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The Carroll Quarterly is published four times a year by an undergraduate staff at John Carroll University. Its purpose is to encourage literary expression among the students of the University. Articles may be contributed by members of the faculty, alumni, and students. Editorial Offices: John Carroll University, Cleveland 18, Ohio. 25 cents a copy, $1.00 a year.

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STATEMENT OF AIMS

SINCE the initial issue of the *Carroll Quarterly* the need has arisen to express more fully the purposes of the Quarterly and the policy which will govern their attainment. By way of introduction the *Carroll Quarterly* may be said to be an experiment, a venturing into unknown places, the genesis of a new literary tradition at John Carroll. Thus, while the aims of this publication may be clearly stated, the policy employed in achieving these aims must be developed over a period of time. The formation of a policy is the result of adjusting the means at hand to the accomplishment of some end. The literary potential of the John Carroll student body, although manifesting itself more every day, is as yet an unknown quantity. Those who instigated the *Carroll Quarterly* believe and hope that the soil of this university is sufficiently fertile to allow a seed of this kind to nurture and grow. On this basis the Quarterly was begun.

The primary aim of the *Carroll Quarterly* is to offer an additional medium for the attainment of greater proficiency in written expression, for mastering to a greater degree the use of those tools by which knowledge is preserved, communicated, and applied.

With this broad purpose in mind, therefore, and with the thought that the Quarterly is published for the benefit of the entire university, the policy of the Quarterly is to accept articles from any and all members of the student body, faculty, or alumni and to publish such articles upon the discretion of the editors. Although guided by the department of English, the *Carroll Quarterly* is not the exclusive organ of any one department or any group of academic departments. In its pages will be represented every facet of the university's academic life.

Thus, for example, articles now being developed for future issues include an article discussing business cycles by a student of the business school, an introduction to the theory of nuclear fission by a science major, a historical approach to the problem of universals by a philosophy major, and an article concerning the position of religious courses in the university's plan of studies by the head of the religion department. Aside from these academic papers the Quarterly also solicits creative writing of all kinds: poems, one-act plays, short stories, vignettes, parodies, satires, as well as music, drama, and book reviews.

The editors of the *Carroll Quarterly* reserve the right to edit all copy as they see fit with the knowledge and cooperation of the author. All articles become the property of the *Carroll Quarterly* unless some explicit agreement is made to the contrary.

The Quarterly also welcomes and encourages letters of comment or criticism from its readers. Letters of unusual merit and wide appeal will find their way into these pages.

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Of Thomas Merton: His Word and His Spirit

by Frank J. Wiess

(*A Man In The Divided Sea*, New York, New Directions Press, 1946)

WHEN a man of some mental stature enters the Church, human curiosity sometimes moves toward speculation as to what, through fresh impacts and deeper visions of spiritual truth, will manifest itself as changed in his public utterances. Such a circumstance does not hold entirely in the case of Thomas Merton, since his conversion antedates his career as a poet. Nevertheless, readers of *A Man In The Divided Sea* have a singular opportunity for comparing the depth of his earlier themes with that of his later ones. The poetry of Merton in a turbulent world is not hard to separate from the poetry he is producing as a Trappist monk in the more tranquil world of Our Lady of Gethsemane Monastery in Kentucky. This is not to declare his early work insignificant, for much of it is marked by the same vividness of phrase and energy of thought which excite a reader of the later poems.

It is proper here to say that Merton's habit of bitter outcry grew out of a welter of early aches from observations of what was untoward in the world of men. Indeed, his anger at injustice was strong enough at one time to propel him into the ranks of Communism. But it is superficial to conclude that he abandons his objective on behalf of man once he enters religious life. The spirit still abides, but expends itself now for betterment of the state of things for the soul. His most recent reflections are prompted by devotion to God and by concern of man for His sake. Even in the light thrusts of satire there is enveloping pity for the world beyond consecrated walls. Though he may consider that some are too heavy of foot to run in the Lord's race, too firmly rooted in earth to make the upward flight, he strives nonetheless with a generous spirit to take them up on high. The poems of the religious period, moreover, are in mood more pronounced, in meaning more luminous, in expression, consequently more ecstatic. These advances are proof of growth. As poets go, Merton is still a young man,* and in the matter of criticism there is need of patience; time and sober judgment will be on his side. In vigor of expression, in sure evolution of the experience, Merton is far from the dimmest of the few shining lights of poetry today.

Or, to look at the line of demarcation in another way, consider the poetry of the secular period the result chiefly of musings and observations on the complex and confused world about him; and that of the religious period the result mostly of feelings of spiritual elation, of heartfelt revelations of the serenity and sweetness of monastic life.

Editor's Note: This article represents the first comprehensive evaluation of the poetry of Thomas Merton to be published.

* Merton was born in 1915 in southern France. He took studies at Cambridge and Columbia Universities, excelling at the latter in the arts of expression. For a short time he taught at St. Bonaventure's College. In 1941 he entered Gethsemane Monastery.

I.

Looking back over Merton's first efforts, one notices pieces that are static. Their phrasing is at times bizarre enough to induce a belief that the young poet was preoccupied with the neat fall of words. But there comes also a growing assurance of the poet's training and predilection for the well etched idea. It is not amiss to say that in his *matter* Merton has much of the reach and suggestiveness of Francis Thompson, but that in his *manner* he reminds one at times of Gerald Hopkins and T. S. Eliot. Yet the debt is not too large; at least it is soon acquitted. In Merton there is not just a newness but a venturesomeness of expression born of a determination to escape phrasing that is unavailing and impotent. (The poet, too, if he thinks of his bread, knows which side is buttered.) Similes fall fresh and clean-cut and with the regularity of chips from an axe;* word-groupings bristle with baffling point; syntax breaks on the rugged reefs of thought. If transfer of experience is thereby impeded the reader is of course vexed. But when he comes to rest in the haven of the poet's inner scheme, he has ample reward for the voyaging in rough waters.

To judge the whole by these parts; to speak pontifically of such of Merton's words and phrases as ensnare and hold one fast; to permit impatience, bias, and prejudgment† to rule opinion is to be unmindful of even the elementary dicta of Pope. It is precisely because critics regard the garb of the language more and the body of thought less that they slight meaning and purpose in Merton. They then are forced into hasty judgments rendered in such seductive terms as "pastel world," "bitter honey," "moonyness," "pale, thin, bland, bloodless." Unfounded opinion grows from negligence; disguised opinion, from insincerity. The inference is plain. A sentence from Charles Lamb well makes the point: "The contemplation of a Spiritual World,—which without the addition of a misgiving conscience, is enough to shake some natures to their foundation,—is smoothly got over by others, who shall float over the black billows in their little boat of No-Distrust . . . " So also some have their little worlds upset, their smugness disturbed by Merton's invitations; they turn away because they choose neither to see nor hear. Poetry, they should bear in mind, is not a proprietary something from which a man Catholic or a truth Catholic is to be excluded. Truth itself is supremely Christian and Catholic, and in the last analysis all expression appraised as great (because it is cognizant of what is lasting as truth) is truly Catholic.

