or what he might like immensely if he had a chance to find out about it, naturally, his ignorance keeps him content. Have we not always had more vegetating rather than discriminating and rebelling men? Are we not always a mixture of Stone Age, medieval, and Victorian men existing simultaneously in any year? Isn't the twentieth-century man, with twentieth-century tastes in arts a rarity? His number will not comprise mass audiences. But art is not produced for the masses. It unites people of the past, present, and future whose “mass” is of a vertical nature as their tastes and interests unite the best in history. They intersect the horizontal audience, who walk around answering pollsters' questions, and this nexus makes life more bearable and beautiful for all. It is this minority who entertain, educate, inspire, excite, and heal the mass. “Giving the public what it wants” is salve rubbed on the itching conscience. It is the apology for the huckster maneuver.

ONE man of Hollywood whose genius, good fortune, and business acumen gave him the power to shape and resist being shaped is Charlie Chaplin. The passage of time proves him right. Also the persistence of his work to entertain proves he was in agreement with the lasting values of film sense. And, he made money and continues to make money proving that people will pay and pay again for good value for their money. The most recent release of the *Gold Rush* netted him more than all its previous releases. Anytime he chooses to rerelease *A Woman in Paris*, *The Kid*, *The Circus*, *The Great Dictator*, *Limelight* and other of his films, he can probably pick up many more millions. However, he did not go into films to make money. He went to practice his art and because it was great art money came. Before he became his own owner and producer, he grew weary of hearing, “But I'm telling you, that's what the *producer* wants.” (In Hollywood the producer is the liaison between the film-maker and the public to insure the film is hammered out in a way “suitable” to the audience.) Chaplin answered this theme song visually during the whole of his working life and verbally in 1924:

“I prefer my own taste as a truer expression of what the public wants of me than anything that I can fathom out of the things that I observe either in my own work or in that of others who are unmistakably successful.

“I have heard directors, scenario writers, and others who are directly concerned with the shape that the motion pictures shall take argue under the shadow of this great fear of the public. They begin with good ideas, then they lose courage and deceive themselves. The consciousness of what the public will want is so terrifying for them! If they do something that is a little different because they have forgotten while filming

the episode that there is such a thing as an audience, they are in doubt about it when they stop to consider. It is difficult to consider the public secondarily, but unless the person making the picture can achieve that state, there will be no originality in his work."

Chaplin's was a lonely voice that was ignored and hated by less successful rivals and small men, but the high quality, beauty, and humanity of his films achieved a stellar position for Hollywood in the world.

The canyon-sized vaults entombing the thousands of Hollywood products are mausoleums of curios and artifacts made by craftsmen, technicians, and business men. They missed the boat despite the boatloads of artists from Europe and train and bus loads of artists who sought a mecca in Hollywood. Hollywoodians made a Detroit instead of a Florence. The films made over the years are too trivial to be remembered even as birth pangs. The bulk of them are too slight to be bought by television even as adhesives between the commercials. Only the "elite" films because of their star value manage this "survival." Unless their public was conceived as only that of the next week, those men who were ruthless in giving the public what it wanted were mistaken. The oblivion into which the

mass of films has gone proves their valuelessness. Producers glued to the whimpers and snickers of sneak-preview audiences were hearing misleading voices. These audiences who said it was too sad, not funny enough, too "real" to be enjoyable were listened to when the film went back to the studio floor, so that a gag could be inserted and the ending could be refixed. In the estimation of thoughtful people those compromises of happy endings by way of the good-bad girl's becoming a bad-good girl give Hollywood a black mark all over the world.

These voices which contributed death and destruction to the film are less audible now. We have seen enough good films to know to expect something that is believable and moving. Rubbish from the Hollywood mills still clutters our cinemas, and ash cans are yet substituted for film cans. But even the pre-teenager is less likely to be hornswoggled any more. We have more persons differentiating bona fide "merchandise" from the bogus. From Hollywood itself, from other cities and towns over the United States, from universities and independent film-makers, and of course from Europe and Asia, we are hearing and seeing renewal of tastes which should cause the rebirth of the film.

in flight and fright



The wind comes and gently tugs and breathes "Come on, come on, there is not much time." It whines about my feet and marks them cold; it brittles my mouth and swells it with hunger; it closes my eyes with dust; and it stops my ears with plaintive sighs and drowns them in a lullaby of smiles.

And the wind is always fleeing. In it a tree strains toward flight, but can only watch the exodus of its outer garment of dead leaves. How pitifully they pull away, snapping and twisting to be free, to be gone.

Yet we too, like dried leaves, brush against each other and ourselves; scurrying in haste to exit out of existence—plunging past ourselves, scrambling, end over end, not knowing, not caring whom we don't know; only to maintain our rhythm; never realizing that the rattle of bones we hear is what we ourselves have become.

However, there may well be a time when someone or thing touches our arm and, by chance, we turn . . . and by chance we see. . . .

Yet how many of us who have had that chance accept it? who do not block it out and continue in flight and fright? and how many more of us *never* as yet have had that chance? How many of us are like dead moldy leaves in the wind—the wind that is always fleeing?

Thus we come to the question, "From whom?"

—RON BROCKETT

motive

ART & KITSCH*

communication, fine and popular art today in america

BY CLINTON ADAMS

THE contemporary artist is not unaware of the gap that exists between his art and his audience. *Uns tragt kein Volk*, Klee stated—the people are not with us. Some who recognize this fact have chosen to blame the artist and to criticize him for his failure to present his images in a simple and easily comprehensible way. The changes that have occurred in the visual arts during the past century have been accompanied by equally striking changes in the audience for art: an audience which now frequently finds itself confused by the new forms; estranged, lost, and even angered that art should be as it is. Such a response reflects the general misunderstanding of art which exists in our culture, for in reality much of the art that is criticized as obscure is ordered and clear, and much that is praised for its clarity is chaotic and obscure.

This misunderstanding arises largely from a failure to recognize the existence of two quite separate kinds of art which, although existing side by side in the twentieth century, are essentially different in their nature, purpose and function. One of these is traditional *fine art*, usually called *art*. The other is *popular art* or *mass art*, which the Germans call *kitsch*.*

The need for a clear distinction between art and *kitsch* is not always recognized; indeed, they are commonly confused in the public mind and the difference between them is thought to be but one of degree rather than kind.

Kitsch has been defined variously as "ersatz culture" (Greenberg), and as "the wax apple in the garden of art" (Kaplan). Like the wax apple, it resembles the real fruit without having any of the flavor or taste or nourishment thereof. It is essentially deceptive, synthetic and false.

Kitsch directs our attention not to its own character or existence as does a genuine work of art, but rather to the concepts, events and objects to which it refers. Characteristically, it is instrumental or directive in purpose, and is therefore logically and even necessarily couched in a visual language which can be quickly perceived and easily understood. As Greenberg pointed



* One of the first to use the term *kitsch* in America was Clement Greenberg in his article, "Avant Garde and Kitsch," originally published in the *Partisan Review*, Fall, 1939, and reprinted in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, an anthology edited by Bernard Rosenberg and David M. White. Since that date the use of the word *kitsch* has been extended in many places to include all forms of visual popular art, and it is in that broader sense that it is used here.

out, *kitsch* "predigests art for the spectator and spares him effort, providing him with a short cut to the pleasure of art that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art."

