

era

fifty cents

a Pennsylvania magazine of commentary and literature

Spring '67



era

VOL. IV

No. 1

Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at
New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

—*W. H. Auden*

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AN EDITOR'S VIEW:

Ultimately, no writing of strictly personal significance has endured. The social implications of a piece of graphic art, no matter how esoteric or self-considering in appearance, have ever determined its ability to survive. With paradoxical perversity, however, the most significant literature today has involved itself in the labyrinthine coils of the human psyche, exploring the refined shades of personal importance, the subtle tensions of internal contradictions or the terminal ramifications of the acceptance of spiritual inconsequence and inconclusiveness.

How will it survive? Necessarily, such a question can only be answered against the contextual frame of this literature's society. As the increasing sophistication of our technology reduces the personal dependence of people on each other, it creates that emotional vacuum of the mind made independent which simultaneously frees the mind to seek its value system within itself.

Thus, the very complexity which attends man encapsulates him in psychological solitude. In such a situation, social implication is fixed at a microscopic level. Language, the mediating activity of literature, endures, but as a medium for expression rather than as a mode of communication. Literature, synthesized from this language, assumes this same posture, and, thus, survives, with each book, in the words of Silone, "like every other book, a part of the book that is the author's life."

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Stephen E. Hirschberg

AN ABSOLUTIST, THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF ETHICS

■ The undergraduate philosophy student's dream is to reveal to the world (or to anyone who will listen) his really sound moral-ethical theory. Such a theory has principles so simple that the student is astounded that this truth has not been universally accepted earlier. What follows is the *true* really sound moral-ethical theory.

The Absolute Morality

Stephen Toulmin¹ states that "the function of ethics is to reconcile the independent aims and wills of a community of people."² When circumstances arise in which there is a possibility of changing the moral code, there are two extreme alternatives: either the power structure can lock the moral code and institutions into the positions they hold; or criticism and modification of the system should be encouraged. The first alternative cannot be justified because of the immorality of denying people the right to criticize established institutions.

Now, inherent in the second alternative is the fact that the moral code held by people is imperfect; that all the independent aims of the people have not been reconciled. Then, it must be possible to conceive of a best possible world, in which there would be as few of such disputes as possible between men. Such a possibility is implicit in the view³ of Toulmin's theory which compares morality to a game. In any game, there is a best possible

1. Stephen Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1950.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

3. By Robert Shope.

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strategy—the master plan by which one side can never lose if it always makes the right moves. So there must be a best possible moral code. I say best *possible* code, because a world absolutely free of conflicting aims would not necessarily be the best possible world—it would be, I think, a rather dead world. Further, a person in such a world could think he has discovered a way to make the world even better, and, feeling his moral conviction, attempt to show people content with the moral system their fault. In doing so, he would be urging the partial downfall of the pure moral code, and would obviously be doing a moral wrong. Because of the existence of this paradoxical situation, it seems there cannot be an absolutely perfect world.

In any case, we can postulate the existence of an absolute morality—that code which, if everyone restricted his actions to obeying, would result in the best possible world. I agree that the existence of a best possible world and of an absolute morality may be physically possible only in the mind of man. However, it will certainly do no harm if their existence is postulated. I must say, nevertheless, that we cannot know for certain whether we have discovered the absolute morality. It is evident, through the past actions of men, that people have continually tried to change the existing moral code to one which more nearly approximates their concept of an absolute morality. It is impossible, for example, for the moralist to believe that the acceptance of the concept “Thou shalt not kill” is nothing more than the selfish attempt to save one’s own skin by eliminating the threat of being killed; acceptance of the commandment is made on a moral-ethical plane.

Let us define “God” to mean that force which appears to have driven people, and continues to drive people to try to make existing moral codes approximate more closely the absolute moral code. Richard Brandt⁴ states the theological rule of justification: “An attitude is justified if there is good reason to believe God approves of it.”⁵ Admittedly, there is limitation on the amount we can learn from the direct revelations of God. But if “God” is defined as it is here, then the “will of God” can be defined as the will of those people who advocate changes in the current moral code which, in reality, although they cannot know for sure, are changes which are in the direction of the absolute morality.

Making Ethical Choices

Brandt says that one test for the validity of a particular ethical statement is that one must be prepared to specify a supporting general statement on which one is willing to rest the validity of the particular statement.⁶

4. Richard Brandt, *Ethical Theory*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1959.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

He admits that sometimes one cannot do so, even though he is convinced of the validity of his statement. The same sort of example is given by Toulmin, when he states that asking of any behavior prescribed in the moral code, "Is *it* really right?" is going outside the moral code.⁷ Propositions such as these lead me to believe that we possess something in our basic nature which directs us to feeling that certain statements are valid, and that certain actions *are* really right. It may be that such basic attitudes are society-induced. In that case we should redefine our terms: "the best possible world" becomes "the best possible society"; the concept of "absolute morality" can be dropped in lieu of "best moral code for the society." However, where societies overlap, conflicts arise.

Toulmin states this problem with the example of whether it is really right to have one wife like the Christian, or better to allow polygyny as the Moslem system permits.⁸ He notes that the problem cannot be resolved except on an individual level. Let us examine the problem further. In the "greater scheme of things," if such a thing exists, would the complete dominance of one system and eradication of the other be the best thing? Clearly, the possibility exists that if polygyny were to be destroyed as an institution, a better world, one nearer the best possible world, might result. In the absolutist point of view, the Christian attitude *is really right*. Of course, one would have to know what would happen if one were to destroy one system or the other to discover whether either existing alone, or perhaps both existing together, is indeed the best possible system.

Similar problems on an individual level have been recognized. What is the person to do when confronted by a situation in which mutually exclusive moral alternatives present themselves? Brandt tells us that we should alter the moral code so that rules with the word "always" should be changed to read, "There is always a strong obligation to do . . ." He wishes to leave priorities up to the judgment of the individual.⁹ No human being can possibly foresee all the ramifications of his choice, but, if he is being moral, he is trying to select the alternative which will result in the least number of conflicts in the future; that is, he makes the choice on the basis of which he thinks conforms to the absolute moral code (which may exist only in his mind).

What Is Real?

Toulmin notes some of the differences between appearances and reality,¹⁰ implying that we may make a moral judgment on the basis of that amount of knowledge we possess. If, however, we acquire new pieces

7. Toulmin, p. 149.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

9. Brandt, p. 18.

10. Toulmin, pp. 125-129.

of data, our entire attitude might have to be altered, and we could say, "The judgment made before was made on the basis of insufficient information." Brandt tells us that attitudes are to be discounted if they are not informed¹¹ and our old attitude was, indeed, wrong. So the old opinion was made only on the basis of appearances, and, in reality, our new judgment is "the right one." When such a statement is made we are acknowledging two levels of moral attitudes: a set of attitudes formed on the basis of what one sincerely considers accurate information; and a second set of attitudes which are sincerely formed on the basis of that which is, *in reality*, accurate information.

It is my belief that no human being can possibly distinguish one of these sets of his from the other. What is implied here is the existence of some absolute truth, indistinguishable from false conceptions believed, before the presentation of more complete data, to be the truth. This concept is parallel to the concept of the absolute morality. People are unable to distinguish those moral attitudes which they sincerely have formed but which would not result in the best possible world, from those moral attitudes—part of the absolute morality—which would result in the best possible world. The absolute morality cannot be distilled from the mixture of moral attitudes. But as additional data are made available, one must be willing to change one's moral theory to better fit reality, just as the scientist is willing to amend his theories to fit new experimental observations.

More Decisions

In the light of the absolute morality, must all men give identical answers to the same moral proposition? It can be said that whatever action a man takes will have some consequence, which can either matter or not in the society of the future. If it does matter, it may either help maximize the welfare of the society or not. In the former possibility, the original action would be in conformity with the absolute moral code. It is intuitive that the same decision, if taken by a different person in different circumstances, might have resulted in reduction of the welfare of society. Thus, of two persons taking the same alternative when faced by the same moral dilemma, one might be morally right in the absolute sense, and the other wrong. The other possibilities here are obvious.

Thus, when making a moral decision, one must consider not only the general principles that he already knows, but also the answer to the question, "Who am I, and what would be the ramifications of the decision taken by *me* (as opposed to being taken by someone in another position)?" Answers to this may include the example one is setting for other people, and so forth. This makes the entire process of making ethical decisions more

11. Brandt, p. 250.

complex, and makes the principles used to aid in deciding questions less general than one would like (with more of them on the order of "Any man who is president of a large urban university should do X."). Still, general principles are "general," and in most cases they will hold regardless of the position of the decider.

Brandt holds that in decision making, attitudes are to be discounted if they are not compatible with having a consistent set of general principles not excessively complex.¹² It may be argued that what is requested in the preceding paragraph is that the wording, "Any man in circumstances $c_1, c_2, c_3, \dots, c_n$, (which happen to be mine) should do X," instead of the less complex, "Any man should do X." However, it is this adjustment which I think is being asked for when Brandt says we decide particular problems, in part, by appeal to our preferences, feelings of obligations, and so forth¹³; the decision made is "whether 'Any man should do X' should apply to me, who am in circumstances $c_1, c_2, c_3, \dots, c_n$, or is 'Any man should do (other action) Y' more applicable here." The circumstances listed include items such as preferences and feelings of obligations.

Eschatological Problems

Why should one make his actions conform to what he envisions to be the absolute moral code? Throughout this paper several references have been made to the benefits which would result in the distant future if people attempted to approximate the absolute morality. Naturally, this is not the only reason for doing so. The general welfare of the world society of the present would also be increased, and a person's individual existence would become more comfortable.

But this cannot be all. It appears that man desires to leave some monument of himself in this world. This may be an effort on the part of man to remove some of the fear of death; there is a belief that there always will be a human race. Such a belief may be of instinctive nature, or possibly it is closely tied to the society which men compose. It is inconceivable, for many people, that our human society will some day be gone. So individual man created the idea that by his moral actions he can erect his small monument in the future—the monument which is his little contribution to the perfection of society.

However, we are told by scientific theory that in several billion years the universe as we know it is doomed, that eventually the universe will be converted to a uniform state of energy where there certainly could not exist any physical beings. What is the purpose of trying to create the best possible human society when it will all come to an end anyway? This question is

12. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

part of the larger one of what purpose does humanity serve at all. It is one of the unanswerables. Perhaps there is some level of existence, beyond man's comprehension, in which the existence of humanity is somehow "good," and the existence of a human society conforming to an absolute morality is "better" than that of one not conforming to an absolute morality. Or, more pessimistically, perhaps the human race is merely part of a long sequence of chance occurrences which eventually will conclude with the heat death of the universe (if that particular theory is true).