A reader, as well as a critic, should allow all his faculties to come into play in taking up a writer's word, in entering into his spirit. He opens Merton's volume and comes upon "unroom sleep," "voiceless curtain-deep," and "mermaid somnambules come sleep." There are frowns. Good. As long as they are not wrinkled sneers, hope remains that the import of the poem need not evaporate. The apparel of the poem being an easy symbolism, it is folly to let slip the opportunity to prepare, by invited musing, for the song of inner conquest from a near-despair. Is it not part of a man's spiritual rebirth to cease sleepwalking? It may be for good reason that the poem has the honor of first position in the volume.

Is the myth of Ariadne pale? Is it moony in either poet or reader to enter the world of old Greece to relive Ariadne's one high moment? Is she bloodless as Theseus (with

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* "Aubade—The Annunciation," a poem of twenty-seven lines, employs nineteen comparisons of which ten are similes, two are metaphors, and seven are personifications. One finds even figures within figures.

† Pope called this **prevention**, a fine term denoting unwarranted running ahead.

even his ship come alive) returns from the maze?

Like a thought through the mind
Ariadne moves to the window.
Arrows of light, in every direction,
Leap from the armor of the black-eyed captain.
Arrows of light
Resound within her like the strings of a guitar.

Nor is Merton aloof or aloft. He is in and of the apalling world of 1939, for example. The contrast between earth looked on from the stars—as white and beautiful and earth in 1939 running red with the tide of blood and earth, is pointed. It prepares for the lament of the closing lines:

As night devours our days,
Death puts out our eyes,
Towns dry up and flare like tongues
But no voice prophesies.

For all its exposure of Delphian hokum ("Shake me: I ring like a bank"), "The Oracle" is a sympathetic study in contrasted credulity of mankind. The effort shows progressing purpose in Merton: From consideration of the old Greek scene as such, he holds up one aspect of it to the light of reason and points up receptivity to the greatest message-bearer of all times, to the most important announcement of all for mankind. Contrast

Come up and light your harmless questions,
Burn them to the Brazen Face,
And wait, in terror, for the Brazen Voice . .

with the final lines:

But already, down the far, fast ladders of light
The stern astounding angel
Starts with a truer message,
Carrying a lily.

The examples of growing feeling, of maturing and inclusive sympathy, are multipliable. "Fugitive" especially succeeds in evoking ineffable sympathy for the mad half-Spaniard who hides "from a coffee-drinking Judas." The poet vividly flashes the man's rising hopes in a stanza which, by the way, puts one in mind of Ariel's "full Fathom Five":

Planted, like bulbs, in the wet earth of sleep
His eyes had started to sprout:
Sea-changing in his murk of dreaming blood,
And shining in his fathoms of ambition,
Bones had begun to turn to money.

How stark the realism of the man's reaction to the long-denied blessed light of day:

But now with secret agents out of mind
And mad sunstorm parrots out of memory,
Beyond two miles of jungle,
He only sees the sweetly drumming sun.

There is something in the man that will not die; there is also contrition and the old, almost forgotten habit of a believer in prayer. "Bamboo trees click in the wind like rosaries." Not mere description, not just accidental, that line; it signifies an essential phase of the man's tremendous inner struggle. At last the fullness of calm and order enters his soul:

And one by one are folded up
The treacherous, fly-catching flowers of his will.

The gamut of emotional drama is run. There need be no shock from the tellingly real "memory, a murderous rooster" and no misunderstanding of "coffee-drinking Judas." What overtakes mere admiration for the graphic portrayal here is a filling sense of the value and meaning of prayer. Compared to those of that crazed unfortunate, ordinary troubles appear petty; but should they convene to push a man to the brink, he may yet remember time's Fugitive praying in the Garden of Olives—the same who taught humanity how and when to raise the heart in prayer. Read thus *whole*, the poem brings for alertness its own reward.

A query often posed by the appraisers presents itself: If the meaning of a poem is not clear, if it is veiled in symbolism or metaphysics, is it poetry to all? Part of the answer is that poetry is as much intangible experience as it is tangible meaning. Discerning readers are not ready to lay aside Donne, Herbert, Marvell, Vaughan, Blake—good poets all—or the best of the moderns, including Eliot. While it is the word that counts, words are at best, to paraphrase Shelley, but feeble echoes of the inspired thought. They are cleansed of dross in the furnace of the poet's mind. They bear no distracting alloys of feeling. A poem can thus be for one reader rather much by sheer power of transmuted phrase and feeling. For another, only some understanding of the medium, the mold, or the convention can help. Devices and vogues come and go. The dream, the lay, the romance, the allegory, the conceit, the fantasy, the pastoral convention, the symbol—all of these have been of use in poetic composition. Poetry fosters a democracy of taste and form and type. There is poetry that is direct and poetry that is indirect. Regarding the latter it would be unwise to conclude that, not being as clear as a neon light, it has no claim to the name of poetry. Some modern poets make a fetish of obscurantism, gleefully hiding their nothings behind disconnected symbols and adopting a Parnassian cult of verbal curtaining. Their work may even pass for a time as poetry. "Tell 'em nothing," is their cry; their achievement, ditto. Merton is absolutely not with them.

If, then, Merton sees effectiveness in the use of a *poem*-metaphor, he has advanced beyond the simpler device of the *word*-metaphor. Shakespeare used a plain figure to express what winter can bring or do to man. There is no denying the directness and simplicity of "coughing drowns the parson's saw," but there it stops. It has served its purpose in the tally of winter's consequences. In Merton's poetry, with but few exceptions, thought proceeds from descriptive capture to a higher fixation of the idea first launched in such description. Credit is due any poet for adapting a vogue so as to point up otherwise dimly perceived ideas and experiences. In that sense there is no divorcing expression and idea, and Merton, no more than any other poet, is not to be denied the right to evolve his own media.

It is a foregone conclusion of rhetoric that language ascends with the plane of thought. In "Ash Wednesday" word and phrase must be grasped as symbols, or else the fearful contemplation comes nowhere. "Dirge," strikingly similar in mood and point, does not yield its import until the end, where the startling phrase "carsick amphitheaters" signifies a hollowness in living today. The dirge is for those who have eyes and see not, who have ears and hear not. It is for the stubborn of mind.

> What speeches do the birds make
> With their beaks, to the desolate dead?
> And yet we love these carsick amphitheaters,
> Nor hear our Messenger come home from hell
> With hands shot full of blood.

Even though expression mounts with some labor, as at times it does in Merton, it at least gets there. Even random study* brings more and more the impression of fit, facile locution, especially by charged figure and pointed implication. "The Greek Women" opens with these words:

> The ladies in red capes and golden bracelets
> Walk like reeds, and talk like rivers,
> And sigh, like Vichy water, in the doorways . . .

