

WINTER
1962



THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

KERYGMA

A JOURNAL OF COMMENT Vol. II, No. 2

A Note on the Title:

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. It is an announcement that is meant to be heard. It is one that has direct consequences for modern culture—implications that demand to be either accepted or rejected, but never ignored.

Our major "proclamation" is the fact of an impending choice between a culture that is totally secular and one that is Christian. But this principal kerygma is surrounded by many minor ones, such as the place of the university in society, the grounds and bases of the arts, the place of the sciences in the humanities, and other specific problems.

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

Winter Issue, 1962

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Editorial Staff: Robert Dupree, editor-in-chief; John Finnegan; Mar-
cia Dickson; Cecilia May; Anne Little.

Assistants: Ann Gravel; Dona Spawn; Kenneth Meyers; Marianne
Gorman; Joanne Lankford; Dorothy Pendergast; Richard
Carville.

Advisors: Louise Cowan; R. O. Bowen.

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*, English Department, University of Dallas, P. O. Box 1330, Dallas 21, Texas. Subscription price is \$1.50 for three issues.

A Note From the Editors

In recent years the growth of "little magazines" all over the world has been remarkable. Most are small, somewhat unstable, and uncommitted: whatever is technically competent is acceptable in their pages. Their major virtue is in allowing new writers to get into print somewhere. Representing a sort of haphazard free-press, they provide a ready channel for new ideas, for new writing that will not be "sterile" or "academic."

If this is an acceptable definition of the function of a little magazine, it may be safely stated that KERYGMA is not one of them. Its founders have no desire to add to an already vast body of publications with no genuine principle of unity. What KERYGMA represents is something all too often lacking in the little magazines: a canon of purposes and a definite group of writers. Thus KERYGMA does not accept submissions from all over the nation; its writings are supplied by a number of people who hold a certain view of life and art in common.

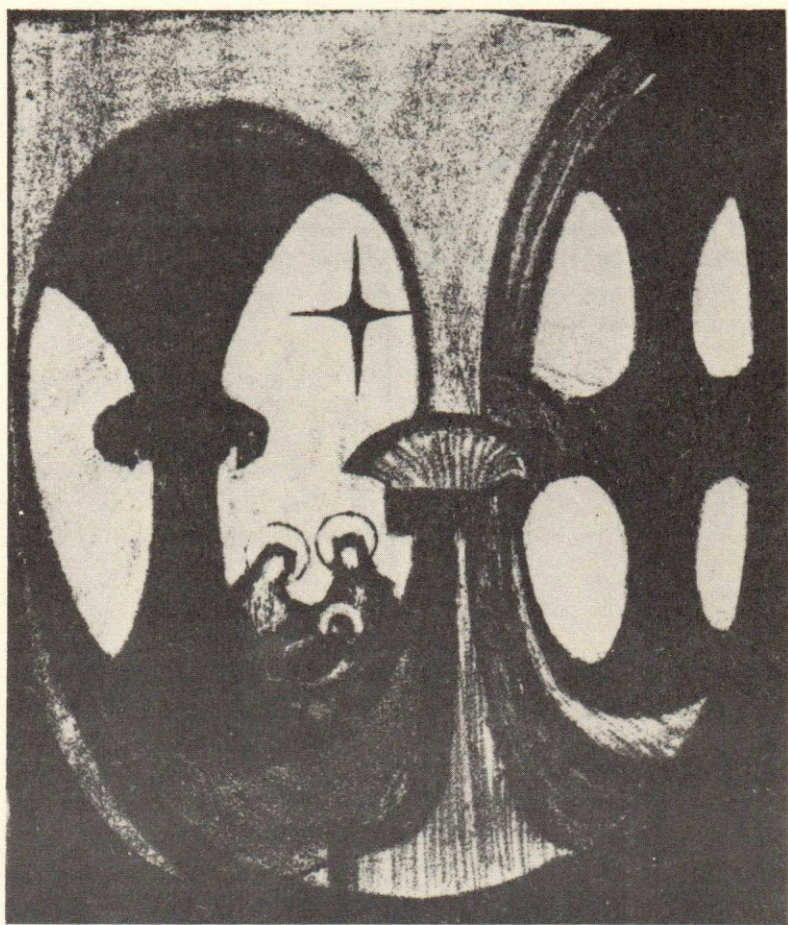
Two of its basic assumptions, inherent in the idea of the magazine from the beginning, are stated in a summary manner on the inside cover. One is a belief that the future of the West and of American culture is tied up with Christianity. The other is a conviction that the liberal arts university is the rightful conservator of tradition in this memory-barren age. KERYGMA seeks to encourage the shaping of the university so that it can perform what is essentially a new function in society.

But if present universities are not prepared to take on the full burden of their responsibility to a culture, if they all too often represent a definite opposition to tradition, then this state of affairs must be altered. The tradition must be reasserted and made pertinent to the current situation in the arts, literature, science, and philosophy, even to its eventualities in economics and government. In short, the university must take on the task of representing its culture and not falsifying it; it can neither permit itself to withdraw from society nor to undermine social foundations by introducing new ideas that are totally counter to tradition.

At the same time, writers must work with what is given, and any advance toward the reformulation of Christian culture must come through a dedication to the actual and not a mere program of ideas. This aim is most ambitious. But it can be accomplished on a small

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scale: in this university and this magazine, writers can attempt to write using the materials of the present world but viewing them in the light of a Christianity applied to life. Meanwhile, intellectual and artistic standards must be upheld, traditions must be kept alive by incrementation, and the values of Western culture must be kept firm. The editors of KERYGMA look forward to developing a poetry, a criticism, and even a world view which is consonant with the principles they feel to be of vital importance for our culture. One of the most promising developments in this decade, we predict, will concern the development of a literary theory and a reconciliation of science and philosophy, in both of which KERYGMA hopes to participate. But though we can proclaim such new advances — *as a kerygma* — attaining them will be a slow and perhaps painful process, involving not only a magazine and a group of people, but the difficult reshaping of life and the correction of taste. In successive issues we hope to offer our readers the opportunity to be either sympathetic spectators or active members of a general movement toward Christian culture which has grown greatly in the last few years.



Sandra Grimland, *Nativity*

JUDITH FRENCH

Albert Camus' Allegory of the Absurd

Now that the French philosopher-author Albert Camus has been dead for a year and a half and some of the excitement surrounding his writing has subsided, a more objective appraisal of his thought seems needed.

For the most part the critics have been kind to Camus. R.W.B. Lewis tells us in *The Picaresque Saint* that "Camus is probably unrivaled in contemporary literature as a master of the variety of style," Jean du Roustu termed Camus "a Pascal without Christ," and others have called him "the conscience of our troubled epoch." Even to several eminent members of the Catholic clergy it has seemed that Camus is the most sympathetic of the modern non-believers. His personal dynamism and the courage with which he confronts "reality," his "passionate disbelief," as he has called it, have been taken as challenges to Christianity. However, the nature of these challenges deserves, perhaps, a considered re-evaluation.

In a speech delivered at the Dominican Monastery of Latour-Maubory in 1948, Camus stated, "If I allowed myself . . . to demand of you certain duties, these could only be duties that it is essential to ask of any man today, whether he is or is not a Christian." He defined his position by saying, "Well, I don't like priests who are anti-clerical any more than philosophies that are ashamed of themselves. Hence I shall not, as far as I am concerned, try to pass myself off as a Christian in your presence. I share with you the same revulsion from evil. But I do not share your hope, and I continue to struggle against this universe in which children suffer and die."

Thus, Camus refuses to accept a system of belief that by postulating

a future world of perfect justice would account for and excuse suffering in this world.

What the world expects of Christians [he writes] is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear, and that they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history has taken on today. The grouping we need is a grouping of men resolved to speak out clearly and pay up personally.

Though Camus does not specify what Christians should affirm, he asks that they stop hiding evil behind a veil of hope and accept a humanism that is a conscious, collective toleration of an indifferent universe. Christians and Communists, then, are pessimistic toward man and optimistic toward God or history, whereas Camus is pessimistic toward human destiny and optimistic where man is concerned. Recalling the notion of an indifferent universe, he accuses Christians of "an ignorance that tries to negate nothing." He reiterates his plea with:

Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children. And if you don't help us, who else in the world can help us do this? . . . I can only speak of what I know. And what I know — which sometimes creates a deep longing in me — is that if Christians made up their minds to it, millions of voices — millions, I say — throughout the world would be added to the appeal of a handful of isolated individuals who, without any sort of affiliation, today intercede almost everywhere and ceaselessly for children and for men.

This, then, is Camus' challenge to Christianity — to eliminate human suffering.

To reduce Camus' challenge to such a simple proposition is to do him some injustice. Doubtless his statement was framed for an audience of men whom he supposed were already committed to a view of man's importance to which he could appeal. In his novels he makes no such assumption and, consequently, works out a much fuller view of man and the challenge which faces humanity.