If this last possibility is the actual one, then the concept of an attempt to benefit future society through one's conformity to one's idea of the ideal morality is ill-founded, for the question is, "What good is it all?" The reason for creating the idea of the ideal absolute morality, and trying to approach it in one's acts, is personal gratification. As long as we are stuck on this planet, it is best that we derive some joy in making existence a little bit easier, even though such pleasure may have as its foundation the fictitious concept of a purpose—of the creation of a future best possible world resulting from adhering to an approximately absolute moral code which we helped to bring about.

The final question, then, is "Why have the concept 'absolute morality' in the first place?" Is it not merely an additional structure added on top, a level which is of no use to us? We might first reply that, should there be another level of existence beyond man's comprehension, in which the existence of a best possible world would be "good," then the existence of such a moral code would help produce that "good"; that is, for some higher order of existence, an absolute moral code could exist *in reality*, in which case knowledge of the existence of the absolute morality would be a "scientific" fact. Second, the conception of an absolute morality (which may be more important than its very existence) which is possibly held by many people as a rationalization for morality, does exist, and helps to imply the existence of absolute morality itself, although in no sense does it prove that. Third, I believe the idea of an "absolute moral code" is a helpful one in understanding other philosophical concepts: the idea is comparable to the concept of absolute truth, for example. One cannot prove a given datum for certain to be an absolute truth unless it is so by definition. Likewise, it is impossible to prove conclusively the existence of absolute morality. Absolute morality is very much like the theoretical ether which carries electro-magnetic radiation. It is useful for explaining some phenomena, but one cannot set up any experiment to prove conclusively its existence or nonexistence. The idea of absolute morality certainly does no harm, does serve elucidative purposes, and may even be absolutely true.

CAROLINE

Can it be she plays the cello
(wood, horse on cat, and all that),
draws its secrets out, and knows them?
Fearful tempting. Does she hear, too,
how her mystery intrigues me

(hank of hair, feet and hands,
skin and flesh, fat and bone,
entrails, blood, and a smile)?

Music speaks and draws to stillness,
sounds in marrow still its knowledge,
till it draws us on to know more.

Cellos play upon their players.

Knowledge makes the secrets deeper
(breast to breast, hand to hand,
mind to mind, still, the smile
draws me on to its depths).

—Wesley D. Smith

AN ANDACHTSBILD FOR JEAN LIBERTE

April is gray. Its long Gothic pinnacles
of rain sink deep into your grave. The dark
cathedral windows drip with beads. Your spark
of vision will no more engender miracles
of brush and paint. The warm tint chills, the stiff
impasto flakes. As on Leonardo's wall,
the rain consumes our images. Someday all
the Renaissance will reclaim its gifts.

Accept this Medieval counterpart of grief,
this twisted face, these hands that bleed their love,
my Andachtsbild, a lamentation brief
as poems permit and rude as all I have
to offer as my art. Your death remains.

These words are slow and heavy: speech restrains.

—Conni Billé Finnerty

THE MORAL ASPECT OF HAMLET

■ The question has been raised whether *Hamlet* is not, after all, a Christian tragedy, and therefore significantly different in moral outlook from the classical Greek tragedies. It seems to me that there are significant differences, indeed, between a play like *Hamlet* and one like *Oedipus Rex*. It does not follow that *Hamlet* is an expression of the highest moral concepts of Western civilization; it has had many influences, some good, some bad. I shall try to make clear this mixture of tendencies in the course of this paper.

In the first act, Hamlet is instructed by his father's ghost to "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (I, v, 25)¹, and to "Let not the royal bed of Denmark be / A couch for luxury and damned incest." (82-83.) Two themes are mentioned. First, as his father's son, he is entreated not to let his father's cruel death go unavenged; secondly, in bringing retribution, he must wipe out the abomination of incest which now soils the royal bed. Neither of these themes is specifically Biblical or classical. We find the first in the law of the avenger of blood, and also in the story of Orestes; we find the second in the extermination of Ahab's house by Jehu, and also in the Oedipus story. It may be argued that the moral lesson here is superior to that of *Oedipus Rex*; if we want a moral lesson of similar proportions, we may go to *Phaedra*. "But the Greek tradition denies free will." True, and *Hamlet* is superior in that respect. But in the delineation of what must be wiped out as morally wrong, *Hamlet* and *Phaedra* have approximately the same level of moral sophistication. This does not make *Hamlet* pagan or *Phaedra* Christian; rather, it indicates at least partial agreement between the pagan and Christian doctrines. Even the concept of the human responsibility to fulfill the cosmic justice we find, as in *Oedipus Rex*.

1. All citations are from the Pelican edition edited by Willard Farnham.

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As to which is dominant, it is difficult to say. Hamlet calls himself "Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell" (II, ii, 570). While this is characteristically Christian from a cosmological standpoint, I can imagine him saying, "Prompted to my revenge by the gods of Olympus," with almost equivalent moral connotation. One of the lines quoted above may indicate a definite pagan influence; why should incest be more condonable for a commoner than for a royal personage if a strictly moral standard is the criterion? It seems that the words, "Let not the royal bed of Denmark . . ." indicate a special kind of purity which has been violated, one which stems from the sanctity of the State and of the higher class of persons called "royalty." We are reminded that Laertes has already warned Ophelia not to place too much trust in her romance with Hamlet, for "He may not, as unvalued persons do, /Carve for himself" his decisions regarding marriage. (I, iii, 19-20.)

Laertes, of course, is an extreme embodiment of certain of the pagan traditions of the West, just as his father is the personification of certain self-serving trends in the ancient humanistic philosophies. None else at court would go so far as to suggest that the romance of Hamlet and Ophelia might be passed over solely for reasons of state (note the treatment of this theme in *La Reine Morte* by Montherlant, a profoundly pagan play). But Laertes is remarkable also in his speech towards the end of the play:

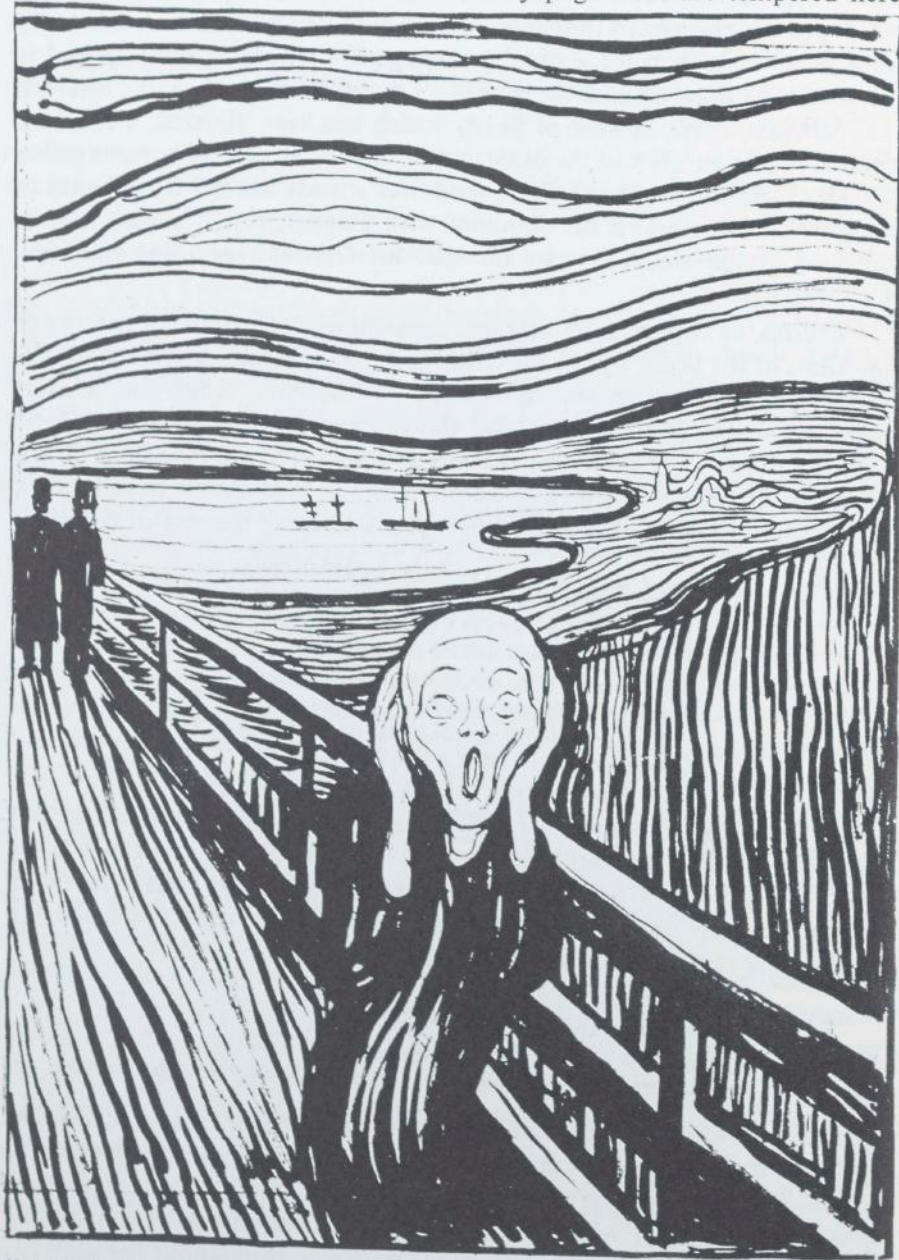
I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge. But in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungored. But till that time
I do receive your offered love like love
And will not wrong it. (V, ii, 233-241.)

In other words, "I accept your apology and would like very much to put aside this quarrel. But the book says to fight for blood, and I'm a book man." We know Laertes had his reasons for the fight. But what were Hamlet's reasons for acceding? Had he heard of Laertes's reputation for handling the rapier; according to the King,

this report
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er to play with you. (IV, vii, 101-104.)

But the tradition that the game is the mark of the man draws its descent clearly from pagan Greece, and has no place in the traditions of Christianity as such. The same may be said of the idealization of the "[courtier, soldier, scholar]" (III, i, 151), which is Ophelia's characterization of Hamlet, and which seems apt on consideration of his portrayal throughout the play.

It would not be unfair, I think, to say that in this play, as in much of Western civilization, we see Christian ritual, doctrine, and ethics imposed on a basically pagan way of life. The outlook partakes of both sources, the resultant standards of life are basically pagan but are tempered here



"The Shriek," by Edward Munch, 1895. Lithograph. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art.

and there by the Gospel teachings. The two sources are fundamentally antithetical and irreconcilable. It might be concluded, therefore, that it would have been better if Christianity had never been imposed, if Western man had been allowed to develop organically without the split arising from embracing two contradictory philosophies. I would disagree, for I believe that the good which is due to the influence of Christianity on Western man outweighs and tends to justify the confusion resulting from a conflict in ultimate values.