In "The Pride of the Dead" one reads of "the paper souls of famous generals" and of "tired emperors, stitched up for good, as black as leather" and of "the leaf-speech

* The author notes that his poems have almost the order in which they were written.

of some skinny Alexander." The ascetic in Merton rarely lets fall the humorous bit, but the poetic in him delights in such fresh and frank sketching. But to pause at the economy of Merton's poetic idiom is not full appraisal of his work. Like any good poet he trains his reader to seek the significant behind the black letters. In the first of these poems the poet keeps a reverence for the brave Greek heroes. No temptation here to gloss over matters flippantly such as that John Erskine succumbed to. One feels the sorry plight of the widows of the warriors and ponders in particular the sorrier case of Clytemnestra failing as wife. In the second poem the reader is one with the poet in unexpressed worry, in transcendent pathos borne along on the thought that the Egyptian dead piteously crave nothing more than a dirge "from the tinny harpstrings of the rain." If such versions leave the taste of persimmon and wormwood in the mouth of critics, let them swallow hard. There is no honey nor creamy curd in Markham's "The Man With the Hoe."

II.

It was remarked above that the later poetry of Merton alters noticeably in tone and reach. Here are heard the full chords of Catholic response and experience for the plain reason that the lines are from the soul of a man who has found something priceless which he would share. Many of the earlier poems rest with high phrasing and graphic portraiture and keep to intriguing but not always soul-touching topics. One may say with certainty that, as practice is still the best way to art, Merton does not, in later, and more recent efforts, disappoint the sympathetic heart and expectant mind wanting to be stirred, looking to grapple with something. For a reader's emotional and intellectual side there is growing satisfaction. Spiritual insight deepens, lyricism runs higher. For a critic to impute to Merton only withdrawal from the mundane or rapture in the spiritual is gross misjudgment. To illustrate, in "The Trappist Cemetery" are the lines:

> You need not hear the momentary rumors
> of the road
> Where cities pass and vanish in a single
> car
>
> . . . With roar and radio,
> Hurling the air into the wayside branches,
> Leaving the leaves alive with panic.

Clear as photography is that, and just as realistic for sound are the well-placed vowels, assonances, and alliterations; but all of it is only to prepare the soil of mind for the seed of message. That lively description of disturbed monastic peace is subtly expressive of more than mere detachment from the things of the world.

While Merton as a man and for his soul has chosen the better part, by now seven years ago, it strikes one that as a poet and for the souls of others he has in the years ahead a heroic role to play. He does in truth render appealingly sweet some aspects of withdrawal from worldly danger and confusion, but he will also seize upon bits of gospel narrative in his eagerness to bear and help bear the sweet yoke. Sometimes he will impulsively twitch the conscience; sometimes he will let love rule the lines, trusting all to the leavening of common sympathy. His approach and manner are surprisingly varied, considering the narrow scope. Mystic notes bearing on the great facts and stages of Redemption thrill Christian readers and prompt will and motive toward the ultimately Christian way of life. Though some may little note or care, he holds to the thought that it is of supreme importance still to follow after Christ.

Not all the poems are armchair reading for an idle moment. Lines are so compact and bristling that at times the thought is not at once let through. But as with Chaucer so with Merton; the gain in casting aside the cut-and-dried flowers of rhetoric is great. But where Chaucer enters the roily waters of physical realism and complacently studies

the struggling and complaining swimmers all around him, Merton takes to the clear pools of spiritual realism, looking to be of aid to the threshing and the floundering. Of these truths and experiences which need repeating and reliving, his poetry is a small treasure-house, to unlock which the reader must have the key.

Nor are Merton's subjects all of the religious life or from the Christian story. Just as in the first period some poems religious in character are found, so among the "abbey" poems are some struck from secular themes. Of the latter, two deserve a moment's notice as being of interest to local readers. "The Ohio River—Louisville" fills you with a sense of the tremendous silence of the river that shuts out the loud noise of city, train, outboards, dynamos. Then, imperceptibly almost, comes the nostalgic note of boys in swimming:

> The train goes through the summer quiet as paper,
> And, in the powerhouse, the singing dynamos
> Make no more noise than cotton.
> All life is quieter than the weeds
> On which lies lightly sprawling,
> Like white birds shot to death,
> The bathers' clothing.

And it is there for a reason: Only in the swimmers is anything heard—the throb of life in their bodies, the "salt voice of violence that whines, like a mosquito, in their simmering blood." It is the inspired turn to something beyond the scene itself that enhances the poem. In "Aubade—Lake Erie" the poet looks on the Indian water and the teeming land it washes and for no more than a moment has a homesick reminder of his native France. But again his business is elsewhere; his thought is not bound to place or time. Into this blooming area of ripening corn and bursting grape, of "hay-colored sun" and "innocent children loving the blue, sprayed leaves of childish life," come a "hundred dusty Luthers" who

> Search the horizon for the gap-toothed grin of factories,
> And grope, in the green wheat,
> Toward the wood winds of the western freight.

In the pursuit of Merton's thought attention dare not wander. Though he has some tendency toward explication, he affords pleasure by involution and figuration, insofar as they put his powers of imagination and expression to the test. Poem after poem by easy stages invites, surprises, challenges, persuades. A great-hearted, merry St. Thomas More could say that Salome danced the head off John, but in "St. John Baptist," writing in the spirit of the fiery Precursor himself, Merton foregoes humor for a momentous if scathing message. Like so many hunters, his words go stalking after the unheeding, the unbelieving of all times. John's work as a prologue to the Divine Drama is set forth in matchless rhythms of query and reply which bespeak the unfailing courage and purpose on the part of the gaunt locust-eater. The realization is cause sufficient for the poet to go to John, asking for consecrated hands a full ministry that will also spend itself to the last and for all in Christ. Similarly, in "A Whitsun Canticle" the movement of word and thought keeps pace. From rejoicing in the work of the seasons for abundance, from a skipping of the heart in the presence of spring and the plenty of summer, the song rises to a loftier pitch of exultation which is yet marked by humility: For the poet, realizing that it is altogether human to enjoy the balm of oncoming summer, asks only that it will not make him or his brethren "stumble and break the bottles of our Pentecost." To project thought so as to let the resulting experience and feeling serve as floodlights is not only a function of poetry in general but a repeated achievement with Merton in particular.