Three definite images of man emerge through the sum total of

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Camus' works. These are Sisyphus, of *The Myth of Sisyphus*; Meursault, of *The Stranger*; and Dr. Rieux, of *The Plague*.

Sisyphus, the man condemned to the continuous and futile labor of rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, only to watch the rock roll back down again, represents The Absurd. Though his life is meaningless, Sisyphus is happy; he will not attempt suicide because

Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive is, above all, contemplating it. Unlike Eurydice, the absurd dies only when we turn away from it. One of the only coherent philosophical positions is thus revolt. It is a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity. It is an insistence upon an impossible transparency. It challenges the world anew every second.

The unique value of Sisyphus' situation is that it "extends awareness to the whole of experience." It is this constant self-consciousness that keeps man concentrated in his own essence. Like danger, which heightens sensitivity to the precariousness of existence, metaphysical revolt brings man to accept himself as man. Realizing that he is finite, he can have no aspirations. On the contrary, he knows that he is being crushed beneath the force of a relentless fate. He knows to a certainty the vanity of hope or resignation. Sisyphus, man, is kept alive by a kind of negative existence; he lives only by virtue of his reaction and denial, his protest against the cruel meaninglessness of life.

The person who embodies this concept of revolt as the path to a full realization of the absurdity of life is Meursault. His "salvation" comes as the result of an acceptance of death as the most absurd reality. This acceptance begins with the death of Meursault's mother, at the beginning of the novel. He excuses himself apologetically to his employer for having to take a day off from work to attend her funeral at a home for the aged. "Sorry, sir, but it's not my fault, you know."

Meursault is an example of almost complete passivity. Those who try to love him he treats with cold indifference. Marie, who becomes his mistress, and Raymond, the neighbor who would like to be his "buddy," are neither accepted nor rejected. Even murder fails to move this strange man. Walking on the beach after his friends, he finds that he is being followed by an Arab at some distance. He pulls out a

gun that one of his companions had given him and faces the Arab.

It struck me that all I had to do was to turn, walk away and think no more about it. But the whole beach, pulsing with heat, was pressing on my back . . . The Arab didn't move . . . The heat was beginning to scorch my cheeks . . . And then the Arab drew his knife . . . A shaft of light shot upward from the steel . . . I was conscious only of the cymbals of the sun clashing on my skull, and . . . the trigger gave.

But, for apparently no reason at all, Meursault fires four additional shots into the body that lies crumpled at his feet. This unaccountable action results in his arrest and, later, his condemnation to death. It is while he is in prison that Meursault learns to forget the physical discomforts and injustice done him. He decides to exercise his freedom by choosing his guilt, and so he lays his heart open to the "benign indifference of the Universe." His ultimate freedom comes from the great action of his life, an acceptance of justice.

The addition of humanism to the composite of Sisyphus and Meursault yields Dr. Rieux, the saint of the absurd. Dr. Rieux's problem is "Can there be a saint without God?" He is confronted by the absurd as it is symbolized in the bubonic plague that lays siege on the city of Oran. The population is divided into those men who revolt against the plague and those who find a fulfillment or peace in it. But, above all, the entire population recognizes in it an event beyond the control of man.

Nevertheless — and this point is most important — however bitter their distress and however heavy their hearts, for all their emptiness, it can be truly said of these exiles that in the early period of the plague they could account themselves privileged.

In the solitude of the plague, men recognize their solidarity in death. Those who reject this solidarity can choose only suicide, as Tarrou tries, for example, and those who accept it and work for this vision of man can find their "sanctity" in it. It is interesting to note the influence Father Paneloux has upon Dr. Rieux. This priest accepts the plague as a test of faith and a punishment for sins and urges an agreement with the divine will by saying ". . . since it was God's will, we too, should

will it." Rieux, of course, considers God as an excuse for an agony we must suffer in the face of absurdity. However, he is not unsympathetic to Paneloux, for he recognizes in the priest a powerful ally for his cause, just as Camus, himself, had pleaded with Christians to accept his challenge.

Rieux is thankful for the situation the plague affords him to seize upon the condition of man and press the forceful example of suffering in the city to further his particular doctrine of humanism.

Being a saint "without God" is, for Rieux, a threefold task. First one must be convinced of the absurdity of existence and of the absolute lack of meaning in life. Then he must recognize the solidarity of mankind; man is divorced from meaningless Nature, and has only himself as a measure. The third step is the cooperation of men in a joint effort to reduce suffering. However, one has to continue this effort incessantly in order to keep the image of the absurd forever before him. By continuing to work with the plague victims, Rieux fulfills the requirements of his sainthood.

But in ten years time Camus has had opportunity to apply his project for sainthood to concrete examples. In *The Fall* he shows us that man is not quite so willing to cooperate as he had previously supposed. In this novel Camus is no longer optimistic toward man; he is more concerned with the idea of evil and how man must contend with it. The first question, then, is "Who is responsible for evil in the world?" Whereas Meursault has said, "It's not my fault, you know," in regard to death; the hero of *The Fall*, Jean-Baptiste Clamence, assumes the guilt for universal sin or evil. Indeed, he becomes "noble" through this assumption. When we first see Clamence he is trying to rid himself of even the slightest intimations of guilt by constantly doing good deeds — that is, good deeds that provide him with great pleasure.

Consequently I was considered generous, and so I was. I gave a great deal in public and in private. But far from suffering when I had to give up an object or a sum of money, I derived constant pleasures from this — among them a sort of melancholy which occasionally rose within me at the thought of the sterility of those gifts and the probable ingratitude that would follow. I even took such pleasure in giving that I hated to be obliged to do so.

But, then, one night as Clamence is walking across a bridge, a woman

he has just passed suddenly throws herself into the river. He hears her cries, thinks that he must be quick if he wants to save her, but does not move. He simply stands there, feeling "an irresistible weakness" steal over him, and listens. This event causes Clamence to pass judgment upon himself and attain an "innocence" by proclaiming his guilt and the guilt of all men. He asserts that the solidarity of man kind is strengthened by guilt; when one recognizes this one attains a freedom from responsibility. Thus, Clamence plays a new role, that of a "judge-penitent." He lives trying to convince others that everyone is guilty and innocent to the same degree. Since life is meaningless, "to judge" is ridiculous.

Wherefore, since we are all judges, we are all guilty before one another, all Christs in our mean manner, one by one crucified, always without knowing. We should be at least if I, Clamence, had not found a way out, the only solution, truth at last

As Camus himself has said of Clamence, he is "possessed by a mania for self-accusation," so that he "can accuse others more easily." Camus is capable of giving us this vision of man — a deprived, demonic person who could say,

How intoxicating to feel like God the Father and to hand out definitive testimonials of bad character and habits. I sit enthroned among my bad angels at the summit of the Dutch heaven and I watch ascending toward me, as they issue from the fogs and the water, the multitude of the Last Judgment. They rise slowly; I already see the first of them arriving. On his bewildered face, half hidden by his hand, I read the melancholy of the common condition and the despair of not being able to escape it. And as for me, I pity without absolving, I understand without forgiving, and above all, I feel at last that I am being adored!

Clamence, of course, is not Camus; indeed, the perspective of esthetic distance is obvious in the writing. But to fail to take the thesis of the novel as a serious statement of Camus' views would be to disregard the height of the calling Camus has answered. What he has said in direct statement has appeared, transmuted, in his novels. And he continues to allow himself to demand "certain duties . . . of any man

today, whether he is or is not a Christian." With *The Fall*, he has progressed from the humanitarianism of Dr. Rieux, who would rid the world of suffering, to the Luciferianism of Clamence, who would make all men gods.

Camus has captivated a wide audience because of his apparent daring. But as some critics have pointed out, his view of man is the logical result of eighteenth-century rationalism and an extension of nineteenth-century nihilism. Camus' sincerity is undeniable. But what has he contributed as a result of his world view? A complaint. He has cried out against evil and urged various plans for its elimination, but he has not attempted an understanding of evil itself. He has told us that because of evil life is absurd, and that we must accept this absurdity. He has based his philosophy upon a feeling that man must strive for a sanctity of sorts, a feeling that is the direct result of nineteen centuries of Christianity. And since this feeling contradicts what Camus sees and believes to be true, his system is ill founded.

When we view Camus' accomplishments as works of art, one fact is evident throughout: Camus is adept at producing powerful allegory. That is, the one-to-one relationship that his novels bear to his philosophical system is quite well worked out. Indeed, Sisyphus, Meursault, Dr. Rieux, and Clamence each represent man as Camus sees him, and each must face the absurd reality of an indifferent universe, confronting it only with a revolt against suffering and, finally, the possibility of suicide.

Modern man is challenged to accept a "sainthood" which expresses itself in an unrelenting humanitarianism, rebelling against human suffering and yet accepting the universe as absurd. Just as Sisyphus must submit to his toil to achieve a "sanctity," Meursault must accept death to attain freedom, Dr. Rieux must fight the plague to become a "saint," and Clamence must accept universal guilt to become God.

