

The  
UNIVERSITY  
BOOKMAN

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A Quarterly R

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Edited by Russell Kirk

Autumn • 1974



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*A Quarterly Review*

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## What Holds America Together?

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN ORDER, by Russell Kirk. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1974. \$15.

Reviewed by Robert Speaight

THE PRESIDENT of a great American university told me not long ago that most of his students shared the opinion of Mr. Henry Ford: history was "bunk." They would not have said that about heredity, which is supposed to unload the sins of the children upon the fathers, and cheerfully to leave them there.

Yet history, read as what has mattered and not only as what has happened, is simply another name for heredity. This important book by Dr. Russell Kirk is a study in the heredity of the United States. Its publication at a time when America is preparing to celebrate the bicentenary of its independence is a significant event. No doubt we shall be hearing a good deal about the American "revolution," but Dr. Kirk shows convincingly that no revolution was less revolutionary than the War of Independence. The last thing the Patriots of the Thirteen Colonies wanted was to turn things upside down; all they wanted was to leave them as they were, but in the hands of a capable English gentleman called George Washington instead of an incapable English king called George III.

Dr. Kirk effectively disposes of the notion that American independence was inspired by French revolutionary thought, which he evidently dislikes as much as I do. For the matter of that, it could hardly have been inspired by an event which followed it. The French Revolution was dogmatic; the American Revolution was empirical, although it found words for its beliefs which can still rouse a great nation to arms. Dr. Kirk shows that the United States was a new thing built upon a number of very old things, and these are the roots which give it life today: the English common law, the English language, the English Reformation, the English Parliament; the Roman order and the Greek intellect; Montesquieu's "depositary" of justice secured by the Supreme Court—for, as de Tocqueville wrote, "it is at the bar or the bench that the American aristocracy is to be found"; Burke's gospel of continuity—"a partnership, not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

Much has happened, of course, since Patrick Henry declared: "I know of no way of judging the future but by the past." The Irish, Italian, and German immigration has drastically modified the ethnic landscape of America; the Catholic ferment has challenged the native Protestant ethos, but it has not disturbed the separation of church and state—the recognition

of Pope Gelasius' "two swords." The problem, as Burke saw so clearly, and as Dr. Kirk is at pains to emphasize, has been the reconciliation of liberty and order. Neither is an absolute; each is a condition of the good life. Liberty easily becomes a profligate; order quickly becomes a policeman. Yet order in the state is a sterile compulsion unless it reflects an order in the soul. As Cardinal Manning observed, "all human conflicts are basically theological," and Tocqueville asked: "What can be done with a people who are their own masters if they are not submissive to the Deity?" Many of the Founding Fathers may have been Deists, and nothing much more, but Alexander Hamilton declared, with the weight of human experience behind him, that "morality *must* fall with religion." Dr. Kirk maintains that "Americans adhere to faith in their religion and scepticism in their politics."

THEY DO wisely if they adhere to the latter. A cynic has reason to proclaim that "democracy" is the Golden Calf of the twentieth century—Hobbes' Leviathan now raised to the altar. Montesquieu's (and Aristotle's) mixed constitution has become perilously unbalanced. De Tocqueville saw the danger of "democratic despotism," and it was a Roman historian, Polybius, who described "government of the multitude as the greatest of all evils." Government by the people can turn into government by the mob, and government by the mob into government by the masters—and by them alone. Few Americans today would go as far as John Randolph with his defiant declaration: "I am an aristocrat; I love liberty; I hate equality." Nevertheless it is a fact of history, and particularly of English history, that liberty flourishes where the aristocratic element in society is allowed its due influence. America has realised that in every generation aristocracy must be earned afresh, but it should not be refused its wages. Aristocracy must also be refreshed, and in England the refreshment has often come from America. Here, again, it is useful to remember that history is also heredity—be that heredity humble, as in the case of Abraham Lincoln, or privileged, as in the case of Franklin Roosevelt.

The first term of Aristotle's definition of ideal government is secure in a state which is really an elective monarchy, and the third term is secured by the popular election. Dr. Kirk is surely right in ascribing to the Constitution of the United States something of "the divinity that doth hedge a king"; and just as right in warning us against a "democratic despotism from which not only God seems to have disappeared, but even oldfangled individual man is lacking." The written Constitution of the United States has in the Supreme Court a safeguard which the unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom altogether lacks. A popular majority in the House of Commons can decree anything it likes. It only requires a stroke of the pen by the monarch which the monarch is unlikely to refuse—even in the case

of his, or her, abdication. Dr. Kirk reminds us of Calhoun's valuable distinction:

The United States is, of course, a Republic, a constitutional democracy, in contradistinction to an absolute democracy; and . . . the theory which regards it as a government of the mere numerical majority rests on a gross and groundless misconception.

Valuable also was Orestes Brownson's warning that "pure democracy would destroy the territorial democracy," so dear to the heart of Disraeli; and Madison's contrast between the "democracy" only viable in the small county or the village square, and the "republic" whose authority is viable over a large area. Democracy is a noble ideal, but it is among the lessons of this book that there are times when it needs to be defended against itself.

