

AUTUMN
1963



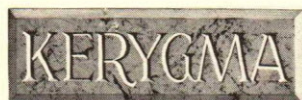
THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

KERYGMA

A JOURNAL OF COMMENT Vol. III, No. 1

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

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



A Journal of Comment at
THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Autumn Issue, 1962

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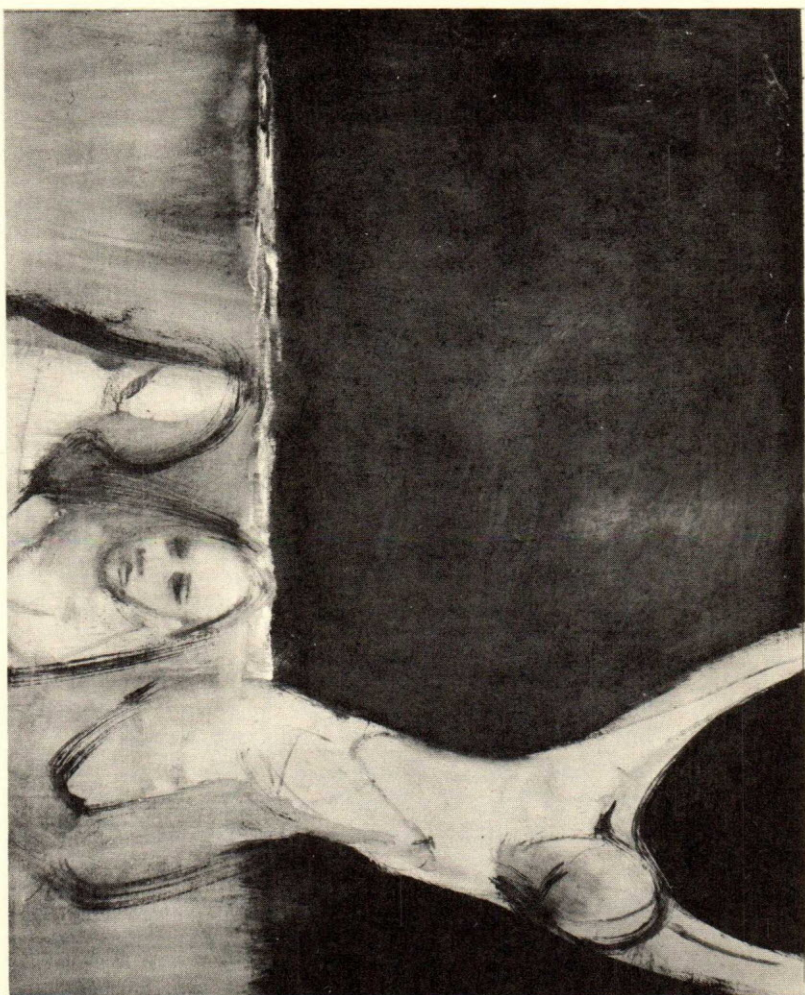
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Photographs—Art Department, University of Dallas.

Kerygma is published three times during the academic year at the University of Dallas. The views expressed are those of the authors and are not, in any way, official expression of the University.

Correspondence should be addressed to *Kerygma*, University of Dallas, P. O. Box 1330, Dallas 21, Texas. Subscription price is \$2.00 for three issues.



Ilya Novinski, *Crucifixion* (40x60 oil)

HAZEL CAZORLA

The Theater in Spain Today

Going to the theatre some fifteen years ago in Spain was an arid and saddening experience. What had happened to the theatrical tradition of the country which had given Lope de Vega to the world? Where was the vitality, the poetry, the realism, the sheer theatricality of a people for whom life was essentially a drama? The picture was the same all over Spain: apart from a few student groups in the Universities with very small followings, the only kind of theatre was the commercial type. More or less witty drawing-room comedy (like the famous *El Baile* by E. Neville) attracted the greater part of the theatre-going public (that was the middle-class with the money and time to spare for this social pastime.) Occasionally a rather sententious drama (like *La Muralla*) made a hit, and everyone talked about its daring or its message, but this kind of theatre carefully avoided discussion of any social reality or any topic which might bring uncomfortable thoughts or memories to the minds of honest citizens on their night out. Evasion was the keynote—evasion of unpleasant realities in the contemporary scene; evasion of embarrassment for any part of the audience (sex was taboo, of course); evasion of the sense of responsibility by playwrights and public alike. In fact it seemed that there were no playwrights, and, among producers and directors, no idealism, no search for anything new. Even the classics were neglected. It was hard to find a professional production of Lope de Vega or Calderón or Tirso de Molina, though there was always the dreary repetition on Halloween in most large cities of the florid Romantic drama *Don Juan Tenorio*, usually played by an equally florid but unromantic male lead some sixty-five years old with a stout figure and declamatory tone that made nonsense of the sensuous love-scenes.

All this sickened and disappointed anyone going to Spain who was looking for some sign that Spain was worthy of her theatrical heritage or even aware of it. Most students of Spanish had read García Lorca—his poems and his stark, evocative plays—and we had fallen under his spell,

This article is an excerpt from a speech delivered at the University of Dallas, October 30, 1962.

but it was no good expecting to see his plays produced in his native country. It was difficult even to find a copy in book form, owing to the tragic circumstances of his death and the sad political mess that followed.

Imagine, then, the excitement and joy of finding in the summer of 1962 that Spain is once more, it seems, a country in which the theatre is alive and has something vital to say. It was a surprise after the experiences of the forties and early fifties, and yet how logical really, looking at the panorama of the centuries. First we find many young new playwrights—Lauro Olmo, Carlos Muñiz, Rodríguez Buded, Rodríguez Méndez, and Alfredo Mañas, all of them finding producers in the number of small art theatres that have mushroomed in Madrid. Now it is possible to see for the first time since the Civil War, a drama by Lorca superbly done by a Spanish cast and producer—"Yerma" the "rural tragedy," and *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding) both produced by José Tamayo.

Last year an exile, Alejandro Casona, who had spent years dreaming of his home in Asturias from the remoteness of Buenos Aires returned to see his *Dama del Alba* put on the stage where it belongs. There are state-patronized festivals of theatre going on all over Spain, producing, very often in the open air, versions of the Spanish classics that are a delight to eye and ear. There is the "Grupo de Teatro Realista"—an enthusiastic, idealistic group of actors and producers; the superb work of José Tamayo and his company—almost a national company in prestige, rediscovering values in the theatre of which the public had not dreamed.

The mark of the new playwrights is the sense of being "committed"—committed not only to a stand on social problems, but committed to the whole reality that is Spain. The old comfortable plays of evasion, with their clichés and hypocrisy were replaced in the late nineties by a revolutionary drama, dramatizing the struggle between social classes and the bitterness of injustice among the unfashionable ranks of society, concentrating upon the social message to the exclusion of artistic quality. The Civil War in 1936 put an end to all theatrical activity for a time. We had to wait until 1949 for something which was to be of extreme importance. In the same year as Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" appeared in the United States, a new play was performed in Madrid called *Historia de una Escalera* (The History of a Staircase) by Antonio Buero Vallejo. It showed the way for an entirely new type of social drama—no longer the inflammatory type of the pre-war days in which an accusing finger was pointed at causes of injustice. In the new theatre, blame is *not* placed upon this or that social class, but upon society in general, upon all of us. Inevitably with the first awakening of the social conscience in the revolutionary theatre, dramatists had tended to oversimplify, to

personalize and to seek a facile effect; the causes of injustice had been personalized very concretely in one sector or another; the rich man, religion, the army, the aristocracy, the King, etc.

But now Buero Vallejo inaugurates a much more mature form of social literature in which the conflict is presented but conclusions are not specifically drawn by the dramatist; the blame, if blame there is, must rest on all of us. There is a call on our social conscience, not to rouse our indignation against some concrete cause of injustice, but to lead us into an awareness of our own involvement. We do not leave the theatre in an aggressive mood, but in a deeply compassionate one. The dramatist cannot provide a satisfactory ending by simply eliminating the cause of injustice, for that cause is a very complex one, only to be found deep down inside each member of the audience.

Consequently one may say that the new social drama, far from taking sides between any two bands, takes on a neutral air, but is not, for that reason, any less effective. On the contrary, it is here that its power lies, for its influence is positive, instead of destructive. Dramatists see further now, and deeper into the causes of our tragedy, and the responsibility is divided among all, the living and the dead of many generations. There is no thesis, no message to be handed to the audience on a plate, but the audience can itself draw the conclusions which the author intends. Perhaps this is the main characteristic of the new social literature—the elision of any concrete accusation, the avoidance of a specific social message. It may be difficult to explain what the author means in concrete terms—there will be no obvious moral, no orderly explanation. Buero Vallejo himself said, in defense of his play: “Purification by means of pity and terror—the old Aristotelian catharsis, is still in my judgment, the ultimate justification of all drama.” He was answering those who accused him of writing a play without an explanation or a moral, a play which did not try to solve everything at the end; and he went on: “A play is not a treatise, nor even an essay: the play’s mission is to reflect life in order to make us think and feel *positively* about it.”

In the *History of a Staircase* Buero Vallejo limits himself to a few lower middle-class families living in an old apartment house in Madrid, using the same staircase for thirty years. The poverty and struggle of the older generation is passed on to the younger one, and this repetition of poverty and anguish is due, partly to the character of the protagonists, but much more to the atmosphere in which they have dwelt, unchanged for thirty years, a favorable one for the transmission of resentments from father to son. The staircase is a symbol of the immobility of social organization—this staircase, used by two generations with the same cramping poverty and disillusionment about ever moving upward in life, is a

symbolic image of the barrier which divides men into economic and social floors, without a single change in thirty years. At the end no one has moved on the scale; the social ladder is fixed; no one has gone up anywhere, except up the old apartment staircase. The drama is expressed by Fernando when he says: "I want to get out of this poverty and this filthy atmosphere—to put an end to the endless worry over money, and to the favors that are like a slap in the face." Torrente Ballester, in his "Teatro español contemporáneo" says of the characters in this play: "They are people crushed by life . . ., and there is no employer, or social class on whom we could justly lay the blame for the situation. Their way of living, indeed, is a result of the capitalistic organization of society."