We are surrounded by popular art: comic strips, advertisements, magazine illustrations, and the pictures on the wall—framed reproductions of paintings that serve as prettified or sentimentalized reminders of familiar experience, as a means of momentary escape from a prosaic reality, and as a substitute for the imagined pleasures of some distant place or time. But the vicarious experience which these paintings provide is basically counterfeit. Appearing superficially to function as works of art, in actuality they are unable to do so. A painting of a happy, country boy with his dog at his side may strike a pleasant note in our memories, and we may enjoy the chain of recollections which it induces, but our response is to the subject represented and not to the painting as an object of value in its own right.

Indeed, it is clear that aesthetic criteria are irrelevant to the judgment of *kitsch*. *Kitsch*, in all forms, must be judged by an autonomous system of values quite separate from those appropriate to the judgment of art. *Kitsch is designed to entertain, to divert, to persuade or to propagandize. Art, in its primary role, does none of these things, and thus is of little use to those who have doctrines or products for sale.*

It is characteristic of *kitsch* that the picture on the wall should constantly change while remaining ever unchanged. The genre scenes of the nineteenth century give way to Maxfield Parrish and "September Morn," and these in turn yield to Rockwell and Huldah. Time passes and fashions change but *kitsch* is always the same: formless, characterless and mushy—the pabulum if not the opiate of the people.

Russell Lynes, in his witty book, *The Tastemakers*, reports an interview with an unnamed Sears, Roebuck executive which bears this out:

Recently I asked the executive in charge of buying pictures (as well as "gifts" and lamps) for Sears, Roebuck in Chicago which pictures sold best in the tremendous market that Sears, as the biggest retailer in the world, serves. "Rembrandt, Renoir and Van Gogh," he said, "don't sell. I wish they did." (He was, of course, talking about reproductions.) "Our best seller is called 'Fiery Peaks.' It's a picture of the Cascade Mountains either at sunset or sunrise, you can't tell which, and the sky is bright orange." I asked him who his most popular artist was. "Huldah," he said. "She paints pictures of Parisian women with big black eyes and frilly things around their necks and we sell them in very fancy Edwardian frames. We also sell a great many small pictures that can be grouped together to make an arrangement, flower prints and Audubons."

There is no surprise in this. "Fiery Peaks" is a familiar image, a romantic vision of The West, a watered-down Bierstadt or Cole. Huldah, an ersatz Renoir, appears refined and genteel, yet spiced with a touch—just a touch—of Parisian sophistication.

In a class with Huldah, although of a different, more home-grown strain is Norman Rockwell, in whose pictures we find images based entirely upon familiar,

everyday vision—simple down-to-earth, and free of disturbance.

ROCKWELL is a master of the stereotype, a painter with a remarkable eye for the common and the typical. He paints with meticulous realism and considerable skill the paintings which the reader of the *Saturday Evening Post* fancies that he himself would paint if only he possessed that skill. Precisely in this fact lies much of Rockwell's appeal. His paintings exist within the area of the observer's past experience; they cause no labor or thought in their comprehension, and the feelings which they engender are pleasant and comfortable. Beyond this, they manage to avoid the look of art. Indeed, Rockwell does everything possible to reduce aesthetic distance, to destroy the painted surface and to replace it with "the real thing," thus permitting the observer to feel a part of the scene depicted. His only style is a suppression of style and a substitution of formula for form. In content, as well as in their avoidance of the look of art, Rockwell's images are a visual counterpart of the anti-intellectualism which characterizes other facets of American culture. In their constant underlining of the stereotype they encourage a rejection of or, at the very least, a failure to recognize the unique.

Rockwell's pictures, based as they are in the artistic styles of nineteenth-century American art, do much to illuminate the nature of *kitsch*. For it is characteristic of *kitsch* that it lives as a parasite upon the high arts of a culture. This parasitical relationship, an essential characteristic of *kitsch*, is not a simple one. *Kitsch* not only appropriates the forms of art, transforming them so as to erode and destroy their vitality, but comes also to serve as a substitute for the art it has replaced. It would be inaccurate to say that *kitsch* destroys a taste for art; rather, the prevalence of *kitsch* tends to foreclose the formation of such taste. The observer, habituated to the substitute, rejects the disturbing stimulation of genuine art and views it with suspicion and alarm. When "art competes with *kitsch*, serious ideas compete with commercialized formulae—and the advantage lies all on one side. There seems to be a Gresham's Law in culture as well as monetary circulation: bad stuff drives out the good, since it is more easily understood and enjoyed." *

Not all *kitsch* is equally bad, although when we come to speak of good or bad *kitsch*, we find that these evaluative adjectives refer not to its aesthetic quality, for this would be pointless, but rather to its moral effect or its usefulness in relation to the purpose for which it may have been made. We would, for example, speak of pornography as *bad*, but this judgment is a moral one. The pornographic painting and the Sears favorite, "Fiery Peaks," have much in common. Each provides the observer with a substitute for "real" experience.

* Macdonald, Dwight. "A Theory of Mass Culture." Originally published in *Diogenes*, Summer, 1953; reprinted in Rosenberg and White.

The pornographic painting serves its consumer not as an object having intrinsic value, but rather as a stimulus to thoughts and feelings which lead away from the painting itself and toward the objects represented therein. It thus serves as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Its effectiveness, or shall we say its success, within its realm lies in the vividness of the counterfeit experience provided by it. "Fiery Peaks" likewise. It is *better* than the pornographic painting only in that it is devoid of certain moral disvalues.