Dr. Kirk spares us the jeremiads to which he might well have been tempted. His book is sober, objective, and erudite. In so wide-ranging a resumé he puts his finger unerringly on the people who really matter—whether they are famous like Cicero, Augustine, Virgil, and Plato, or less well known, but hardly less important, like "judicious Hooker," who indicated many a rendezvous where Anglicans and Roman Catholics might meet today, and who was not without influence on Shakespeare. All the quotations are pithy and relevant. This book should become a breviary for every educated person, and especially for those who are less well educated than they imagine. In taking us back to our beginnings it brings us up to date, often with a salutary jolt.

If it shocks the complacency of the progressive mentality, the shock will be timely, for the moment, let us not deceive ourselves, is critical for Western civilization. As Emerson wrote: "Things are in the saddle: they ride mankind." They are not always pleasant things—more insidious and less ephemeral than the "men on horseback," like Cromwell and Bonaparte, Hitler and Stalin. Emerson's outcry was echoed by Yeats: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world . . ." Dr. Kirk's recall to order should help the "centre" to hold firm.

## Of God's Jokes, Toys, and Christmas Trees

JAMES V. SCHALL

**A**RE 'educational' toys really educational?" Such is a question posed in a promotional advertisement for *Saturday Review/World*. But it is the wrong question. What should be asked is this: "Are 'educational' toys really *toys*?" This is the more profound inquiry, the one which most quickly brings us to the heart of those joyous and penetrating notions that are the very ground of our hope and our affection.

For it is the concept of a toy, of a thing made merely to be fascinating, that comes closest to touching the mystery of our strange worldly existence. Toys are not made for the purpose of education. Rather, it is nearer to the truth to say that education is for the purpose of enabling us to play with toys—though, thank goodness, this capacity needs little education. Education is ever but a means, a preparation to arrive at something else, truth or technique. The question about toys already transcends the learning process. Indeed, there is something mystical about a toy, something that touches the very spirit of the divine.

Neither George Bernard Shaw nor Count Leo Tolstoy was known as an apt theologizer. This did not, happily, prevent either from trying. We have a letter, belatedly published, from Shaw to Tolstoy (letter of February 14, 1910 in *Intellectual Digest*, January 1973, p. 32). Tolstoy, it appears, had chided Shaw for being too flippant about solemn things in *Man and Superman*. "But why should I not?" Shaw replied with gusto. "Why should humor and laughter be excommunicated? Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one?" In itself, this is a marvellous notion—that the world is God's joke. The concept of joke, like that of toy, arises out of the exuberance of things, out of, it seems to me, the very source from which all things appear.

I should like to be more enthusiastic about Shaw's witty retort than I really am. Unfortunately, it immediately followed a brief exposition of the good man's theory of the deity, a quaint exposition, alas, that rather undermined any possibility of the world's being a joke, good or bad:

To me God does not yet exist; but there is a creative force constantly struggling to evolve an executive organ of godlike knowledge and power:

that is, to achieve omnipotence and omniscience; and every man and woman born is a fresh attempt to achieve this object.

The current belief that God already exists in perfection involves the belief that God deliberately created something lower than himself when he might just as easily have created something equally perfect. This is a horrible belief. . . .

Such, of course, is refried Hegelianism, which ends up inventing what had just been denied. The suggestion that a perfect God create a plethora of equally Olympian divinities is contradictory. In bypassing the trinitarian mystery, moreover, Shaw's notion misses the very essence of diversity within the godhead as well as the profound dignity of creatures other than God. After all, because we are *not* God's equals, we do have a possibility to rejoice. Moreover, the belief that God will perhaps exist someday is merely despair for those who already do exist. For Shaw, we are more obviously tools than toys and jokes.

*Credo in unum Deum, patrem omnipotentem. . . . Credo in a creative force constantly struggling to evolve an executive organ of godlike knowledge and power. . . .* Which indeed is the more horrible belief? And how do we know that this "executive organ," once brought forth, will be benevolent? Shaw blithely presupposed, without telling us, the existence of a good God or at least a good process, to eliminate this fear.

**N**EVERTHELESS, the notion that the world is one of God's jokes is, I think, a happy one. In Shaw's theology, everyone is supposed to become a kind of equal god some fine day, or at least, somebody else is. In his humor, however, there seems to be some room for finiteness. A bad joke, after all, can often be as funny as a good one. Out of a reflection on this notion of our finiteness and our jokes, I think, we can begin to grasp the essential glory of the fact that we are, none of us, nor the world itself, equally perfect to the deity. For the insistence that a perfect God is somehow imperfect because he does not create other "equally perfect gods" is simply a disbelief in and negation of the creature that does not have to be divine to be worthwhile, the creature we foolishly often call foolish, namely, ourselves. Sometimes, I believe, it takes far greater faith to believe in the existence of ourselves than in the existence of a God or a multitude thereof.

Marvin Glass is a toy designer who lives in Chicago. The *Wall Street Journal* did a piece on his business and his attitudes (December 1, 1972). Mr. Glass says a good toy should have these qualities: "Several children should be able to play with it at once; it should also be easy to handle, not too complicated, and preferably red." I cannot but wonder if that explains the color of Santa Claus' uniform.