The characters in Buero Vallejo's play avoid personalizing the causes of their situation, and refer their accusations to an obscure collective curse, almost, one might say, they accuse fate. "Avoidance of accusation" then is the first characteristic of this drama. The second is that all the characters come from the same level of society and there is consequently no violent contrast, and the third is that the scenes normally take place "at home," not in the factory or workshop. We see these people in their moments of leisure, away from work; the protagonists most usually relax and give expression to their feelings over the dinner table when the family is sitting round, with maybe a neighbor or two. In this intimacy of setting it is possible to speak freely, and we are permitted to see into the deepest recesses of a man's anguish, without any need for contrasts.

These characteristics are to be found as a norm in the work of young dramatists. There are two in particular, Carlos Muñiz and Lauro Olmo, who have written outstanding plays and who obviously owe a great deal to Buero Vallejo. The first play by Carlos Muñiz, *Telarqñas*, was produced in 1955, without great success. However, encouraged by Buero Vallejo himself has gone on to write *El Grillo* (The Grasshopper) and last year *El Tintero*—"The Inkpot." This last has been enthusiastically received among the new generation of playgoers and students of the theatre. Muñiz deals with a humble office worker in Madrid, Crock, by name, who refuses to conform to the usual rules of the bureaucracy. He is a poor little man caught up in an inhuman machine, but has sufficient sense of his own dignity and worth to struggle against it, only to be crushed. It is not, however, realistic drama, as was "History of a Staircase". In "The Inkpot," we have caricature, farce, horrifyingly cruel situations presented as if in a dream. There are elements which are frankly unreal, many symbolic in this commentary upon the humble white-collar worker in the world of business—or is it a commentary on Man in his universal situation? "The Inkpot" has been called an expressionist farce, and certainly in the use of symbolism, the little man who

is misunderstood, we are reminded of Chaplin; we hear echoes of Kafka's "The Trial" in the scenes which appear to be a horrifying dream from which it is impossible to awake. We can hear other echoes of Ionesco and the Theatre of the Absurd in the sense of isolation and the impossibility of communication between human beings; as in the anguished scene between Crock and the park-keeper who insists that Crock has tried to murder his friend; everything that Crock says in his own defense merely gives the park-keeper another absurd and crazy reason for suspecting him until we feel, with Crock, that we have reached the limits of sanity, and that he is alone, alone against society.

Crock's initial crime, in the eyes of his employer, in that caricature of an office where they work like automatons, is to have brought flowers to put on his desk—flowers to remind him that the spring exists outside, even though he is not allowed to look through the window. Having been warned once that he will be fired for having flowers on his desk, he hides them inside a drawer and brings them out from time to time when his employer is elsewhere. His efforts to please his employer, who can never be satisfied, are endless and pathetic, but his servility will go only so far. He will not give up his entire personality—he refuses to throw away the flowers. Naturally he is thrown out of his job even though he pleads with his boss: "But you can't throw me out. I swear to you that I try to do my best—I want to smell the flowers in spring, I want to eat, I want to breathe deeply. I want you to leave me in peace, I want to live in peace, I want to be fond of everybody. I want people to like me, but how do you get people to like you? How?"

Crock is a victim of the organization because of his independence and non-conforming personality. But even more victimized are his two companions who have lost their entire selves, soul, spirit and all, to the office, and are incapable of an independent action. Their servility is complete, and when ordered by their superiors to whip their former colleague, the reprobate Crock, they obey orders, moving mechanically to attack. These pathetic creatures are made to chant a little song about the gaiety of life at the office "Viva la vida, alegre y divertida". They are told that they are happy. They are degraded to the extent that they no longer realize their degradation—they are incapable of recognizing their own sad situation, to the point that they will martyrize one of their own fellows who dares to protest against that degradation.

As one can see, *El Tintero*, "The Inkpot," is much more than just social drama—it has taken a leap over the immediate social causes into a wider existential anguish. When Crock discovers, after his dismissal, that he has lost his friend, that his wife deceives him, and that everyone despises him—then we feel he has entered the realm of Calderón's "Life is a

Dream" in which "el delito mayor del hombre es haber nacido" (man's greatest crime is that of having been born.)

The most prolific writer on the Spanish stage today is Alfonso Paso. He has been compared for sheer variety and abundance of invention with the great Lope, quite unworthily, I believe. It seems that there is never a moment when there are not at least three or four of Paso's plays running in Madrid or Barcelona. As a technician of the theatre he is superb, and his comic vein seems inexhaustible, but it does seem a case of talent misdirected. There was a time when Alfonso Paso seemed to be joining the ranks of Buero Vallejo and Carlos Muñiz, when he seemed concerned with social drama. In 1957 he staged *Los Pobrecitos* (The Genteel Poor) based on his own experiences when he lived as a struggling writer in a modest boarding house in Madrid. It is a drama not of the really poor, not of *desperate* hunger, but as he says "el hambre a medias". It is the hunger which one is ashamed to confess, of people always on the edge of poverty and keeping up a continual struggle to preserve appearances and find the next meal without too much loss of dignity. Paso says in a prologue to the play that this struggle is the "most grotesque of modern tragedies." It becomes, he says, "something spontaneously comic, something which produces laughter, bitter, hollow, horrible laughter." Here again we seem to find the note already sounded by Valle-Inclán—that this life is not tragedy, but tragic-comedy. Moreover Paso is really following a very ancient procedure in Spanish literature, deriving from the picaresque novel, which is the use of hunger (or in the case of Paso, semi-hunger) to comic effect. How many times has it been said that the Spaniards, more than any other people in the world, have more often laughed at their hunger than cried over it, even since the penniless nobleman in *El Lazarillo* first swaggered down the street in his great cape only to sit down with his kitchen boy, his mouth watering for a taste of the boy's tripe and onions. So what is for Alfonso Paso "the most grotesque of modern tragedies" is in reality a continuance of a perennial Spanish theme, and for that reason, having so many literary echoes, perhaps did not make a significant impact as *social* theatre. Since then Paso has been commercially successful with dozens of plays in different veins, mostly in the field of comedy, removing him a long way from the serious intentions he declared in his prologue to "The Genteel Poor."

Another Alfonso, Alfonso Sastre, is also an established name in the theatre. Not so prolific as Alfonso Paso and certainly more profound, he has written fairly conventional drama with social undertones, in which the message very often is not what it appears to be on the surface. *La Cornada* is the story of a young bull-fighter, exploited by his impresario, trying to free himself from those clutches, and finally reduced to suicide.

The bull-fighting theme of course is one which will always attract an audience. We are shown the power exerted by one human being over another, not just economic power, but power which has its roots deep in the human personality. The social note is not obvious, but we realize it is there in the words of Pastor, at the end of the play: "There are some in this life who live on the misfortunes of others; who take advantage for their own ends, of all that is in danger, of all that is dying, of all that is poor and gradually rotting away." That too is a Spanish story, isn't it? Throw somebody into the fight, and watch the bulls from the other side of the fence, waiting to pocket the money of the dead."

Alfonso Sastre contributes not only as a dramatist to the ferment in the theatre with its focus on social injustice, but also as one of the founders of the Grupo de Teatro Realista—the group of actors and producers and technicians who staged *El Tintero* and who are interested above all in the new drama, to which they give the adjective realist. Carlos Muñiz, as we have seen in *El Tintero*, "The Inkpot," has written something much more complex than what is generally thought of as realist drama. But in that word realist the new dramatists imply what they call the total reality of life in Spain. They consider Valle-Inclán and Buero Vallejo the first guides along this road the theatre is taking, and now walking courageously down that road are Carlos Muñiz, Ricardo Rodríguez Buded, José Luis Rodríguez, Méndez, and the latest newcomer Lauro Olmo.

Lauro Olmo is the author of *La Camisa* (The Shirt) produced in March of this year in one of the intimate theatres of Madrid. *La Camisa* was an immediate success, with critics and audience, and is extremely significant for several reasons. Olmo calls it "un drama popular" a drama of the people, and it is the most outspoken presentation of the social problem yet to be seen on the Spanish stage. Here we are not dealing with the "genteel poor," nor the down-trodden office worker; this is not semi-hunger, or the struggle for individuality and dignity, however distressing and important they may be. Here in *La Camisa* we have the brutal, naked truth of complete poverty. The characters do not live in a boarding house, or even a tenement, but in a *chabola*; one of the huts that these people knock together for themselves out of whatever they can find, on the waste land where the city ends and the treeless dusty countryside begins. The only things that stand between them and the elements are four flimsy walls and a tin roof. Here there are no appearances to keep up: hunger presents itself in its most basic form. This represents a step further than any other of the new dramatists has so far gone. This is the first time that we see contemporary drama about those who have absolutely nothing.

Olmo then is an innovator in his choice of characters from the very lowest economic stratum. Logically, if this is realist drama, the language of these characters must be the language of the slums. Olmo does not hesitate to use that language, and in this he is also an innovator. As Carlos Muñiz has said of Olmo "Si hay que decir palabrolás, se dicen" (If you need to use swear words, then you use them).

La Camisa is a fierce drama centered around Juan and Lola, a married couple who have not been able to realize any of their dreams, who came when first married to live in the *chabola* as a temporary measure, but the temporary measure has lasted for twenty years. It is the drama of people like them who have no possibility of hope unless it is in emigrating or winning money on the football pools. Many of them are emigrating, and Lola, as a final desperate resource, has decided to emigrate, too, to get herself a job as a maid in England, even though it means leaving her husband and teen-age children for awhile. Her husband Juan, whom she dare not tell of her intention, is about to be laid off his job as redundant, but he has faith that if he goes and talks to his employer, he may succeed in getting something else. A great problem for the family is posed by the fact that he does not have a decent shirt to wear to go and talk to the boss. The shirt is finally found in a second-hand stall. Lola uses up all their pitiful resources on the purchase of this white shirt, on which all their hopes are pinned. Juan fails in his efforts, but he still refuses to give up and emigrate like so many. His wife urges him, so that at least the children may have a chance to know what it is to eat, and to live in a real house with windows. But Juan is adamant, sure that his roots are there in Spain, and that somehow the fight has to be won there. He tells his wife, speaking of their children: "They were born here, Lola. Their hunger belongs here, and it is here that they have to fight to satisfy it."