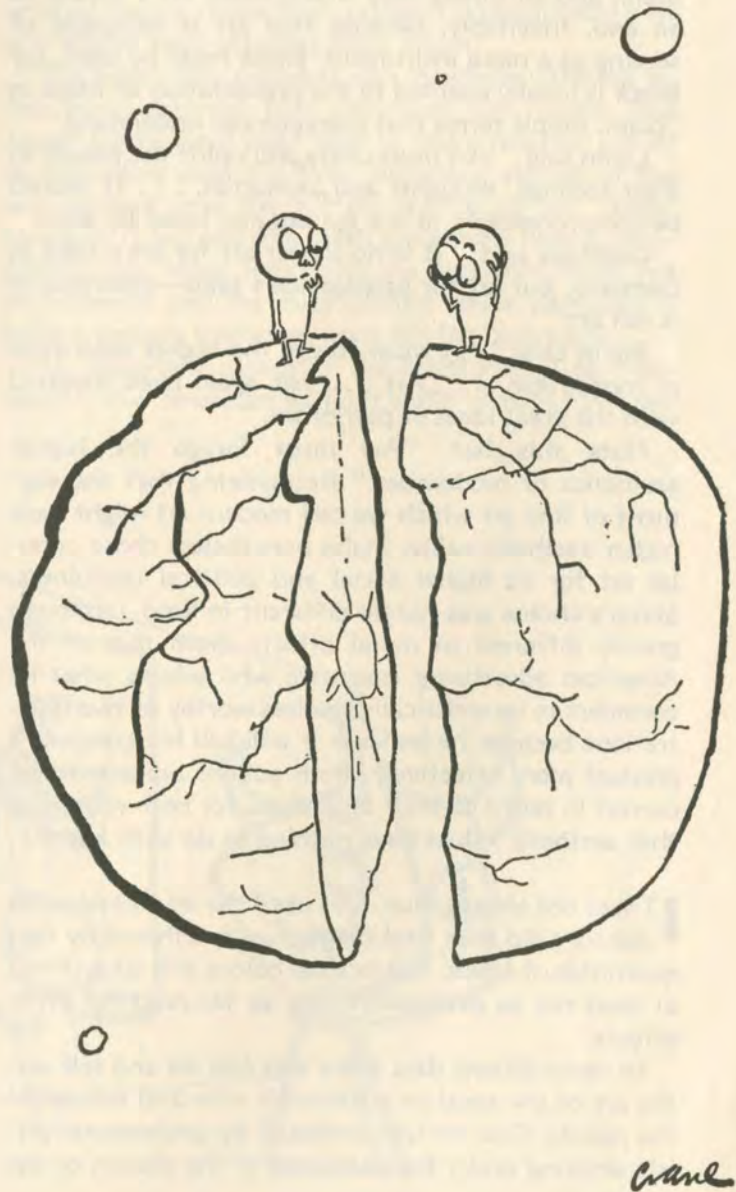
The glowing illustrations of our billboards and advertisements are similar. We may speak of them as good if they are successful in encouraging the sale of the products advertised, but we should not confuse the issue by mixing aesthetic considerations with pragmatic ones. The enticing rendering of a cold foamy glass of beer is most certainly designed to direct our attention to the beer itself, and not to the rendering of it. The intention of the artist is to make us want the beer, not the painting; to produce thirst, not an aesthetic experience. And, indeed, any advertisement which might make us immediately conscious of its character as a visual image, while possibly good art, is most clearly bad advertising.

Business, necessarily, must sell what it can sell. Its role is not that of the museum; its primary concern is with profit, not education of the public taste. Some companies are delightfully frank about this. Sears certainly is, for in a statement of desirable qualifications in candidates for executive positions, they openly note that acceptance of

*"artistic beauty and taste as a fundamental standard of life . . . is not a factor which makes for executive success. . . . Generally, cultural considerations are not important to Sears executives, and there is evidence that such interests are detrimental to success."**

Certainly we cannot look to business, whether in the sale of pictures or in advertising or in product design, to take the lead in the aesthetic development of our culture. But it would be equally mistaken to conclude that American business alone is responsible for the origin and growth of *kitsch*. *Kitsch* is not limited to the United States, even if it is more widespread here than elsewhere. It finds its origin in the nature of modern culture, in photographic methods of reproduction and in the mass media of communication. It is now universal, existing in any given country in direct proportion to that country's advance toward an industrial and technological civilization.

Except for quite minor differences in manner or technique there is little beside subject matter to let us distinguish the popular art of the United States from that of Soviet Russia. Politically neutral, flourishing in democratic and totalitarian societies alike, visual *kitsch* can be measured and classified only by the nature of its subject matter, the skill of its execution and the



Crumb

* Quoted in Whyte, William H., Jr., *The Organization Man*. Page 194.

purpose for which it is created and employed. In America this purpose may be that of innocuous diversion and entertainment, or it may be the sale of commodities. In Russia it is the sale of ideas.

There are some in this country who would have us use it that way too. Representative George A. Dondero (R-Mich.), speaking in 1949, accused modern art of being communistic "because it is distorted and ugly, because it does not glorify our beautiful country, our cheerful and smiling people, and our great material progress. Art which does not portray our beautiful country in plain simple terms that everyone can understand breeds dissatisfaction. It is therefore opposed to our government and those who create and promote it are our enemies." *

Clearly, Mr. Dondero would have us use art—he really means *kitsch*—to sell ideas, and in urging this he is not alone. He has the company of Lenin, Goebbels, Stalin and all others who would make art a means to an end. Inevitably, because true art is incapable of serving as a mere instrument, *kitsch* must be used, for *kitsch* is ideally adapted to the presentation of ideas in "plain, simple terms that everyone can understand."

Lenin said: "Art must unite and uplift the people in their feelings, thoughts and aspiration. . . . It should be comprehensible to the masses and loved by them."

Goebbels said: "It is no longer art for art's sake in Germany, but art for propaganda's sake—otherwise it is not art."

Stalin said: "Art must forego the higher aesthetics of modernism. . . . Art . . . has again been invested with the great ideas of patriotism."

Note this last. "Art must forego the higher aesthetics of modernism." Recognizing that the segment of fine art which we call modern art might have higher aesthetic value, Stalin nonetheless chose popular art for its higher social and political usefulness. Stalin's choice was hardly different in kind (although greatly different in moral effect) from that of the American advertising executive who selects what he considers to be artistically the less worthy of two illustrations because he believes it will sell his company's product more effectively. Both actions are essentially correct in terms of their objectives, for both recognize that aesthetic values have nothing to do with *kitsch*.

It was not always thus. Not until the mid-nineteenth century did men find themselves smothered by vast quantities of *kitsch*. If it existed before this time it was at least not so overpowering or so far-reaching in its effects.

In more distant days there was *fine art* and *folk art*: the art of the royal or aristocratic elite and the art of the people. Fine art was produced by professional artists working under the patronage of the church or the

court, artists who were under no obligation to satisfy the masses, artists who were free to work, and expected to work, at the highest level of their abilities. Folk art, on the other hand, flourished in the villages and country, an art not of professional artists but of anonymous artisans, an art of the people, by the people, and for the people. The separation between fine art and folk art was as distinct as that between court and village.

Mass culture, of which visual *kitsch* is but one aspect, came into being as a result of the industrial revolution, accompanied by a sudden explosion of total population and increasing urbanization. Folk art, essentially rural in its origins, cannot thrive in this new environment, nor can fine art continue unchanged and unaffected. Particularly has this been so in America.

Here, on new soil, all art is transplanted—unless we would speak of the quite genuine folk arts of the Indian, which, however genuine, are no part of the main stream of our culture. Our folk art, like our fine art, was imported from Europe, and neither was quick to take root. Gilbert Seldes states:

In the first half of the nineteenth century the prime event was the taking over of a continent, making it into a nation. It was not a time for the classic arts to flourish, and the poets and the sculptors and novelists . . . left America for Europe or stayed behind and jeered at the rude pioneer, finding only in his womenfolk any appreciation of the translations and copies they made from European originals.

In the next phase of our history the country became more industrial than agricultural, and the huge immigrations began. . . . Just as the first era had separated the people from the major arts, the second was unfavorable to the preservation of the folk arts. A kind of vacuum was created, and into it the popular arts naturally flowed.