Mr. Glass told the Chicago City Council: "Only God can make a safe toy." Mr. Glass also believes—probably correctly—that there is a con-

certed plot on the part of broadcasters and other similar public-safety types to abolish imagination, to restrict severely the advertising of fantasy on children's programs. The National Association of Broadcasters defined fantasy as "anything not in the play environment or real world of children." I am glad C. S. Lewis never lived to hear such rot. "That is one of the functions of art"—he wrote in his wonderful essay "On Stories"—"to present what the narrow and desperately practical perspectives of real life exclude" (*Of Other Worlds*, p. 10).

Practically all the things that are worthwhile are not in the play environment or real world of children, except, of course, the children themselves—and they are always imagining. Mr. Glass went on: "When you deal with a toy, you deal with imagination. But if 'Jack and the Beanstalk' were written today, the author would have been told not to do it because vines can't grow that high and giants don't exist."

"Only God can make a safe toy. . ." I wonder if Mr. Glass knew that the ageing Plato in the *Laws* called men the playthings of God? I hope he didn't, in a way, for these curious toys that God made are anything but "safe." That is, in fact, why he made them. For had the deity made men "safe," there would have been no sense in making men in the first place. *Because we are not safe, we are.*

THE TROUBLE is that too many grim thinkers (not children) would assume Plato to have been merely frivolous for such a remark that men were the playthings, the toys, of God. But Plato was saying perhaps the most profound thing ever said before the Prologue of John, which says that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, a miracle of sorts making this world, after all, a dear and welcome place. Plato knew that the playthings of God are not safe, that they need not even exist, that they are, therefore, the results of creative joy.

In preparing for Christmas, Charlie Brown's little sister Sally was painfully writing her English theme. The subject was "the true meaning of Christmas." "To me," she painstakingly scribbled with her brother looking intently over her shoulder, "Christmas is the joy of getting." "Giving!" Charlie corrected her. But Sally refused to change her mind.

There is a profound insight here not unconnected with toys and incarnation—the joy is in the getting. The degree to which this sounds merely selfish is the degree to which we have gotten away from the essence of our condition. To lack the capacity to enjoy the getting is to lack, perhaps, the best thing about us, the fact that what we have, we have received.

To be sure, we are likewise made to give, to go out. Malcolm Muggeridge, that sane man, recently published his memoirs with the wonderful title, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*. (The Little Prince had said, hadn't he, that only the time you waste on your flower or on your star or on your

friend is of any value?) "All I can claim to have learnt from the years I have spent in this world," Mr. Muggeridge, wrote, "is that the only happiness is love, which is attained by giving, not receiving; and that the world itself only becomes the dear and habitable dwelling place it is when we who inhabit it know we are migrants, due when the time comes to fly away to other more commodious skies."

This is very Augustinian, very wise. And it is not untrue. "The joy of loving, giving," a friend similarly wrote, "surely we are most truly blessed when we have a fellow creature to love, not to be loved by. Masses of people could love us and it wouldn't make a whit of difference. To have someone to love is to have a creature in whom reside the reasons for all the joy and pain and sorrow, ecstasy, concern, and laughter of which we are capable, provided we are capable of giving at all." Our condition as persons in the Christian tradition is also one of giving, no doubt. We are truly blessed by our love of our fellow creatures, in giving. But it would be a strange world indeed if the only joy were in giving and not likewise in receiving, a very one-sided enthusiasm that takes the heart out of thanksgiving and gift and expectation. Our very capacity to love is already a gift that is not ours. This is the very meaning of toys, gifts, and probably of Christmas too. Eric Mascall wrote:

We love God, but only because God first loved us. The fact that God loved us provides us with both the reason for loving God and the power which enables us to do this. For the love which the Christian exercises, whether towards God or towards men, is simply the reflection and overflow of the love which God has poured into him (*Grace and Glory*, p. 11).

When God did not make something equally perfect to himself, he indeed committed the "horror," as it were, of an unsafe toy and a bad joke. In the universe, every man and woman is a fresh struggle in the search for omnipotence and omniscience. But the struggle takes place only under the more commodious skies of a reflection and an overflow enveloping us from the beginning. The joy is in the getting. We give only because we receive. When we cannot accept a gift, when we cannot be enthusiastic about receiving, the quality of our giving must be very suspect.

In *Eliot and His Age*, Russell Kirk mentions a poem of Eliot entitled "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees," something I had never read before. I tried to find it in the British Council Library in the Via delle Quattro Fontane, but it was not there. A resourceful friend, however, found it as the Morning Prayer in the new English Office for the Christmastide. For Eliot, we are to remember the unexpectedness and wonder of our first glittering Christmas, of the goose and the turkey and the reverence and the gaiety, so that we shall retain to the end, in spite of it all, our sense of surprise and delight that such wondrous things could ever be at all—toys, and jokes, and Christmas trees.

Because the beginning shall remind us of the end  
And the first coming of the second coming.