Juan is urged to emigrate also by his friends, especially by Sebas, who is himself expecting to go off to Germany at any moment, on the State-financed labour scheme. Taunted by the picture of prosperity and plenty which, they assure him, awaits the emigrant, Juan angrily answers them: "The majority of you are not just going—you are running away. It is a stampede. And what I can't stand about many of you is that you run out cruising the land you were born in," and Juan himself lets out a curse.

One might think that the situation would lend a monstrous dreariness—that there would be no place for humor in the play. On the contrary. To Olmo, as a Spaniard in the good old tradition, it comes quite naturally to make his characters joke about their situation, all the more tensely and bitterly because of the nearness of disaster. The children joke about the eternal dried herrings that are all the family has for supper—pre-

tending that they are chicken's legs. The boy, Agustín, suggests, tongue in cheek, that one day their mother should let them try dried herrings, "just like the poor folk." The situation of the neighbors is often the cause of laughter—as when Ricardo, who is constantly drunk, finds that his wife has hidden his trousers so that he can't go out to the tavern, and we hear his pathetically funny appeals to her.

Olmo has introduced into the play a certain symbolism with the character of the old man, El tío Maravillas, who sells balloons in the streets for the children. For him, his balloons encompass all the poetry in the world because they are capable of bringing happiness into the eyes of children. For him, and for the audience, the balloons mean hope and illusions. He has his dreams too, —pathetic futile dreams. As the customers in the bar are busy trying to decipher the newspaper directions for spotting the American satellite as it passes over Madrid that night *el tío Maravillas* tells them one of his dreams. "Do you know what has just occurred to me? The day they fill the skies with satellites and paint them all different colours, they will immortalize me. One of your grandchildren will read in the papers 'Maravillas, a Spaniard! First man in Space!!' Hey? How do you think it sounds?" And he drinks a toast in honour, as he says, of his country. The old man, though he tells no one, has a sick wife, and in order to pay for medicine he takes a job as night watchman on a construction job down by the river. Little wonder that they find him sometimes asleep as he waits for the children to buy. In the middle of one noisy gay scene, the party given by Sebas, after they have all watched the satellite pass over, the old balloon seller becomes excitedly drunk, and gives away balloons to everyone, asking them to release them into the sky. Then he calls for quiet. In the middle of absolute silence in a very serious voice, full of emotion, he suddenly exclaims, as his balloons take their place like seven more satellites in the sky "Long live Spain! Long live Spain!" Overcome by emotion, he kneels down, beating the ground with his fists, and half-sobs again: "Long live Spain!" Quietly, two of the men help him to his feet and take him away,—one or two of the little balloons come drifting back to earth as the scene ends. The full significance of the symbolism becomes apparent in the last act. The wife of the old balloon-seller has died, and he no longer brings his child-like illusions and gaiety to the slum. He appears in deep mourning and bitterly denounces his colored balloons as a deception. He tells Juan: "The rainbow is pure nonsense. It doesn't exist. I am a cheat, Juan. I have cheated all the kids on the street. All balloons are black. Black! Black!"

Olmo gives us no facile hope at the end of the play—Lola is about to leave for England, but there is an ominous presentiment that all may not turn out as she wishes. Juan remains—to leave, for him, would be

a confession of failure—he must have a future in his own country, among his own people. Olmo effectively suggests the depths of Juan's love for his wife, and the suffering it costs him to remain where he feels he must stay. Goodness knows he has little reason for staying and working out his destiny where he was born; he himself cannot explain it to his wife and children; the only thing he knows is that it would be cowardice to run away.

What gives tremendous power to the play is precisely what is not explained, what is not said, but what is felt to be on the tip of the tongue, what is held back with a gesture of biting the lips. This contention of emotion gives the play a vitally contemporary quality. Above all, the setting of the play in the slum wastes on the outskirts of Madrid, and the focus upon almost desperate human beings, who, nevertheless, preserve their integrity, is quite new to the post-war theatre.

It is probably not mere coincidence that the first social drama of the nineties appeared soon after the Pope's Encyclical "Rerum Novarum," and again *La Camisa*, which takes a long step down the road of the new social drama, also appeared at a time when public opinion had been prepared by Pope John's recent Encyclical "Mater et Magistra."

In Spain, the avant-garde theatre of the absurd has no real following, although two Catalan writers, Brossa and Pedroló have written works which could be classified in this way, but of course in their own Catalan language which means they are inaccessible to any large audience. Actually, Brossa was writing in this style some time before Beckett's "Waiting for Godot." Perhaps the most important name in this group is that of Fernando Arrabal, a Spaniard born in Morocco, who has been living in France since 1954, and who writes his plays in French. Though he is well-known in Europe for such plays as "The Automobile Graveyard" he has had **only** one play produced in Madrid.

The truly interesting fact about the theatre in Spain just now can be summed up, I believe, in this ferment among young writers to describe the Spanish scene with complete honesty. "Writers committed to the reality" is one of their favorite expressions, and that reality is the reality of the mass of the people. These working people are not however used as material for propaganda, political or social. The new writers are not accusing or judging or taking sides: they are presenting the picture in all its human depths in such a way as to awake a response in the conscience and sensibility of each spectator. The most constantly recurring note is that of laughter mixed with tragedy, this peculiarly twentieth-century grimace, half-humor, half-horror, with which modern man, and the modern Spaniard particularly, views his precarious situation.

To William Faulkner
1897 - 1962

Spirited away in mahogany,
in a gleaming eternity box,
dressed up fit to kill,
dark suit, sombre socks,
for shopping the Holy Ghost
and rest of the Trinity,
and wet, disconsolate faces
don't know he's in two places
under and over the sun.
One half of him shall toast
in a dark, ovenly hill;
the other, naked, has run
straight into the heavenly will
and is stopped there. At most
the sentence will be light
and not severe; at best
he'll find half-service right,
as suits a severed guest.
This feasible bilocation
is fitting and proper to him
who met the world on its own
terms and left them alone,
used no thread and needle
to stitch the diverse rim
that circles lion and beetle,
citizen and nation,
but let the world of shoddy
threads be like a crumpet
that allows the appetite
to plunge into its ration.
When soul shakes hands with body,
he too will hear the trumpet
that welds the population.

GEARY BLANKENSHIP

Ballade of Adam in the Vineyard

Primeval Adam, drawn from muddy clay
By God, was set upon the Elysian bank
Near fertile waters—fertile and risqué.
The vineyard earth was his to rule, but thank-
Less, he was tempted in a fruitful prank
And ate forbidden apples at the shrine
Of Furies; when humility grew blank
He had to bruise the grape. To get the wine

Then, Dionysus Adam sought his pyre
Among earth's rotting vines; suffering, he sank
To save his brothers from hydrotic mire
Their ancient vinegar had rendered dank.
This perfect vine aspersed them from the tank
Of love. But they, in hydrophobe repine,
Pressed him, great vintage, on the cruellest plank
They had. To bruise the grape (to get the wine),

Adam Jones who hails from Adams' side
Cultivates the freshened, but still lank,
Earth vineyard. Still he holds a sterile pride
In passionfruit, a pride he should rerank
If he would drink his fill—should turn the crank
To press the mash of man. He will design
His vintage as he tends his fertile bank;
He has to bruise the grape to get the wine.

ENVOI

Adam, though you fell, we can but thank
You for that fall which rent our sweetest vine.
The blood your rib bled taught us as we drank:
We have to bruise the grape to get the wine.

Oedity

By blaspheming Poseidon and the Sun
Odysseus and his gourmet crew transgressed.
And since no mortals long offend the Blest,
Odysseus was repaid, his men undone.
The mighty warrior pliantly searched on
For years until Athena manifest
His case to Zeus who straightway gave him rest:
Odysseus gained himself, his wife and son.

Consider Oedipus: He had no sin,
(His incest was dyspeptic circumstance)
Yet every good Olympian showed him scorn.
When he discovered self and what he'd been
He fed the gullet of unyielding Chance
And eyeless, shorn of wife and sons, must mourn.

DAVID CARSON

Lake Canto: VIII

I

Water seeks to climb
The banks across the
Tree-domed cliffs
And sputters here beneath
The breath of grass and rocks.

II

Black crows crawl across the sky
On silken wings that trip the clouds
And buzzing flies make honey
In the trunks of rotten oaks.

III

Wherefore nature gives to insects
Sweetness, and to birds, infinity,
And to man she gives the
Gift to think the sugar
Made by bees and the oblivion
Spawned by crows.

DAVID CARSON

Wind Reeds

I

The sky burns blue and warms the waters
That lick across the gnarled stumps and roots
Of what was once a wood of oak and cedar.
Waves break on branches that have stood
The buffets of wind, and the snakes slide
Round where once a linnet made her nest.
The shore sands tell of other floods
When mossy green covered the naked shapes of
Trees now streakily visible.

II

The wind is rising now, sweeping the lake
In arcs of aquamarine, that break in
Foamy heads splashing low beneath me.
The reeds point east in quivering gestures,
And sand covers sand on the crested banks
As my footsteps follow each other
Into the oblivion of the beach.

III

The warmth now slowly leaves the air
And I suddenly shiver, for the wind is rising.
The coldest gales do not always scrape the northern
Shore, nor do they always whiplash and blow.
For now I feel the ice in a western breeze
And the impassive beach lies cold before me.

WALTRAUD BARTSCHT

The Roman Fountain

(Translated from Conrad Ferdinand Meyer)

Up soars the spout and plunging fills
the marble basin's ample round,
which veils its brim and flowing spills
into a second vessel's ground;
the second one with bounty heaves,
down to the third its wealth conveys,
and each one, while it gives, receives,
and streams and stays.

LOUISE COWAN

Retort

I cannot draw Leviathan with a hook
Or stretch a net or toss a rope his jaw
Would not undo. His furious teeth would gnaw
My flimsy lines to shreds; I would not look

Into the cavern of his mouth. Who would?
When Jonah entered there, you may recall,
It was not of his own free will at all;
You had to push him inward with the flood.