Many of the negative aspects of the American attitude toward art and the artist had their beginning at this time. One could make a long list of American artists who, finding little sympathy in their own country, went abroad to work, and another still more tragic list of those who remained, living and dying unrecognized.

In the provincial society of nineteenth-century America the artist was a stranger. Because art was so commonly regarded as the proper occupation of women, the artist was thought to be somehow lacking in manly virtues, a stereotype which persists to the present day. The image of the effeminate artist, together with those of the mad scientist, the schoolmarm, and the absented-minded professor, stands as a symbol of the American fear and distrust of those who dare to be different, of those who dare to explore the world of ideas.

A portion of the responsibility for our failure to understand and provide for the artist in our society must be placed upon our educational system and institutions. The arts have not been given a central or even an adequate place in American schools. Art has been considered primarily in terms of manual skill, a view which, although etymologically well founded, is the root of much confusion. If we were to measure

* This statement and those by Lenin, Goebbels and Stalin which follow were quoted by Emily Genauer in "Still Life with Red Herring." *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1949. Pages 88-91.

art by skill alone then certain popular artists, Norman Rockwell among them, would be entitled to respectable places upon Parnassus. Rockwell, as was mentioned earlier, fits perfectly the layman's conception of the artist—that of a man possessed of the skill to do what he, the layman, would do if only he were an artist.

Harry Truman, while President of the United States, once commented on this point in a letter to William Benton, then Assistant Secretary of State.

I don't pretend to be an artist or a judge of art, but I am of the opinion that so-called modern art is merely the vaporings of half-baked lazy people. An artistic production is one which shows infinite ability for taking pains and if any of these so-called modern paintings show any such infinite ability, I am very much mistaken.

Mr. Truman was misled in this instance, as have been many Americans, by the notion that all art should be characterized by great finish and polish of execution, a notion which causes a good part of the layman's difficulty with contemporary paintings. True art demonstrates far more than an "infinite ability for taking pains."

All too often the public schoolteacher, sharing in the general confusion of art and *kitsch*, approaches art in the classroom only in terms of skills and techniques, thus passing along misunderstandings to a new generation.

The amateur artist, too, has characteristically been conditioned by *kitsch* rather than art, and the images toward which he aspires are the images of familiar experience. He attends a class in the hope that the teacher may help him to do more skillfully what he

already wishes to do. He fails to recognize the fundamental differences between his own activity and that of the professional painter, and is apt to think of the painter as a man who does full time what he, the amateur, does only on Sunday. Nowhere in America can one find more adamant Philistines than among the ranks of the amateur painters, men who like what they know—and what they know is *kitsch*. Paint-by-the-numbers kits notwithstanding, art is not a field in which you can do it yourself.

Mr. Truman and his compatriots can hardly be blamed for their misunderstandings. *Kitsch*, like smog, has in great quantities a blinding effect.

As a protective measure in a world of incredible visual chaos and disorder, as a means of preserving their sanity, most have found it necessary to learn not to see. In a matrix of advertisements and billboards in an architectural wasteland it is not remarkable that so many should have become blind to the visual character of their surroundings; rather it is remarkable that any should have retained their vision.

The artist, like everyone else, has been affected by the visual disorder that surrounds him. Some, like Stuart Davis, have been able to make positive use of it, converting even the most disturbing aspects of the environment into the subject matter of art. Davis, however, is but one of a small group who have accomplished this. More frequently the artist has found his environment and the mass culture which produced it to be a serious limitation upon his life and work.

An important aspect of the artist's total environment is the "museum without walls" which has been



CAN YOU GIVE ME A MESSAGE OF HOPE?

created by modern methods of reproduction. Artists everywhere now work with the world of the past and present all but literally at their fingertips, and the effect of this, particularly through interest in the antique and primitive arts, has been incalculable. It has acted as a catalyst in producing much of what has been most stimulating and characteristic in the art of our time.

But the mass media are by no means wholly beneficial. One must question the final effect of the film presentations of the lives of Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh. In part the question is based upon the emphasis given to the lives of the artists rather than to their works, thus catering to the stereotypes already existing in the mind of the audience; in part it is based upon the necessary presentation of their art as a part of an entertainment. It cannot be otherwise. The theater audience is there to be entertained, and the success—the financial success—of the film will be conditioned by its value as entertainment.

ONE must question, too, how much benefit results from the publication by *Life* and *Time* of reproductions of much of the best of the world's art, past and present. While appreciating the potential contribution thus made to general misunderstanding, we must remain aware of the journalistic bias which is unavoidable in any magazine edited for a mass audience.

Characteristic of *Life's* stories on contemporary painting is an emphasis upon the gimmick, upon work which is newsworthy not because of its quality but because of its deviation from the norm. Originality for the sake of originality is thus encouraged. *Life's* editors cannot afford, anymore than can the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post*, to be interested in a contemporary work of art by reason of its quality as a work of art. Its quality as art must remain secondary to its newsworthiness.

It may well be that the effect of the mass media has been more helpful than harmful insofar as the layman is concerned. But the effect upon the artist has frequently been less fortunate; for the constant emphasis upon the original, the different and the tricky has caused too many artists, perhaps already overly imbued with romantic notions of originality, to strive to be different whatever the cost; and the cost has often been high.

Originality in art cannot be achieved through conscious striving. Like the distant garden in *Through the Looking Glass*, it is approached only in the act of turning one's back resolutely upon it. No great artist has ever been other than original, nor has any great artist ever set originality as his objective.

Fine art is created as an end in itself. We ask nothing more of it than that it should be capable of serving as a stimulus to an aesthetic experience in a receptive observer. Far from operating in the realm of familiar

experience, we expect it to extend our experience in one way or another, to contribute to our emotional and intellectual awareness of ourselves and the world in which we live.

It has become a commonplace to assert the existence of the work of art as a thing-in-itself. It was in 1890 that Maurice Denis wrote the since often-quoted words: "Remember that a picture—before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote—is essentially a plane surface covered with colors assembled in a certain order." This recognition of the painting as a painting is essential to our experience of it.

Whereas the popular artist characteristically strives to *reduce* aesthetic distance in every way possible, the painter strives to *maintain* this distance as a necessary condition of aesthetic experience. He wishes—indeed, he insists—that we become aware of the painted surface as a painted surface, and that our response be not to the subject matter alone but rather to the style and form of the painting and to the significance of that form as the expressive means through which the painting's meanings are conveyed to us. This does not mean that the painter asks us to disregard the subject of his painting; quite the contrary. It means simply that the painter wishes us to respond to the images, qualities and forms of the work of art rather than to the natural events and objects which are outside of it.

I have said, "the painter." I do not qualify the noun with adjectives such as Renaissance, Baroque or modern; for concern with the work of art as a work of art is not limited to a single time. Picasso, Matisse, Klee and Kandinsky have far more in common with Leonardo da Vinci, El Greco, Rembrandt and Rubens than have any of these with the popular artist. It is not Norman Rockwell who is the "traditional" painter in our time; the tradition of art has been that of the created visual image. In this sense it is the art called modern art that is the traditional art of the early twentieth century.