Such Christian influence can best be seen in this play by emphasizing the dynamic character of Shakesperean drama as opposed to classical drama. Because of the baser impulses in man, represented on the civilizational level by the substantial leftovers from pagan traditions, the most effective dramatization of Christian ethical teaching is perhaps the portrayal of the struggle in man between his higher and lower natures. There is repeated failure and occasionally limited success. We learn more from a man's constant efforts at self-improvement than from the perfect ways of a saint, for we could not imitate the latter if we tried, and we would not even know best how to try if it were not for the example of the former.

At the beginning of the play, Hamlet has just had what Camus would probably term an "Experience of the Absurd": he has lost his father, he has experienced shocking disillusion regarding his mother, and the agency through which all this was achieved is none but simple human malevolence, or in classical Christian terms, the abomination of evil. Unlike Laertes he is sensitive by nature, and turns inward rather than outward, contemplating death as an end to his suffering. The vision of his father's ghost introduces for him a companion in the new world he finds himself in, and on the basis of the personal confrontation he is able to see his predicament as meaningful; the meaning lies in the imperative (1) to avenge the murder, for his father's sake; (2) to revolt against the oppressive abomination of evil, for God's sake. To the first role he is geared quite well, for he is both courtier and soldier. To the second role he is not geared, and in the resultant tension and struggle lies the significance of the play from a Christian standpoint.

His first action after accepting the call is to draw a sharp line between his friends and the world at large. The first he swears to secrecy, the second he throws off. His friends are individual exceptions, while all others belong to the world at large; his subjective rationale is that those who acquiesce in the new order of things are tacitly approving of what took place to establish it, and therefore are tainted by that guilt; not only might they betray him now, they have in fact already betrayed him and sided with the abomination. His feigning madness, while it is a tactical device, is also symbolic of his spiritual alienation from the people around him. Even before the vision he expresses himself in terms which are notably different from those of the others, being purposely cryptic while making sense to himself, as if

to insulate himself from them while conceding the ritual minimum of social intercourse; his feigned madness is a logical extension of this to its extreme. Self-separation as a concomitant to dedication has had good exemplars in Christian tradition.

By the time that the play-within-a-play is approaching, the first freshness of the vision has worn off, and he contemplates death again in the "to be or not to be" soliloquy. His newly-found morbid obsession with its concomitant separation and solitude has brought on fierce depression, which speaks clearly through his dialogue with Ophelia. He is somewhat cheered by the opportunity to let loose his inhibitions in constructive activity by instructing the actors before the play; then he meets Horatio, with whom he can share everything, and he is soon himself again. When the court comes for the play he must put up his defenses again, but he is visibly refreshed.

After the play has worked its effect, he is seized with a tremendous energy and desire to finish the task, as is evident from his speech at the end of the scene. Then Claudius "prays." Hamlet balks, and rightly so. "Revenge" was his father's command. Even from the other side of the coin, Hamlet's central insight which drove him to embark on the entire project was the apprehension of evil in this man, and is he going to send him to heaven on that account? If God has planned the situation thus, then surely He is defeating His own purposes! For Shakespeare I am sure this scene served the purpose of dramatic tension, for the chief lesson which I see in it is one which he could not have intended. I see there a crucial event in Hamlet's struggle to fulfill God's will. At the very moment when he might achieve spiritual fulfillment, an obstacle is placed in his path in the form of an impurity in religious outlook. He only *thinks* that God is defeating His own will, and that is because the knowledge he has of God's ways is faulty. The belief that a man dying in prayer will automatically go to heaven is a survival from fetishism, which sees sacred objects as containing the divinity and therefore gives extravagant rewards to anyone who protects them with his life or (by extension) who dies in their vicinity, i.e., while worshipping them. We are back at the amalgamation of paganism with Christianity, and here the sins of the society cause an individual to sin grievously.

For what happens there while Claudius is kneeling? Hamlet is thrown far off the track by an irrelevancy. No longer is it a simple question of the evil to be punished by death for God's sake. God has faded from the picture by His equivocation, and with Him, the holiness of the venture. There are now the many gods, of Heaven, of Hell, and of Prayer, and it is a question of using ingenuity and propitiating the gods in order to steer the King through the portals of Hell. And since the holiness has departed, all that is left is the animal thirst for revenge, for blood. There is nothing to distinguish this world from that of the classical tragedy.

With the baring of the animal lusts comes a tremendous impatience, carried over from before the prayer incident, but sharpened by the frustration. It is this impatience which drives him to thrust his sword through the arras, and first the discovery that he has killed Polonius, then the reappearance of the ghost restore him somewhat to his senses; we are relieved that he becomes progressively gentler towards his mother. Then the scene ends and he must resume the game of answering truth to the falsehood of others so that it seems madness. He regains full unity with his purpose in Act Four, Scene Four. There he learns of a large force of soldiers ready to give their lives for a tiny spot of ground, and suddenly sees his situation again as clear as day. The complications which once intruded have melted away; there is the abomination again, and he must wipe it out. From this point he holds firmly to his resolve, until it is fulfilled, and he with it.

Thus the essential Christian aspect of the play is the study of man's moral commitment through stages of rejection, reclarification, and return. The rejection is often less than forceful, the resolve just fades away, or is broken under pressure of outside circumstances. Man feels himself drawn towards God, or serving God from a distance, then he looks around and sees no God and senses himself lost, without a moral frame of reference. Soon, though, he stumbles into sin and his memory is refreshed, his moral vision cleared.

But what moral principle is used for purposes of the study? As I pointed out earlier, the principle of incest and murder is not specifically Christian, but is to be found in Greek theater as well. Moreover, it does not rest on any profound insights into the ethical structure of man's world. In Hamlet's soliloquy in Act Four, Scene Four, in which he is refired with moral purpose, he does not seem to condemn the half-tragical, half-comical situation of the many soldiers ready to die for a tiny spot of ground—or of people dying in numbers anywhere to such small purpose. And the play ends in a duel—one of the classic examples of a profoundly pagan custom with its anti-Christian values which has had a position of prominence in Western civilization in nearly all ages. The pagan background of the play manifests itself through to the end.

And so many other values could have been chosen more typical of the highest contributions of Christianity to the Western world. Hospitality, for one. Humility, for another. Refusal to wrong one's enemies, for another. Certainly condemnation of the crimes of a Claudius is not the great achievement of Christianity which has won it such admiration and gratitude; for that you did not even need Greek civilization, let alone Christianity.

And yet *Hamlet* remains distinctively a Christian tragedy.

LANCASTER: GOING OUT

The gens have fledged.

Perhaps it's just the time of year.
Spring can be a way of looking.
But more likely the fault is not the air's
And only in my doubtful presence here.

The sun is wheeling through dead maple trees.
A few rays catch the pane of glass
And light the lonely corners of this shell.
I pipe upon my future reveries:

The big, empty house cracks beneath my weight;
A crazy girl comes in with clay
While upstairs Aeschylus sleeps on beer.
There is no moon in Lancaster tonight.

What grows by secret starlight up with coil?
Expectations, dreams and scarecrows
Sprout wherever beans are spilled
If human hands will urge the soil.

But the black robed, bearded fool
Is only planting another dark church,
Builds this other world removed from eggs and love
And hoes a value in death's fossil pool.

Past a decade of decades ago this pose was struck.
Pioneers with black hope once watered rock;
Now on these fragments the Amish boy deciphers
The message: the gens have etched a stoney "Fuck."

The streets narrow into emptiness.
The houses dangle on the edge
Of throbbing wrists which find the razor,
Blade into the heart of nothing less.

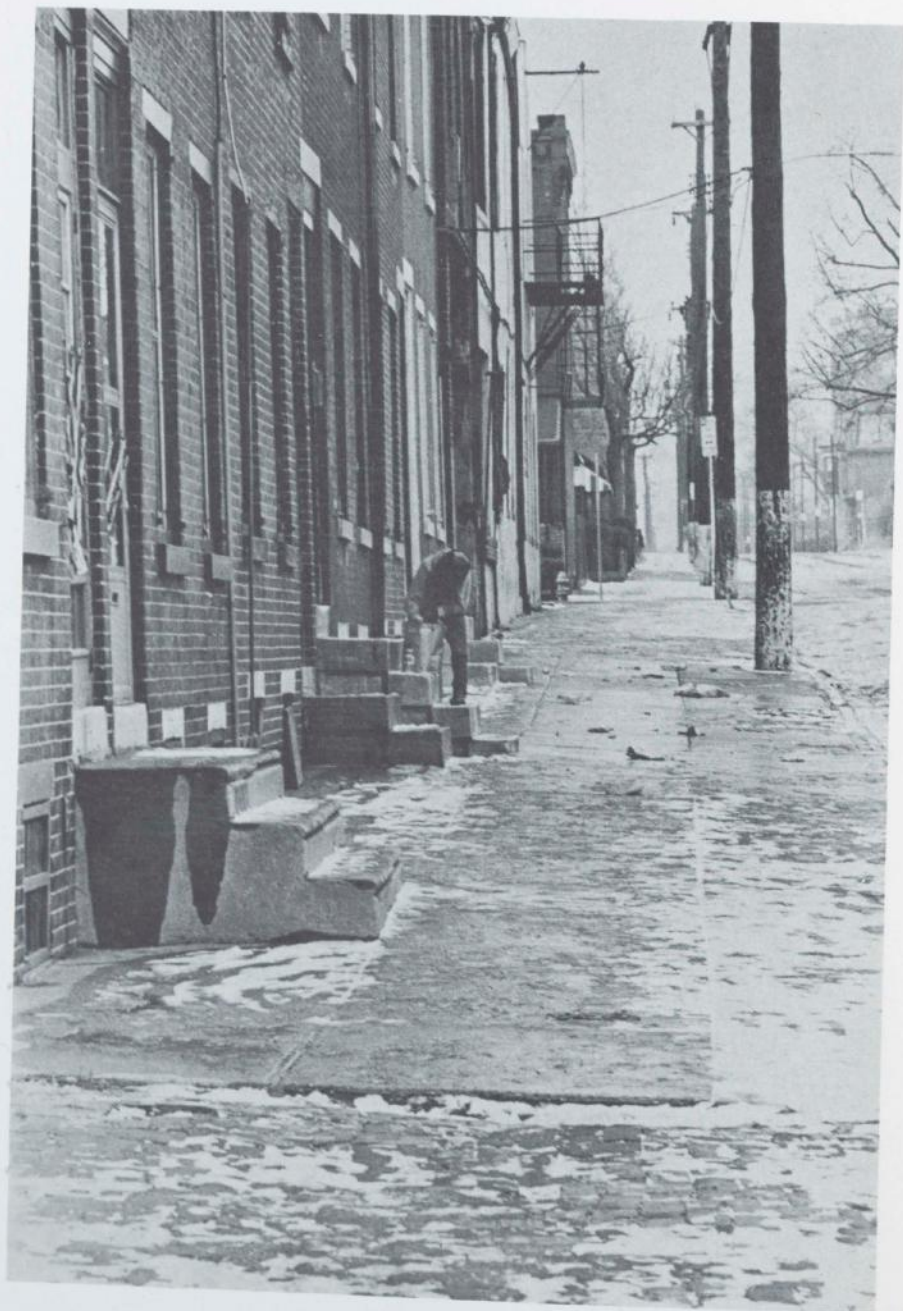
Lorena, for instance. Wearing April eyes
She flows out of tuberculin mines,
A trickle, a skip; something white with loveliness
Ticking beyond the bomb of watch-clock factories

With tock-tock hands that press me back through skies
Toward the impossible forgetting,
The worlds of windy green blown out of mind
By the hollow gunshot of quaint lies.