I don't know how the whale got into this;
I would not try conclusions with his length;
My subject, Sir, is justice and not strength
And I would know my guilt. You are amiss

To use his monstrous size. Until my wish
Finds issue inside Peter's swelling load
And multiplying loaves beside the road
I shall not grant the argument of fish.

RICHARD BAKER

Here Dusk Looms

Here dusk looms a lover's tent
And the lilacs are leeward bent
But you
Who gave to these few
Props a play are gone away.

In the place where you laid your head,
Where your hair spread my hand a bed
This lilac shows we bent the grass
And in some distant dusk will pass
To blend with the persistent clod
Which shall take for "yes" a passing nod.

MADELEINE BECAN

Something There Is That Doesn't

While the city of Jericho, somber and tall,
Stood silent and shuttered behind the great wall,
On the plains out beyond watched a God-fearing man,
The son of Nun, Josue, with an ear for a plan.

"Once a day," said the angel, "to Jericho's heights
Take the Ark, seven trumpets, the Lord's Israelites,
Have them all march around and when six days are past
Sound the rise and the fall of a long trumpet blast.

When the trumpets' loud jubilee shatters the sky,
Have the children of Israel clamor and cry;
Raining noise on the city, the pride-mortared wall
Shall crumble to pieces and tumblingly fall."

On the sixth day the angel had still a word more:
"Spare no house but that one of Rahab the whore.
When the battle is won, take no spoils or reward
For the wealth of the city belongs to the Lord."

Oh, it all came to pass as the angel had spoke:
When the dawn of the Lord's day of triumph had broke,
Seven priests, seven trumpets, and Josue's men
Seven righteous times marched around the boundary of sin.

What a bleat, what a clangor they blew from the trumps,
And Jericho's wall fell in ten thousand thumps;
In the blood-burst assault only one house was spared;
The good harlot's where Israel's spies had prepared.

But one renegade Israelite scorned the Lord's plan,
And looted the sacred spoils under the ban.
So they stoned him, and there on the spot where he died
Rests a rubble of rocks from the fortress of pride.

DICK McNALLY

Autumn

The leaves, astounded, sidle pendulum-
Fashion to earth, not green, hostile with fear.
The time of sap-on-tap leisure is done
And now begins the downward flight of drones.

As guilt from limbs touches the fear from clods,
(Whose fear is not of cover, but of mulch.)
A loose, susceptible-to-wind embrace
Does not disturb the earth's fecundity.



Liye Novinski, *Three Performers* (24x32 oil)

ANN GRAVEL

The Symbol of the Living South

They turned off the smooth road that had brought them only a half-hour before to the new Pine Prairie airport, a structure somehow out of place there, set amid cotton land and taking the place of a fragrant pine reserve. There had been a good deal of protest over the airport; but it stood there now, with the sun glinting off its silver trim in the daylight, as arrogant and incongruous as a Union general back in the days after.

Her grandpa shoved the gear-shift into second and the car hummed and jerked a little as he straightened it out on the cracked, lumpy Pine Prairie highway. She sat very still and quiet between her grandparents and tried to decide whether she minded being left behind or not. Of course, her parents hadn't wanted her to go with them. She really was too young, only twelve; and they wouldn't be able to get into those fancy New York night clubs that they liked so much if she went along. Her grandparents wanted her to stay because she was their only grandchild and, besides, they didn't trust airplanes. "I'm going to be praying for you every minute you're up in the air," her grandma had whispered frantically into her mother's ear as she leaned to kiss her goodbye. "Oh, Mama, they're as safe as anything else," her mother had laughed and squeezed her grandma's arm. But it was really one of those heroic kind of laughs that meant she was as scared as grandma but wasn't going to admit it. Jimmie Kit wasn't worried about them, though. She knew her parents could take care of themselves. As long as she'd known them, they hadn't had a single problem that they couldn't overcome. And if the airplane started to crash, she knew her Daddy would be able to accept it calmly and comfort her mother—who would probably be in hysterics.

Finally, she settled back in the seat, put her left hand on her grandpa's knee and her right arm through her grandma's soft sweated one, and decided she'd really rather stay with them. They were her favorite people and she would die for them. This was one thing she was sure of. She

had made up her mind about that two years ago when her grandma and grandpa had saved her life by a miracle.

It had begun with her cousin Etta Lou's birthday party. Etta Lou's mama had shuffled them all out into the back yard to play Pin-the-Tail-on-the-Donkey. But Jimmie Kit hadn't felt much like playing; so she sat down in one of the steel yard chairs and watched the rest of them scream and laugh and throw colored streamers at each other. They walked dizzily, blindfolded, up to the big piece of paper that was pinned to the pecan tree. Etta Lou's mama was taking moving pictures; and every time she aimed the camera at her, Jimmie Kit turned her head and hid her hands in the folds of her dress. The camera made her feel stiff, as though she had to pose. But Etta Lou's mama, with only her pudgy cheeks showing, kept the camera whirring the whole time. It was like a wound up toy that would never stop. When it was her cousin Bufin Joe's turn to pin the tail on the smiling donkey, he crept up behind her and jabbed her instead. He pretended that because he was blindfolded he had gotten off course. But she knew Bufin Joe. He was mean and nasty and killed dogs. She chased him and tried to hit him, but he just laughed and eluded her. By that time everyone else was laughing too. And Etta Lou's mama ran and followed them around with the camera. Then they all started calling her "donkey." And Bufin Joe, when she was almost near enough to hit him, had hissed at her. "Poor old four-fingers. She's too scared to try to play with the rest of us."

The little finger of her right hand had gotten snapped off the year before when she had tried to save a baby bird from being eaten alive by her Daddy's pet alligator, Bertha. She hadn't liked Bertha from the first, when she was just a foot long. There had been something mean about her eyes, the way they just stared and never blinked. But her Daddy liked to show Bertha off to his business friends. "Yes, indeed," he would say to the ones from the North. "I've got a symbol of the Living South right here in my back yard." But even if Bertha was a symbol of the Living South, she wasn't going to let her eat that baby bird. So that day when Bertha raised her thick armored fullgrown legs and sidled up to the bird, hardly more than a fuzz it was so young, Jimmie Kit ran and pushed her hand through one of the diamond shaped wire holes and tried to snatch it out. But she was too slow. The wire kept her arm from moving freely; and Bertha got both the bird and her little finger and slunk off to the corner to enjoy them. Her Daddy admitted it was a real tragedy, but it was something that they all had to accept because it was in God's plan. Afterwards, she had asked him to get rid of Bertha. But he said

that it wasn't necessary because Bertha wasn't rational and didn't know any better and, really, wasn't she the one who should have had more sense than to stick her hand into Bertha's cage? She kept forgetting, she guessed, that Bertha was a symbol of the Living South.

When all her cousins and her friends started playing blind man's buff right after Bufin Joe had stuck her, Jimmie Kit had slipped away, her heart feeling strangely sore, and walked around the side of the house. She sat down at the edge of Etta Lou's goldfish pond and leaned over to look at herself in the water. Her reflection looked blankly back at her through the clear grey water that was dotted here and there beneath the surface with darting, orange fish. Five or six goldfish, very close together, wriggled and snipped at each other as though they were playing tag. She held her right hand out over the water to see how it looked from the bottom. She tried to imagine the finger there. But it was impossible. Again, she leaned over to look at herself. What she saw was just a thin, dark, slightly wavering face with stringy black hair falling about the cheeks. She passed her hand out over the water to make it ripple and erase the image, but she leaned too sharply and tumbled headfirst into the pond, scraping her leg on the coarse concrete bank. She opened her mouth to call for help, but she was in the water and the sour liquid filled her mouth before she could yell. For a moment, thinking that the pond was shallow, she pushed her feet down to balance on the bottom. But there was no bottom and she went deeper under. She kicked and squirmed and finally managed to surface. When her head came up, it was collared by the lily pads that grew thick in the middle of the pond. Gasping and gagging, she spit out some of the water that was filling her lungs and grasped for the lily pads. One broke off in her hand. And when she hurled her free arm over to grab for them again, they bent beneath her weight. She went under again with great blurs and dots of water splashing before her eyes. A fern-like growth beneath the surface got tangled about her. Somehow she managed to break through. But she could only sputter and rasp when she tried to call for help. Her clothes were getting heavy on her body and her shoes were weights on her feet. Across the yard a door slammed. And she churned her arms against the water and fought to keep on top. A lady and a little girl were coming out of the apartment next door.

"Oh my goodness!" The voice was sweet, melodious. "Someone's drowning over there. I'll be right over," the lady called out, "just as soon as I tie Rosie's shoe."

Jimmie Kit went limp then. The water quieted and she sank slowly, weightlessly, into the grey cooiness and hung there below the surface, letting the breath and life bubble out of her. The goldfish nibbled shyly at her legs. But as she sank a little deeper and the water began to pass down her throat, hands grappled at her body and jerked her straight up. A man's voice was saying "oh baby, baby." And then she was flat on the grass and there were feet running through it and screams and strong hands pressing at her sides. Then everything was black until the next day when she found out what had happened and who and why.

They had just come back from Sante Fe and dropped by to bring her an Indian blanket that they bought at one of the reservations. And though they hadn't planned it, they brought her life too. So she would die for them and fight for them and protect them if she ever had to.

Her grandpa eased the car into the white shell driveway that bordered the house like a half-moon. It was a beautiful old house with columns spread so far apart on the gallery that Samson couldn't have touched two of them at the same time in a stretch. Her Daddy had been talking about moving into the suburbs, though, because they were too far from town. As they pulled into the garage at the back of the house, Bothia the maid and Caleb the yard boy were struggling through the back gate, their arms full of grocery bags.

"What are all the groceries for, grandma?" Jimmie Kit slid across the seat and followed her grandma out of the car.

"Oh, we thought we'd have a little party tonight. Cousin Lottie and Elwin are coming in from New Orleans."

"Yes ma'am," her grandpa said and held open the gate for them. "While the cat's away, the mice are gonna play." His eyes twinkled down at her.