The layman who remarks that he understands a Rembrandt but cannot make sense of a Picasso reveals, among other things, that he does not really see the Rembrandt. His training on the images of *kitsch* has conditioned him to respond to the Rembrandt as he would to a Rockwell: to look through the surface as if it were transparent—as if it were a window into nature—and to see only the subject matter, not the painting. He then reacts directly to that subject matter, liking or disliking it according to its character, becoming sentimentally, romantically or nostalgically involved with the scenes or characters depicted. Rockwell would have us respond directly to the subject matter of the painting, to become one with the happy members of the family gathered around the Thanksgiving table. The true artist, dealing with a similar subject, would, in effect, hold us back sufficiently so that we might contemplate rather than participate in the scene portrayed.

Recalling Kant's assertion of the essentially disinterested character of aesthetic pleasure, José Ortega y Gasset points out (in *The Dehumanization of Art*) that "grieving and rejoicing at such human destinies as a work of art presents or narrates is a very different thing from true artistic pleasure," and "preoccupation with the human content of the work is in principle incompatible with aesthetic enjoyment proper."

While it is not necessary, in my view, to accept fully Ortega's total separation of aesthetic responses from other responses, the concept of aesthetic or psychological distance is of considerable assistance in understanding the development and character of contemporary painting.

If we may speak of a Rockwell as "transparent," we may speak of the semiabstract or abstract painting as relatively or totally "opaque." The layman, looking at a semiabstract painting by Picasso, finds himself brought up short. He cannot look beyond the painting to the subject matter represented, the artist having so structured the image as to make this response, if not impossible, at least inappropriate. He must therefore take notice of the painting itself. Put in this position, forced to respond in an unaccustomed manner, he is ill at ease. Still attempting to look at the subject matter, at what is outside of the picture rather than in it, he feels frustrated by the fact that what he sees appears to him to be a "distorted woman." Blinded by this outrage, he fails to see that there has been no violation of the nature of art, but only of his prejudices and preconceptions.

As noted at the outset, the artist is all too aware of these problems. His development in the past half century of a vocabulary of expressive abstract forms has been a retreat from values held dear in popular art: a retreat from likeness, a retreat from the display of skill, a retreat from conformity—but not, in the main stream of contemporary art, a retreat from the essential and traditional values of art. The history of the period is a history of reactions, and central among these reactions has been the struggle of artists against the fashionable banalities of popular culture.

In his search for uncontaminated ground the painter has turned increasingly toward totally abstract forms. But even here he finds he cannot stop. Piet Mondrian's sensitive and subtle geometry is now converted to shop windows, advertisements and storage walls, and the violent explosions of the abstract-expressionist painter are already tamed as textile designs. If in *Dada* and the more recent *Neo-dada** movements we have seen an apparent rejection of the very values of art itself, it is in part due to this cause. For as rapidly as the artist invents, the popularizer appropriates, sweetening and sugar-coating the pill for consumption. Thus depreciated, the artist finds the forms no longer his. Changed,

* Often spoken of as "junk art" and celebrated in a large show at The Museum of Modern Art, N. Y., under the title "Art of Assemblage." (Editors.)

separated from its original context it has become empty and meaningless. He must abandon it and find new ground.

The history of art has been a search for such ground. In each century, in each artist's work, art has explored new realms of experience; it has dealt with realities, with perceptions and ideas of depth, meaning and importance, and has presented these ideas in aesthetically significant form. It has asserted the value of the individual. It has enlightened and endured.

Kitsch does none of these things. It deals with the obvious, the accepted and approved, the superficial and banal, the fancies, fads and fashions of the moment. It diverts and entertains, but fades rapidly with the passage of time, leaving nothing of substance behind it. It encourages conformity, group taste and group think, and in its failure to accommodate and give importance to the individual creative art takes a long step toward abandonment of the freedom which permits that act.

We live at a time when freedom is under test. One part of our task must be to provide an atmosphere in which the arts may survive.



EVERY TIME I TAKE A STAND THE WORLD SHIFTS

College students, theoretically, spend most of their time immersed in the printed page. Course syllabi, lecture bibliographies, reading reports, and term-paper research require endless hours in the library. And yet, students seem to evidence an amazing lack of contact with significant books which aren't on their required reading list. motive has invited four educators to comment briefly on the two most significant books which they have read in the past five years.

SIGNIFICANT BOOKS

JACOB, PHILIP E.: CHANGING VALUES IN COLLEGE. (HARPER & BROS., 1957)

Does college change the values held by students? If so, what are the kinds of influences which bring about such changes? These are the questions dealt with in this volume. Dr. Jacob finds that the formal educational process has little influence upon whatever change in student values occurs during college, a change which varies greatly from student to student and from institution to institution. However, he does point out that certain institutions and certain teachers do influence student values significantly. At a time when education is receiving "top-billing" in all segments of our American life, the insights of this volume can be valuable.

Another book which makes an important contribution along similar lines is Edward D. Eddy's *The College Influence on Student Character*. This volume emphasizes the importance of the "level of expectancy" in educating men and women "for both competence and conscience." The Jacob volume has received more attention than the Eddy volume—perhaps because it was published first and stirred the complacent feelings about what our colleges accomplish. However, reading the Eddy volume should cause any student to discover what can make his college experience a more rewarding one.

CAMUS, ALBERT: THE FALL (KNOPF, 1957)

This small volume has an impact comparable to that which results from an encounter with the early Hebrew prophets. In both cases the reader is, in effect, judged and he will probably acknowledge that he is found wanting. Written as a narrative, *The Fall* introduces the reader to a man who is like most of us—a respected and outwardly righteous person. But then the central figure suddenly is made aware of the hollowness of his own pretensions. The message which Camus so artfully develops is that no person can judge others from a standpoint of righteousness. This is an important insight for the college student—and equally for the professor, the business man, the minister, the

housewife, indeed, for all of us moderns who are so concerned with matters of status. (Since the publication of *The Fall*, Camus has died from injuries received in an automobile accident, thus bringing to a close the career of one of our most promising contemporary literary figures.)

WILLIAM F. QUILLIAN, JR.
President, Randolph-Macon Woman's College



Because of the current emphasis on books which deal indirectly with religious issues, I have chosen to stress two titles which confront the Christian faith in positive ways.

C. A. COULSON was first known to Americans through his little volume *SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF*. A professor of mathematics at Oxford University and an active churchman, he has written a second volume *SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN*. The purpose of the book is described as "An interpretation of practical implications for the nuclear age." In it Coulson shows the fallacy of scientific humanism. He does not believe that science can cope with man's modern dilemma but that technology motivated by Christian belief can do it. He cites four areas of need which must be satisfied if man is to survive and world order is to be preserved. The first is power. On the one hand, "The present-day American citizen has available 2,500 times as much power as his ancestor two centuries earlier." On the other hand, the need for power in a nation like India is so serious that the standard of living in the West "is increasing at least twice as fast as that in India." The second area is food and population. Here he shows that the problem is a technical one and that "the Christian community should . . . think globally about these things." The third area is that of family life. His description of the growing centrality of the family is apt and opens up tremendous potential for the Christian faith. In his fourth area he rightly stresses the neces-

sarily increased place of science and technology in the educational program, believing that these help us to understand ourselves and our environment. This book needs to be taken with the utmost seriousness. It calls for understanding and action. "In the deepest level of understanding, only those who have seen the Incarnation, and know in their lives the great Christian doctrine of Creation, are big enough for this job. The Christian need not be afraid of technology: rather must he welcome it. But he must add to it that which it lacks, and without which it can never become a unifying influence in the world."