We are not, blessed state, the equals of God. This is why we do in fact have creatures in whom reside the reasons for all the joy and pain and sorrow, ecstasy, concern, and laughter of which we are capable. The joy is in the getting, in being the friends of such wonderful, unsafe toys and jokes whom God has made in lieu of making himself over and over again *ad infinitum*.

WHEN WE deal with a toy or a Christmas tree, we deal with imagination, with the capacity of wonder that suggests how our ordinary play world might be insufficient. Mr. Glass was right; there are men about today who would prevent our children from hearing the story of Jack and the beanstalk, just as there are more and more men preventing our children from hearing the story of Christmas trees—indeed, there are men who want, as the hope for mankind, to prevent children. But, C. S. Lewis said, “nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants.” At the heart of every fairy tale is the human child astonished at the fears and glories and risks of the universe.

The child wonders at the Christmas Tree:  
Let him continue in the spirit of wonder  
At the Feast as an event not accepted as a pretext. . . .

The joy is in the getting—this is the event of the God who does yet exist. The only happiness is not “in love attained by giving, not receiving”—that is a happiness, to be sure, and we should not doubt it. But the greater mystery is that someone loves us and gives us wondrous things—the end and the beginning, the first coming and the second coming. The joy in these is, and will be, in the getting. We are not gods. This is our glory and our wonder, and why we have other creatures whom we can love. With God’s jokes, unsafe toys, and glittering Christmas trees—with such is our universe filled. The joy, dear friends, is in the getting.

## Unamuno: No Evangelist, No Secularist

THE AGONY OF CHRISTIANITY, by Miguel de Unamuno. Translated by Anthony Kerrigan; annotated by Anthony Kerrigan and Martin Nozick. Vol. 5 in the Bollingen works of Unamuno. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. \$11.00.

Reviewed by **Thomas Howard**

IF, A HUNDRED or a thousand years from now, there are historians poking through the twentieth century, one of their jobs will be to weed things out, deciding which things are “typical” and therefore worth their attention, and which may be put on the pile of chaff. (Perhaps an unhappy irony here is that much of the chaff may prove to be more typical of this century than the worthy stuff; and then our skeletons will have to blush under the incredulous stare of scholars who wonder what on earth those people were telling themselves.) In any case, the historians will wish to find a few words or phrases to catch the flavor, or the hue, of this era. And one of the words they may try is “agony.”

You can’t find any century anywhere that wasn’t undergoing agony of some sort or other. The fifth, with Rome crumbling; the eighth, with the Saracens at the gates; the fourteenth, with plague and fire; the sixteenth, with Christendom sundered; the seventeenth, with the inductive method nosing out dogma; the eighteenth, with Reason bidding to replace faith; the nineteenth, with faith vanishing; and the twentieth—the energetic twentieth, which zestfully set about the final dismantling of the ancient hierarchies, and the exile of the gods, and the jettisoning of all traditional authority and dogma; and the supplanting of these by cruel and cynical caprices of mere appetite and the mad and individualistic pursuit of gratification, rushing along under banners proclaiming “Democracy!” and “Freedom!” and “Autonomy!” and other heady slogans.

Our historians will want words like “chaos” and “confusion” here, to be sure. But I think that they will need the word “agony”; and they will wish to revive its ancient sense of great struggle on the part of a strong man. For it is in the imaginations of strong and noble men, perhaps more than in the streets of Vanity Fair, that the real *agon* of an epoch is to be seen. From those imaginations, the clutter of mere vogue and the truculence of slogans have been purged; and you can see, starkly played out, just what the struggle is.

One of the items that will make these historians reach for the word “agony” as they sift through the data will be, let us hope, the work of Miguel de Unamuno. This Basque Unamuno, exiled from his beloved Spain

in the 1920s, living in Paris, observer of the doubts and sorrows and contradictions of his time, experienced in his own soul those doubts and sorrows and contradictions. But he saw beyond the politics and the battles of the time—the public arena, that is, where the struggle was played out. And his message was that the doubts and sorrows and contradictions of the modern West are the death throes of that civilization and of Christianity, which are, if not synonymous, at least co-inherent.

But death throes do not mean for Unamuno that Christianity will disappear tomorrow. On the contrary, these very throes are the necessary condition of authentic life. Christ died in agony in our history; and from that time on, Christianity has known and proclaimed the agony of the struggle with death as the *sine qua non* of life. This agony is experienced, in Christianity and in the individual soul and in society, as the simultaneous embracing of, and resistance to, the awful contradictions that lie at the root of things. (It is hard to keep one's *syntax* simple in talking about Unamuno's work, for the very reason that you are forever trying to talk about two things that are simultaneously synonymous and antonymous: doubt and faith, life and death, resistance and embracing, affirmation and denial, virginity and fecundity, individual and collective, Jesuit and Jansenist.)

To BE alive, for Unamuno, meant to be locked in struggle with death. Hence his imagery—of the Spanish Lady of Sorrows (*La Dolorosa*) “who agonizes in sorrow with her Son in her arms,” rather than the Italian *Pietà*, where the focus is as much on the dead Son as on the suffering Mother. Or again, the (celibate) Trappists of Dueñas, chanting “*Mater Creatoris, ora pro nobis!*” Or Abishag the Shunammite, the virgin wife of the aging King David, sent to him to warm him in his death bed—his still virgin wife! Or Père Hyacinth, priest (that is, *father*) in the Church, who left the Church in order to marry, “in order to have offspring, to perpetuate himself in the flesh, to assure the resurrection of his flesh.” Or the glory and the defeat of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris, as it is perceived by France's statesmen, or by France's bereft mothers.