However, some of us may not wish to accept man as deity and may pose a problem central to the value of Camus' work. If Camus had successfully embodied his philosophy in serious art, however, the problem of belief would not enter into our evaluation of his work. But in Camus' work, as in any other allegory, the fiction has no value independent of the system. Camus' novels are not well constructed; he uses clumsy devices, such as the narrative in the tavern to open *The*

Fall, and he seldom succeeds in creating what must be for fiction the basic unit, a good scene. Thus, it is not possible to read Camus in the way that one would read Dostoevsky. Camus' novels are the works of a polemicist, of an essayist. They cannot in sober judgment be considered successful fiction.

We may seriously doubt, now that Camus is dead and the power of his personality is sustained only by rather fragmentary examples of his program, that he will be looked upon by serious literary men as having struck a new direction for novelists. When the effectiveness of a writer's work depends upon the validity of his philosophy rather than upon the reality of his images, his acclaim is likely to be short lived. By the time atheistic existentialism is no longer fashionable, nor perhaps even comprehensible, Camus' novels will largely be important for providing a clue to the understanding of his age.

ANN GRAVEL

The Buddha and the Jelly Roll

When Ama Rose awakened, she didn't know whether she was dead or alive. Her hands trembled as she cupped them about the back of her neck. Slowly, as though imploring some greater power, she raised them before her face. Drops of perspiration glistened from her palms, but nothing scarlet. Finally she let out a deep breath and shifted beneath the light quilt, knowing that she hadn't actually been beheaded. Or if she had, a miracle had taken place in that grey, high-ceilinged room.

Sunlight slid into the bedroom through the parted venetian slats, and outside the window a bluejay squawked and fluttered in the fig tree. Ama Rose slipped under the covers and shut her eyes hard. In the kitchen, the screen door creaked on its unoiled hinges.

"Bothia," she called, "is that you?"

"Yeah, honey, it's me," Bothia rasped.

Ama Rose heard her fumble in the pantry and the clink of the coffee pot being set on the iron burner. She burrowed her head into the thick pillow, happy that she wasn't the only person awake. "Bring me some coffee-milk, Bothia," she called, her voice muffled by the pillow.

"Ain't heard what you said, but I know what you want," Bothia yelled. "And you kin wait."

"All right, all right, Bothia." She lifted her head. "You don't have to scream at me."

"You know well as any other body I only got two hands," Bothia yelled back.

Ama Rose fluffed up the big pillow and settled against it like a great lady, crossing her hands primly in front of her chest.

The sun arched higher over the levee casting bright shafts of light that fell in slanted bars over the pictures of her Uncle Duncan, hanging above the desk opposite her bed. He was only fourteen, a year older

than she was now, when one of the photographs was taken, a boy with a thin frame and straight dark hair that hung over his forehead. Another group of his pictures were hinged together and stood on top of the desk. The last one showed him older, still thin, leaning against the cockpit of an Air Force plane with a uniform on and a helmet in his hand.

The door into the front bedroom opened and her grandma tiptoed in, wearing an old brown smock with a slip showing underneath. Ama Rose shut her eyes and played asleep, squinting slightly as her grandma eased toward the kitchen door. Just as she placed her hand on the doorknob, Ama Rose threw off the bedcovers and shouted, "Boo, Grandma!" She giggled as her grandma froze and then relaxed.

"Godsakes alive, Ama Rose," she said, letting go of the doorknob. "You're gonna give me the mollyhocks. What are you doing up so early for, child?"

Ama Rose scooted over in the bed and lay still as her grandma sat down on the edge and tucked the soft flowered quilt under Ama Rose's neck. She looked up into her grandma's blinking blue eyes, noticing the pinch that glasses had left by the bridge of her nose.

"You know what?" Ama Rose said, pulling her arm from beneath the sheets. "Last night I dreamed it again. I dreamed Alec chopped my head off with Grandy's big axe." She massaged the back of her neck.

"Phooey, child." Her grandma smoothed her short, tightly curled grey hair and looked around the room. "Why Alec taught you how to walk." Her grandma walked over to the window, her slippers knocking against the wooden floor. The cord opening the blinds was near the top and she had to stand on her toes to reach it.

The sun poured into the room and Ama Rose blinked and rubbed her eyes in the brightness.

"Besides," her grandma chuckled, gazing out at the fig tree, "he's been telling you that for years."

Ama Rose propped back against the pillow and reached for a lock of her hair. She twisted the fine black hair about her fingers and rubbed the strands together. "Alec doesn't really scare me, Grandma," she sighed. "I'd just rather dream about something happy." She drew up her knees and crossed her arms around them, resting her chin on one knee. "Maybe I won't go to school today."

Her grandma turned abruptly and came over to the side of the bed.

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"Is that okay?" Ama Rose asked innocently.

"Look here, Ama Rose." Her grandma rested her hands on her hips. "This happens every time you spend the weekend. I declare, I don't know what to do with you, child."

"Come on, Grandma," Ama Rose pleaded, "call Mama before she gets here and tell her I don't feel good."

"Honey, what you need is a good spanking. There's only a month left till summer, you know." Then she paused thoughtfully. "Well, I've done this so many times, I guess once more won't hurt." She padded off to the telephone, her pale slip clinging to the backs of her legs. "I'm probably the one that needs to be spanked," she muttered, and pulled the front bedroom door shut behind her.

"Thanks, Grandma," Ama Rose called after her. "I knew you'd come through."

Bothia came in carrying a small tray. The coffee-milk steamed from a large cup with "Ama Rose" written across it in red letters. Ama Rose pulled the quilt over her head.

"Come on out, Miz Sassie-Pants," Bothia shook her shoulder through the cover. "I got no time to be playing around."

"Aw Bothia," Ama Rose said and poked her head out like a turtle from its shell. "You're not any fun."

Bothia set the tray on the nightstand; she pulled a hairpin from her slicked black hair, then shoved it back in at another place. "You drink that up, Ama Rose, and bring me the tray in the kitchen. Hear me."

"All right, already, big fat Bothia," she said and dodged the slap aimed at her. The coffee-milk was so hot that it made her nose run. She sipped it slowly and drained the undissolved bits of sugar from the bottom. Sniffing, she threw off the covers and let the quilt fall to the floor. She dressed quickly and went outside fastening a rubber band around her hair to make a pony tail.

She stood for a moment on the back steps. In the early morning, her grandy's patio was beautiful and cool. As if it had been dashed from a large bucket, the concrete sprawled formlessly out into the yard, peaking and curving, with small patches of St. Augustine filling in the gaps. Three great pecan trees stood behind the red brick barbecue pit and the connected fireplace. The tree branches spread out like a giant fan and, with the exception of a few irregular splotches of light, cast a huge rounded shadow upon the patio. There was always shade except in the winter when it wasn't needed. Usually in the middle of October, when the leaves had fallen, she and Bothia would come

outside and pick pecans, some of them already cracked from falling onto the hard pavement, and Bothia would cup her apron and take them to sell to Mr. Kees down at the grocery store. Often, in the winter, she and her grandparents would come outside and build a fire; they would just sit there, watch the orange blaze, and listen to the river hit softly against the levee.

"Hey, Grandy," she yelled, coming down the steps. He was floating on his back near the left end of her swimming pool. "Are you dead?" She picked some of the deep maroon pansies and rambled slowly on to the pool. "The jig's up. You didn't wake me up to come swimming and you promised, remember. Look, I know you're alive."

His eyes opened slowly, slyly. Sunlight glinted off the steel frames of his glasses. There was no sign of water on either lens. His body was perfectly still and the water, dark green from the painted cement bottom, lapped gently against the sides of the pool, but only because there was a slight breeze. His stomach was covered by the water, with only his head from the ears up and his feet sticking out.

"You look just like a big whale," she observed.

He ducked his mouth under the surface and spewed forth a great fountain of water. "Get your swimming suit on, gal, and come on in."

"Nope," she said, "it's too late now," and threw the flowers at him. "Alec'll be here in a little while, and he's gonna make me a buddha." Sliding off her sandals, she sat on the bank and stuck her feet in the water, grabbing one of the pansies between her toes. Before she could turn to see what the soft tapping sound was behind her, something grabbed her pony tail and yanked hard. "Ouch! Stoppit!" she cried, reaching back to grab the hand. "Alec!" she squealed, able to turn her head just far enough around to see him out of the corner of her eye. "Are you trying to snatch me baldheaded?"

He was a tall man, nearly bald, with wisps of pure white hair thinly scattered over his dark scalp. His face was thin, and his cheekbones stood out like heavy veins under skin the color and crinkly texture of coffee grounds. The right leg of his stained khaki pants was tucked into the leather band that attached a wooden shaft, his right leg, to his thigh.