It is perhaps bold to propose a volume of sermons to college students but I venture to commend **Helmut Thielicke's *Our Heavenly Father***. Few of us ever have the opportunity to hear really great preaching. These sermons belong to the ages. Thielicke preached these messages in the midst of the second world war. A congregation of 3,000 taxes the seating capacity of his church and the sermon is preached to another 3,000 on Wednesday evening. Thielicke is widely known as a scholar and serves as rector of the University of Hamburg. What is amazing about these sermons is that they are written in the simplest language, and the meaning is so clear that no one can escape what the author has to say. I know of no volume in recent years that brings us closer to the essence of the Christian faith than this one does. No one can escape the power of the truth that it conveys. The book finely complements the volume by Coulson. Thielicke by his exposition of the teachings of Jesus advocates the same deep interest in the movements of contemporary history. He speaks out boldly for the need of our acceptance of Christ's teachings and calls for a faith that does not turn by man's changing thought. This man speaks out of vital experience and he talks straight to the mind and heart of the twentieth-century Christian. No one can read this book without having his life profoundly affected by it.

FRED HOLLOWAY:
Bishop of The Methodist Church

The two books do this in completely dissimilar ways; most surprising, in fact, is the resonance, the mutual response of their insight when we consider their dissimilar bases. Pere Teilhard's book is a speculative analysis of the inner dynamic, the organic force of evolution in which man finds himself as a crucial but not "final" creature. Faulkner's novel is the recapitulation of much that has come before it in his work, a fusion of wit and tragedy dedicated to the dark triumphs of justice and the even more mysterious triumphs of love. Despite these differences in their modes of insight, the two books are bound together by the distinction of their authors. The first is the mature, almost the final work of one of the best paleontologists of the twentieth century; the second a brilliant example of the power which has made Faulkner for many of us the ablest novelist writing in English.

Such a claim for "parity of talent" might merely suggest that an apple and a pumpkin are both fine specimens. Despite their striking differences of character, however, *The Mansion* and *The Phenomenon of Man* have one major insight in common. Both demonstrate the human condition as one which is built equally from necessity and freedom. It is a measure of their stature that they insist on this difficult view of man—a view opposed equally to the sentimentalists who romanticize our freedom and the cynics who romanticize our doom.

For Faulkner and Teilhard, the thing which we cannot escape is our responsibility—the fusion of all that we inherit, and all that we may do with it for good or evil. Both of them see man as a creature who, within the limits of his blindness and his folly, is a creator as well. And this duality is for them no duality at all, but merely the path of their complex but unified understanding. Man's uniqueness, on our own planet at least, is to be defined, not by his political or aesthetic or scientific talents alone, but by the responsibility which calls him into being.

DOUGLAS M. KNIGHT:
President, Lawrence College



Two books in my recent reading have struck me with unusual force—*THE PHENOMENON OF MAN*, by **PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN**, and **WILLIAM FAULKNER's *THE MANSION***. They are two among many distinguished books of the last five years, but both have about them a special power to compel our attention. This is so, I suspect, because each tells us something personal and crucial about where we are and what we are.

motive

DAVID REISMAN,
CONSTRAINT AND VARIETY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION
(ANCHOR BOOK A135, DOUBLEDAY & CO., 1958)

Reisman discusses progressive and conservative thinking in American education. He shows how creative talent is frequently inundated and strangled by oppressive majority opinion. He also shows that the task of education is to tackle life not yet lived—"versions to stand, as art and scientific endeavor do at their best, as projections beyond life rather than reflections and anticipations of it." Stylistically not easy reading, the book nevertheless has pungent points and attacks upon favorite proverbs. It is written by one of our most

astute sociologists who knows exactly how a bull ought to behave in a china shop. Especially when some of the china is useless.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES,
ONE GREAT SOCIETY
(HARCOURT BRACE & CO., 1959)

One of the best books I have ever read! All that Jones writes is indeed calculated "to elevate the spirit and refine the sensibilities." His argument is that he profits most who studies humane learning most. Critical of many aspects of our lives, the author has a deft way of leading us from abuse and myopia to perception of something like the whole. He gives the most viable definition of the humanities yet conceived: "The humanities concern life itself in all its variety, or, more accurately, how life has been lived on this planet, and how it could be lived." It deals with America, but in the context of the world.

FREDERICK deW. BOLMAN, JR.:
President, Franklin and Marshall College



BOOKS

PROTESTS OF AN EX-ORGANIZATION MAN
by Kermit Eby (Beacon Press, \$3.50)

Long-term readers of *motive* need no introduction to Kermit Eby. For new readers, it may be enough to say that Kermit Eby has been a high school and college teacher, an organizer and executive secretary of teachers unions, director of research and education for the CIO. Now he is professor of social sciences at the University of Chicago. Inwardly, he is a Brethren-Mennonite farm boy, always struggling to reconcile that conservative, pious, rural world with the urbane, materialistic, revolutionary world around him now.

His latest book is a brief one (140 pages). Much of it has been printed as articles in a number of magazines and journals. I see four parts to the book.

First part is a preface and five chapters on the Eby background and biases. Here is a picture of his rural, conservative, Brethren-Mennonite background, his myths and heroes, his own education, and his work at helping others to become educated. These chapters are sermons for contemporary man, combining solid meat with a sauce that enhances and stings.

The longest portion of the book, twelve chapters, is a picture of the labor movement in America, its leaders, its problems, its changes from a fire-eating move-

ment of committed men to the stable, organized, bureaucratic institution it is today. This portion may read slowly for many students, who have known first-hand so little of the last three decades.

Section three of the book is a poem of pictures on life's cruelest decision (which comes when a man must choose either the power and the glory or the simpler, less exciting meat), and a hymn of challenge to the church and to labor that they find each other, and help us all find democracy and the meaning of citizenship. American Protestantism's almost total ignorance of organized labor and the problems of the laborer is one of the reasons why students and churchmen should read the long second section of this book.

What Kermit Eby writes about here are moral dilemmas in the labor movement, failures of the church, and foibles of persons. He pleads for private morality, for integrity of character. Specifically, he pleads for "a church which creates a spiritual climate of participation in society so intense that men of ability and integrity are compelled, by the force of their personal ethic, to take part in politics on all levels." Really, in life on all meaningful levels.

The fourth section of the book is an epilogue, only four pages long. It is his "Invocation for a Meeting of Brethren Ministers." I once read it for the opening of a Methodist youth conference. It is tremendous. A moving experience to hear. Read it before you go to another conference. Read it for worship whenever the saints gather in your church or student center.