One thinks of a poem with the title of "Ode to the Present Century" as having for us some validity. So it has, despite the composite of startling phrase, of insistent

and taunting challenge, which retards acceptance. Epithets strong and bitter are not to be excused by the logic of severe ailments calling for severe remedies. Terms such as "dirty garrisons of sin," "this wolf-world, this craven zoo," and "our monstrous century" make readers wince but also wonder if mere indictment (which is in essence preachment) is the stuff of poetry. I heard Robert Frost remark* that the strength of intellect kept much of Emerson's verse from being great poetry; the force of idea was too strong. It is the one danger Merton often comes close to and the one he just as often avoids. But there is yet to consider that such terms, evincing a spirit unafraid to come to grips with human ills, lose something of their tone of pessimism and indictment. They represent ready analysis and bring effective purgation. One feels, however, that poetry should not be thought to have for a given subject or time any such equipment as delicate wings. The true strength of "Ode to the Present Century" is not in the thought that Merton strives or hopes for the best, but rather in his demonstration, by the twofold power of word and spirit, of how matters could best eventuate for man. It means the way of Christ the Vine; we, as branches, must live in and with Him. It means converting greed and hunger of body to humility of spirit. Charity, the reaching out to others, is humility.

Revealing as a study of spiritual struggle is "The Biography." Among the longer poems of the volume, it suggests a soul's turmoil in New York, Cuba, Cambridge—a looking backward, only to be confronted with the essential truth of existence:

> And thus I learn that I was born,
> Not now in France, but Bethlehem.

The poem has echoes of "The Hound of Heaven." But where Thompson personalizes, Merton universalizes:

> Oh, read the verses of the loaded scourges,
> And what is written in their terrible remarks . . .

It is for us all that the poet says:

> And yet with every wound You robbed me of a crime,
> And as each blow was paid with blood,
> You paid me also each great sin with greater graces.
> For even as I killed You,
> You made Yourself a greater thief than any in Your company,
> Stealing my sins into Your dying life,
> Robbing me even of my death.

With double meaning Thomas Merton can be called a poet of spirit.

Constantly measuring human aspiration, human desperation, Merton can in the same line weep and smile with sympathy alike for the proud and low, the rich and poor, the satisfied and the groping, the befriended and the betrayed. No other poet of the present day or since Browning's has bared heart or shared feeling so generously. In "Aubade—Harlem" the poet is a persistent *alter Christus*, a father of the poor, a washer of the unwashed. For the beholder the black tragedy of Harlem becomes a spiritual sobering. The shadow of the Cross and the sound of driven spikes must come to New York's "cages of keyless aviaries," because "four flowers of blood have nailed Him to the walls of Harlem."

When a poet makes his readers uncomfortably aware of perpetuated injustice; when he makes them count "against the fearful light, the ragged dresses of the little children"; when they are constrained to agree that "the white girls sing as shrill as water, the black girls talk as quiet as clay,"† they may want to close the books of social science. Here is persuasion that without the

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* In an address before the Ohio Poetry Society assembled in Cleveland in 1940.
† From "Song of Our Lady of Cobre."

noise of clashing theory and hammering opinion settles in the mind and calls to the love that may be there—the love of a fellow creature who is from God even as all mankind is.

From the sweetness of Bethlehem to the gall of Calvary Merton continues the story scattered under various titles. One is "The Betrayal," a moving recital of the ignominious suffering whereby men were redeemed. Not just Judas, Pilate, or Caiphas; not the rough soldiers but all of us with equal malice dug the Hands.

> With little smiles as dry as dice
> We whipped and killed You for Your lovely world.

For its lasting benefit the betrayal is another *felix culpa*.

"Clairvaux" merits special attention in its significance of interlocking detail, its fervor mounting as contemplation recreates the Abbey, as veneration colors the remembrance. The Abbey is almost personified. Devoted recollection yields to imagery and thought which in turn gather to soar with grace and ease to that which is beyond the physical vision, beyond the contemplation of the earthbound mind. But the world is not of kindred spirit with a man whose heart has found joy and peace in glorifying God in whatever simple way it best can. It is a heart, too, that craves more opportunity for carrying out the task of love.

> Oh holy Bernard, wise in brotherlove,
> . . . prune and tie us
> Fast, trim us in sure and perfect arbors of stability and rule.
> Oh peal your quiet unpretension and succession, time, your seasons
> No-hurrying us to our sweet, certain, everlasting home;
> Paying your bells, like Christ our price, oh, yes, like the Peace-blood's
> Ransom into our hearts . . .

That is hardly "surrealistic" clutter to thinking readers. The whole poem grows into an exultation in, an exaltation of a place and time for prayer. To speak of it disdainfully as the reaction of withdrawal from the world is unreasoning. Say rather here is a Christ-captured soul hoping not only to share but also to show so that others may behold the beauty of His house and of the soul that truly dwells therein. Where such a motive rules expression, poetry reaches out, far out in time.

III.

The line between poetry and prose is clearly drawn; that between poetry and philosophy or between poetry and theology is not. Granting that the latter lines are sometimes crossed by Merton, is the higher aim in so doing to be discounted? Catholic theology is universal because it includes the substance of all truth. It is an integral philosophy of life, embracing the knowledge of God, of angels, of man, of all things in the universe. Had they cared to, the saints could have written most brilliant poetry. As a matter of record some did write such. To sing the unlimited song of God in Himself or as Man or as seen in the things of His creating, is no unworthy occupation for man. Writing admired from the dim dawn of literature down to the present day attests to that. To some critics, however, the difference between bald statement of theological truth and the use of emotionally illustrated truth that turns the heart Godward is not clear. One must conclude that they are allergic to Catholic poetry of which there is at present an excelling and increasing amount. Their voices, hoarse with a narrowing attitude and a willing bias, sound ominous in man's murky night. Their pens, dipped in planned oversight, flow with the easy vaporings of the unseeing.

These spokesmen should note that while Merton warns, he also raises up, so that with the bitter wine there is also the sweet. Standing firm on the solid platform of truth and faith, Merton, like another John the Baptist, uses rebuke and exaltation for increased seeing of that truth. This it is that makes "An Argument—Of the Passion

of Christ" unique. It is a poem autobiographical for all—an expression of every Christian's bitter personal sorrow.

In his newest poems Merton is succeeding with a free line that has the rhythms and cadence of speech.* Smooth rounds of thought are spurs to interest in the resulting divisions. There is a pattern, but it is not metric nor stanzaic. Chief reliance is on a pronounced but varied sense-rhythm, changing tempo, melody of statement, the effect being comparable to that in a symphony which, gathering momentum after a brief announcement, comes into its own with fuller, more sweeping utterances. Such fabric, noted in "St. John Baptist," is more apparent in his later compositions, notably "Natural History," "Landscape: Wheatfields," and "A Letter to America."† It is not the simplest matter to move from the literal and visible to the meaning of things not seen. Merton accomplishes the leap with some smoothness. The ever-present danger is that he may over-simplify. There will be the hasty charge that he is didactic. It should be remarked that Merton has finally learned not to presuppose a right disposition and understanding, but actually to promote these. Thus at least the void of ignorance and un-will thriving in apathy becomes somewhat filled. The Master used the lilies of the field for effective analogy, yet who refers to Him as didactic? By homely comparisons Merton, too, reaches his purpose be it to

> . . . learn such ways to God from creepy things,
> And sanctity from a black-and-russet worm

or be it the symbolized harvest that "arms us with ripeness for the wagons of our Christ." In the last of these newest poems he considers that richly endowed America is being murdered, but it may yet be (a monk cannot know of these matters) that

> . . . the cities have begun to heal . . .
> Maybe the glorious children have rebelled
> And rinsed their metal slums
> In the cold drench of an incalculable grief.
> Maybe their penitence has . . . learned . . .
> Within the doors of their confessionals,
> Their new, more lasting Lexingtons!