"Why you ain't in swimmin', Miz Ama Rose?" he asked and released her hair.

"I was waiting on you, Alec." She pressed the back of her hair against her head. "Remember what you promised."

"Oh. That buddrham thing. Don't know 'bout that, Miz Ama Rose."

His left arm was held firmly behind his back.

"Alec," her voice cracked. She began to edge along the pool bank and almost fell backwards. Gripping the sides, she straightened up. "What's behind your back?" She watched, with her mouth half open, as he pulled his arm slowly around.

"I brung you this from the bakery, Miz Ama Rose," he grinned, showing his white teeth, most of them lined around the edges with gold.

"Oh goodness!"

He handed her the pastry, wrapped in stiff white paper. Red jelly oozed from the sides.

"I'm gonna chop your head off, now, if you don't eat it," he said.

"Golly, thanks, Alec," she mumbled, stuffing the jelly roll into her mouth. "I love these things and you know it." She crumpled the paper and tossed it over her shoulder. "You better stop telling me you're gonna chop my head off. I been dreaming you really did. Just now even . . ."

"I is," he shook his finger at her, "if you don't watch out."

He started to hobble away, but she reached out and tapped on the back of the wooden shaft. "Wait, Alec, where you going? Aren't you gonna make me my buddha? I've got the clay and the picture and everything."

"Hold on there, gal." Her grandy climbed out of the pool. Water streamed down his legs and his baggy trunks clung to his skin. "You let Alec be for a while. A few things I want him to do," he said, grabbing his towel from a canvas chair.

"Yessum, Miz Ama Rose, I got to do a few things. Wait till afternoon, then I'm gonna make that buddrham whatchamacallit for you."

"Oh, all right, doggonit," she said and headed toward the back porch as they started to talk about fertilizer.

When she awakened from the nap her grandma had forced her to take because all the doctors were saying it would prevent polio, the clock beside her bed said three o'clock. She lay on the bed a minute and stretched her arms straight out from her sides. The dream had come again, always the same. She had just climbed from the swimming pool, with her long hair stuck to the sides of her face and Alec was standing there, wearing a long white robe, just standing there, motionless and silent. She started toward the house, ignoring him, but he jumped in front of her and pulled the axe from behind his back, the axe with the long, curved red handle. Then he swung it over his shoulder

like a baseball bat. Somehow, strangely, she watched as her head toppled and cracked, bloodless, onto the cement. But her grandma had said not to pay any attention to the dream; after all, Alec had taught her to walk.

She jumped from the bed and snatched up the battered art magazine that she had found in the attic and put under the nightstand. In the kitchen, she opened the cabinet drawer and took out the big mound of green clay that her grandma used to hold flowers in the bottom of her vases. She hurried outside and found Alec sitting on a steel box next to the garage door. He was whittling on a piece of tree bark, his wooden leg stretched out in front of him.

"Okay, Alec, I'm ready." She handed him the clay and the magazine with its yellowed, curling pages, folded back from the middle. The buddha was squat and flabby looking.

He dropped the bark on the ground, folded his knife and slipped it into his shirt pocket, and, without a word, took the magazine from her. He flipped through its pages keeping his finger to mark the place and finally turned back to study the picture. "That's the ugliest man I ever seen, Miz Ama Rose, but he's pretty colors."

"Well, I like him," she said. "Come on, Alec, get started."

His hands were smooth, even smoother than her mother's. But then she had to wash dishes all the time. He hummed softly while he molded the clay. There was hardly any other noise. No cars were driving down the side street and stirring up the gravel. The only other sound was the drone of automobiles as they crossed the Red River bridge.

Ama Rose leaned against the garage wall, then slid slowly down it and sat on the ground next to the steel box. "Alec, tell me about some of the things Uncle Duncan and Mama did when they were little."

"Didn't make no buddrhams for them, that's sure," he said and wiped his hands on his pants. "You know bout everything they done when they was chillun. I done tole you too many times."

"Were you here the day Uncle Duncan got killed?"

"Yep. He's almost a full growed man then, should have never flew no airoplane." He shifted on the steel box. "Don't you want to hear bout nothin else?"

"What happened?" She picked up a twig and drew lines in the dust.

"You wasn't even born that day. But your Mama was carryin you. Lawdy," he sighed, "I ain't never seen her lookin so big." He kept on rolling the clay around in his hands. "I was the one took the telegram from that boy, Miz Ama Rose. If I'd knowed what it was, I wouldn't

have brung it in. I give it to your grandy and I never, no, I ain't never, seen no such look on no man's face. He drapped it on the floor and run and squatted down in the corner, and his whole back was shakin."

"Did Mama cry?" she asked.

"It was her brother weren't it?" he said. "She picked it up off the floor and your grandma read it over her shoulder. Your grandma knowed what it was, but she didn't scream till then and she grabbed holt of your Mama and they hugged each other. Me and Bothia got them up in the front room, but we couldn't get Mistah Malcolm out of that corner. He kept sayin 'Lawd, Lawd, what has I done to have this'."

Alec ran a shaking hand across his brow, leaving bits of green clay on his forehead. "Hit near bout kilt us all, Miz Ama Rose. Hit near bout kilt us all. Poor little Duncan was dead. Nothin none of us could do bout it."

"I wish he was alive," Ama Rose said and her eyes felt glazed.

"Here is your buddrham, Miz Ama Rose. I's finished as I kin be. Gonna go home." He placed his hands on his legs, rose from the steel box and hobbled to the garage door.

For a second, Ama Rose held the idol in her hand, not even looking at it.

"Wait, Alec." She glanced down at the buddha and studied it. "His stomach's not fat enough."

"You better like it else I'm gonna whack your head off. I got to go."

"Come on," she said, "you can fix his stomach. It's not that late."

"Ain't got time," he said, starting out the door. "Done all I kin."

"Alec! I'm gonna tell Grandy on you if you don't." She stamped her foot in the dust.

"Mistah Malcolm don't care," he said, peering around the corner of the garage door. "You must wants to get your head whacked off."

"Go on, then. I hate you! I just hate you!" She took the buddha and pinched its head off, throwing it and the body against the garage wall. Alec stood in the doorway and watched both pieces stick against the wood for a second, then fall to the ground leaving dabs of clay on the wall.

"How come you went and did that Miz Ama Rose?" Alec asked.

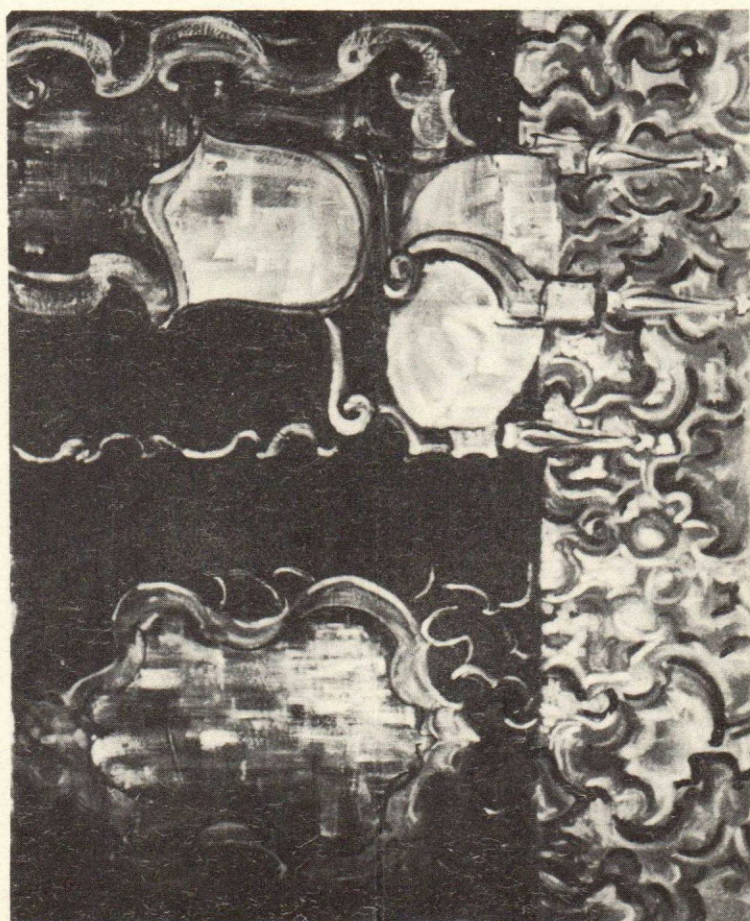
"Leave me alone!" She ran into the house. The screen door banged behind her.

In all the days she had spent in that great warm house, she had

rarely lifted the phone from its hook, save to answer it. She jerked the dial back and forth. On the third ring, the phone at the other end clicked up. "Mama," she said hoarsely, "it's me, Ama Rose. Please come get me."