Unamuno struggled with all of this. He was never able to sail into the haven of the catholic faith and drop anchor, as other agonized minds have done. (Newman and Eliot are obvious cases in point here.) His biography might be entitled *Unamuno Agonistes*, with the subtitle “The Courage and Integrity of Doubt.” Hence it is disquieting, not to say maddening, to read Unamuno. Where is he? What, exactly, is his view? Is he a Christian believer, or is he not? Does Spain know Christ, or does she deny Him? Is Christianity purely private and personal, or is it corporate? Is Christ alive or dead?

To use a word like “orthodoxy” in any sort of rejoinder to Unamuno is, of course, to play straight into his hands. “Yes. Precisely. The letter kills.

Your formularies and your creeds will strangle you.” That is his case, it often seems. And yet his is a noble mind and imagination, and one which struggles with (and loves?) Christ. So the orthodox interlocutor hesitates, lest he appear as the Inquisitor. But it must be said that Unamuno's Christianity in agony is not the entire story. It is, to be sure, the passionate drama of the doubting soul; it is, moreover, the drama of Christ on Golgotha as paradigmatic of history. But it is not *quite* the evangel that the patriarchs and prophets saw, and grasped by faith, nor is it that which the apostles and fathers and doctors and confessors and martyrs and virgins and widows held with joy, even in the flames. Or, put it this way: Unamuno reveals for us, far more exquisitely and forcefully than our theologians and pastors ordinarily do, the mystery of suffering, in which God Incarnate both partakes in, and blazons for us, our radical limitation, our humanness. For Unamuno is a poet (and perhaps a prophet? and a heretic? He would applaud, nay embrace, the contradiction). He is not an apostle or an evangelist.

## Mother Teresa's Faith and Good Works

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR GOD, by Malcolm Muggeridge. New York: Ballantine Books, 1973. \$2.00.  
Reviewed by **Haven Bradford Gow.**

THIS BOOK is eloquently written and spiritually discerning: it is the sort of book which can transform a person's life. It asks whom we consider lovely, and what we take to constitute this moral and spiritual beauty.

Do we consider lovely the beautiful and popular socialite who compromises her conscience so that she may be invited to the right parties, be seen at the right places, and with the right people? Or the ugly and unpopular girl who spends much of her time working in an orphanage? The influential husband and wife, martinis in their hands, exchanging witty clichés with their hosts? Or the obscure husband and wife kneeling together in church with their eyes downcast in prayer? The bitch goddess of social status? Or Mother Teresa of Calcutta?

Mother Teresa is a Loreto nun who left the convent 25 years ago for the slums of Calcutta. There, with doctors, nurses, and other nuns, she serves the poorest of the poor. Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge is an English social and literary critic not given to effusive praise for other people or books. Yet in *Something Beautiful for God*, Mr. Muggeridge tells us that while Mother Teresa is "slightly built" and "not particularly gifted in the arts of persuasion," she does have "this Christian love shining about her; in her heart and on her lips." She is, he continues, "prepared to follow her Lord, and in accordance with his instructions regard every derelict as Him; to hear in the cry of every abandoned child, even in the tiny squeak of a discarded foetus, the cry of the Bethlehem child; to recognize in every leper's stumps the hands which once touched sightless eyes and made them see, rested on distracted heads and made them calm, brought back sick flesh and twisted limbs."

Mother Teresa possesses no status in this world, for she represents another kingdom and another and higher reality, which fewer and fewer of us are willing to acknowledge and serve. She has never been a contestant in a Miss America pageant, nor is she a member of the Beautiful People. And while Leonard Bernstein and other participants in Radical Chic have thrown parties on behalf of America's revolutionaries, they have not seen fit to throw a party on Mother Teresa's behalf. Yet this self-effacing nun possesses a moral and spiritual beauty—reflected in her face and in her actions—which far transcends mere physical beauty. She is an example of genuine beauty, for by helping the poor, sick, and helpless of Calcutta, she

is doing—to use Mr. Muggeridge's irreplaceable phrase—"something beautiful for God."

Part of the work of Mother Teresa and the Sisters is to pick up the dying from the streets of Calcutta, and bring them to a building where they can die seeing a loving face. "We want them to know," she says, "that there are people who really love them, who really want them, at least for the hours that they have to live, to know human and divine love." Many die; but some survive and are cared for. "There is always a danger," Mother Teresa continues, "that we may become only social workers or just do the work for the sake of work. . . . It is always a danger; if we forget for whom we are doing it. Our works are only an expression of our love for Christ. . . . To us what matters is an individual . . . every person is Christ for me."

EVEN NOW Mother Teresa remains in Calcutta, where she continues to minister to wounds that need healing, to souls that need saving. "We ourselves feel," she observes, "that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But if that drop was not in the ocean, I think the oceans would be less because of that missing drop."