Strong words of worry, these, but also the cogent words of zeal.

The pervading theme of the better half of Merton's poetry is that man is capable of a wisdom alert in the love and service of God. By that set of mind and heart comes salvation in any sense of the word. In all things the life of virtue is to be man's best objective. Merton appealingly reminds his readers that God has wonderfully made all so that man, His creature of most concern, can keep sight of and pursue that objective. Designed as they are to man's use and God's glory, all things betoken His loving wish and will. By such perception some lead holy lives; by stronger argument, everyone can live a conceivably better life than possible without that perception.

The mournful thought is that too few are disposed to hear a gospel set in words the like of which one may not in his day be given to read—words that will not soon fade in acceptability or in power to stir the ready soul. Make no mistake about it: Merton repays the open mind. Rich, even if fleeting experiences come in a first reading, and when one returns to the poems for the recapture, they throng once more, brilliant and quickening, because vital. The poet's urgent sincerity assures that much.**

It was said that Merton's expression and manner bear some influence from Hopkins and Eliot, but with or without that benefit his work stands with the best in our decade. It exhibits enough modernity to allay the suspicions of even those whose false yardsticks measure his effort as spiritless, as

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* Merton uses four and five successive unstressed syllables in a line. Sometimes, too, there will be three and four consecutive stresses.

† These three poems are not included in the volume under discussion.

** Merton dedicates his work to no living mortal but to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Queen of Poets.

milk and water, as limiting thought (oh, rather prettily) to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Nothing, they must conclude, nothing at all that really matters for man in time and eternity took place in those two cities.

One misses the poem of length, the long, strong flight, but Merton is young. The promise is real, the harvest lies golden, and art is long. Where are the Homers and Vergils and Miltons of today? The pace of life may be too swift, tensions too strong, disciplines too lax for the miracle of epic or near-epic composition. A monk's time is far from being his own, for he thinks of it as God's time.

Merton is leading to the road of righteous thinking, to the taking and keeping of which road Christians should give all the more thought. His poetry is unfinished only in the sense that its matter and spirit must be finished in us. The whole of the Christian story to which he gives much thought, closes only when time's cup is full. It may be more than a warning, then, to those who deify science, when he says "the thieving stars may come and steal our lives." It is a terrifying thought. If man continues heedless of his Creator or even of the night which is closing about his world, the final atomic explosion will not much matter. We are all united, as Chesterton put it, in a democracy of eternal danger. Well worth having around, in such a fearful pass, is a poet with advice and aid, who in liberal volume will give of his word and spirit so as to correct the centrifugal in the world and mind of man. He should be a poet who takes us gently by the hand so that we go, confident that he will lead to new pastures where mind and spirit may feed. He senses that prevailing thought needs revitalizing in Christ. He looks to cleanse the human spirit to render it more receptive to the divine. He will in truth be the *seer* who, imbued with the spirit of Christ, aids in drawing all things upward. He will be the prophet theocentric in vision and effort, and therefore most efficacious for the groping inquiry of today. That man may well be Thomas Merton, poet for and of the soul.

The Passing of a Scientist

by Henry F. Birkenhauer, S. J.

ON September 10, 1937, *The Catholic Universe Bulletin* carried an article beginning:

Noted Savant Declares
His Faith in God

Non-Catholic Resigns
Nazi Post to Accept
Papal Honor

VIENNA—(NC)—A scientist so distinguished that he had been awarded the Nobel prize and is one of the savants named by His Holiness Pope Pius XI to the new Pontifical Academy of Science, although a non-Catholic, has just made a public confession of faith in religious belief.

He is Professor Max Planck, one of the greatest savants in the domain of natural science . . .[1]

On October 13 of last year, *Time Magazine* wrote the epilogue to the long series of Max Planck's discoveries:

> The author of the quantum theory lived long enough to see his discovery affect all branches of science and all human life. Last week Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck, 89, one of history's greatest discoverers, died.[2]

To call Planck one of the greatest savants in the domain of natural science and one of history's greatest discoverers is not to praise him beyond his due, for his Quantum Theory is the basis of a large part of twentieth century physics. An international authority on atomic structure, Neils Bohr, writes, for example:

> Scarcely any other discovery in the history of science has produced such extraordinary results within the short span of our generation as those which have directly arisen from Max Planck's discovery of the elementary quantum of action.[3]

It was in 1900 that Professor Planck proposed his quantum theory as an explanation of a problem of heat radiation. He originated the idea that energy is radiated in small packets or photons and not continuously; but in his treatment on the second law of thermodynamics was involved a more revolutionary concept, the notion that these packets of energy are emitted according to the law of statistical probability.

The classical physics of the nineteenth century had assumed that there was no such thing as chance in physical events, that if one knew the position and velocity of all the particles in the universe at a given moment, it would be possible to predict all future movements of these particles. Planck's work destroyed the rigor on this concept. His ideas as developed by Bohr, Einstein, and Schroedinger may be used to predict the movement of aggregates but only on the underlying assumption that the movement of the individual is due entirely to chance.

Meanwhile, confusion had arisen in the philosophy of science itself. Because of the supposed rigor of nineteenth century physics, claiming that it could predict if it knew sufficient facts, and because of the

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1. *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, Vol. LVIV, No. 11, p. 11.
2. *Time Magazine*, Vol. L, No. 15, p. 66.
3. Max Planck, *Where is Science Going?* translated by James Murphy, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1932, p. 18.

Kantian misconception of cause, scientific philosophy had identified causality with predictability. In other words, if a scientist could predict what a machine could do, causality was operating.

Many were not slow to draw the corollary from Planck's work that if predictability failed on the microscopic level, causality correspondingly failed too. Others there were who applied Planck's notion in a weird concept of free will. For them, freedom meant unpredictability. Therefore, the individual motions of molecules might be free while the movement of the whole would be determined. Planck himself saw his concept gain momentum among scientific thinkers and rushed to defend the true notion of human freedom and of physical causality. He himself wrote three books, *The Universe in the Light of Modern Physics*, *Where is Science Going?* and *The Philosophy of Physics*, to explain a saner notion of causality. Unfortunately in these books, Dr. Planck has tended towards identifying prediction with causality and therefore has often wielded ineffective weapons against his adversaries.

It is regrettable that Dr. Planck neglected the Scholastic approach to the problem of causality—the seeking of sufficient reason for change. Every new being requires a sufficient reason, and therefore the principle of causality is universal. Certain changes result from natural bodies; these act necessarily, in accord with their nature. Here predictability, at best an external sign of internal necessity, may be had. Other changes are due to human beings; these act freely, in accord with their nature. Predictability of their activities is moral certitude. The necessity of physical causality and the freedom of human causality can be established from facts available to all.