Her mother questioned her as they rode slowly, in the late afternoon, across the Red River bridge, with the tires humming on the newly laid steel which replaced the old boards that had rotted and begun to chunk off into the river. But Ama Rose remained tight-lipped, staring out at the river, not really a red river but a murky rust color, and watching a log as it seemed to fight from being sucked into a whirlpool and was finally pulled under.

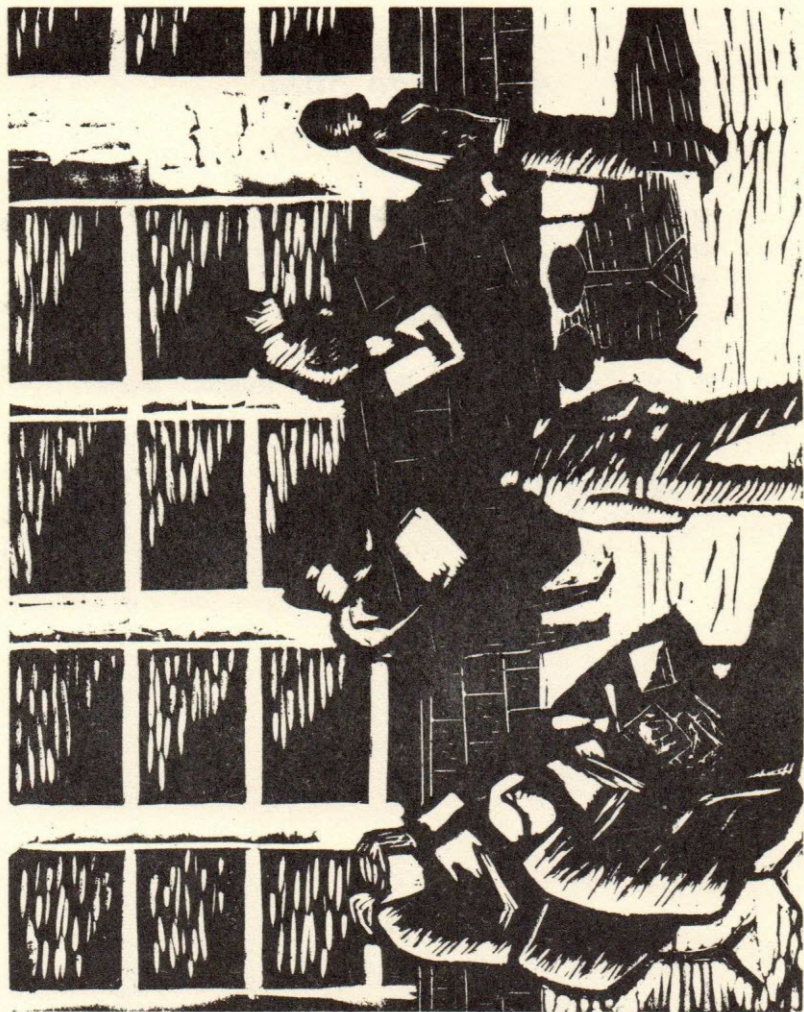
Five years later when she was in her last year at boarding school in Sunset, Mississippi, she learned by a letter from her grandma that Alec had died. Five years had passed since that day and she had not spoken with him or even dreamed of him again. Sometimes she wished for it, that dream, in all its terror. Once, in her first year at Sunset, she had tried to make another buddha. But her hands were not as nimble as his and she had to divide the clay into two pieces to get the right proportions. Unfortunately, with the slightest, softest touch whenever one of the girls tried to pick it up to examine it, the head would roll off the thick, fat body.



Sandra Grimland, *French Interior*



Sandra Grimland, *Composition*



Sandra Grimland, *Graphics*

EUGENE CURTSINGER, JR.

Amo Ergo Sum

If love responds to love like water to the sun,
Or leaves, where once were lakes, dry sand,
Yet spirit, unsealed of arid seas, cries once:
I love, therefore I am.

If love responds to Love like clay to sculptor's hands,
Or leaves, where once were hills, bare stone,
Yet *Spiritus ex Olympo cantat*
Amo ergo es:
I love, therefore you are.

ROBERT DUPREE

After Great Pain

*"Can I learn to suffer without saying
Something ironic or funny
About suffering."*

—*W. H. Auden*

Embezzling apologies,
I scuffle in my memories
And shuck dry pods of no recall:
Not once, no, not *one* time at all
Have I suffered. That deep door
Passed me time and time before
My instinct mellowed in such rhythmic
Rage. I want some cataclysmic,
Blackened, beaten, dull, or tortured
Way to worm into my orchard
And starve my pretty soul.

But say,

I remember one hard stay,
Sunday morning, midnight, when
My car broke down and left me in
The middle of the road. It paid
(Or so I thought) me right. I made
A bed inside. It stormed. Steel rain
Pitched hard irony on my brain
And all my scanty dreams could feel
The pillow of my steering wheel.
I woke up dreaming that I'd slept,
Raised my aches, still fasting, kept

The roosters company for miles
Flexing every crow with smiles,
And walked till noontime, where at last
I broke my bank book, pride, and fast
At a motel in the sticks
Awaiting Monday trade to fix
My scuttled engine's fore and aft,
And sat upon my bed and laughed.
A life of surfaces can bring
Pain but no real suffering.

Perhaps it's that I've not deserved
To fell the youth my youth's preserved.

ROBERT DUPREE

Reflection

A mirror standing vertically before
another glass reminds its imaged floor-
length opposite with labyrinthine stares.
It does not care, the looking-glass which shares
an empty face with others of its kind
or ping-pongs what is missing for a mind
with damning clarity. The slightest ounce
of meaning reproduces in a bounce
that shrinks from sight through frames of phantom sense.
A careful consciousness that wants to fence
and parry every stroke a studied way,
it loses the inevitable *touché*
of action. While such thinking mauls the knower,
its wavelengths shudder weakly, far from shore.

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

Two Thomases

Old interlopers, Thomas, the undesired,
Failures in friendship, why did younger years
Not pall as do these later, lengthening days?
Fresh blood, fresh mind, and scintillating wit
Kept King and court amused. You ventured all:
Power, influence, life, nay, even death
And life hereafter, you of Chelsea and you
Of Canterbury. You turned from gait
When once the Henries made it amply clear
That royal favor would be bought by sin.
Each earthly diadem dispatched a mortal life,
And sent a Thomas to a heavenly crown.

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

Johannine Requital

No raven ventured near, nor was one needed
To carry bread to far-away retreat
Where prophet heard the saving word conceded
To stoppered ears and worldly mind replete
With baubles, trifles, brash unliving pelf
That with a strident whisper dulled the wit:
Let him who's not to die bestir himself —
These present joys prompt quite the opposite.

No raven came, nor was the raven missed.
To penitents the Words of God suffice;
What pleasure bread when head has lain in bliss
Upon the Word that gave the bread of life?
That manna sates all needs, but leaves perforce
A thirst for vital draught from wisdom's source.

GEARY BLANKENSHIP

Summa Tranquillitas

"Media nocte, omne bene est."

Why then this listlessness we sense —
And what's this odor in the air
Which seems to stifle, smother, scare?
It must just be the fog or dense
And smoky fumes of frankincense
From all the factories' intense
And pungent fumes of progress.

"Quatre heures et tout va bien."

Why is it then we can't sleep, Dear,
But withhold our visages
Of vice and graven images
To haunt our dreams another year?
What is this shivering sound we hear
So harsh to soul, and heart, and ear —
It must be just our Chaunticleer
Crowing overtures to progress.

"Acht Uhr —"

Why hasn't day yet been reborn
To free us from the night cloud's womb
Of fruitlessness so like the doom
Of those interred in Sodom's tomb?
Oh! Venus, Eli, hear us mourn.
And save us from this great forlorn
Hell. Don't show your children scorn.
Oh God! Please grant us one more morn,
We had made such progress.
"—und alles ist gut."

KENNETH MEYERS

Pride's Autumn

As leaves that in falling rise
By looseleaf wind and summarize
Themselves above their bare support,
Then fall intently but lose purport
And hardly make it, so
The glassy-stemmed esteem I sow
Rafts with me above misplaced conception
And I'm a tourist after some reflection —
A sylph-supported ranger on a breezy heath.

And then I grovel with the leaves
(Since slivered glass unlaced my grieves)
To sift and shift with no support.
In grounds below I find rapport
And thrash about in mad content
Till, joined in crowded sacrament,
My shaky limbs lose all their ends
In frenzied press of unknown friends,
A fertile mash, but dead inside.

Here, self-sacrificed, I lie
In wait, compost for roots to try.

SUE EASTMAN

Catharsis by Love

On this parched brow
Made feverish by torment
Of furies that spring full-bodied
From a psyche's lament
Your hand traces sweet respite,

Echoing the ageless verdict of deity —
The just Pallas, the merciful Lord.
Orestes is acquitted; my soul purged.
The furies' fury is abated
By love's vow perpetuated.