....
"Aw shucks," Jimmie Kit said. "I wish you had told me sooner. I promised Kenneth Ray I'd go down to his house tonight."

They walked up the back steps into the kitchen. Bothia and Caleb were setting cans and bags out on the kitchen table. They flashed big white, golden tipped grins at her.

"Well, honey," her grandma said and slipped out of her shoes. "We'd rather you stay here tonight. Anyway, your Daddy doesn't like for you to go down to the Fairchild's. He thinks they're strange people."

"But you see," Jimmie Kit said, "I promised him I'd come. And since Daddy's gone . . ."

Her grandpa came and put his hand on her shoulder. "Your grandma's right," he said. "You better stay here with us this evening." He gave her shoulder a squeeze.

"Well, would it be all right if I go down and tell him I can't come then?"

"I reckon that'd be the polite thing to do," he said.

She went outside and crossed the back yard at an angle and tried to ignore Bertha in her cage. But the alligator interrupted her meal of grade A top quality beef and growled at her. When Jimmie Kit turned her face slightly toward her, Bertha bared her teeth in an evil grin. Jimmie Kit hurried on across the yard and up the levee that rose like a low treeless mountain from the ground, curving with the river so far down that it looked like it never ended. When she reached the top of the levee, a long flat barge, floating near the river bank, slid past the clearing between the heavy mossed trees and bushes that bordered the river. It cut a wide black line through the otherwise immobile green scum that clung to the top of the water. But as the barge drew on past the opening and was hidden by the thick growth, the waves it left in its wake lapped together, returning the scum in patches.

Kenneth Ray's house was set down in a slope right at the edge of their fenced-in property. It was yellow with age and dirt, built in the shape of a box. Screens stuck out from the windows as if someone had deliberately poked them out from the inside.

She lurched down the levee in a slow, sliding, uncontrollable run and stopped herself at the bottom by grabbing hold of the Fairchild's gate post. Four scrawny chickens, their feathers battered, once white, now brown, clucked up to the gate and scratched at the ground. "Go away chickens," she said and pushed back the gate that tilted on one rusty hinge, cornering them behind it. She crossed the grassless yard, stepping on top of shed chicken feathers and peered through the screen door of the back room. Only the outlines of two pieces of furniture, a bench and a chair, were visible. A dank musty smell came from inside and she pulled away from the screen. Cupping her hands around her mouth, she called softly, sing-song, into the darkness. "Kenneth Ray, Kenneth."

The front door slammed and in a second he was jumping off the edge of the front porch. He struggled into a white tee-shirt that came down taut across his chest and wrinkled under his arms. It hung so short on him that his tanned stomach showed.

"Everybody's sleepin'," he said and reached into his bulging pocket.

"Want a plum?" He held out a tiny, spotted green plum.

"No thank you."

He sat down on the ground and pulled his knees up. "You gonna come down to the meeting tonight?"

"That's what I came to tell you," she said. "I can't come. They're having a party tonight. And I think I should be there instead."

He looked up at her and took a bite from the plum and then spit it straight out of his mouth. "Must be rotten," he said and threw the rest of it over his shoulder. "You promised."

"I know it," she said. "But I just can't come. My Daddy . . ."

"Your Daddy what?" he said angrily. "He's crazy!"

She looked straight into his eyes. They were a color so blue that it was almost as if she could see straight through them to some white unnamable substance, maybe his soul. "My Daddy's not crazy," she said quietly.

He softened. "Well maybe not. But there's somethin wrong with him."

She started drawing circles in the dust with her finger. Suddenly, he reached over and grabbed her hand and closed his around it in a tight grip. It was a hard, rough hand, almost like sandpaper. Then he loosened his grip and let his fingers fall away and balanced her hand in his palm as though it were a baby bird. He took his other hand and with his forefinger touched the tiny stump that was left of her little finger. He touched it very softly, moving his finger back and forth. He bent his head down and laid his forehead in her hand. His back shook a little. "This shouldn't have never happened to you." When he pulled away, his eyes had become cloudy and unfathomable. "This shouldn't have never happened to you. It shouldn't happen like that to nobody, the way it happened to you."

She pulled her hand away and covered it with her skirt.

"Please come tonight," he said. "The Holy Ghost is gonna be here."

"The Holy Ghost! How do you know?"

"He's come before. And He's coming tonight."

"How's he coming?" And before she could stop herself, not really meaning it. "In an airplane?"

He jumped up then, raising dust with him. "Look here," he said. "My pa says he's coming tonight. And if my pa says he's coming then he's coming."

"Don't scream at me." She got up too.

"I will too," he said. "I ast you to come even before that old party. Well now, I don't care if you never come." He jerked around and ran

toward the front porch. In one quick motion, he jumped to the edge of the porch that jutted out a little from the house. He stretched his arms upward, pulling his shirt nearly to his chest, and screamed out as though there were a great throng of people before him. "The whole damned world should be here tonight. Because it's gonna happen," he shouted. "It's gotta happen!"

She ran back out the gate, not bothering to shut it, and straight down the side of the levee until she got home. When she got into the kitchen, Bothia was the only one there.

"Good Gawd Amighty," she said. "What's happened to you, child? You jest as white as a ghost."

"Nothing," she said. "Nothing."

"You been doing too much runnin around here today. I'm gonna put you right to bed." She led Jimmie Kit by the arm into the bedroom and sat her on the bed. Then she went into the closet and pulled down a quilt. "Git under this, chile. Else you not gonna be in no shape for this party."

She would go to sleep for a little while; but she didn't want to go to the party.

When she awakened, it was dark outside. Her grandma was standing over her, taking curlers from her soft grey hair. "Rise and shine, honey," she said. "You've got to get ready."

"What should I wear, Grandma?"

"You can wear whatever you want."

Jimmie Kit went to her closet and pulled back the doors. She shoved aside a lot of the dresses and then pulled out the one she had made her Confirmation in. "Is this all right, Grandma?"

"Sure is," she said. "Looks mighty pretty on you."

She bathed and dressed nervously. Then she stood for a long while looking in the mirror, recalling her Confirmation and the invisible descent of the Holy Ghost upon her. Well, anyway, she already had Him.

She went outside. Most of the people were already there and Cousin Lottie and Elwin, her husband, ran up and gave her a big bear hug and told her how much she had grown since the last time. Some of the guests were standing over in the corner of the yard by Bertha's cage. There was a spotlight on a post in the corner of the cage, and it beamed down on Bertha and glinted off the shiny gold identification collar that her Daddy had had made special for her, with "Bertha" written in large letters across it. With drinks and snacks in their hands, they gazed down at the alligator.

Somebody murmured that they wouldn't have an alligator if they were paid to keep one. But Bertha just sprawled there, a flattened out dragon, looking up without fear or recognition at the people.

Jimmie Kit moved away from watching and went over to her grandpa who was at the barbecue pit. He poked a long handled fork into a huge side of beef. "How's that look to you, gal?"

"Just beautiful," she said. "Delicious."

"It won't be long now. Then you can have all you want."

"Okay," she said, "I think I'll be able to wait," and laughed.

He leaned down and kissed her on the cheek. He smelled of that sweet sharp shaving lotion that she liked so much.

She left him then and crossed the back yard, making a wide circle so that she could avoid both Bertha and the people at the party. She climbed to the top of the levee. The river was black and slick, without even a ripple. Down at Kenneth Ray's, everything was quiet. A light glowed from one of the back windows, but there didn't seem to be anything happening. The voices of the people at the party wafted up in a low, incoherent murmur. And right then, unexpectedly, the singing started down at Kenneth Ray's house. The voices were strange and shrill, not pretty like the Catholic choir, but more like they were calling, almost screaming for something or at somebody.

The people down at the party turned into colored statues. But her grandpa's voice boomed out. "It's just those rollers down at the Fairchild's." And a great united laughter rose up and they moved again.

She crept down the levee, feeling her way, her hands clutching at the hard, slightly peaked earth.

The voices, the moans, the rumble from Fairchild's house grew louder and more feverish, like African drums.

She went sideways through the half-open gate, stopping to un snag her dress from a stiff wire that poked out. Ducking low and almost on all fours, she crossed the yard. There was a square of light on the ground outside the back window. She crept up to the window and craned her neck and strained on the tips of her toes. Over the sill, she couldn't see anybody, but only shadows, dark silhouettes, on the opposite inside wall. Every now and then a hand would raise up with five fingers outstretched. It was as though they were all on the floor. Suddenly a man's body—Mr. Fairchild's—shadowed on the wall. His arms stretched. His voice quaked through the singing. "We are ready O Lord. Send him to us. Send him."

Fists hammered against the floor. "Our tongues will burn like fire for you," Kenneth Ray's cracking voice called. It was distant from the rest of the noise, as though he were in another room. "Hallelujah, hallelujah," they all shouted back.

Then there was the sound of running from inside, someone from another part of the house. "Pa," Kenneth Ray called out. "I've got to do it." The singing stopped. There was struggling, the sound of bodies and clothes pushing against each other. The shadows, fluid and grey, began to mingle together now, as though all of them had been drawn into one silent and mysterious body. "Stay away from me, Pa." He broke away and stumbled back to the window. "It ain't gonna hurt me much, I promise." His back was to the window now, shirtless, shining with sweat as though it had been shellacked. His breath was jerky. Slowly, deliberately, he turned and placed his right hand on the inside sill. Then, as though lifting a heavy weight, he raised a hatchet, all grey except for the silver, shining edge. He held it poised for a second. Then with a motion as swift and smooth as an Indian might have made and with his eyes wide open, he brought it down, whacked through flesh and bone, cutting hard through the wood of the sill, a thin chopping block, while a surprised red blood fountained up from the mutilated hand.

At first the rising wind was no more than a breath, softly heaving. But then it intensified and whistled about the house like a storm wind, stinging at her legs and rustling her dress. She could feel it parting her hair straight down the back. Just as abruptly as it had risen, the wind ceased. There was a stillness inside the house.

Then the shadows, still fused there on the wall, began to moan in low painful halting chorus, as though the battering wind had rushed down their throats and they were trying to choke it up again. A woman wailed finally, her voice high and shrill as a siren. Then Mr. Fairchild's voice rang hollow, like an unsought echo.