The world has indeed lost one of its finest scientists in the passing of Dr. Planck, a fair-minded, gifted man (unfortunately in the Kantian tradition) who would have been far better guided in his attempt to interpret natural causality correctly if he had followed the common-sense approach of a traditional philosophy.

Ode to a Shadow

Lean, withered, and soulless, yet you haunt
Every corner, man, or beast;
Death lurks in thy footsteps,
Your fleshless hand beckons ever on to the forlorn
And forgotten.
Though voiceless and bedridden you can swiftly
Grasp your victim with your pall;
Your voice may be the rumbling of a mountain
Monarch, or the wind menacing the tall
Pine tree.
You have a million eyes spying every creature
And aspects of dust that stirs upon this earth,
So lean, withered, and soulless, feared as a
Plague but loved by the poets.

—*Mario D'alanno*

Interlude

THE war was over; all of Europe was recovering from the exhilarating celebrations following VE Day. The people of Great Britain were doubly thankful, for, since the Americans had been leaving for some time now, England was their own again. Nature, seeming to sense the great joy in the hearts of the English people, was smiling as serenely on the little green isle that fall, as she was to frown on it during the fateful winter of 1946-7. The large cities seemed desolate as a war-weary people enjoyed their first holiday in six years. Not in sixty-four years had there been such weather in the Lake District—hotel space was at a premium.

Entirely unaware of such mundane matters as hotel rooms, two travelers were making their way along the road leading from Penrith to Windermere. The travelers, two American soldiers on leave from France, had taken the bus from Carlisle to Penrith and were now beginning to fulfill months of planning and hoping. With a three-shilling map as their Baedeker they were starting on their own Cook's Tour, a walking tour of the English Lake District.

No footpath seemed too obscure for them to investigate, no sign or gravestone too insignificant to read, no tavern too commercial for their romantic spirits. Late afternoon found them weary but happy, resting their burning feet on the banks of Lake Ullswater and wondering where they would spend the night.

While they were thus engaged a large Humber drew up on the road just above them, and a gentleman in the uniform of an R.A.F. Group Commander asked if he might give them a lift. For the next hour they were entertained by tales and legends of the countryside and in particular of its literary heritage. All the places of interest along the road were pointed out and explained. As if by mutual agreement the late war was completely ignored. When the time came to leave the car at Patterdale they were given instructions on how to reach Patterdale Hall where they would be able to spend the night in surroundings as picturesque as most of the district's legends.

Patterdale Hall was a large, low cottage covered by a neatly-clipped thatched roof and set back from the road in a grove of ancient beech trees. It could normally accommodate eight guests, but because the tourists seemed to be flocking to the larger towns, the two Americans were the only guests at the Hall.

It was already dusk when the travelers entered the Hall, and while a light meal was being prepared, they had the unique experience of bathing in a large wooden tub in front of a blazing fire. After they had finished eating, the innkeeper invited them to join him and his wife before a cheery log fire in the spacious room which was apparently responsible for the name Hall being given to the cottage.

The atmosphere of opulence and age emanating from the massive, square oak logs, and the shadows cast by the dancing flames provided the proper setting for story telling. The innkeeper seemed well aware of this, for after seating the company around the fire and giving each a generous tankard of ale, he cast a few handfuls of chestnuts around the edge of the fire, lit his pipe, and started to talk.

He talked of princes, of poets, and of peasants. He talked of the good people who lived in the trunks of trees and of the bad people who inhabited Lake Ullswater. He talked of the battles that had been fought here between the Scots and the English and of the English and German planes that had crashed in the vicinity.

And while he talked the chestnuts dis-

appeared, the fire burned low, and the tankards ran dry from time to time. When finally he led his guests to their room, they were ready for the deep, soft beds and slept as soundly as complete physical and mental exhaustion permits.

In the morning when they were again on their way to Lake Windermere the two travelers agreed that the England of books, the rustic, hospitable England of fable, was here in the wild backlands much more than in the cities and ports. —*J. A. G.*

Theatre

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

EMPLOYING the familiar formula of the almost hoplelessly naive girl plus the worldy-wise and eligible young man, Anita Loos has managed—but just barely—to fashion a reasonably entertaining comedy called *Happy Birthday*.

The play was first presented to an audience in October, 1946, and it is still playing to happy throngs of Broadway theatregoers. The chief reason for their happiness, it would seem, is that Helen Hayes has the starring role and that Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rodgers are the producers.

All the action takes place in a Jersey City bar. The play ends with the girl, Addie, and the young man, Paul, together under a table, convinced that they should be able to make a full life together. During the course of the play the customary barroom "characters" appear in generous quantities—the understanding bartender, the solitary drinker, the exuberant sailor, the lonely young lady, and all the stock types with a few others of Miss Loos' own invention. It's all quite crowded.

Even at what is probably the comedy high-point—when Miss Hayes, on drunken legs, climbs up on the bar for a little song—the play still falls short. The plot situation creaks just a bit too much; to do anything with it requires a truly deft touch, a touch of almost genius. Miss Loos is saving hers, which is really probably quite discerning of her. With Helen Hayes and Oscar Hammerstein to give an aura to a play, Broadway audiences seem to consider those advantages sufficient.

Another tried and true laugh provoker is the fact that the bar is in Jersey City. Like the implications directed at Brooklyn *Happy Birthday* worries the Jersey City angle in the manner of a frenzied puppy with an old shoe. Precisely why Jersey City should suggest humor is something of a mystery, yet audience reaction to *Happy Birthday's* Jersey City Saloon was most enthusiastic.

If the play had had lesser names behind it and an unknown cast, it is likely that it would have died an early death. An extended tour, even with the play as it now is, could conceivably impair its health. *Happy Birthday* will not be celebrated for any great length of time. The cake isn't fresh enough. —*Charles Eder*

Program Notes

NOT the least of the multiple perplexing difficulties which confront the concert virtuoso as well as the amateur recitalist is the selection of a satisfactory program. At the outset it may appear to be a rather trivial concern, but a deeper consideration of the matter will reveal such a conclusion to be entirely erroneous. The success or failure of many a concert may be directly attributed to effective or ineffective programming.

A recital program is intricately designed to achieve various purposes; despite this, it has the appearance of transparent simplicity. First, it must represent a panorama of musical thought ranging from Bach to Shostakovitch. Second, it must possess what may be colloquially termed "ear-appeal"; that is to say, the selections included must produce such effects upon the audience as will sustain interest throughout the entire concert. Third, the program must serve as a vehicle for the performing soloist, revealing him in contrasting moods: the ascetic classicist, the romantic poet, the dynamic technician, the mystic impressionist, and finally the glamorous virtuoso, the brilliant impressario.