DOROTHY PENDERGAST

Christ at Canaveral

A star lingers a while before it fades
Into the groping limbs of universe
And dangles its dare at man. To pluck this fruit
Of night, he tumbles into bleak departure.

He shoots for stars, almost finds their shore,
And rockets forth his stellar appetite.
The engines of his hunger stall a savor
Of trimming distances, of sating hungers,

But still a distant dazzle lights the Babe,
Unfolds the fruitful wealth of other glow.
Thus men still aim at stars, tread astral beaches,
And reach a bank, yet find another sea.

DONALD COWAN

The Rise of the Quantitative World View

For the past fifty years historians of science have attempted without complete success to destroy the myth that modern science rose quite suddenly with Galileo and came to full flower within a century in the work of Newton. The uses of that myth have been cultural and perhaps psychological in an age exalting physics over metaphysics. It is quite likely a human tendency to attribute to great men those changes which in reality arise disparately and unobtrusively throughout an age of transition; it has been peculiarly a modern tendency, however, to see those men as heroes who stand *against* their age, enemies of bigotry and ignorance. This is the kind of interpretation of Galileo which has accorded him credit not wholly justified and in the process rather seriously distorted the history of science. Recently, however, Lynn Thorndike, George Sarton, A. C. Crombie, and others have shown that the rise of science in the seventeenth century was well prepared for.

Despite the myth, experiment did not begin with Galileo's dropping balls from the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Even if that story is not apocryphal, the fact is that the same experiment was performed some years before—about 1570—when Simon Steven of Flanders dropped weights from a window down to a sounding board. Such experiments—dependent upon the recognition of qualities, rather than the measurement of quantities—may have been more common in the sixteenth century than our extant documents indicate. Indeed, the many speculations on motion which have been preserved from that period do not seem wholly divorced from observation. But even quantitative experiments were underway. Scientific investigations of the declination of the compass had begun by 1525 with the work of Felipe Gullen and was carried on by Pedro Nunez, Joao de Castro, and others. A century earlier, about 1450, Giovanni da Fontana performed careful experiments with rockets.

Professor Crombie makes a good case for the origin of experimental science as early as 1250, with Robert Grosseteste, at Oxford. One suspects that the rise of experimental science may have been engendered by an evolving technology which required deliberate experimenting for practical purposes and that, in the process, excesses of skill allowed leeway for curiosity. When we have an adequate history of technology we are likely to find a continuous history of experimentation with many instances of detached investigation.

If experiment did not begin with Galileo, neither did physical theory begin with him, even though one of our modern physicists, Robert Lindsay, in admitting that Galileo was not a notable experimentalist, writes "but he is the founder of Theoretical Physics, and that is fame enough for any man." (*American Journal of Physics*, X, 291). It is true that from Galileo on there has been continuous sequential development of theoretical physics, thanks in part to his witty pen, to the printing press, and to his two brilliant disciples; but to give him credit as the founder of Theoretical Physics is to overlook not only the contemporaneous claim of Kepler but the whole series of thinkers during the Renaissance who developed the idea of impetus extending back at least to Olbert of Saxony in the fourteenth century. The Mertonian Rule, which states that bodies with uniform acceleration increase their velocities by equal amounts in equal intervals of time, was used by William of Heytesbury and others at Oxford late in the fourteenth century; and the relation of acceleration to distance was worked out in detail by the Spanish Scholastic Dominico Soto about 1570. It would be surprising if these are the studies Galileo dismisses as "superficial observations" in his introduction to the "Third Day" of his *Two New Sciences*, but it would be even more surprising if a man of his learning and position were ignorant of these studies which concern the very key to the Galilean ideas of motion. The construct of motion as the interconnection of time with space was a recurring tool for physical thought as is evidenced by frequent references to the earth's motion and rotation before Copernicus, for example, the theories of Buridan and Nicolas Oresme. And when one looks back through Simplicius, Hipparchus, and Aristarchus, to Aristotle, it would seem that whatever the case we might make for the fairly modern onset of experimentation, we should have to admit a very ancient beginning for theoretical physics.

What did arise in the late Middle Ages and throughout the Renaissance was a concern for precision of measurement beyond the demands of practicality or profit. The thesis I wish to explore is that it was the development of the metrological process—the concept of measure

for its own sake—arising during the Renaissance, that engendered the cultural shift from a qualitative to a quantitative world view—to what Alfred North Whitehead has called “the characteristic scientific philosophy which closed the 17th century.” (*Science and the Modern World*, p. 80).

Measure concerns primarily time, mass, and length. The instrument for measuring time was the clock, invented late in the thirteenth century. This device was to give rise to a school of fine craftsmen which, to this day, provides artisans to build instruments of precision. It induced the full development of gears and the perfection of the screw. On quite another level, it provided a satisfactory analogue for a deistic conception of the universe which was to lend itself handily to the new astronomy, even Kepler making use of the comparison. But it was in making Time an independent entity, no longer the private tool of the astronomer, that the clock was to have its most important historical effect. The old variable hours, organic, related to man's needs and marked by the offices of worship, were now replaced by precise fractions of an inexorable cycle, portioned out by a mechanism not made in the image of man. The infinite divisibility of such a uniform continuum became easily imaginable. The idea of precision seized the popular imagination sufficiently enough that the terminology of minute and second became common in the fourteenth century. Thus, Geoffrey of Beaux reported the lunar eclipse of March 18, 1345, as 3h29m54s—a calculated result, of course, but one showing how precision had affected thought. In the next century Fontana postulated for the purpose of scientific experiment a clock with a dial rotating in a minute and another dial rotating once a second. The idea of a countably infinite divisibility was obviously present. Early clocks generally had a frenal which controlled the time of the escape mechanism, and this frenal beat at a rate of once every two seconds, thus fixing the least-count of the instrument. These clocks were large weight-driven devices, but in the latter part of the fifteenth century spring-wound clocks made available a portable timepiece. Although the clepsydra, a device for measuring the flow of water, remained the chief instrument for measuring short intervals of time, the perfection of the watch during the sixteenth century was bringing a better device to hand.

The idea of precision in the determination of mass has a very practical aspect; in fact, there are early records of city ordinances legislating honest weights. Alchemy, too, encouraged precise measurement of mass, but records show that in the sixteenth century the idea of precision in weighing had become independent of its utilitarian value.

Simon Steven proposed a decimal system for weights in his *De Thienda* of 1585, but before this time, about 1557, as Cyril Smith has pointed out (*Isis* XLVI, 354) an assayer in Wissenberg named Schreitmann described and apparently made a decimal set of weights. They were little helical wire bits, the smallest of which he called atoms. "These must be so small," said Schreitmann, "that no balance, however quick and true it may be, will detect one, two, three, or four of them but needs ten to produce a moderate deflection." Schreitmann's atoms turn out to be a little less than a milligram; apparently the best balance he was aware of had a sensitivity of a few milligrams, and recent experiments of balances of that time confirm this sensitivity. But by 1579 Ercher suggests that a good balance should respond to a "quintlein"—about a quarter of a milligram. This discrepancy by a factor of twenty does not seem to be an accidental variation, but, rather, evidence of a rapid increase in sensitivity of instruments during the intervening score of years. The imaginative use of precise weighing in the curious scientific investigation of matter became possible with the increase in practical measure of mass and the organization of these measurements in a decimal system—a development of the sixteenth century.

The increase in precision of measuring short lengths is less easy to document to a time prior to the seventeenth century. The need for high precision generally would await the advent of interchangeable parts, but there was one endeavor which quite early demanded replaceable parts: armaments. It was necessary to have moderately uniform bores to guns and a consistent diameter to shot if armies were to operate efficiently. The *calibre* of shot became the *caliper* of measure. Apparently the first mention in English of the word *caliper* is a treatise of 1588 on the *Art of Shooting*, in which we are told to "measure first with a pair of caliper compasses the whole thickness of the piece." A fine pair of compasses is included in Holbein's painting, "The Ambassadors," in 1533, but since the points are not turned inward or outward as they would be for calipers, this instrument is apparently intended for the drawing board. The compass is an old instrument of practical use in masonry and a precision instrument in geometry; it was adapted to the precise measurements of physical objects in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

The ability to read a measurement with high precision depends on the turning of a screw or the aligning of a vernier. The screw itself dates from about 400 B.C. But the invention of the lathe for making screws belongs to the early sixteenth century; there is a careful drawing by Leonardo da Vinci of a screw cutting lathe. The screw cut on such a lathe could be more finely threaded and more uniform than the hand-

manufactured screws preceding them so that their use as measuring devices would be possible—even probable. Gascoigne's Micrometer of 1637 which employed the screw to move a wire at the focal point of a telescope appears a rather complex device to have come into existence full blown. It seems likely that it was preceded by a more straightforward use of the screw as a measuring device. In any case, the precision screws which made the device possible began to be made by Leonardo's contemporaries.