"He's done it for Jesus and the sins of the world. Fall down and praise the Almighty." It was as though thunder itself were housed there. Kenneth fell to his knees. And the hatchet handle showed round and curved through the screen.

She could not move, standing there, her shadow behind her in the light, did not know if she should. Her heart pumped fiercely against her chest and mingled with the throbbing inside. Finally she turned around, at first tiptoeing through the yard, overhung now with a cloud of softly settling dust speckled golden beneath the moon. But when she reached the gate, she began to run.

Her lungs turned to steel as she raced down the side of the levee. It was as though no air was coming into her body at all. Her body was chill and she gulped for air as she finally reached home. She came to a full stop in front of Bertha's cage. The alligator was moving around and restless. As Jimmie Kit caught her breath and leaned against the fence, Bertha pushed against it from the other side, wanting release. Jimmie Kit leaned closer and looked at Bertha. Bertha stopped shoving against the fence. The two of them were still, mesmerized. But then that low guttural growl came, as though from the depths of hell itself. And Bertha moved against the wire again and flung her tail with a fury and wrath against it. She pushed and shoved. And the wire creaked and bent.

Jimmie Kit walked up to the cage gate. She took the key from the nail that hung on the side and inserted it in the padlock. Then she climbed the fence and leaned over, pulling the curved piece of iron from the hole in the lock. She threw the padlock into the yard and flung open the gate. Bertha was still for a moment. Then she moved liquidly toward the gate. The wind pushed the gate back, nearly shutting it again. But Bertha, indomitable, shoved it open with her blunt snout. And knowing what was on the other side, she slithered up to the levee and laboriously made her way to the top. The moon shone down on her and her thick green skin gleamed. She reared her tail and held it still for a minute; and, framed by the moon as it was, it was as though part of Bertha was on the moon. Then she slapped the thick ugly tail hard against the levee. And the wind carried her last growl down. She disappeared over the levee, slinking awkwardly, almost as though she were going in sections, and then the last bit of her tail slid from view as she headed down to the dark growth to penetrate the river scum.

Jimmie Kit sat astride the fence for a while longer and watched the soft cream colored moon, glancing now and then down at her right hand and for a few seconds, she held it out and let it shadow on the ground beneath her. Finally, she threw a lanky leg over the fence and jumped off. The guests at the party were all lining up by the barbecue pit now, waiting for her grandfather to start carving. From the way they were laughing and talking, they all seemed very happy. And down at Kenneth Ray's house, the singing started up again, very loud, very triumphant, joyful.



Lyle Novinski, *Crucifixion* (40x60 oil)

RICHARD McNALLY

The School and the Eucharistic Celebration

Culture lives on religion through divine worship. And when culture itself is endangered, and leisure called in question, there is only one thing to be done: to go back to its first and original source. (Josef Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture*, 1952, p. 78.)

The place where culture is studied is the school, and the methods of study are the liberal arts. The liberal arts have been variously defined in various periods of Western civilization. All the definitions, however, refer to those studies and mental occupations which are built upon the philosophical act, that immanent act by which the mind conceives truth or reality envisioned by it, just as the senses know the exterior reality they perceive. Unlike the act of discursive reasoning—defining and dividing, comparing, analyzing into components for the purpose of mastery with the aim of ultimate, practical use—the philosophical act is effortless and joyful, grasping reality at first hand. The medieval separation between *ratio* and *intellectus* forms the basis for this distinction.

It would be wrong to separate entirely the two orders of knowledge, however, since they do occur together *per accidens*. But it is perhaps a worse error to equate the two, considering them to be of equal rank. *Intellectus* is man's greater privilege; by it he reaches out of the context forced upon him by self-preservation and begins to enjoy Creation as proceeding inviolate from the hands of God rather than existing as raw material upon which he must exercise the *violence* of improvement. For once he has, in fact, mastered the universe, or at least the area of his own existence, he is free for a higher act. And so the work of mastery is, at most, a "clearing away" for the act of contemplation. *Intellectus* is prepared by discursive reasoning and allows man to come out of his needy self and the insecurity of his world in order to become "quodammodo omnia" (Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, 8; *De Veritate*, I, i). In this way the

liberal arts, or the disciplines they imply, are "free": first, in themselves, from any commitment to the needs of man, and second, in their relation to man, who is not compelled to take them up. Cardinal Newman speaks of this liberal knowledge: "Knowledge is then most truly free when it is philosophical knowledge." (*The Idea of a University*, V, 6). The liberal arts do not operate outside the human person, but enhance his humanity only; they provide a *copia* of insightful truth not immediately necessary for the maintenance or existence of the species. The disposition necessary for the philosophical act is receptivity. In this condition the mind is allowed to be taken over by the real order of creation and formed accordingly. Receptivity differs from the disposition to labor or work, a preparation for mastery of the universe through discursive reasoning.

If man is to know the world about and within himself, if he is to preserve his humanity and not simply his existence, then he must create for himself a *locus* or human situation where the philosophical act is possible. This *locus* is an atmosphere of silence, an interior attitude of composure which gives man the power of his own interiority, enabling him to give himself over to that which is before him, to life as he finds it, and opening to him the world as a creation full of objects of wonder and awe. This atmosphere of silence and composure, as well as freedom from compulsion by forces or attractions less than human, frees man from distraction and makes possible a state of receptivity.

The liberal arts school, then, is a *locus* whose atmosphere produces interior composure and allows its participants to devote themselves exclusively to the operation by which they initiate a new relation to reality and see it as worthy of veneration. The interior attitude is not so much a moral attitude as it is an orientation to the real for its own sake, that is, as a vestige of the beauty of the Person who gives it existence. And receptivity is the irreplaceable disposition necessary for the true understanding of things; interior silence, composure is necessary to achieve the condition of reception; the total result is called "leisure," although leisure in its complete, true sense contains more than the elements of silence and contemplation.

The true meaning of leisure is, in fact, difficult to comprehend in an age tending to the disparagement of any pursuit which is not of immediate profit. A misunderstanding of the true nature and end of leisure, and of human work as well, is caused by a misunderstanding of the nature of man. Man is not meant to be a mere functionary, bringing about change in the world: he is not on earth simply to create an abundance of material

wealth. He is here to enjoy, not so much at the level of operation as at the level of contemplation.

The concept of leisure that arose in the Greek civilization was an immediate function of its outlook on human life. It is closely connected with the Western, Christian idea of the contemplative life, a life-ideal often misunderstood and undervalued today. The concept of leisure, then, is the basis for the distinction between *ars libera* and *ars servilis*.

But leisure goes beyond silence and contemplation, beyond this condition of receptivity to what is, to a further act of the joyous acceptance of reality, its grateful recognition consummated in a celebration of the order of things as a gift from the creative hands of a divine Person. As Pieper has written, "The true sense of sacramental visibility in the celebration of the Christian *cultus* should become manifest to the extent needed for drawing the man in us . . . out of himself . . . into the sphere of unending holiday . . . into the heart and centre of creation." (*Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, p. 81).

Thus divine worship is the core of leisure just as leisure in its turn is the core and beginning condition, the origin, of the philosophical act. The act of divine worship is the final consummation of the philosophical act, the pole of its rhythmic movement from contemplation and acceptance of the world to joy and peaceful accord, to what is conceived of the real.

Likewise, in the tradition of the West, the academic life as conceived by Plato was anything but an austere disconnection from human life and pleasure. Rather, it was a way of life total and justified in itself, assuring the accord of man with creation and himself. Joyous celebration of the real order of things, grateful acceptance of the divine gifts, were of its very essence. Pieper tells us that the Academy can best be thought of as a social club or spontaneous grouping of men for the celebration of the traditional *cultus*. Etymologically, "school" does not have the dry and pedantic connotation we can hardly avoid giving it; it implies leisurely pursuit of philosophic speculation and includes the notion of celebration, just as the word "culture" is linked with the notion of fulfilment of public sacrifice, the ritual *cultus* which puts the social body in touch with the lifegiving core of its existence. Plato saw the traditional feasts as moments when man's soul was restored by consort with the gods, a convivium which allowed him to leave the sphere of merely pragmatic and instrumental involvement with the world to return to the source of inward acquiescence to reality, as the privileged gift of a creator. As Plato himself says:

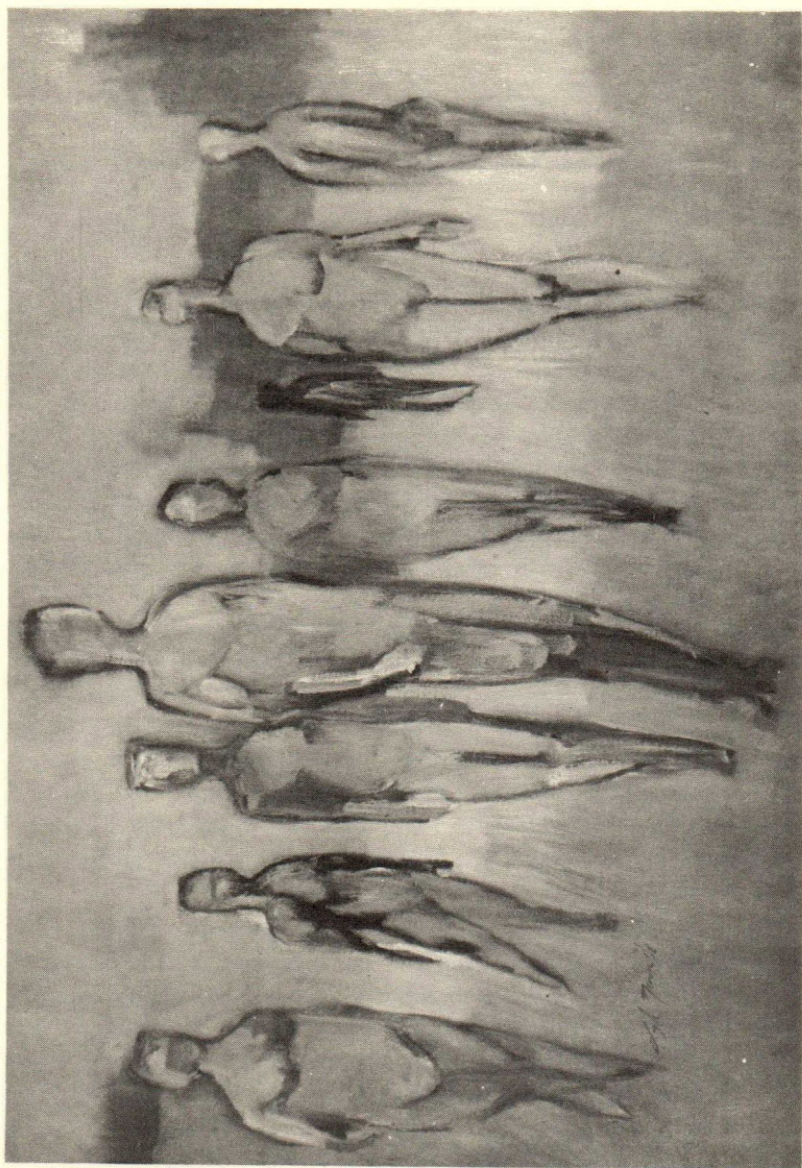
But the gods, taking pity on mankind, born to work, laid down the succession of recurring feasts to restore them from their fatigue, and gave them the Muses, and Apollo their leader, and Dionysus, as companions in their feasts, so that nourishing themselves in festive companionship with the gods, they should again stand upright and erect. (*Laws*, 653)