Suppose a man sleeps here, and seeds?
What water but the urine of bald cows
Will kiss these circles to completion?
I watch Lorena moving through the weeds

And seasons upon seasons
Utter what I cannot say.
Leaving knows its reasons
And returnings; single flowers make me stay.

—*Aaron Poller*



West Philadelphia street. Courtesy Daily Pennsylvanian.

THE ESCAPE

October has come late
and scraps of tomorrow's papers
are rattling in the streets
like the bones of the uncounted dead.

Throwing money away wildly,
the madman gives pesos
to crippled ladies
and puzzled children.

Someone has called the Evening Star
to get the closing prices,
but the financial editor
has left for Mexico
and while his desk phone rings
the moon dangles like a skeleton
over Guadalupe.

—*Aaron Poller*

Michael Zuckerman

REFLECTIONS ON REVOLUTION

The ramblings of an old man on the Berkeley riots, LSD, SCUE, apathy, the Free University, and other assorted signs of the times

■ In his time the old man had had a bit of pot and spent an evening or two on mescaline. He had even been in on the graduate seminar that got Leary and Alpert kicked out of Harvard. But that had all been before Berkeley and the League for Spiritual Discovery, and the old man had drifted away from that scene.

A bit of background—The old man had been one of the last kids on his block to give up Santa Claus, he'd kept on reading Albert Payson Terhune's stories of superb colliers long after he knew he disliked dogs, and for that matter he still trusted the people around him at their word. And yet, this prince among gullible men had somehow stayed aloof from the larger illusions of his century. He had never been able to manage more than two cheers for democracy, nor even that much for the Democratic party or the communists. He had been born a bit too late for the idolatry that his intellectual ancestors had poured upon the poor helpless working class, and he could hardly help laughing when the Norman Mailers of his own time attempted a similar idealization of the Negro. Art had always seemed to him an idle dream of idle men, Freud the desperate dream of despairing men much like his own father. Not even love, that ultimate of

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UCLA student protest march, January, 1967.

American panaceas, had ever held him long, for in some short time he would find himself lusting for his lady to leave or provoke his own departure, and then he would stand amazed at how long it had already lasted.

So the old man had doubted, and he had wondered about himself, but in the end he had concluded that it was no use. He could contrive no

transcendental faith. Resigning himself to the twilight of the absolute, he retired to the cultivation of his own garden, the creation of his own soul.

A paradox—In privacy he found himself sufficiently a Puritan to set himself to the study of his fellow Americans. Free from the sphere of shared illusions, that is, society, he discovered that his soul was a social soul. Like all the others who have inhabited this stubborn soil, he was a voyeur and a snoop. And so, in a fit of perverse pleasure, he became a student of American civilization.

His study was the American past, and so in part it was a study of the illusions that had lifted in this most modern of nations, and of the new ones which had been born in their stead. From the arrogance of the City on a Hill to the craving-created adulation heaped upon John Kennedy, the visions of the new birth and of a new world had continued to come, and go, and come yet again. And now there was another.

Almost as if that November day in Dallas had demonstrated once and for all the futility of politics, the new revolution stood somewhat outside the spheres of power and propriety. Its prophets were people like Paul Goodman, and its first great public expression had been the riots at Berkeley. The riots had confounded the custodians of culture and set the pundits to speaking once more, in fear and in fond hope, of a new force in the society, a force for revolution. For the pundits saw in the riots, and the kids on the strip in LA and all the other unrest, a new kind of crusader in America, something they could scarcely comprehend at all. These were no outsiders looking in, and theirs was no apparent exercise in group aggrandizement, no effort of labor unions or Negroes to get a greater share of the goodies of a society they criticized only for excluding them. Rather, the kids were inside and seemed to want out, and the adults, scared witless, were utterly unable to understand a life-style, a set of standards, and a sense of outrage that the kids themselves were at best only beginning to grasp and work out the logic of. In turn the kids insisted, "Don't trust anyone over thirty." A significant corner of the current generation seemed to have cut itself off from the neatly ordered existence ordained by society, and society grew fearful about the clothes the kids wore, the politics they professed, and the drugs they took.

The drugs were the starkest symbol of the supposed revolution. Luminously they seemed to insist that an entire chunk of a generation had signed off from the standards of social success by which Americans were accustomed to order their lives; defiantly they declared the new concern for personal happiness, the new insistence on self at the expense of civilization. Even the old man himself suspected that there had never been such a sizable movement in America so separated from the traditional success ethos and the compulsive achievement motivation as the drug culture that was beginning to blossom among the young. And so it seemed to him

altogether appropriate that it was the drugs which had aroused the most violent, irrational reactions among the very old.

An example—The old man had once chanced to hear a radio conversation show run by a self-styled liberal on which a young man had called up to defend marijuana. Calmly and with rather too much evidence the young man detailed a rather standard defense, and he encountered apoplexy at the other end of the line. The announcer, who made much of reason in his warier moments, sputtered furiously, if incoherently, for a full minute or two and then concluded with a declaration that, even if marijuana *wasn't* actually harmful, it wasn't good either, and *that* was justification enough for banning its use by law. Upon which peroration he slammed the phone, gathered himself together, and began his scheduled commercial . . . for the largest discount liquor store in town.

The old man himself did not put much stock in drugs, but he was sorely tempted to an interest in the people for whom drugs were a pretext. The young caller on the radio show had been met only by a ritual reaffirmation of the cash nexus, but he had indeed attempted to communicate, and the crucial questions were questions of the quality of communication and the quality of community in America. Too long there had been nothing but compulsive community here, and too long there had been no communication because men were closed to themselves. Oriented outwards, to esteem and to achievement, they had been beyond any genuine conversation because they barely knew their genuine selves. In the new movement, the old man thought, there might be a new openness to the self, and a new openness of self-expression; there might be the affirmation that there was a need for people to talk, and to touch, and not be cool; there might be an insistence that there must be no fear of intensity, and that men must live fully, for life was too short for anything less, and that they must live their own lives, not the lives deemed proper for them; there might even be an affirmation of sentiment at the expense of sophistication, for that was perhaps the price of spontaneity, and delight at the expense of propriety.

And so the old man turned, with the weariness of age and the eternal hope born of his endless gullibility, to this new revolution, this new Youth Culture which came so highly touted by *Time* magazine and a few of his friends in Powelton Village. Upon his strange, self-appointed rounds of study, he went one evening last year to a SCUE¹ symposium on the ills of the modern university.

At the symposium he learned that Berkeley was in the back of almost everyone's mind and that there were many things wrong with the modern

1. SCUE is the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Founded early in 1965, it published *The SCUE Report*, a frequently quoted 40 page survey and evaluation of the academic environment at the University.

university. Not as many, perhaps, as he himself could have ticked off in any idle half-hour, but still, many. Of that the young people on the platform seemed very certain.

But as the old man listened, it occurred to him that the students did not really know what was wrong. They knew only that they were not happy. They struck out blindly, speaking of seminars and selective admissions, independent study and a student voice in the formulation of institutional policy, as if a few of their fellow students voting with the administration or a few pass-fail courses could make them happy.

And as the old man listened, he thought that their very presence there that evening perhaps precluded their happiness, and certainly augured ill for any revolution. It was not only that so small a fraction of the students thought the symposium interesting enough to drop by, for revolutions are not necessarily made by the masses; it was a deeper deficiency in the dis-



Student rally in Sproul Plaza, Berkeley, December, 1966.

affected themselves, for so long as they gathered in sessions such as that one they demonstrated the shallowness of their disaffection and they denied the existence of a widespread and autonomous Youth Culture.

The problem pertained to outworn values and to promises that had been kept, and to the disparity between them; and so long as students felt the need for symposia on the subject they would change only the players, not the game. They would merely act out their dilemma, not resolve it. For the students on the stand were the possessors of a Promised Land of prosperity for which generations had sacrificed; decades of deferred gratification had brought them to their present pass, and ancestors who had aimed at achievement above all else and pegged their very egos and identities to success. Yet such aspirations and identities were almost without meaning in the new land of abundance. The affluence they had created was for the children, or so the parents said—but the children, as the old man could see, languished.

The children had grown up, as their parents and their parents before them had grown up, on an ethic of accomplishment. But accomplishment no longer seemed so important in a world where it was only the difference between \$7,500 a year and \$25,000 a year at equally insipid jobs. The children had been brought up to be responsible, but they knew now that in an affluent society there were countless interstices of irresponsibility, and still the machine went on. They had grown up with preachments of productivity and propriety, but they soon discovered that productivity had to be curtailed in order to maintain economic stability and that propriety was a tether to which they alone kept the key. They were the incipient heirs of imperial Rome, of a new age of decadence, and yet they seemed, as students and as citizens, repelled by decadence. They still swallowed that old story about the "decline" of Rome.

In short, they were caught, caught between the consummation they desired and the unending instrumentalism that they knew. They were suspended between two worlds, a generation in transition, like all generations, except that some generations are more equal than others, and some transitions more painful. They knew, or sensed, that success had gone stale, and yet they sought nothing else. The old values of achievement and the old insistence upon meaning and significance were still their values and their insistence, and thus their every effort at happiness was shadowed by a pale but powerful pall from a world beyond recall. Inevitably, then, they could find no final gratification, nor anything more than the most momentary of satisfactions or the most unsatisfactory of self-deceptions, because gratification brought with it anxiety. The old man recalled the young women he had seduced, who had needed so little seduction before but so much reassurance afterward.

—Was I good?

—Yeh, you were good.

—But then I'm bad.

—No, you're not bad.

But they had not been happy, either. Even the very best of them had been sick with the Puritan sickness, the burden of meaning, the insistence upon significance and purpose in every act; only the very sickest had lacked *that* sickness.