As for the vernier, the astrolable or the quadrant would seem to be a fitting instrument for its introduction. In the Holbein painting showing the compass is also a table version of a double-quadrant, which one is tempted to interpret as having a vernier, for it evidences a 40-degree span coinciding with 45-degree markings. The ring does not appear to move, however; consequently the markings must be interpreted as a version of the shadow-square which had its trigonometric uses on the astrolable. Nonetheless, we need not leave Pierre Vernier's invention of 1631 without antecedents. In 1542 Pedro Nunez described his attempt to divide degrees into 90 parts by scribing successive quarter circles and marking them so that 90 divisions of the first circle correspond to 89 divisions of the second, 88 divisions of the third, etc. After attempting to make use of this scheme in 1587, Tycho Brahe discarded it as not worth the trouble. But it continued to be used experimentally, and in the hands of Clavius and Curtius about the end of the sixteenth century, it reached a perfection which led naturally to the movable device of Vernier.

The measurement of length on any large scale becomes the measurement of angle. The sixteenth century was the great age of surveying and of cartography. An illustration of a surveying instrument known as the polymetrium apparently by Waldseemuller, the cartographer who named America, appeared in a 1512 edition of the *Margarita Philosophica*. Many more surveying instruments came into use in the same century, including the theodolite of Leonard Digges in England in 1571. Since the precise location of various landmarks became a matter of great interest during the period, the enthusiasm for cartography spread from Saint Die, where Waldseemuller was located, over the Continent rather generally, to find a great center in the Netherlands. If I may return for a moment to the Holbein picture, there is here a very excellent example of the torquetum, which appears to be adapted for surveying. In fact, I should hazard a guess that the two ambassadors of the picture, the bishop and the nobleman, were cartographers—the drawing compass, the square, the globe, the charts, the multi-facet sundial, as well as the

torquetum and quadrant, indicating such a connection. But my concern at the moment is one of measurement, and I should say that the interest in precise cartography during the sixteenth century exceeded the requirements of immediate use.

There is one final point I wish to make about precision. It is that precision in the making of measurement and precision in the recognition of qualities have quite different effects on the sensibility of man. The concern for appearances remains, in essence, a concern with qualities, so that the precision of a Holbein, a Michelangelo, a Galileo, is a natural outgrowth of Scholastic and nominalistic philosophy—a flowering of the Middle Ages in the Renaissance. Galileo's concern was unmistakably with the quality of things; he reported to us not the data of his experiments, but his conclusions; he designed a telescope which would see the features of the moon right side up but could not be used for measuring as could, for example, the telescope with the inverted image built according to Kepler's design. The perfection of the circle outweighed for Galileo Kepler's measurement of elliptic orbits. Galileo, for all his talk of measure and all his urging of new inventions, was a scholastic philosopher standing in the Age of Science. For the Age of Science had already begun—and if we must find a representative figure for it, that figure is Tycho Brahe. With him metrological precision did not stem from new inventions but from a desire for precision itself. He had large instruments made—6 feet in radius—15 feet in radius—however large he needed to gain the precision he desired. He accomplished a hundred-fold gain in precision. It was not his theories which were important—not his speculation, but what he did—the numbers he took down. Tycho Brahe, stubborn, egotistical, wrongheaded, perhaps not very bright, and not at all a hero, carefully measured and carefully reported his measurements. And here was the new precision—the factual, non-sensible abstraction of measure. The idea of gaining facts by measurement had taken form; for better or worse, it was the paradoxical gift of the great humanistic period—the Renaissance.

REV. MOSES NAGY, S.O.Cist.

The Dark Theatre of Modern France

A Review of Jacques Guicharnaud, *Modern French Theatre: Giraudoux to Beckett*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

When the playwright comes to the final period of his drama's last cue, his personal work is done. And yet nothing is final in his drama, nor will the future say anything final about it. A drama — one that counts — follows its own ways, never ceasing to express itself to men of different centuries. All dramatic work is in constant flux because it is linked to beings of flesh who breathe and who are subject to change. Drama calls for spectators: it envisages the captive spectator of all ages. Thus it is the dramatist, the actor, and the drama itself that speak in Claudel's *L'Echange*:

. . . I see those hundreds of white faces.

.

They listen to me and they think what I say;
they look at me and I enter their soul
as into an empty house.

After two hundred years of decadence in the French theatre and a long search for a new form, with Antoine's *Theatre Libre* (founded in 1887) and Paul Fort's *Theatre d'Art* (founded in 1891), the French drama freed itself from the self-sufficient and complacent concepts of the bourgeois drama; and by the late twenties of our century some great dramas were waiting for the understanding and appreciation of a cultivated audience. What is this drama like? What is the value and grandeur of the past thirty-five years of French theatre? Who are its outstanding representatives? These are some of the questions that Jacques Guicharnaud analyzes in his book.

His solution is, of course, just one of the many possible answers. In a literary world which is still in search of its own voice and object, a critic must be somewhat groping: a hasty word uttered today can be

overthrown by a masterpiece of tomorrow. In spite of these limitations, the book of J. Guicharnaud is an excellent aid for those who wish an acquaintance with some of the dramas which have been dominating the stages of Paris for the past few decades.

To follow these dramatists in their creative efforts Guicharnaud is not seeking the "sources" or influences they have undergone; instead he presents their "portraits." Reading the chapters one after the other, one comes to the conclusion that these playwrights together give "an image" of man—though in only one of his aspects. Is this going to satisfy us? Is it through this same process that Greek dramatists presented the universal image of man? According to Aristotle, a work of art is imitation. But what does it imitate? In the theatre, though "Comedy aims at representing men as worse, Tragedy as better than in actual life," man, as the subject of imitation, is given as a self-evident principle. The main problem today is that we no longer know what or who man is. Is there a complete reality for the twentieth century man without any mythology? If the modern playwright eliminates the "mythos," he necessarily limits the horizon of his created world. One can hardly realize the idea of "total theatre" without recurring to mythology or "merveilleux." For the Greek playwright mythology was a reality.

One must acknowledge that the theatre of Jean Giraudoux is — to a limited extent — a "total theatre." He "affirms the general at the beginning and demands . . . that [the spectator] provide some living correlative." But one is puzzled in seeing that, as M. Guicharnaud puts it, "instead of just remaining the respectful transcriber or explorer of the Creature, Giraudoux tried to repeat the process of Creation, the passage from the plan to the act, and became the rival of the Architect." In this respect Giraudoux appears to be the "thinking reed" of Pascal. Though superior to the universe, a man of this sort is constantly in danger of being crushed by the universe. Consequently, the tragic sense of life lies in man's capability of "thinking" his oppression.

Jean Cocteau is the restless, ever-evading, ever-persecuted spirit of our century. He sees, not with the traditional tragic vision, but with a "particular conception of destiny very near to fatalism." Facing this world of fatalism the best Cocteau's man can do is to live "as if" he were stronger than his fate. He exists between a past world which constructed brilliant solutions to life and a world which is to bring a new order. But will the new order come? Cocteau does not know. He seems to prefer to hold an exalting—though blind—illusion. As P. Brisson

has said of Cocteau, "... ultimately it is himself . . . who became his most outstanding and the best performed creation."

To understand Claudel's dramas one must accept the fact that they are not sufficient "unto themselves." The whole universe, the natural order of beings as well as the supernatural world, enters the drama of Claudel. When he reaches the heights of his art in *Le Soulier de Satin*, "the stage of this drama is the world." Contrary to what Guicharnaud says, I should emphasize that Claudel's drama unites believers and art-lovers into one group of spectators. He provides in an unquestionable way that sacrifice, sorrow, joy, charity are the basic elements of the great drama which is being unfolded before our eyes and in which we all are involved ("We carry within ourselves the key to the soul of such and such of our brothers.") The "human condition" is magnificent and tragic in that it presents the paradox of the individual man who is "implacably himself and at the same time always something other than what he is." This real but fabricated universe is poetic in retaining the greatest respect to God, who is the main personage of the drama. Exuberant joy and hope are never absent from Claudel's dramas, although some of them were once called "pessimistic." The constant presence of God in the dramatic history of humanity is continually manifested in his plays.

While Claudel makes Catholicism a part of his drama, Henry de Montherlant writes about Catholicism in the same way as he writes about politics, war, or love. His plays are obscure and ambiguous. He throws "a veil" on his subjects in order to "imitate life." The beautiful language, the classical form, the daring thought of Montherlant cannot hide—they rather sustain—self-love, a vigorously accepted and self-justified solitude.

A very different tone is given to the theatre by Anouilh and Salacrou. Their plays are situated in the present, even when the myth becomes a part of the present through anachronism. But whereas Salacrou is a naturalist, Anouilh is a lucid intellectual who evinces an ethics and a poetry. They agree, however, in the principle that "the mission of the theatre—the art of illusion par excellence—is to denounce illusion." Salacrou explains and solves problems. Anouilh finds his own role to play in the world's drama: Man can be defeated in the face of life, he would say, but playing his "total role" no one can have "any real hold" of him.