Similarly, the Common Preface of the Mass states: "*Cum angelis et arch-angelis . . . hymnum gloriae tuae canimus sine fine.*"

The *cultus* in this sense is more than an objective reminder of the existence of the divine world; it is entrance into it: "festal companionship with the gods" was a true and personal contact. St. Augustine, it is to be noted, used the same image to explain the notion of Christian sacrifice: sacrifice for him is the public entrance of the redeemed city into conversation with God, the principle of its being: "True sacrifice is every work done to establish us in a holy fellowship with God, every work tending to the attainment of that good in which alone we can be truly blessed." (*City of God*, X, 5-6)

Thus it is that the liberal arts school revolves around the celebration of divine worship. The liberal arts ultimately resolve themselves into philosophical knowledge whose condition is leisure; and leisure, in its turn, depends upon worship.

The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Rev. C. L. Breedlove in suggesting source material for this article.



Lyle Novinski, *Man as a Naked Being* (35x44 oil)

JOE CANTERBURY

Miss Porter's Pointless Voyage

A review of Katherine Anne Porter, *Ship of Fools*, Boston, Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1962.

Prior to the publication of *Ship of Fools*, Katherine Anne Porter has enjoyed the acclaim of only a small, though influential, group of critics and readers. Strangely enough her first taste of public acceptance has been not with her usual media, the short story and *nouvelle*, but the novel. In her foreword to *Ship of Fools*, she tells us that she began thinking of the plan for the novel in 1932, when she read Sebastian Brant's *Das Narrenschiff* and decided to use the ship as an allegorical vessel of life as Brant had done in 1494. She began writing the novel in 1942, and now, after much anticipation by her admirers, Miss Porter's first novel is finally in print.

A serious review of *Ship of Fools* must therefore consider its extensive period of development. In the preface to *Flowering Judas* (1940), her first collection of short stories, Miss Porter wrote, "They (the stories) are fragments of a much larger plan which I am still engaged in carrying out . . ." *Ship of Fools*, then, is the culmination of that plan—a summing up of Katherine Anne Porter's acute observations of man and his nature. If one considers the novel as a life work, one must ask an important question: Can it be considered a fitting crown to her years of patient artistry?

The novel describes the voyage of the rusted German ship, the *Vera*, from Veracruz, Mexico, to Bremerhaven, Germany, in the summer of 1931. Miss Porter begins her novel by giving vivid descriptions of Veracruz, "A little purgatory between land and sea for the traveler." The impressions of Veracruz's turmoil and human suffering are so acute that when the *Vera* sails we are more than ready to leave that "little purgatory" to begin learning something of the passengers.

At first, we learn only their names and little else, but as the *Vera* begins her slow progress through the waves we learn of the passengers at the same slow rate of speed. Most of them are Germans of fierce

national pride and bitter prejudice. There are the appalling Herr Rieber and the coy Fraulein Lizzi Spockenkiker, whom he mischievously pursues. There are Frau Rittersdorf, who records her daily animosities in a notebook, and her cabin-mate, Frau Schmitt, who lives in the shadow of her dead husband. There are Herr Professor Hutten and his meek wife, a childless couple who pamper their pet bulldog; Herr Baumgartner, a hopeless alcoholic; Karl Glocken, a tortured hunchback; and Herr Wilibald Graf, a dying man who believes that God has granted him healing powers.

Among the passengers of other nations are four Americans: Jenny and David, artists who have been living together in Mexico; Mrs. Treadwell, a forty-five year old divorcee; and William Denny, a narrow-minded young Texan. There are Mexicans, including two priests and a fat political agitator; a Swiss family; six boisterous Cuban medical students; and a Spanish noblewoman—La Condesa—a drug-addicted political exile from Cuba. There are two other groups of Spaniards, who represent respectively the evil and suffering in life. The evil is manifested in a troupe of Spanish dancers: the women are whores, the men pimps and thieves, and worst of all, the children, a pair of six-year-old twins, Ric and Rac, are more evil than their parents. Eight hundred Spanish migrant workers, who live in filth and misery in steerage, represent the mute, suffering victims of society.

As we see more of each character we begin to understand that Miss Porter is presenting a carefully drawn study of human beings at war with themselves. Her method of presentation is a series of episodes, in which the characters are many times helpless and unaware of their actions. Struggle and conflict are always present. A conflict of races is depicted best in the Germans, who look down on all other races with distaste or hate and flaunt the superiority of pure German blood. Though the Jew, Lowenthal, is the object of their scorn, their prejudice barely equals the gnawing hatred that he privately nurses for all Gentiles. The sad dilemma of being in the middle of racial conflict is that of Herr Freytag, ridiculed by his countrymen for having married a Jew and also at conflict with his wife's people for being a Gentile—"He had felt again and again that he was living between two armed and irreconcilable camps, deserter from one side, intruder in the other, the turncoat nobody trusted."

Another bitter conflict among the passengers is the battle between the sexes. Particularly sharp is this struggle for the mastery shown between the German men and their women, whom they treat with exterior courtesy, but a scarcely disguised domination. Women have the upper hand,

however, in the machinations between the alluring Spanish dancers and their hungry victims. The basic antagonism in erotic love is seen most clearly in the affair between Jenny and David, who hate and love one another in turn. For David, love is strictly sensual pleasure, but he insists on a rigid superficial decorum, which Jenny constantly defies. Their life together is nothing more than a series of quarrels and temporary reconciliations.

Miss Porter's treatment of her characters is incisive; some of them are made to reveal their inner baseness rapidly; others slowly; but always the effect upon the reader is one of distaste. To feel pity for these passengers very long is impossible; the Jew, for instance, after receiving a bitter glare from the captain, at first arouses the reader's compassion: "Lowenthal, thinking himself snubbed, was cut to the marrow, his heart broken, the very nerves of his back teeth began to ache, and this state went on for hours." In the very next paragraph, however, he boasts to the American, Denny, of the money to be had in selling Catholic religious goods—"There's money in it. Indians not got enough to eat will buy a statue." By his utter contempt for the religion from which he earns his living he has forfeited any sympathy and has depicted himself as being as rapacious and snobbish as those who persecute him.

Indeed, the reader finds himself compelled to search for a character with any hint of altruism. For a while this redemptive charity appears evident in Dr. Schuman, the ship's doctor. He is a religious man, of firm character, strict morals, and unprejudiced outlook. His weakness, however, comes out in his relationship with the pathetic Condesa, for whom he allows himself to feel a romantic attachment. His desire for this tormented woman places him—like the other passengers—at war with himself. The narcotics with which he supplies her give her a temporary peace but aggravate her deterioration. Loving and destroying her at the same time, he does not admit the truth until she is gone: "His lapse into the dire, the criminal sentimental cruelty of the past days was merely the symptom of his moral collapse: he had refused to acknowledge the wrong he had done La Condesa, his patient, he had taken advantage of her situation as a prisoner, he had tormented her with his guilty love and yet had refused her—and himself—any human joy in it." The significance of the doctor is, by far, the hardest of all the voyagers to determine. Perhaps Miss Porter is telling us that even the good cannot escape corruption in one form or another. She seems to imply that he should have yielded to La Condesa, or have had nothing to do with her.