All these requirements must be met of necessity, and to accomplish this demands the expenditure of much time and labor. The musician must choose from the vast treasury of masterpieces those numbers which best display his abilities, are most suited to his temperament, while at the same time do not disclose any of his weaknesses. The rigid classicist, for example, would never program Albeniz whose compositions require sheer technical brilliance for their effect; instead, he might perform Sibelius or even Franck in whose music interpretation is the dominating factor. In like manner the entire program is constructed; every detail is worked out so that the net result is a well balanced, interesting, and entertaining evening.

Now, why all this deep study? Why not play just anything which is appealing? The reasons are obvious. The soloist desires primarily to entertain his audience, but he also wishes to acquaint them with as many phases of great music as possible. He wants that audience to appreciate his program to the extent that they will wish to hear it again, and—here comes the rub—he wants them not only to desire to hear the program but *him* playing it.

Few people realize the amount of actual labor an artist spends on his program. Every effect is anticipated; every flaw is removed before the musician walks on the stage. Not only are the technical and interpretive phases perfect but the selection peerless. For every musician realizes that, no matter how great his talent, before the general public he is only as good as his program.

—*W. J. Roscelli*

Catholic Leadership and Education

by Aloysius Goblowsky

THIS paper will attempt to clarify three points: first, that the concept of Catholic leadership covers a vast range; second, that within its own sphere the Catholic college is effectively developing Catholic leadership; finally, that most of the confused thinking about Catholic leadership would be avoided by achieving a correct understanding of Catholic action. The last of these points needs clarification in order to set the Catholic college in its true perspective with reference to the Catholic leader.

The fundamental fact concerning leadership is simple, "a man has someplace to go";[1] its corollary is, "somebody has to lead." These are the two basic ideas inherent in the term. As creatures of God we have two "places to go," two objectives. We have our eternal happiness to earn and our temporal welfare to secure. As Catholics we have the additional objective of "expanding the kingdom of God on Earth." Consequently, the Catholic leader has a threefold activity: Spiritual, Temporal, and Spiritual-Temporal.[2]

Catholic action is an *outward* movement, developed from an *inward* motivation, that attempts to embrace the world and draw it close to the bosom of Holy Mother, the Church. For this reason Catholic action is most obvious on the first and third levels. Yet the Catholic leader must be so completely and integrally permeated by the spiritual that the level of temporal activity will be thoroughly under its sway. His performance on the second level, therefore, depends upon a spiritual preparation. Catholic action, accordingly, does away with the possibility of *duality* in Catholics whereby they might act as Catholics in Church and forget that they are Catholics in their daily activities.

It is very important to realize that the training (or schooling) involved in the preparation of a leader can be informal; for, indeed, the vast majority of people do not go to college, and so too their leaders need not. Necessarily, also, the college graduate who aspires to leadership will be able to influence only a small percentage of the population. Of equal importance is the fact that the college receives the student with many habits, ideas, prejudices, and traits that were acquired during almost two decades of his life. In view of these circumstances the college cannot judiciously be investigated in isolation from the culture, institutions, and other environmental factors that influence it and the student body. The Catholic college is not instituted to take the place of parents, families, parish priests, childhood companions, and elementary and secondary schools. In the measure that these forces have failed, the college is inevitably less effective. In the measure that these forces have succeeded, the college can be more effective. With these preliminary considerations in mind, we may properly find the Catholic college open for investigation.

On the first and third levels distinguished by Maritain, that is, on the levels of the Spiritual and the Spiritual-Temporal, the philosophy of education adopted by any college is of paramount importance. In this

respect the Catholic college holds an enviable position: the objective data of the sciences and other studies, the Catholic college shares in common with all other similar institutions; but it offers in addition the peculiar and exclusive advantage of correct philosophy joined to the true religion. The work of the Catholic college, consequently, is based on the philosophically certain definition of a student: Man is a rational animal with an immortal soul. Consistently, its educational objectives are both this-worldly and other-worldly. In its hierarchy of values the knowledge most worthwhile is knowledge about God. Since the soul is immortal, salvation transcends all other objectives; but in so far as salvation of the soul depends upon certain earthly objectives, these latter become very important. The essential order of studies in a Catholic college must be: Theology, Philosophy, Science. In theory at least, therefore, the Catholic college is preeminent in the education that it offers.

How does this philosophy of education work out in practice? The person who has never had the doubtful pleasure of attending a secular college might take the practical achievement for granted; but as one who has been exposed to the philosophic chaos of the secular college, I can testify that it is amazing to see the simplicity with which the entire curriculum of a Catholic college is permeated by Catholic thought. There is everywhere evidence of a clear-cut, definite philosophy that integrates the various subjects and provides unity for the entire process. Father William J. McGucken, S. J., in his *The Philosophy of Catholic Education* quotes Howard Mumford Jones, a non-Catholic, thus:

> Roughly speaking the problem does not rise in the Catholic educational tradition, or if it does arise, it does not arise in the same way. The Catholic university may be objective in matters of pure science, but in the humanities it is not unpartisan and it does not try to be. The core of the Catholic system is theology, theology in turn conditions Catholic ethics and Catholic philosophy; and the Catholic point of view in the interpretation of history and literature is unmistakable. Indeed it is precisely because the Church does not desire to entrust the question of values to irreligious hands that Catholic institutions of higher learning exist. There is a definite point of view which if it avoids dogma, implies doctrine; and consequently Catholic education in the humanities has a certainty with which one may quarrel, but which in contrast to the confusion of mind among non-Catholic educational leaders is admirable.[3]

Even casual observation will bear out the truth of this view. Indeed, the Catholic college is very frank and open in the discussion of all social, ethical, political, and religious problems. The textbooks pertaining to these problems make good use of the papal encyclicals in laying out the Christian treatment of them. Both the curriculum and the instructions based on it are adequate when judged in relation to the general achievement of American education. But the precise point is that such a standard is unsatisfactory, for the general concept of education in America is inadequate. Under the old dispensation, educators had a clear and concrete idea as to what constituted an educated man; this was the objective of the *Ratio Studiorum*. American secular education, however, abandoned this concept and substituted a confusion of departmental

Editor's Note: This essay was written by Mr. Goblowsky for the Midwest Jesuit Intercollegiate English Contest, 1947-48 and was awarded seventh place among the entries from nine Jesuit Colleges. Although Mr. Goblowsky has treated the subject of his essay well his views are not necessarily conclusive. The Quarterly will gladly publish any communication or comments from its readers either substantiating or disagreeing with the authors point of view.

credits as the criterion. Unfortunately the Catholic college has been forced by circumstances to make certain concessions of a similar sort, but at least it has retained clarity of objective.