Mother Teresa manifests the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Her example causes one to believe that even were the whole world covered with concrete, some day and somewhere a crack would occur; and in that crack, someone would plant seeds. From those seeds, flowers would grow.

The slums of Calcutta are choked with poverty, sickness, and suffering. Yet amidst this suffering, Mother Teresa contrives to plant the seeds of Christian love within others. And from these seeds, love shall grow.

## Educational Humbuggery

DONALD M. DOZER

A UNIVERSITY, like every other institution, must show proof of its continuing utility. It must respond to felt needs of society. It must be prepared to accommodate itself to these needs—to a degree. But this accommodation, this coming to terms with the present, must not be carried too far. Where to draw the line is a perennial problem in higher education.

The intricate manipulations and official compulsions that are being resorted to in an effort to respond to the demands of the "now" generation have reduced the true intellectuals in our academic communities to an embattled minority. Under modern pressures only strong professors can resist the temptation to vitiate their learning, to relax their discipline, and to compromise the exacting requirements of their subject specialty. Those who bravely undertake to do so against the prevailing heavy odds are the true defenders of academic freedom in our time, that is, the freedom of the scholar to teach the truth that he knows.

Every teacher teaches only one course, himself. "What we are we shall teach, not voluntarily but involuntarily," declared Ralph Waldo Emerson. And, after all, within the precincts of higher education the teacher is the only gold in the bank. Nevertheless, experienced and successful classroom teachers are expected to beat a supplicating path to the offices of new university bureaucrats who are charged with promoting "innovative" programs. Faced by firing squads of student pressure groups who are allied with craven administrators, they live and try to work under the almost panicked necessity of demonstrating the popularity of the courses which they teach and the relevance of their learning to the temper of the times. Jumping around like butter on a hot griddle, they squander their learning in attempts to accommodate the titles and descriptions of their academic courses to the newspaper headlines and to the imperatives of newly publicized minorities.

UNDER SUCH unrelenting pressures professors in the social sciences must restructure their courses to include the word *recent* in their titles and content. If Soviet Russia is "in" at the moment, they must present courses next semester which will be tailored to the Russian experience. Whatever the period or area in which they specialize they must emphasize the deficiencies of slum and ghetto life, the urgency of antipollution measures, apprehensions about global overpopulation, and the sociological and behavioristic aspects of their subject. They are consequently being hounded out of that

objectivity which was formerly considered to be inseparable from scholarship.

It should be the function of education at all levels to conserve what is best in the past, to carry that best into the present, and to point the way toward its use in the action of the future. The university in particular has long had laid upon it the obligation of serving as conservator and upholder of ideals for mankind. But this has been replaced by the faddish acceptance of other objectives such as life adjustment, student permissiveness, and missionary effort on behalf of the culturally disadvantaged. This altered objective has had the predictable result of mediocratizing education and thus compelling teachers either to mediocratize their teaching or to sensationalize it at the television level.

THE BASIC meaning of the word *university* has become sadly distorted. It connoted originally a place where the search for universals could be pursued, where wisdom, sometimes defined as God, could be studied and known, and where absolute values could be pondered and possibly acquired and lived. But now the university is conceived, both by the public and by a seeming majority of educationists, as a place for everybody, as an institution illustrating democracy in action, as a place where miracles can be wrought that will convert the hitherto inert and unintellectual elements of society into useful elements, the emphasis being placed upon their utility to society. Under barrage of the syndromes of democracy, institutions of higher learning are being required to do what the university was never created to do, namely, serve a directly political function. Its earlier efforts, when the university was conceived as aiming at the discovery of wisdom, often produced results of a political nature, but these latter were incidental. Now the university is being expected, even forced, to the delight of educationists of the Dewey school, to assume a direct and mammoth political role.

In an effort to correct a notorious socialist imbalance in the economics department at Cornell University, a group of distinguished Cornell alumni, organized as the Cornell Alumni Committee for Balanced Education, proposed to the president of Cornell the establishment of a Center for the Study of a Free Society which, because of biases and prejudices against a free society in the economics department, should come directly under the direction and control of the President's office and which should be interdisciplinary in character. This proposal was flatly turned down by the president on the ground that "a special organization to teach a particular philosophy within a faculty just will never work" and that "no good member of a faculty would find [such a program] tolerable." But after black militants armed with guns invaded one of the central buildings on the university campus the president found it not violative of his earlier

proclaimed principle to establish a Black Studies Center reporting directly to his office.

Following the decision of the Warren Court in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in Topeka in 1954, eager academic David Livingstones rediscovered Africa and courses, special programs, and even whole colleges of black studies proliferated on college campuses. So far has the search for minorities to be appeased been carried that in a certain state college in California a serious-minded student delegation came to see an albino professor and asked him if he would authorize them to agitate for the demands of albinos on the campus. He readily agreed, tongue in cheek, and typed out impromptu a list of albino demands including a demand that only white turkey meat and white bread be served in the dining hall. Soon thereafter he was called into the office of a timorous dean for a serious discussion of these demands and then confessed to the dean that he had presented them only as a joke.