An example—A bit outside of Cambridge, Massachussetts, the ancient citadel of the Puritan affliction, is the old DeCordova estate, which is open to the public and which the old man had discovered while serving his time in pursuit of his working papers. In any other part of the country it would be pleasant enough but pass scarcely noticed; for those parts it is rather lovely, and the old man went there once in a while for picnics and the refreshment of his soul. In the spring a fresh green hill sloped softly down to a lake, and a few yellow flowers astounded simply by the temerity of their existence in such a clime. But atop the hill, for no good reason but the comfort of the New England conscience, there stood an art museum. None of the old man's friends ever admitted that they were going to wander the trails, or to lie in the grass. They always said they were going to visit the DeCordova Museum, for the museum endowed the fresh air with purpose and with seriousness. By its good offices they were not going just to enjoy themselves; they were going for Culture.

Thus it had been in the old man's late youth, and thus it seemed still for these youth on the platform, the youth of the new Youth Culture. The felt pressure of their own environment was gratification and indulgence, but the inherited values of their upbringing were work and accomplishment. And thus they represented nothing new, only the old *quest* for meaning, which persisted to poison the joy they sensed as their birthright but did not dare grasp. And thus joy made them uneasy, and thus they were divided against themselves.

For they had no models of joy, and none of delight. Not even noble Thomas Jefferson, that American prophet of the new age, that first of modern men to turn away from the ever-so-moving work of ending man's oppression of man and toward the vaguer, more vital work of defining the new man, not even Jefferson had been able to free himself completely. It had been, after all, the *pursuit* of happiness that the great Virginian had proclaimed—a process, not a destiny.

So the kids had nothing before them but the old instrumentalism, and so they couldn't come to terms with the essential pressures of their own lives. They would live their own lives, but they would live them with the values of their fathers. They would attempt to endow aimlessness with purpose, indulgence with meaning, compulsiveness with necessity. They

would be unable to uproot the old values, and they would be equally unable to live with them, for work without scarcity and without community can be little more than a conditioned reflex, with as little relation to reality as a bell to food. Men who built railroads across a continent might convince themselves that their work was important, but not men who built a better air-conditioner.

The trouble, then, was in society, a superbly successful society that could not come to terms with its own success, a society that had eliminated scarcity and yet clung to the values of scarcity. The ills of the modern university were not large lectures or computerized registration but the ills of the society it was a part of, for the university had not set itself apart from that society. Nor had the students: that very SCUE symposium was dedicated, ultimately, to making education more meaningful, when the world already suffered from a surfeit of significance. Or, rather, from a surfeit of efforts to impose significance, for surely, the old man thought, there was little enough of significance itself to be found.

And the university was also of society in a second way, for it was a social institution. Ultimately its purpose was still socialization, not the practice of any of the grand freedoms proclaimed in the prefaces of its catalogs. Students had to be trained to staff the great corporations, or at least not to tamper too strenuously with the American Way of Life, and the rewards of the system went to those who learned its lessons. Only a few naive students and teachers, not nearly enough for a revolution, ever took the catalog rhetoric seriously—they, and a lonely lawyer the old man knew, who once argued academic freedom and the other big words all the way to the Supreme Court in a University of Washington loyalty oath case. But the Supreme Court had known better.

The kids on the platform that night had also come to complain of the university and to remind it of its rhetoric, but they did not really offer it any alternatives. At least, not any that they were conscious of. And yet, the old man himself had graduated from the university four or five years before, and such a group as SCUE, or the Free University, would have been inconceivable then. The old man wondered if these kids could be convinced that nothing they would *do*, none of the institutional changes they urged so seriously, would be as important to them as the community they had created and the fact that they were talking to each other. In time SCUE would subside, and so would the Free University, but that was not, to the old man's taste, the true test of these groups. Their true test they passed by their very existence: they afforded a new communion, a place where people might enjoy each other and discover a bit of themselves, for their latent function was delight, not institutional reform.

And so things *did* change. Indeed, things even changed quickly, for the old man thought again of the university he had left and the one to

which he returned. He thought of the days of demonstrations and attacks on demonstrators in front of College Hall, and of the discussion in a seminar he taught, in which the president of the Inter-Fraternity Council tried to account for the attacks by saying, in essence, that the fraternity boys struck out as they did because they no longer felt that it was their university. They had never felt that way when the old man had been young.

But things did not change *very* quickly, for whatever the fraternity boys thought, the old man knew that the kids on the platform didn't think it was *their* university either. And, much more importantly, the kids on the platform showed by their very presence there, and by their very pitch for publicity and their very earnestness, that, at bottom, they offered no alternative to the values of the fraternity. They were still all Puritans, still all attempting to get ahead with the tools at their disposal, still all attempting to make meaning instead of making whoopee.

The old man left the symposium slowly, sadly. He was disappointed, for he had seen nothing of a Youth Culture apart from American culture, and he was driven to the suspicion that those who did claim such a sight were only bent upon illusion. No, he concluded, there would be no revolution. There would be change, for in America there was always change; and the change might even make the society a bit more humane, for it generally did. But there would be no new Rome, for the heirs of old America were still children of their fathers, and did not dare admit what was in their hearts. Worse, what was already before their eyes. All that sacrifice of generations, all those cramped and narrowed lives, all that deferred gratification—for what? For still more deferred gratification, and for fighting the communists? Never a harvest, always more sowing? Who had ever faulted imperial Rome anyway, the old man wondered, but Puritans and compulsive achievers? And what was decadence, in such a setting, but the occasional, precious opportunity for which centuries of sweat had prepared? But these youth were American youth, children of Puritans, Puritans themselves though their activities belied it, for along with the activities went the ambivalence and the anxiety still. These kids were Puritans in mind if not in body, and the Puritans had never achieved more than a single, Puritan, revolution in any nation. We had ours centuries ago.



Philip Baum

MY NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Like others, I have suffered an affliction.

Among the many days that I drifted so lightly from home to school, down through the gray metal fire doors that kept their criss-cross of twisted wire embedded stiffly in their glass panes, there was one day that brought my normal development to a halt. I had been eased along so smoothly, so unquestionably until that day; who would have thought that that structured, reinforced glass could have been smashed?

The classroom in the basement, by virtue of brains trapped in formaldehyde, plaster organs, and microscopes of tarnished brass, was the "BioLab," and in it we sat, two to a blacktopped table, recording Mr. Dole's random (so it seemed) edicts on human physiology.

"THE SALIVARY GLANDS ARE HERE AND HERE AND HERE."

"THE SALIVARY GLANDS AID IN DIGESTION."

"THE SECRETION OF SALIVA IS INVOLUNTARY."

The last shocked me, and I scraped the top of my tongue with my teeth, flexed some muscles below my tongue, and sure enough, tiny jets of saliva shot out from their hidden vantage points. Delighted with proof of the falsehood of one of Mr. Dole's commandments, I thought of nothing else for the rest of the period except calmly explaining to him how the results of my experimentation had proved contrary to his statements and couldn't he be mistaken? You see, it had once been a game with me, pretending to start these sudden oil-slick fires on my tongue and quickly dousing them with the high-powered jets from the fire boat poised so attentively underneath. I could, in fact, with a mere flex, send an admirable stream several feet beyond my lips. I had even (years before) practiced spraying a dart

board that my older brother had long since abandoned in favor of spearing squirrels and, on one occasion, my sister's leg.

After class, I went quickly to the front of the room to state my case, but Fritz, who claimed he was a broker for his Father and his father's friends, stood stiffly with his *Times* and briefcase at his side, already discussing his semester project (Radiational Effects on Photosynthesis) with our teacher. Actually, he was merely seeking approval for the project which (he all the time knew) was preeminently approved by the very stature of its sound; he hardly waited for the understatement of Mr. Dole's nods before he strode out into the hall and through the gray fire doors, leaving in the atmosphere a deadly fall-out that reduced my ripe proposals to char.

"What is it, Clark?"

"Well, about the secretion of saliva . . . I . . ." By this time, though, I had already accepted that I either misunderstood the meaning of "involuntary" or maybe even "saliva," or that I had mutated glands—perhaps I was different.

"Yes? . . ."

"I'm not so sure it's involuntary, you see . . ." And all of a sudden I scratched and flexed and squirted Mr. Dole's cheek. That was that; my apt display of the voluntary secretion of saliva was now little more than spit on old Dole's face. He pulled a paper towel out from under half an onion and wiped his pale skin, looking first at the towel and then at me. I apologized and excused myself by saying that I had answered my own question (a handy out); in fact, in my mind I had: I *was* different.

That I forcibly made my way that afternoon to my doctor's, flexing secretion after secretion (this time with my mouth clapped shut), was evidence of my unease. My appointment seemed a good opportunity to bring the matter up again for it had really begun to bother me. At lunch I had sat tensely attacking every bite of boiled potato with blasts from under my tongue, trying desperately to aid in its digestion. And all afternoon I scratched and flexed until my tongue was sore and my glands were bone dry. But I couldn't stop.

I deliberately ran up the flights of stairs to his office floor instead of riding the ancient cage elevator because I always felt that my check-up began as soon as I entered the building; I imagined, without looking, that, above me, Dr. Ross and his nurse were peering over the railing, diagnosing my ascent. I turned at the top of the stairs and through the door saw the pea-green walls that made this office just an extension of school, and made Dr. Ross, with all his questions and concern, a stethoscoped guidance counselor. He, the faculty, and my parents, I was sure, secretly conferred about my development. I somehow welcomed the possibility of this conspiracy, though; it relieved my responsibility. I could do as I pleased and

feel secure that they had planned it that way, or, if not, would soon set me back on the right track.

Dr. Ross was a pediatrician, and treated me like an old friend, not only because he had examined me for so many years, but also, I'm sure, because I was a relief from pale mothers and their red-faced babies. We never made it as old friends, though; between his questions about my personal life, and my feeling that he had enough of it on record, we stood apart. I believe, also, that I carried over a resentment from past years when he so carefully examined the development of a girl I was then in love with; ever since, I looked for a shiftiness in his eyes. He stuck out his dry hand and smiled.

"Hello, Clark. Go in and strip to your shorts, and I'll be there in a minute."

I went into the room and closed the door; for the first time I was uncomfortable undressed, I couldn't stand or even sit casually, and I kept imagining that when Ross finally returned, he would be shocked to find me unclothed. I found myself adjusting my underpants as I would my necktie, which now lay over the seat of a child's chair, just big enough for that purpose.

I was still wary from the incident with Mr. Dole that morning, so by the time Dr. Ross came back, classically drying his hands, I had resolved to let the whole matter go. I answered his questions as vaguely as possible, and things were going well until it was time to say "Aahh."

"Looks like you've been chewing on your tongue."

The jig was up. I didn't exactly know what to say, he hadn't really asked a question and I was concentrating so hard on not doing to him what I did to Mr. Dole, that I forgot completely that the dry stick in my mouth prevented me from speaking anyway. On muttering the first syllable in way of explanation, I nearly swallowed the stick whole, but Dr. Ross pulled it out, lowered the flashlight and asked me if I wanted to say something. I told him no, and he resumed examination under my tongue, *not* finding, to my dismay, that I had exceptional salivary glands. I had so hoped that he would, so that I could end the issue once and for all.