The only noble character in the novel is likely to be overlooked because

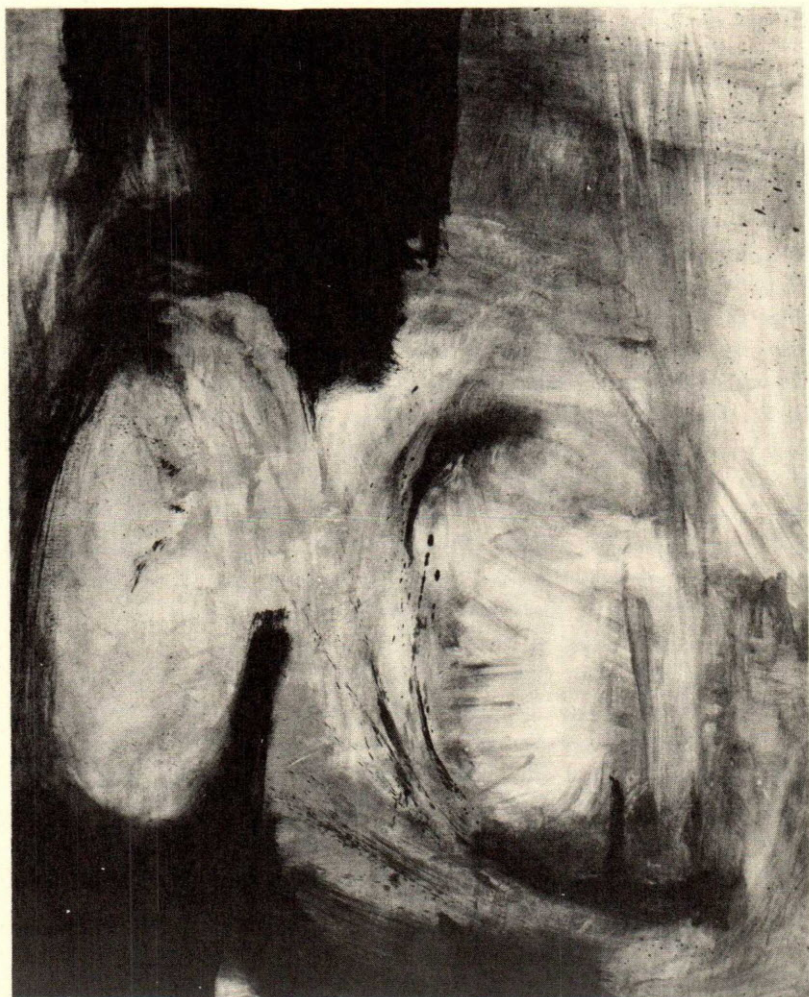
of his insignificance. In the steerage deck one of the Spanish workers carves miniature animals from wood. He is victimized when the Captain, fearing a revolt of the peasants, has all knives confiscated. The carver cries over losing the tool of his art. Later, Ric and Rac throw the Hutten's bulldog overboard, and the carver jumps in the ocean to save the dog at the cost of his own life. The irony of the artist's losing his life to save a fat, ugly bulldog, whose owners fail even to understand his motives, diminishes the extrinsic value of his action. He has certainly performed a noble act, but it has no impact on anyone else. In the carver's martyrdom Miss Porter seems to be expressing the fate of the artist in an unappreciative world.

Most of the passengers on board the *Vera* are motivated by a selfish grasping for love; but a force of pure evil is to be found in the Spanish zarzuela troupe. Collectively, the singers and dancers represent such a total force of evil that the other passengers cannot resist their plots. Towards the end of the voyage they plan a fiesta to defraud the other passengers of their money. All the passengers know that the troupe has stolen the cheap prizes they are offering and that the whole party is in mockery of the other passengers, but still they attend. The Swede, Arne Hansen, says of the situation, "All is crooked, everything—look at these Spaniards! You know they are whores and pimps, nobody wants their party—but here we are, we all pay and we all go like sheep! They blackmail, they cheat, they lie, they steal from everybody all over Santa Cruz, everybody sees, knows—what do we do? Nothing." The voyagers are depicted as helpless in the grasp of the forces of evil.

After the fiesta the novel moves quickly to a conclusion as the *Vera* docks in Bremerhaven. The voyage simply ends and the voyagers go their separate ways. From what we have learned of their past lives, through their memories and conversations, and by connecting this knowledge with their episodes aboard the *Vera*, we can predict their future lives. We know that no one has been changed by the voyage; no one has learned anything of himself that will make any difference in his future life. Bitterness, arrogance, and hate are still prevalent among them. After knowing the passengers so intimately, we cannot help feeling cold with such an ending.

Miss Porter's vision is obviously of a loveless world, where people prey upon each other in their search for self-fulfillment, and evil is unchecked by any redemptive element. Technically, though the writing is superb, the structure seems incomplete. It is as though her subject has no resolution: her fine particulars lead to no universal form. In the end, one must say, there has been no real action.

Lyle Novinski, *Departure* (33x44 oil)



RICHARD CARVILLE

The Vocation of the Western Mind

A review of William F. Lynch, S. J., *The Integrating Mind*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962.

Father Lynch's new book defends the rich contrariety of thought against what he considers the brutalizing influence of the Cartesian "pure idea." He refers to the "constantly recurring fact that many contraries, instead of constituting alternatives for choice, are mutually creative of each other and cannot live without each other." The vocation of the Western mind, he suggests, has been to explore the meaning of various antinomies in their relation to actual existence. He characterizes the opposite tendency to enshrine the univocal concept as "the disease of the pure idea." The pure idea is attractive, he admits: "It would make all our decisions easier; it would simplify the whole of life; it would take all the pain and frustration out of it." This simplicity must be abandoned, he continues, if the Western vocation is to be followed; but if we choose against simplicity and clarity then we must not be trapped into embracing mere complexity, a solution which would actually be a refusal of choice. A course must be chosen, but the course results from decisions made at every crux, with judgment, common sense, and intuition the guides rather than a preconceived notion of reality.

The Integrating Mind is composed of seven essays and selected passages from Father Lynch's philosophical analysis of the problem of contrariety in Plato, as it appeared in *An Approach to the Metaphysics of Plato Through the Parmenides* (1961). The essays form a sequence with the first, "The Totalistic Temptation," defining terms for the subsequent discussions in the course of its presentation of the appeal and method of the singleminded thinker.

Father Lynch goes on to other aspects of the simplifying mind, considering the problem created by the American tendency to cast aside history and tradition, with the "resulting over-extension of the either-or way of thinking into vast areas of human life," and proposing that

"those on the far right and far left are both victims of a process of polarization that is rooted in the philosophy of the clear idea." He then turns his attention to the positive values of contrariety, considering, among other antinomies, the deep interpenetrating and creative relationship between freedom and law and, in "Toward a Theater of Public Action," deploring the loss in our theater of the tension between the public and private life, with the resultant collapse of ritual drama.

Father Lynch continues in the present volume his exploration of the idea presented earlier in his *Christ and Apollo* (reviewed in *Kerygma*, Spring, 1961). His major insight has been into the richness and worth of the finite, as opposed to the romantic, or angelic, aspiration for the infinite. In *Christ and Apollo*, however, he was concerned with what he referred to as "the dimensions of the literary imagination"; in the present work he investigates the way in which ideas work themselves out in human life itself, particularly in Western culture. Father Lynch makes his readers aware that a civilization means a development—not only a growth but also a perfecting—by means of an integration of the many contraries and paradoxes of life. "The only true either-or," he reminds us, "is the division between those who love and those who have irreconcilably chosen hate." He would have us avoid that totalism which falsifies the human condition but instead to take part once more in "the march of the mind of the West—the movement of a growing achievement that defies absolute unity and absolute totalism and tries to think, in human terms, in the presence of God."

SUSAN FRENCH

The Education of Lucius Priest

A review of William Faulkner, *The Reivers, A Reminiscence*, New York: Random House, Inc., 1962.

I was as bent as Boon, and during the next step-anyway-even more culpable. Because (I realized; no; I knew it; it was obvious; Boon himself admitted it in so many words) I was smarter than Boon. I realized, felt suddenly that same exultant fever-flash which Faustus himself must have experienced: that of we two doomed and irrevocable, I was the leader, I was the boss, the master.

Surprisingly, the self-styled Faustus figure in this passage is an eleven-year-old boy, Lucius Priest. His companions in crime are Boon Hogganbeck, the huge part-Indian (who seems never to have progressed in maturity) and Ned, a Negro, wise in his own native learning. Their crime is the "borrowing" of Grandfather's automobile, a cherished novelty in an unmechanized society, for an escape to Memphis, while Lucius' parents, away at a funeral, believe him to be staying with relatives. Thus an elaborate plot forms involving the Quixotic adventurers; and in the humorous episodes of William Faulkner's final novel, *The Reivers*, Lucius discovers his manhood in a declining Southern culture.

Lucius faces 'the forbidden' with the disconcerting revelation that there is no such thing as an innocent child, or an ignorant one.

There is no crime which a boy of eleven has not envisaged long ago. His only innocence is, he may not be yet old enough to desire the fruits of it, which is not innocence but appetite; his ignorance is, he does not know how to commit it, which is not ignorance but size.

Therefore, if his guilt is discovered, he cannot hide behind his years.

In Memphis, taken to a house of prostitution by Boon, Lucius encounters in Corrie a girl "too big to cry" but still beautiful in her quiet gravity. For him, Corrie promises to reform, much to the outrage of Boon, who has come all this way to see her. Boon cannot understand that Lucius' respect for Corrie's womanhood endows her with a new dignity and worth as well with a new name, her girlhood name which

she has kept hidden. Once, when the boy calls her by her real name, Boon challenges him:

"You said something else." I could feel him looking at me.
 "You called her Everbe." I could feel him looking at me. "Is that her name?" I could feel him looking at me. "So she told you her real name." Then he said, quite gently: "God damn . . ."

Even a Corrie, Faulkner seems to be saying, possesses those qualities which make women the redemptive element of society; and even a Corrie evinces, like all women, the strength to endure:

It is not men who cope with death; they resist, try to fight back and get their brains trampled out in the consequence; where women just flank it, envelope it in one soft and instantaneous confederation of unresistance like cotton batting or cobwebs . . .

And when the "men-folk" do get their "brains trampled out," Corrie, described as "one of those Memphis whores," but still the heroine, sacrifices, out of love for the young boy, her refound honor. Then Boon, illiterate and slow-witted but possessed by osmosis of some of the Southern valor and courtesy, rises to the situation and marries Corrie, after, of course, beating the man who has so dishonored her.

This code of honor of which Boon partakes permeates Faulkner's novel: Lucius realizes that a gentleman does not lie but that if he does he stays with his falsehood. And if he give his word not to commit an action, he does not do so. Corrie asks Lucius if his mother has told him not to take things, and he replies: "No ma'am, she didn't have to. You just don't take things." His father, taught also by preceding generations, has taught Lucius that a closed door never needs to be locked. That barrier is respected and entered only with permission.

Faulkner thus describes among even the derelicts and outcasts an intricate code of manners rooted in a traditional culture. This code is not formally taught; it is learned by being lived, as Lucius lives it in this expedition to Memphis.

The Reivers is Faulkner's most enjoyable novel by far; but the reader, just as in Faulkner's other works, finds himself caught up in a profound vision of human life. *The Reivers* is a book to be enjoyed and, more important, to be remembered. Truly, it is a "reminiscence," not just for a Southerner, but for Western man, who—quite as thoroughly if not as spectacularly as the Southerner—finds his society changing its dominant pattern from the natural to the mechanical.