It's worth the price of the book just to have that invocation available.

Just as it's good to have Kermit Eby around to needle us, provoke us, challenge us, and remind us of who we are and what God calls each of us to be.

—JAMESON JONES

Alden D. Kelley, *Christianity and Political Responsibility* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961, 239 pp, \$5; "Westminster Studies in Christian Communication").

D. L. Munby, *God and the Rich Society: A Study of Christians in a World of Abundance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961, 209 pp, \$5.50).

A well-worn joke has a psychiatrist asking his client what various objects remind him of. The Empire State Building? "Sex." Compact cars? "Well, sex, Doctor." Election speeches? "Same thing, Doc—sex." "To be honest with you, Doc," the man goes on to say, "everything reminds me of sex."

In our day, just about every subject involving human beings in interaction reminds us of "communication." This is understandable, because our inability to communicate is directly tied up with some of our most fearful human problems.

And yet we do not necessarily advance our understanding of communication itself by equating it uncritically with other disciplines.

The author of *Christianity and Political Responsibility* assures us, however, that "politics may be regarded as communication writ large." And so his volume goes forth as one in a series published under the imprint "Westminster Studies in Christian Communication."

In its own way, this latest contribution to the study of "Christian communication" demonstrates what is wrong with this new, often casually approached discipline of theological inquiry. Some of the early studies—Malcolm Boyd's *Crisis in Communication* is one example—while highly valuable, did not display enough of the tenacious, grinding theological analysis to which the mass media ought to be subjected by churchmen. Other studies—e.g., Hendrik Kraemer's *The Communication of the Christian Faith*, F. W. Dillistone's *Christianity and Communication*—were long on theological analysis but revealed little or no experience (or interest) on the part of the authors in the empirical side of mass communication. A third type of problem, and it is this one that Kelley's book illustrates, is the assumption that almost any old subject in the realm of social concern has something to do with communication, and so any Christian thinker writing about one of these subjects must therefore be writing about "Christian communication."

There is truth in the assertion, of course, that "politics is a specialized and particular form of communication." But by and large Kelley does not take his own assertion seriously. He does not devote his book, that is, to laying out in critical fashion just how and in what ways politics is relevant as a field of communication. Rather he assumes that a book about politics is *ipso facto* a book about communication. To be sure, he does take up problems of communication as such in his opening and closing sections. But the book itself is not really about communication, or even about politics as a field of communication. It is a book about Christian political theory.

Kelley mentions the mass media. He gives no attention to problems of reaching, speaking, listening to the audience of politics—the public or electorate. He devotes little space to the problems of opinion formation. He does not discuss the phenomenon of propaganda, which such scholars as Harold Lasswell have treated brilliantly as communication in the realm of politics. He has little to say on the indispensable subject of what political symbols are supposed to convey.

Much less are the directly theological questions of communication dealt with.

The book, rather, is strong as a summary of the views of certain historic and contemporary Christian thinkers on politics and social action. Kelley's thesis is that we must be realistic in political analysis and action; the church must avoid withdrawal from the world on the one hand and identification with it on the other.

A more convincing example of what Christian realism involves is supplied by D. L. Munby in his *God and the Rich Society*. A British Christian layman and professional economist, Mr. Munby has provided a refreshing, sensible estimate of how things stand with the Christian world today, economically speaking. He combines theological insight and thorough acquaintance with the special field about which he writes.

In his analysis Munby slays a few foes. One is the "grand historian" who carefully filters facts to weave a picture of modern society as "dehumanized."

Affluence has its problems, but it has brought new possibilities also, Munby shows—a revolutionary new freedom of choice in finding a vocation, for example. "There is an outline of a twentieth-century city life that is humane and urbane," he insists.

Another set of foes are the ecclesiastics who meet and issue platitudinous pronouncements signifying nothing. Churchmen are notorious for speaking too hastily about "reconciliation," for example, which is sometimes neither possible nor desirable.

He shares neither the pessimism of the neo-orthodox that little can be done nor the jaunty optimism of social planners who think the world ought to be reformed overnight.

Some parts of his treatment are perhaps too technical for lay use—his discussion of the intricacies of "rent," for example. Some of his illustrations are tied rather closely to British economic concerns—his talk of surtax or of reciprocal borrowing among Commonwealth neighbors, for example.

But it is a valuable book with new insights. It is especially helpful as a corrective of lingering social-gospel assumptions to the effect that free, private enterprise is all bad. Though discerning a sweeping trend toward economic equality, Munby resists the temptation to make "money-making and profits" into scapegoats. He displays real theological insight when he points out how one-sided it is to assail businessmen for the profit motive when they are not necessarily any more avaricious or ambitious than the rest of us.

Munby displays an almost complacent confidence about the resilience and flexibility of Western society. (Here is where his Christian realism is most apparent: out of the conflict of contending forces in society, rough justice may be expected.)

In a typical retort, he insists it is those who talk so obsessively about "the vast impersonal forces" of our society who are themselves most dehumanized. Many could better spend their time, he suggests—especially philosophers, lawyers, and theologians—in trying to understand the realities of present-day economic life, relating Christianity to the facts rather than to specters.

—JAMES E. SELLERS

contributors

MALCOLM BOYD continues to be one of *motive's* most faithful friends and contributors. His comments on communication came from his address at the 7th National M.S.M. Conference and from his final sermon as Episcopal chaplain at Fort Collins, Colorado. He is now chaplain at Wayne State University in Detroit.

ROBERT T. OSBORN is an assistant professor at Duke University in the department of religion. He holds the Ph.D. from Drew University and the B.D. from Garrett Biblical Institute.

FRANKLIN H. LITTELL is the author of *The German Phoenix* and many articles in American and European journals. His latest book, *From State Church to Pluralism*, has just appeared as a Doubleday paperback. He is professor of church history at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

TOM F. DRIVER is a frequent critic and contributor in the fields of drama, theology, literature, and cultural renewal. He is the drama critic for *The Christian Century*, author of *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama*, and assistant professor of Christian theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

SAMUEL H. MILLER has been dean of the Harvard Divinity School since 1959. He is an American Baptist minister, secretary of the Commission on Worship and the Arts of the National Council of Churches, and author of four books, the latest of which is *Prayers for Daily Use*.

DON HALL is the associate director of public relations in the Southern California-Arizona Conference of The Methodist Church. He has spent one year in free-lance writing in the film industry and has credits for twenty-one documentary and dramatic films.

AUGUST L. FREUNDLICH is chairman of the Fine and Industrial Arts department at Peabody College in Nashville. He also serves on the executive committee of the National Committee on Art Education of the Museum of Modern Art.

ROBERT STEELE is a long-time member of *motive's* "family," having served as managing editor for four years. He is an assistant professor at Boston University in the school of public relations and communications. His film seminar at the 7th National M.S.M. Conference evoked considerable interest and comment.

RON BROCKETT is a graduate student in sociology at San Jose State in California. He is serving a second stint as editor of *Logos*, the Wesley Foundation publication at San Jose.