But, instead, he told me to take deep breaths, and began to thump on my back as though he were looking for a thin stud into which he could hammer a tack and hang up one of his diplomas. My spine was the likely place, but he missed it altogether.

"Now breathe normally."

Breathe normally? I released my last shaky, abnormally deep breath while he went on thumping, and tried to simulate what I thought was normal breathing and found I continued to do so long after he ceased his search for my spine. I continually measured my breaths and spaced them normally until, finally, it was time to go.

"Say hello to your mother for me and stop chewing your tongue," he said with a smile. But between thinking that he needn't have reminded me of that soreness, and waiting for the space to follow my last normal breath so that I could speak, I delayed too long.

"Is anything wrong, Clark?"

Suddenly speaking while on an inhale, I defensively gasped, "You ought to know, you . . . just . . . made the . . . check-up." That was too much; I was ready to leave.

"Well, any diagnosis depends upon. . .," but his voice didn't carry out the door where I found myself, skipping down the stairs past the cage which made me rush out to the sidewalk even faster. I had jumped; I was aware too of the chain reaction of surprise that would come back to me very quickly—those blackish, carefully phrased question-marks would sit like annoying Chinese puzzles on the dinner table, and above them my parents' faces would wait and wait to relax until I fit the pieces together. I dreaded going home.

Yet I only had time between breaths to puzzle them more, and I began to feel sick from swallowing so much spit; and, finally, in a second burst I escaped the dilemma once more, and sequestered myself safely in my room. Below, my mother assured Dr. Ross over the phone that it was minor and that she was certain I'd be all right in the morning. I wasn't.

In fact, during the night, my consciousness made further inroads on my subconscious; I began to think circles around my thoughts, the awareness of my mouth and my lungs gave way to an awareness of my entire body. I felt the extent and boundaries of my limbs without touching a thing, I no longer felt the sheets; the great black space within me screeched and pounded with the workings of my brain, the rushing of my blood, and the rasp of air that I kept pulling into me and pushing out again, no longer knowing whether I needed more or none at all. My eyes, which I could not keep closed, I feared would dry, so I blinked and blinked again, and again, performing with all my energy a job I'd never conceived of before. I knew (or was I just fooling myself?) that the whole ordeal was silly, that I would soon forget this self-consciousness and return to the spontaneity of unawareness. How I hated Mr. Dole! Or had it started long ago? Was it the childhood game I played within my mouth, or the intellectual probing inside that cavity, now so tortured, that was to blame? How could I halt these inroads? How would I return to all those unconcerned days that had somehow culminated in so horrible an awakening?

At school, after forcing one step upon another to get there, I sat nervously behind a book, turning the pages when I thought I would probably have finished them, trying so frantically to avoid everyone. And when the shattering clangclang of the bell destroyed my pretended solidarity, I walked slowly behind all the others and sat in the back of Mr. Dole's class.

Through the watering of my blinking red eyes, I scrutinized Mr. Dole's pale flesh that hung so limply around his bones. I was intent on hearing him through the vibrating roar of my whole body; I gathered up out of myself that rocking, turgid energy that shook my hands and rasped with every deliberate breath in my throat and concentrated it full-force, like a laser, upon the spot where I now wished I had decidedly spat with much disdain. But my hatred of this man did not distract me; the tumultuous reeling that I so wanted to project into his body mounted within me. My hate multiplied my anguish, my anguish propagated my hate. My bones cried for release. I picked up a plaster jaw from the table next to mine and squeezed it violently until it too was wet.

I walked out trembling at the end of the period through the door at the rear of the room with hallucinations of self-amputation of my tongue, and other parts—then I heard him.

"Clark! Weaver!"

I turned, my breath had stopped, my heart! Had it stopped too?

"Where do you think you're going with that model?"

I opened my mouth and searched for air, my hands tightened around the heavy jaw I now realized I held, its teeth gnawed my hand, still no air.

"You'd better watch yourself, sonny-boy!"

Watch myself watch myself watch and at the splitting open of my head I aimed for Dole's hardly aiming at all, watch himself! and suddenly there was a crash as the air rushed in and my mind finally flew from my mouth my chest my legs . . .

I can still recall the bits of plaster and glass strewn before and beyond the fire door. The wire mesh bent just slightly, but it bowed instead of so neatly criss-crossing inside the pane where it used to dwell undisturbed. It allowed me to breathe.





Tympanum of Church of St. Peter, Vezelay, France. Courtesy Free Library of Philadelphia.

ANDACHTSBILD FOR AN ARTIST

(a sonnet rewritten)

Renaissance
cathedral. Rain.

Damp plaster underneath
desolves the bloodless
Crucifixion.

Black murmuring:
three women in dark mantillas
with candles for the God behind the paint:
who doesn't exist:

one Our Father
two Hail Marys
and Glory Be To God.

Rain stops
and sun wrings out the walls.

Artificial flesh and
trompe l'oeil arcades
turn brittle as mud-pack,
death mask, or track
of a dry tear.

In the 15th Century, Germans felt elaborate;
multiplied their detail over church facade and cruciform;
greedy for death's baubles,

hewed out welts,
lacquered blood, tinted tears
and sweat—

images all
yearnings for decay.

(Instead of your sublime tragedy,
these tedious details of despair.)

—Conni Billé Finnerty

THE THREE LEVELS OF NATURE: ASPECTS OF SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY

■ The concept of a hierarchy in Nature was fundamental to the world-view of the Middle Ages and exerted a powerful influence in the centuries which followed. All beings could, according to this concept, be arranged in a chain of ascending excellence, ranging from the lowest order (inanimate matter) through the highest (God). Among sentient beings, man occupied a position midway between the animals and the pure spirits, and his nature was composed of elements taken from both.

The two themes do not simply run parallel; they are closely related. The hierarchical distinctions between the animal, the human being, and the intellectual being (i.e., the being composed entirely of spirit) are drawn on the basis of how well each kind can distinguish appearance from reality—what seems from what is. On the one hand, we have the pure animal, with no capacity to make the distinction, entirely led by the evidence of the senses. On the other hand, we have God and the angels, who are pure intellect or spirit, and are never misled by appearances. In the middle stands man, a compound of body and spirit, endowed with reason and thus enabled to make extensive discriminations between what seems and what is, but a little lower than the angels in that his insight is never complete. The “intellectual” level of the hierarchy stands to the merely “human” level in much the same way that “wisdom” stands to “prudence”; the distinction is between enlightened understanding and mere rationality.

These interconnected themes—of Nature's hierarchy, and of the difference between appearance and reality—can be found in some of Shakespeare's comedies, in varying forms and degrees. In *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream, for example, the distinctions of animal, human, and intellectual have some applicability, though the lines are not clearly drawn. Here, we have a magic world, but its symbolism is attenuated, perhaps because it is so closely associated with the human world of Athens. The inhabitants of the magic world are not of a high enough calibre to be called representatives of the "spiritual" level in nature. Oberon and Titania, although they have special powers and move in a fairy culture of dances, songs, charms, and love-potions, are hard to distinguish from human beings, with their jealous quarrels, their affectionate attachments (e.g., Titania's for her boy attendant, and for his mother before him) and their capacity for pity, a capacity which Ariel, the disembodied spirit of *The Tempest*, avowedly lacks. (*Tempest*, Act V, sc. I, l. 20.) They even accuse each other of carrying on extramarital affairs with human beings—Oberon with Hippolyta and Titania with Theseus. (*MSND*, Act II, sc. I, l. 70-76.) Puck has a somewhat detached vision of human life, revealed by the enjoyment he finds in bewildering human beings, and by his comment "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" (*MSND*, Act III, sc. II, l. 115), and he has the mobility and versatility of Ariel. But basically he is an English rural sprite, too much of the earth to be representative of disembodied intellect. The Clowns, on the other hand, while they are the lowest stratum among the characters, cannot be equated with animals, or even with animalistic humans. Although they have more than their share of "mortal grossness," as Titania calls it, they are not at the mercy of their senses and appetites. However, their thinking is on a lower level than that of the other characters, and nearest to the animal in one regard: they do not adequately understand the imaginative process which goes into the watching of a play. In preparing "Pyramus and Thisbe," they feel that their audience is incapable of envisioning a moonlit setting unless actual moonlight, or an actor who declares himself to be the moon, is present. (Act III, sc. I, l. 48-62.) At the other extreme, they fear that the figure of the lion will be *too* convincing, that the audience will not be detached enough from the theatrical experience to realize that the lion is a stage-lion. What these anxieties indicate about the Clowns is their own lack of imagination and intellect, their bondage to a world of appearances. Bottom is more concerned with his beard and his costume than with the text of the play (the text itself being an indication of the sparse amount of intellection going on among the Clowns). He is given an ass's head by Puck because his mental scope is small, and by the same token, can be seen as roughly representative of the animal man.

So the three levels are present, though less distinctly than in later plays, and the issue of appearance versus reality is certainly present, couched in the same kind of imagery, and brought to the same kind of resolution. After a night of enchantments in the forest, Demetrius recalls the series of irrational events "Like far-off mountains turned into clouds"



From *Outlines to Shakespeare*, Vol II, by Retzsch, Leipsic, 1841: "PRO.— come from thy ward,/For I can here disarm thee with this stick/And make thy weapon drop." (*Tempest*, Act I, sc. II, l. 471-473.)

(Act IV, sc. I, l. 191-192), but his faith in the daylight world is nevertheless shaken:

But are you sure
That we are now awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 196-198.)

Bottom, not given to speculation, simply dismisses the night's experience as a dream, and rejoins the ordinary world without any philosophical hang-over. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 204-224.) Theseus remarks on the lovers' tale:

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact. (Act V, sc. I, l. 4-8.)

Theseus may deny the reality of the experience: he didn't live through it. But the audience did, and if it *was* a dream, as the title of the play implies, it was a dream of such vividness that it becomes as real as the daylight world, or the daylight world as dream-like as the dream. Perhaps the lunatic, the lover and the poet, using the faculty of imagination, have knowledge of a sort denied to "cool reason." Robin underscores this theme by turning to the audience at the close of the play with:

If we shadows have offended
 Think but this, and all is mended,
 That you have but slumbered here
 While these visions did appear.
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream,
 Gentles, do not reprehend. (Act V, sc. I, l. 430-435.)