At a meeting with the teaching staff of an academic department the chancellor of one of the branches of the University of California announced that thereafter all vacancies in the teaching staff of that department must be filled by members of minority races.

"What minorities do you mean?" a professor asked.

"Oh, I mean blacks and browns," the chancellor replied.

"Well, assume this hypothetical case," another professor asked. "We are considering the appointment of a black who has received his Ph.D., has published a few articles, and would, under our schedules, be entitled to appointment as an assistant professor at a salary of \$14,000. But suppose that Harvard offers him \$18,000. What should we do?"

"We will have to outbid Harvard," replied the chancellor.

AS A RESULT of such shortsighted and politically motivated policies, Indian war whoops, echoing through the halls of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, have sent historians of American life scurrying into the more recondite recesses of their lore and have gained for many American Indians, hastily rushed through M.A. programs, coveted academic positions. American universities, in short, have succumbed to the cult of faddism, sensationalism, and even vulgarity. New courses in scatology, whether masquerading as sociology, anthropology, or literature, have been given classroom platforms and academic respectability.

Pressures upon colleges and universities to move in these directions have tended to dilute their educational programs, to perpetuate the immaturity of their students, and to prolong the emotional elements in adolescence at the expense of the intellectual. Educational leaders have not only permitted but even encouraged their students to base their responses to problems upon feeling rather than mind and have consequently allowed their

campuses to be disfigured by orgies of destruction, thus substituting mob action for education and contributing to the denigration of the intellectual in our time.

The relaxed admission requirements to college and university are characterized, in a recent study distributed by the American Council on Education, as an attempt by those institutions "to accommodate to social needs by being more flexible in both admissions practices and instructional procedures" (John A. Creager, *Selected Policies and Practices in Higher Education*, American Council on Education Research Reports, vol. 8, no. 4, 1973, p. 6). In at least one branch of the University of California students who are ineligible for admission to the university on the basis of academic qualifications and educational tests, but who are nevertheless admitted because of race or color and who, once in college, make only failing grades are not separated from the university but are given special tutoring by faculty members who are pressed into this service by the administration, and these students are allowed to continue on in the university with failing grades for five full terms at taxpayers' expense. This expense is justified, concludes the above report of the American Council on Education, "by the humanitarian and egalitarian implications of such policies."

In recent years the social sciences have lost their former function of serving as transmitters of cultural heritage to the present generation and, as they have instead divested themselves of their emphasis upon content, they have produced the result of "liberating" the student from the past. One of the many junior colleges in California that have eliminated the former course requirement of "American History and Institutions" has substituted for it a course called "Problems of Human Behavior," which, according to the course description, covers:

science, the 'easy rider' effect, society, psychology, group behavior, free will, determinism, controls, utopia, maturation, conformity, meaning, communication, culture, individual personal behavior, anthropology, punishment, people gap, love, discrimination, war, peace, cold war, defense, politics, aggression, God, religion, church, Jesus, family, marriage, sex, happiness, drugs, mass media, patriotism, communism, socialism, capitalism, pollution, deviant behavior, mercy killing, abortion, birth control, civil disorders, freedom, independence, leadership, heroes, the draft, military, education, grades, teachers, racism, minorities, violence, and other important issues.

As students have become increasingly involved in curricular planning they have encouraged the idea that courses rich in content inhibit their creative impulses and represent an imposition upon them. This has led to the multiplication of colleges of creative studies, which might better be called colleges of undisciplined studies, where lectures are eschewed as "bourgeois" and students educate themselves in "rap" sessions.

But if members of college and university communities have not yet

been fully "liberated" to cultivate their own whims and are still forced to remain in classroom situations they insist upon being entertained. Classrooms have therefore produced a new breed of demagogic showmen, Johnny Carsons in caps and gowns, whose antics have replaced the intellectualizing processes which formerly characterized the classroom experience. A young professor of chemistry at the California Institute of Technology, cultivating the hippie image, enters his large classroom dressed in a horse costume. "The students love it," he explains without apology, "and so do I. It keeps them coming to lectures. If you don't keep them coming, obviously you can't teach them anything" (*Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1972).

In colleges and universities where such practices prevail, the average grade is no longer a "C" but has been raised to "B." The elevation of the grading level is explained by college and university administrators as due to the fact that college students are now much better prepared and better informed than were their parents, thanks to television and other media facilities for the spread of information. But is it a fact? A survey taken of some 1,467 students, all presumably above the voting age of 18, at Los Rios Community College in California of their knowledge of American history and government revealed that:

52 per cent did not know which branch of our national government contains the most elected officials;

44 per cent did not know in which branch the Cabinet is located;

65 per cent could not name the three major Axis powers during World War II;

55 per cent could not list four basic rights guaranteed to citizens in the Bill of Rights.