As for the existentialist drama, it is perhaps the best known theatre that France has produced during the last two decades. Sartre and Camus, philosophers before being playwrights, present heroes that are

less personages of drama than arguments and proofs. The first dramatic tension lies in the assumption that the world in which man lives is absurd, and that he still needs justification. The second dramatic tension is contained in the question, what is man to do now? Should he fall back into blindness or "bad faith" which means reason, essence, order, or should he give the world "a meaning that comes from himself alone?" Where is he going to find his criteria? It is rather deplorable that Guicharnaud does not mention G. Marcel, who, after all, is the first to discover for the theatre "the broken world."

The history of Modern French Theatre would not be complete without Ionesco and Beckett. They are concerned with the same tragic aspect of the modern world, but they differ in their approach to it. Ionesco points out that in the world in which we live, facts, events, beings, and things exist in abundance. How can one justify the fact of being although there is a "superabundance" of being? For the existentialist, life is as absurd and ridiculous as that which the theatre unfolds on the stage. Since there is no reasonable justification for being, this theatre does not allow the spectator to take himself seriously. Beckett's drama stresses the insignificance of the universe. There is, however, tension between this insignificance of life and man's effort to find a meaning "despite everything." In short, the relativism of the modern view of man seems to have reduced the possibility of drama altogether, at least in its conventional form.

When Guicharnaud says

We are perhaps now ready for the great Tragedy Camus dreamed of. One can hope that today's "dark" theatre, having furnished perfect metaphors of the metaphysical abyss and modern tragic terror, will go on to complete the tragedy by adding the necessary dimension, not of happiness and facile solutions, but of that higher exaltation Yeats called "tragic joy."

it is difficult, after the preceding portraits and analyses, not to feel that the conclusion should be restated as follows.

The contemporary French Theatre, with the exception of a few dramatists, presents the dissolution of man in the twentieth century. Dramatic conception, which is founded on a view of man, is floundering under the limitations of a negativistic philosophy. This new anti-humanist attitude threatens to put an end to all dramatic efforts.

MARY HUG

Elegy on the Liberal Arts

A Review of Robert I. Gannon, S.J., *The Poor Old Liberal Arts*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1961.

In *The Poor Old Liberal Arts*, Robert I. Gannon, S. J. sounds the death knell for the liberal arts education. He feels that "it is more true than ever that science is now the main instrument of our national education; that by its predominance it is still dehumanizing our schools; that it is more than ever crowding out our liberal arts, and that all the great plans for reforming the curriculum and strengthening humanism which roused such hopes in the forties have been powerless to counteract its influence."

He maintains that people in our modern world fail to realize the good of a liberal arts education in an age over-shadowed by the ghost of Hiroshima and the threat of nuclear war. "If an age is materialistic and pragmatic," he points out, people believe that "the only fit preparation for it is one that is materialistic and pragmatic." This philosophy is based on the fallacy that, as he states it, "education should be content to mirror contemporary society and not try to lead it anywhere."

Father Gannon uses the form of personal memoir to develop his theme. The book covers fifty years of his life, spent as student, teacher, dean, and college president.

Beginning with his student days as a Georgetown freshman in 1909, Father Gannon charts the decline of the liberal arts education. Underlying the Jesuit idea of the liberal arts college were two presuppositions which, at that time, seemed obvious enough, but which are today vigorously challenged. "First, it was always believed in their schools that all men have the same principal purpose in life and that that purpose is discoverable. Second, it was always believed that all men have faculties which are capable of being trained, group them and

name them as you like as long as they cover broadly the intellect and the will." The Jesuits realized that before specialization should come general culture. This general culture should not be judged according to its immediate utility and its primary task should be the refining of taste, the sharpening of intellect, the strengthening of will, and the ennobling of character.

As a Georgetown student of fifty years ago, Father Gannon was offered elementary theology, universal history, mathematics, a year of poetry and a year of rhetoric (both studied in Latin, Greek, and English), two years of scholastic philosophy, inorganic chemistry, mechanics, physics, and a bit of geology and astronomy.

This was the Catholic idea of education; but, in the world at large, the Protestant concept was changing radically. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, naturalism was already far advanced. President Charles Eliot of Harvard, for instance, taught that "the religion of the future was the service of mankind, a service based on actual experience and analyzed by the scientific attitude of the mind."

Science gradually became the main instrument of education in the United States. It began to dehumanize the American schools. Since nature was the only reality, the study of nature—the physical sciences—became the principal source of knowledge. This marked the beginning of the present-day feud between the Christian idea of a liberal arts education and the secular idea of thoroughly specialized education.

After so erudite a foundation, Father Gannon pursued his graduate studies at Cambridge and, returning to the United States, was made president of the newly re-established St. Peter's College in New Jersey. Because of the smallness of the college and his powers as president, Father Gannon was able to put his ideas of a liberal arts education to practical use. After six years of promoting this college, he was ordered to a new post as president of Fordham University.

The problems now became much more complex. Fordham, as the largest Catholic university in America, began following the lead of other American universities toward specialization. Father Gannon characterizes the gradual decline in the following way: "The easiest way to destroy our freedom completely was to cut off one by one the roots that nourished it. This many American educators were doing systematically like their European mentors and the steps, though pretty obvious, were very interesting. First, you cut off the idea that man is made for God. Cripple his aspirations. Cut him down to earth. Next, you cut off the idea of the natural law and make morality merely the

common denominator of what people usually do. Then cut off the idea of inalienable rights. Make all rights depend on other men, that is, on the omnipotent and omniscient State. Make man himself a small anthropoid, a small and unimportant chunk of society, better still a machine, a bundle of reflexes. It is less likely then that he will develop a sense of responsibility."

Father Gannon sees no relief in sight for the struggling liberal arts. He feels that the world war which began half a century ago has led to a progressive emphasis on the physical and mechanical aspects of nature. Students come to college conditioned by the post-war atmosphere they breathe. For the majority, this atmosphere creates a close association between a degree and a future salary.

The author poses the question, "What can we expect fifty years from now?" "If" the human race is still in existence, he suggests, and "if" our country is still free, Christian humanists will still be struggling against powerful odds.

Although Father Gannon has a particularly spirited style, the book leaves the reader depressed. He holds little hope for the eventual emergence of the liberal arts. Ultimately, he fears, college will become solely a place to go in order to earn a better salary after graduation; knowledge will be strictly secondary.

Father Gannon's alarm is justified, for the liberal arts education as he conceives of it is dead. But does the picture need to be painted in such dark colors? One would think that hope might still be found in the small, privately endowed colleges, which can require at least a two-year study of the humanities and can graduate students who, though not *liberally* educated according to Father Gannon's idea, will nonetheless sow the seeds for the "growing green again of letters."

MARIANNE GORMAN

They All Remember

A Review of Sean O'Faolain, *I Remember! I Remember!*, Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1961.

Sean O'Faolain once said, "In Italy I learned that the facts are the way you look at them." This phase of his education evidently made a very great impression on him, for in his latest volume of short stories, some of which were previously published in magazines, he creates the stories chiefly on the basis of the way characters look at the facts. They are revealing stories which deal with many facets of human nature. The workings of the human memory and its effects on people is the predominant theme in seven of the eleven stories in the collection. In one, a self-made successful businessman is seriously rattled because he is unable to control his memories at will. In another, a young matron is disturbed because her invalid sister constantly recalls to her incidents she would rather forget. The other reveries have more pleasant effects. One boy is reminded of the charming and typically Irish household of his childhood. An adolescent boy relates what he learned of life and love from two older girls. In two stories, chance meetings, one of old sweethearts, the other of long-lost relatives, create an air of nostalgia. One lengthy story deals with a man's lifelong pursuit of a single woman.

All the stories have a distinctly Irish flavor, although they portray characters and situations of universal appeal. The people are honest, basically good, and value their Celtic tradition. The architect in one of the stories, disturbed by the passing of this tradition, appeals to his fellow architects, "Must this too, this latest place to be threatened by what we grandiosely call Urban Development, also be utterly destroyed? Must we lose entirely the inheritance of our Irish past?"

None of the stories are adventurous or suspenseful, but they have the mild attention-holding quality of well-constructed fiction in which

character, mood, and place are excellently handled. Mr. O'Faolain has a facility for making characters of diverse classes—a lonely sailor, a work-worn waitress, an adolescent boy, a wealthy country gentleman—come to life in a believable drama. The characterization is especially delightful in the one humorous story of a bookie who suddenly has doctor's orders to stay in bed for a couple of months. Mr. O'Faolain should use his soaring gift for humor to enrich more of his works.

Some of the stories will leave the reader satisfied with their obvious completeness, while others will leave him pondering. However, they are pleasant reading and not intellectually over-taxing.