In this speech appear imagery and concepts that will figure again in Prospero's famous speech (*Tempest*, Act IV, sc. I, l. 146-163), which contains the lines: "We are such stuff/ As dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

When we come to *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, we are in a world that is composed entirely of human beings; there is no other-world of spirits, visibly operating on the stage. But there is the invisible realm of God and the angels, and the hierarchical distinctions between animal, human, and superhuman, though differently defined, are much more explicitly present than in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Portia's three caskets help to define the three levels. The gold casket, attractive on the outside, stating its case in terms of "desire" (Act II, sc. VII, l. 4-5), is chosen by Morocco, a man of appetite. He chooses on the animal level, beguiled by his senses, and his reward is a death's head, symbolic of the mortality of the body (as well as, on a more general level, the deadness of matter uninformed by spirit). The silver casket, "the pale and common drudge 'tween man and man" (Act III, sc. II, l. 103-104), makes its appeal in terms of "deserving" (Act II, sc. VII, l. 7), and attracts the man who relies on common sense or rational choice. He, paradoxically, is rewarded with a fool's face: reliance on the merely human faculty of rational choice is, in the end, folly. The lead casket appeals to a superhuman intuition. It is unattractive to the eyes and asks the suitor to "give and hazard all he hath" (Act II, sc. VII, l. 9), with no promise of reward, a proposition which offends common sense, justice and the you-get-what-you-pay-for mentality. Yet Bassanio, because he has the superior knowledge and instincts of a lover, sees through the discouraging appearance of the lead and wins Portia. The distinctions drawn by the caskets apply to the conflict between Shylock and Antonio, as well. Shylock stands for justice and law; the other characters constantly ask him to be merciful. The former is a rational standard; the latter an irrational, or super-rational one. The former belongs to the weighing, measuring aspect of the human being; the latter belongs to the sympathetic, imaginative aspect, and is related to the perfect knowledge of each individual creature, which is characteristic of God. Shylock accumulates money for its own sake, not even spending it to increase the comforts of his household; Antonio accumulates money only in order to dispense it, and in particular to dispense it in gestures of love and friendship. Shylock's religion, to the Elizabethan mind, is the inadequate religion of the old covenant—the covenant of law and justice, in contrast to the

new covenant of grace and mercy. "How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?" asks the Duke (Act IV, sc. I, l. 88), and Shylock responds, "What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?" Portia makes a similar appeal:

Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 198-200.)

To which Shylock retorts: "My deeds upon my head! I crave the law." (Act IV, sc. I, l. 206.)

The theme of the play is that an excessive insistence on abstract justice becomes finally injustice. The angelic or spiritual qualities of love, mercy, "hazarding all one hath" are contrasted to the merely human qualities of rationality, justice and prudent self-interest.

A similar conflict is developed in *Measure for Measure*, between the human (but inadequate) standard of abstract justice and the divine (though non-rational) standard of mercy. Angelo's rigid justice becomes at last flagrant injustice, exactly as his excessive sobriety becomes license. The three levels of man's nature are present here, and the problem of the play is the imbalance between the three aspects in certain characters. Angelo denies his animal aspect, "scarce confesses that his blood flows" (Act I, sc. III, l. 51-52), "never feels/ The wanton stings and motions of the sense" (Act I, sc. IX, l. 58-59); he is likewise impoverished at the level of imagination and sympathy, which serve to mitigate justice with mercy. Isabella pleads with him, in Portia's vein:

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? (Act II, sc. II, l. 73-77.)

Angelo replies, in Shylock's vein, "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother." Isabella herself, unfortunately, knows her doctrine better than she practices it. She too is bound up with cold abstractions, a technical kind of purity being more important to her than a brother's life. Isabella has to see the destructiveness of rigid justice before she can herself be merciful; Claudio, who is dominated by his sensual nature, has to face the death of the body in order to ascend from this animal level; Angelo has to commit glaring injustices, in the pursuit of an unruly physical passion, so that there can be no rational defense of his behavior, only a non-rational appeal to mercy.

On a literal level, the appearance-reality conflict lies in Angelo's reputation for spotless virtue, as opposed to what he becomes at the first onslaught of temptation. One of the Duke's motives is to test that appearance of sanctity:

hence shall we see
If power change purpose, what our seemers be. (Act I, sc. III, l. 53-54.)

Isabella cries "Seeming, seeming!" when she finally comes to understand Angelo's purposes (Act III, sc. I, l. 150), and later says:

This outward-sainted deputy,
Whose settl'd visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' th' head and follies doth enew
As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil;
His filth within being cast, he would appear
A pond as deep as hell. (Act III, sc. I, l. 89-94.)

Angelo himself exclaims:

O place, O form,
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! (Act II, sc. IV, l. 12-15.)

But on a more fundamental level, the appearance-reality conflict lies in the difference between justice, which makes its decisions on the bare, external facts of a case—on what the case looks like on the outside, and mercy, which flows from a sympathetic imagining of what it feels like to be the offender—from knowledge of what the case looks like on the inside.

The conflicts in *Twelfth Night* are less serious. The characters are all human beings, but the tensions between them are not of the life-and-death variety. The pull is between sobriety and frivolity rather than between justice and mercy. But the difference between appearance and reality is still an issue. Malvolio, the "sad and civil" puritan, who prides himself on the dignity of his bearing, is in reality a fool, "an affection'd ass," "the best persuaded of himself" (Act II, sc. III, l. 160-162), while Feste, a fool by profession, has a sanity of perspective which Malvolio lacks.

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit. (Act III, sc. I, l. 67-68.)

No three words are used more in the play than "fool," "foolish," and "folly," supplemented by "mad" and "lunatic" and the course of the play is to expose Malvolio as the greatest of all fools because of his total lack of humor or frivolity, to prove true what Feste asserts of "wit" in the first act:

Those wits that think they have thee, do very
oft prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack
thee, may pass for a wise man. (Act I, sc. V, l. 36-38.)

On the same occasion, Feste says to Malvolio (Act I, sc. V, l. 83-84) "God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly" and the prayer is answered. Nothing could be more fatuous than the readiness with which Malvolio is duped by the letter-trick, or the outrageous pretensions he acquires thereafter. No one has been more contemptuous of Feste than Malvolio, but Malvolio, when he is at last locked up as a lunatic, is in a desperate enough situation to plead, "I am as well in my wits as thou art, fool." (Act IV, sc. II, l. 96.)

"But as well?" Feste responds. "Then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool."

In the final scene, Malvolio protests that he has been made "the most notorious geck and gull/ That e'er invention play'd on." (Act V, sc. I, l. 351-352.) Olivia even addresses him as "poor fool." But though Fabian urges that the trick should "rather pluck on laughter than revenge," Malvolio remains humorless to the last and exits vowing vengeance.

Perhaps a similar development can be traced in Olivia, whose cool self-possession are at last penetrated by a passion. Referring to Malvolio's madness, Olivia remarks:

A most extracting frenzy of mine own
From my remembrance clearly banish'd his. (Act V, sc. I, l. 288-289.)

In Illyria, it is against the rules to be calm, rational, in perfect control, unruffled in one's dignity. Antonio risks his life out of love for Sebastian; Viola offers to die a thousand deaths for the Duke. The Duke himself devotes every thought to Olivia. The first edict delivered by the head of state is "If music be the food of love, play on!" (Act I, sc. I, l. 1.) In Illyria, to be reasonable, restrained, or cautious is to be a fool.

However these four comedies may differ in theme and mood, they all agree on the need for a non-rational insight—mercy, love, a sense of the absurd, a sense of the fleeting quality of human life—to broaden the barren perspective we get with our rational faculties alone. Nowhere is this less explicitly, or more potently, stated than in *The Tempest*, and it is also in *The Tempest* that the three levels in Nature's hierarchy are given their fullest treatment. (According to Theodore Spencer, the theme of "the animal, the human, and the intellectual" and the theme of the difference between appearance and reality, form "a central framework from which further and broader interpretations may radiate.")¹

Prospero's island is a world of archetypes. Caliban is the archetype of the animal level in the hierarchy. His position is lowly: he is used for manual tasks. Prospero repeatedly calls him "slave," and at one point (Act I, sc. II, l. 314) "Thou earth." He is frequently compared to animals. "A freckl'd whelp, hag-born—not honor'd with/A human shape" is Prospero's description of him (Act I, sc. II, l. 283-284), and in the preceding line refers to him as the witch's "litter." He is called a tortoise, later a fish (by Trinculo, who also comments on his powerful smell). His knowledge of the island is the knowledge that an animal would need: he knows the locations of fresh water, brine-pits, fertile soil, berry bushes, apple trees. He knows the arts of hunting and fishing, and apparently roots for pig-nuts with his long nails (Act II, sc. II, l. 172). We learn early in the play that he attempted to rape Miranda, and that his motivation was to people the isle with Calibans.

1. From Theodore Spencer, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man*, quoted in *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*, edited by Leonard F. Dean, New York, Oxford University Press, 1961.



From *Outlines to Shakespeare*, Vol II, by Retzsch, Leipsic, 1841: "PRO.—Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints/With dry convulsions . . ." (*Tempest*, Act IV, sc. I, l. 259-260.)

He had no language before Prospero came, but would "gabble like a thing most brutish." (Act I, sc. II, l. 356-357.) The quality of his thinking is low and based largely on immediate physical reactions to pleasure and pain. He loved Prospero at first: "Thou strok'dst me and made much of me, wouldst give me/Water with berries in't." (Act I, sc. II, l. 333-334.) Stephano and Trinculo win him as their subject, in fact as their worshipper, not by superior virtue but by forbearing to hurt him physically and by giving him wine. His abject servility to these inferior specimens of mankind, and the childish, half-pathetic song of elation that he sings at being the slave of someone new (Act II, sc. II, l. 184-191), serve to establish him further as a sub-human, sub-rational form of life.

On the other side we have Ariel, who is archetypal intellect. He is "an airy Spirit," according to the list of dramatis personae, and takes on whatever shape Prospero bids, entering now as a water-nymph, now as a harpy, most often invisible. He has an equally large range of sounds—music to drug the mind, music to derange the mind, "roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains." (Act V, sc. I, l. 233.) Like imagination itself, which can

travel anywhere, unfettered by the laws of physics, Ariel is able
to tread the ooze

Of the salt deep,
To run upon the sharp wind of the north,
To do me business in the veins o' the earth
When it is bak'd with frost. (Act I, sc. II, l. 252-256.)

But if Ariel is at home with water, air and earth, he is characterized best by the disguise that he first assumes in the play: the St. Elmo's fire, which terrorized the sailors during the tempest:

now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flam'd amazement. Sometime I'd divide
And burn in many places. (Act I, sc. II, l. 196-198.)

While Caliban performs the menial, physical labor for Prospero's household, Ariel is the agent for Prospero's imagination:

Pros. Come with a thought. I thank thee, Ariel; come.
Ari. Thy thoughts I cleave to. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 164-165.)