IN THE LIGHT of such facts it is no wonder, concludes Professor Ernest van den Haag of New York University, "that many students think higher education as it exists is irrelevant to them. It is [so] because they are irrelevant to it." He asks: "What happens to the students who are not educated, even though they are enrolled, and to the professors who profess without professional competence? One possibility—which is becoming an actuality in many institutions—is the debasement of the coin: grades, credits, and degrees are given without the learning for which they are supposed to stand. Students are graded beyond their achievements, educated to pretentiousness, and to ambitions beyond their possibilities. Since much grading is done on a curve, which may measure only the relative standing of the members of the class, this result is easily achieved, and as easily hidden" (*Imprimis*, Center for Constructive Alternatives, Hillsdale College, vol. 2, no. 8, August 1973).

All this offers alarming evidence of the approaching breakdown and

intellectual bankruptcy of higher education. Under pressures applied largely by political forces and blatantly assertive minority groups, colleges and universities have accepted growing student involvement in academic decisions, lowered standards for students and faculty, and modernized curricula revised radically downward. They are still, in a certain sense, living in the climate foisted upon them by the exigencies of World War II and by the educational theories of the Armed Services which made it necessary for professors of violin to teach courses in navigation and professors of history to become psychological warriors. They have succumbed to a deplorable humbuggery, offering specious courses of instruction, indulging in fly-by-night educational schemes, and promoting a sensationalism which is based on the principle that, as phrased by William Graham Sumner almost a century ago, "seeming is as good as being." He added in words applicable to higher education today: "Its intrinsic fault is its hollowness, insincerity, and falsehood. It deals in dash, flourish, and meretricious pretense. It resides in the form, not in the substance; in the outward appearance, not in the reality." Its sponsors have cheapened the entire educational process by holding out the hope of "a royal road to learning, when, in fact, the only way to learn is by the labor of the mind in observing, comparing, and generalizing, and any patent method which avoids this irksome labor produces sham results and fails of producing the mental power and discipline of which education consists."

OURS IS AN AGE dominated by half truths, and for this situation many causes can be found, not a few of which are attributable to the processes of higher education. Education should aim at arousing in students at all levels by fit incentives the revelation and the mastery of the true superiorities of civilized man. The university, in particular, must take universal knowledge as its object, but its quest for universal knowledge cannot be pursued by everyone. The modern university has conceived its function both too broadly and too narrowly—too broadly in the sense that it has sought to become all things to all men and too narrowly in the sense that it has ceased to deal with the kind of universals that constitute a universal area of interest. In assuming a universal function in the physical sense the university has largely abandoned its universal function in the idealistic or spiritual sense. In doing so it has yielded to pressures which are essentially political in character, and has sought to run the full gamut of human learning, skills, techniques, and expertise, ranging from the level of the trade school on the one hand to the elusive sophistries of dialectical materialism on the other.

While thus seemingly broadening its spectrum the university has at the same time segmented and refined away its content in an inevitably vain attempt to placate all sectors of society. It has not unwillingly succumbed

to an acute case of astigmatism, that is, an inability to bring the light which supposedly emanates from it to a single focal point. As the horizontal and vertical lines of its vision have thus become almost hopelessly blurred, it is failing to sustain its traditional relationship to the claims to greatness which life levies upon men and women and to its role of serving as one of the enlighteners of civilization.

EDUCATION OUGHT TO BE, largely, the business of stimulating rigorous intellectual discipline. Agencies of higher education can best fulfill the needs of society and demonstrate their continuing usefulness to society by refraining from a mob-minded pursuit of current follies and by rejecting the cult of presentism, in which they cannot hope to compete successfully with more skillful and more practical interest groups. Educational leaders ought at least to seek to train young people not to be caught up in mob action but to remain aloof from it while objectively preparing to deal constructively with its probable ultimate consequences.

"The contentious world in which we live," declares the prospectus of the new and already distinguished Francisco Marroquín University in Guatemala City, "demands that we return to the classical or fundamental idea of a university: an institution of learning, of teaching, of research, which in its organization, orientation, and function is dedicated to academic excellence and which has nothing to do with the deliberate search for solutions to the social problems of the moment." Such a university, fulfilling its legitimate role, serves its highest purpose and makes its maximum contribution to the society of both the present and the future. "The collective responsibility of the university is education," writes Irving Kristol. "That is its original mission, that is its original purpose, that is the only thing it can claim expertise or authority for. To return to this original purpose, with renewed seriousness, would be an action at once radical and constructive."

It is imperative that, amid all the compromise which the circumstances of the time necessitate, everyone who respects the true and important goals of higher education must do all he can toward realizing them. Such goals, however uncongenial to the current climate of opinion and to the disposition of educational leaders, must be emphatically reaffirmed as ideals needed for right guidance. If these leaders continue to be actuated merely by the exigencies of the moment, if they persist in treating the proximately best as the ultimately best, if they capriciously yield to faddism and divert education into blind alleys, there cannot be any true educational progress. And the realization of this goal, furthermore, is essential to a realization of the deeper needs of society. Only by following its guidelines can education be made to demonstrate the social utility which, when accomplished, will restore to it the aura of respect and even glory which it deserves.

## Notes on Contributors

Robert Speaight, O.B.E., English actor and man of letters, is especially famous for playing the role of St. Thomas à Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral*. He is the author of *Teilhard de Chardin*, *Bernanos*, and many other books—among them his recent autobiography, *The Property Basket*.

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