CLINTON ADAMS, painter and printmaker, is dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico. He has exhibited nationally, and has taught at the universities of California, Kentucky, and Florida.

The panelists for the "significant books" feature are **FREDERICK deW. BOLMAN, JR.**, president of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; **WILLIAM F. QUILLIAN, JR.**, president of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia; **DOUGLAS KNIGHT**, president of Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin; and **FRED HOLLOWAY**, resident bishop of the West Virginia Area and former president of Drew University.

Book reviewers include **JAMESON JONES**, former editor of *motive*, who is now an associate professor of religion in higher education at Garrett Biblical Institute; and **JAMES SELLERS**, a member of the faculty at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville.

JIM CRANE has appeared in *motive* so frequently that we think of him as a member of the staff. We are delighted to include him this time as author, as well as cartoonist, artist, and amateur philosopher-theologian.

Apologies to the following who appeared in the January, 1962, issue, but didn't receive credit: **JOSEPH N. PEACOCK**, director of the Methodist Student Foundation at Northwestern University; and **CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS**, a colleague in contemporary Christian journalism, which gave us permission to reprint Harvey Cox's "Miss America and the Cult of the Girl."

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE:

HERBERT SEIDEL, a German artist whose work *motive* and *Christianity and Crisis* will be featuring in the near future. He has worked with biblical themes with vigor and freshness.

MARGARET RIGG is reinterpreting the traditional symbols of the life of the Church which have "spoken" visually of the faith for centuries.

JEAN PENLAND, Nashville, Tennessee, has evolved shadowy figures which emphasize the dignity of man in today's rather shadowy world of community and isolation.

ROBERT CHARLES BROWN, Uncasville, Connecticut. Again RCB drawings seem to delicately and boldly embody the realities of the outer and inner worlds.

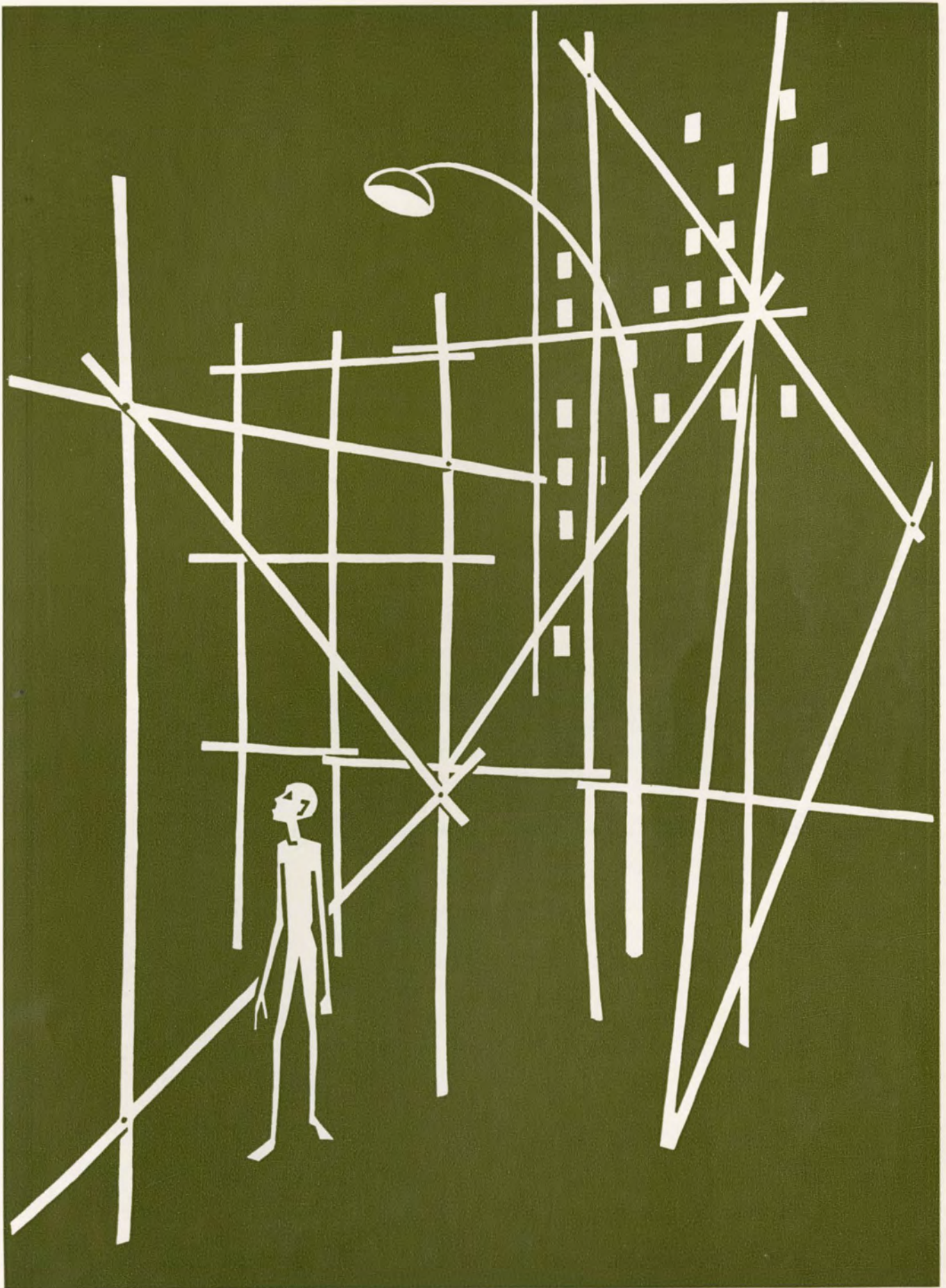
RONNIE YOUNG, Owensboro, Kentucky, is a newcomer to *motive* and a student: welcome.

ROBIN JENSEN, Dayton, Ohio, keeps his marvelous little square cartoon-men coming, muttering their opinions.

C. W. EDWARDS, a student at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, has sent some interesting interpretations of symbols and biblical quotations.

JIM CRANE, currently a student, has sent a new batch of wonderful cartoons.

MARCELA KOLB, Rockford, Illinois, has done drawings from time to time—now on page 37 among the book reviews.



PREACHER IN THE WILDERNESS

HERBERT SEIDEL

A MYTH

The Lord God looked down upon the earth and was filled with righteous wrath, for the earth was filled with evil, and the people's hearts were closed to him. "Come," said the Lord, "let us make an end to it. I have sent prophets and they were not heard. I have sent my son, and it has done no good."

And the Lord's son said, "Come, let us take a walk in the world." And they did.

The Lord saw two lovers walking by a river bank. He saw a mother nursing a child with her cheek pressed to his head. He saw a father playing on the floor with a laughing child. He saw two old ones who looked upon each other with humor and understanding. He saw a man who found meaning in his work: who knew the beauty of weeds and bark, of rocks and water, of old walls and rusty metal. He liked the smell of the earth and of cooking things.

The Lord looked down upon the earth once more and saw it all again and wept.

—JAMES CRANE