If Caliban is the essence of the animal, and Ariel of the intellectual, "archetypal humanity" is missing from the island until the shipwreck. Prospero is human, but he is also a sorcerer and has been too long away from the normal world to be considered representative of humanity. But Alonso's party, fresh from attending a political wedding in the world of nations, rulers and statecraft, is composed of all the elements that characterize normal humanity, from Gonzalo's terror at drowning, through Alonso's grief for a dead son, Sebastian's ambition and duplicity, Ferdinand's love for Miranda. Most of all, they are uniquely human in their bewilderment at the strange world they have been thrown into, a world where the evidence of your senses must be rejected by your reason.

There are gradations, however, even among the human beings. Alonso, Gonzalo and Ferdinand might be called "human humans," while Stephano and Trinculo are "animal humans." The latter pair are primarily concerned with their butt of wine; they even take oaths by their bottle. Their form of speech is prose, never verse, and their idiom is full of coarse, animal allusions. Stephano asks Trinculo, after pulling him out by the legs from under Caliban's cloak, "How cam'st thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? Can he vent Trinculos?" (Act II, sc. II, l. 110-111.) They are fittingly associated with Caliban for their guide and slave, and their plot to overthrow Prospero is a burlesque of Antonio's and Sebastian's plot to overthrow Alonso. Ariel's description of how he thwarted the former enterprise, aided by the conspirators' perpetual drunkenness, involves an animal image:

Enter Ariel
Then I beat my tabor;
At which, like unback'd colts, they pricked their ears,
Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses
As they smelt music. So I charm'd their ears
That calf-like they my lowing follow'd. . . (Act IV, sc. I, l. 175-179.)

Appropriately, they are left in a stinking, stagnant pool, from which Trinculo emerges saying (Act IV, sc. I, l. 199), "Monster, I do smell all horse-piss." Like animals, they are beguiled by their senses, are unable to resist the glittering garments arrayed on the lime tree, even though Caliban protests "Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash." (Act IV, sc. I, l. 224.)

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Prospero, the intellectual human, the man who has spirits at his command and can therefore virtually construct a world composed of the products of his own mind. In his days as Duke of Milan, he was, in his own words,

for the liberal arts
Without a parallel; those being all my study,
The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. (Act I, sc. II, l. 73-77.)

The practical world of politics was no world for Prospero:

neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind. (Act I, sc. II, l. 89-90.)

Antonio, the man of action, who seizes opportunities without moral or philosophical reservations, usurped the state, and Prospero fell into a world so fantastical that it resembles the interior of the mind, where everything is "rich and strange." Prospero says of Ariel's predicament with Sycorax:

thou wast a spirit too delicate
To act her earthly and abhorr'd commands. (Act I, sc. II, l. 272-273.)

and the same may be said of Prospero himself in relation to the external world of political reality.

Prospero dwells so much in a world of mind that he is at odds with the animal level of the hierarchy. The enmity between him and Caliban is virulent and constantly re-emphasized. Caliban repeatedly calls down curses on Prospero, while Prospero menaces him with physical tortures of a vivid and ghastly variety. Caliban is always addressed as "slave," if not by more contemptuous terms—e.g., "Filth that thou art" (Act I, sc. II, l. 346), "hag-seed" (Act I, sc. II, l. 365)—while Ariel is consistently "servant," "my delicate Ariel" (Act IV, sc. I, l. 49), "my bird" (Act IV, sc. I, l. 184), "fine spirit." (Act I, sc. II, l. 420.) Caliban is in constant terror of the spirits which Prospero uses to execute his punishments. One could attribute this mutual antipathy to Caliban's own depravity, except that Caliban once loved Prospero, and even now, as we see him, Caliban is more pathetic than sinister. Also, Prospero gives other indications of alienation from the animal aspect of man. The violence of the imagery and tone with which he warns Ferdinand not to take Miranda's virginity (Act IV, sc. I, l. 14-23) before they are wed seems unnecessary in view of Ferdinand's character. When he sees that Miranda has fallen in love with Ferdinand, according to his scheme, he makes the strange comment "Poor worm, thou art infected." (Act III, sc. I, l. 31.) He complains of Caliban

as with age his body uglier grows,
So his mind cankers. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 191-192.)

and it is possible that Caliban becomes a more and more corrupt animal as Prospero becomes a more and more exaggerated intellectual.

Prospero has lived in both worlds: the ordinary world of human society and convention, and the fantastic world of the imagination. Thus, in *The Tempest*, he has the final word on the difference between appearance and reality, and what he has to say casts unsettling doubts on the reality of "reality." His daughter recalls the ordinary world the way most people remember their adventures in fairyland, "rather like a dream than an assurance,/ That my remembrance warrants." (Act I, sc. II, l. 45-46.) Antonio came to believe himself the rightful Duke of Milan, lost the "screen between this part he play'd,/ And him he play'd it for" (Act I, sc. II, l. 107-108), illustrating the power of illusion even in hard-headed men of action. Ariel sends the King's fleet home to Naples, with all aboard convinced that they saw Alonso perish, but the audience knows differently. The "real world" begins to show cracks, to reveal itself as possibly a world of mere appearances. Very late in the play, after the audience has lived a good while in the dream-like action, the visions and enchantments of the island, Prospero puts into words this growing awareness of the ephemeral, illusory quality of what we call real life. This is, of course, the speech that follows the elaborate vision of the goddesses, and it is the pith of the play. It binds up in eleven lines (Act IV, sc. I, l. 148-158) the strange beauty of the detached vision of human life which, in a sense, has pervaded the entire play, and comes to an intense focus now, because Prospero knows that the end of his magical career is approaching.

Prospero leads the other human characters as near to this revelation as they can go. To do this, he must first disrupt their reliance on common sense: he must drive them mad. The play is called *The Tempest* because it is the storm which initiates the process of unsettling the minds of the humans:

Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil
Would not infect his reason?

Prospero exults and Ariel replies:

Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad. (Act I, sc. II, l. 207-209.)

Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian are later afflicted with a spell of genuine madness. Prospero works on them all with visions and spells that are an insult to common sense, and gradually they acquire, in part, the detachment which Prospero has in full, the detachment of doubting both worlds, or doubting neither. "Whether this be/ Or be not, I'll not swear," says Gonzalo when Prospero at last reveals himself to Alonso and his retinue, and Prospero replies:

You do yet taste
Some subtleties of the isle, that will not let you
Believe things certain. (Act V, sc. I, l. 123-125.)

and again:

they devour their reason and scarce think
Their eyes do offices of truth. (Act V, sc. I, l. 155-156.)

Finally, even the boatswain staggers on the scene and, asked how he got there, says:

If I did think, sir, I were well awake
I'd starve to tell you. (Act V, sc. I, l. 229-230.)

echoing the imagery of sleep and dreams that has run throughout the play, and raising again the question of how awake we are when we are "awake," how real is the "real" world.

The greatest achievement of *The Tempest* is not, however, in its magical pageantry or philosophical observations on the nature of reality, but in its concentrated presentation of the human level in Nature's hierarchy. More than any of the comedies, *The Tempest* makes a statement about mankind in general, what it means to be human.

In the beginning of the play, Prospero is predominantly the guiding intellect of the island, a manipulator, a creative artist, almost a god. But as the play progresses, it becomes clear that this is his last project, Prospero has no magic inherently: his powers reside in his books and robes and staff; in his farewell speech to his spirits, his "demi-puppets," he says:

I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book. (Act V, sc. I, l. 54-57.)

Shortly thereafter, he goes and dresses himself as the Duke of Milan. Prospero is going to rejoin the world of ordinary human beings in order to die. Already he has become more humanized. To Ferdinand he says:

Sir, I'm vex'd,—
Bear with my weakness—my old brain is troubled.
Be not disturbed with my infirmity. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 158-160.)

and for the first time we see Prospero as an old man, near his death. Because he is a human being, "One of their kind, that relish all as sharply/ Passion as they" (Act IV, sc. I, l. 23-24), he pities the others for their afflictions, and relents in his vengeance. Meeting Gonzalo, he weeps. Meeting Alonso, (Act V, sc. i, l. 106-111), he talks as one political leader to another, rather than as a sorcerer to a victim. At last, he frees Ariel and announces to the audience:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is but faint. (Epilogue, l. 1-3.)

It is possible to view this as a degradation in Prospero's stature. Caliban, for one, says that without his books, "He's but a sot, as I am." But Caliban's evaluations are suspect. To get a picture of the nobility of the human being, simply in himself and without magical resources, we can look at Ferdinand. Miranda says of him:

I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble. (Act I, sc. II, l. 417-419.)

Prospero tells Ferdinand of the humiliation that is in store for him—to live

in chains, drink sea-water and grub for roots like an animal—and Ferdinand, drawing his sword responds with the pride and courage of a man:

No;
I will resist such entertainment till
Mine enemy has more power. (Act I, sc. II, l. 464-466.)

He is vanquished, of course, and in the first scene of Act III, he enters bearing wood, the task distinctively associated with Caliban, the brute creature. But Ferdinand redeems his degraded position in a way Caliban could never do, through an internal nobility that cannot be polluted by an external humiliation, and through his love for Miranda:

some kinds of baseness
Are nobly undergone. . . .

.....
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead
And makes my labours pleasures. (Act III, sc. I, l. 2-7.)

Both Caliban and Ferdinand are slaves, but Ferdinand is a slave to love:

The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides,
To make me salve to it; and for your sake
Am I this patient log-man. (Act III, sc. II, l. 64-67.)

In the same humility of love, Miranda offers to be his serving-maid, if he will not have her for wife. "They are both in either's powers"—a kind of magic that human beings have, which both Ariel and Caliban lack. Given the opportunity, Caliban tried to rape Miranda, but Ferdinand's love has a spiritual theme, redeeming and refining the animal theme:

the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can, shall never melt
Mine honour into lust. (Act IV, sc. I, l. 25-28.)

Ferdinand is the human being at its finest, matter lit up with spirit. *The Tempest* serves to refresh the audience's view of the human race, a view that becomes jaded after a lifetime spent in complex, crowded societies. For a few valuable instants, we get a chance to see ourselves through Miranda's eyes:

O wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't. (Act V, sc. I, l. 181-184.)



TWILIGHT (for Louis Kahn)

Looking down from a hill in Fairmount Park
I have seen office buildings in a dry haze
Turning to lighted dominoes in the dark,
Under the random splinters of the sky,
Power that they have gathered on clear days.

Down there across the river I have seen
Arches and columns spreading north and south,
Rising over City Hall in dream
Kept visionary by a statue's eye
Surveying from the hills to the river's mouth.

—*Paul Hopper*

EVENING IN WEST PHILADELPHIA

That steady noise of refreshment's no longer the stream
that flows by in the valley a mile away:
it's the patient whirring of an electric fan
counting the hours till the end of day.

The stream brought settlers, and they planned a park
to liberate upon the map its green;
the plan brought settlers further, man for man,
and their descendant waiting for the dark.

—*Paul Hopper*



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