It must also be thoroughly appreciated that even for the Catholic student, who is the one developed under the system described, attitudes and habits of person are an important factor in determining the amount of spiritual enlargement he will assimilate from the system. If he has had a good up-bringing in Catholic principles, he will readily improve himself by "the thrilling and thoroughly satisfying experience of exploring them intelligently and being able to accept them."[4] On the other hand, if he has many bad habits, if he has un-Christian prejudice and an excessively secularistic attitude, the Catholic educational process will be impeded in its work. Consequently, if the student fails to come out of college impressed with his glorious Faith, ready to do battle for it, willing to learn more and more about it, and ambitious to spread it to the ends of the world, does the college fail?

The Catholic college affords abundant opportunity to avoid such failure: retreats, Masses, the examples of priests and nuns, and thousands of wholesome exhortations in addition to competent guidance in secular studies. It is likewise prolific with organizations of advantage to the student: sodalities, intercollegiate associations for various social and intellectual activities, schools of Catholic action, student unions, and the like. If the student ignores these, does the college fail?

Most important of all, the Catholic college provides the student with the ethics, the doctrines, the social thought of the Church; history reports the errors and tragedies of man, and side by side are the principles of justice taught by the Church through the ages. The students come to know current problems. They are shown that the first law is charity; they know that all men are brothers in Christ. If they neglect to act, does the college fail?

No, the college does not fail; the student fails through omission. There are many reasons for the fact that Catholic students exhibit such shortcomings, even in Catholic colleges. In spiritual matters, they sometimes are lax because the culture they live in has seeped into their lives. To change that environment by the return of a truly Christian culture will require generations, though there is good hope that the world has seen its hollowness and is beginning to turn in the direction of Christianity. In the meantime, however, we must not overlook the fact that the press, the movies, the standards of the nation, and education prior to college are all forces in shaping the college product. Students spend most of their lives outside the college, in the midst of such forces. Catholic students would indeed be remarkable if they were totally unaffected by their environment. The marvel, rather, is that so many students are sufficiently impressed by what the Catholic college offers spiritually that they resolutely rise above their environment.

Another plain fact is that Catholic college graduates cannot go out into the world and sweep it into the "City of God" simply because the world does not want them to do so and actively resists the attempt. People are easily led where they want to go, and for this reason the non-Catholic leaders who offer materialistic values find a ready following. To teach Catholic college students "all that the world today demands of them as Catholics," accordingly, would amount to a choice between leading with a rejection of Catholicism and not leading with a retention of Catholicism.

With respect to the training of the intellect, individual initiative, and personal responsibility, there is much that is excellent in Catholic colleges; but there is not as much as could be achieved under more favorable circumstances. As previously indicated, Catholic colleges have sacrificed a good deal because of outside pressure. The greatest obstacle to a readjustment is probably the ideal of mass education, even

though this in itself be a praiseworthy objective. In the face of its validity and actuality, Catholic colleges cannot set standards so high that only the better students could attend; those rejected would enter secular schools, and as a consequence the Catholic college would defeat its own purpose.

Since, then, intellectual standards for admission to the Catholic college must be roughly comparable to those of the non-Catholic college, enlargement of the roll must be accepted. With such enlargement, adequate intellectual training naturally becomes more difficult; and the difficulty is aggravated by the fact that Catholic colleges are financially unable to afford the increase in facilities and equipment that would help to offset the congestion.

Despite all these handicaps, however, this much can be said with certainty about Catholic colleges: they are the only colleges capable of satisfactory training in the humanities. They definitely do require initiative, accuracy in speech, logic in reasoning, and, what is foreign to secular schools, a solution to problems rather than a mere recognition of them. It is not too much to say that the very logic instilled by the Catholic college makes its graduate a man distinguished from the rank and file of his contemporaries.

Perhaps the same adherence to unswerving principle makes the Catholic graduate unacceptable as a leader in some quarters. Even though the assertion sounds unreasonable, there is evidence to support it. For example, consider what Hutchins has to say about American higher education:

> Yet we live in a world that is not merely unintellectual but anti-intellectual as well. Even the universities are anti-intellectual. The college, we say, is for social adaption; the university is for vocational adjustment. Nowhere does insistence on intellectual problems as the only problems worthy of a university's consideration meet such opposition as in the universities themselves. We try to adjust students to life by giving them information about it, though we know the information will be archaic when they graduate. We try to adjust students to their life work by telling them how a professional man operates; we seldom bother to tell them why. The result is a course of study which is anti-intellectual from beginning to end.
>
> A student may, then, enter a professional school without ever having been compelled to think, without, in short, being educated. In the same innocent condition he may enter a learned profession. We cannot wonder that the learned professions are no more learned than they are.[5]

It might be remarked in this same connection that the Catholic graduate often lacks the favor not only of non-Catholics but even of his own. That Catholic unity is not as complete as it could be outside of the strictly religious sphere is an observable fact, and the history of our country helps in large measure to explain the circumstance. Catholicism spread throughout America by means of some twenty immigrant nationalities. Exploitation of these groups forced them into little "foreign colonies," an occurrence which impressed upon their minds their national origins more than their religion as a binding force. Ethnocentricism, even though to a less degree, is still a characteristic of American Catholicism. The decline of immigration is curtailing it, and various measures of the hierarchy and the National Catholic Welfare Conference are developing greater unity. The coming generations doubtless will see such consciousness of nationality totally obliterated; when that happy day arrives, Catholic unity will be a fact socially, as it is now spiritually.

Another aid to understanding the lack of Catholic leadership is obscured by the characterization of ours as "a disillusioned and frightened world." The partial justification of such an estimate does not remove

the fact that in many respects our world can be and is quite the opposite. We live in an age of arrogance, of excessive confidence in merely human abilities, of inordinate pride in the efficacy of science. Our doctrines, our logic, our methods, our God are regarded by the non-Catholic world as a "religious luxury and a scientific absurdity."[6] The age of materialism, relativism, skepticism, positivism in which we live has built a huge wall between the Catholic and the rest of the world; and for this reason, Father Farrell concludes, the written and spoken word is not very effective in changing the situation.[7] Personal example remains the most effective means of influencing such a hostile audience.

We must also remember that the cultural heritage of this country is English and Protestant to a large extent; discrimination against Catholics is still a reality. The mere fact of the growth of the Church in recent years has caused bigotry to raise its evil head. "Until thirty years ago even the municipal public schools preferred non-Catholic teachers";[8] more accurately, it might be said that such preference exists in many regions to this very day. In political life the contemporary scene exhibits the age-old story of Catholics staying in the background to avoid trouble for the Church. The occasion for such retirement has been oft repeated, from the War of Independence down to 1939, when James Farley was asked not to run for the United States presidency for fear of a repetition of the debacle of 1928. It can be urgently insisted that recognition of the too probable consequences of braving Protestant hostility is an important basis for the timidity alleged against Catholic college students and graduates. A too sedulous "protection" of Catholic students is not the reason for the disparity between their own performance as leaders and that of non-Catholic graduates; the plain fact is that the latter do not face such hostility but profit instead by attitudes of receptivity toward their guidance.

A most important point in the controversy, therefore, lies in the opinion that "the Catholic college, and the hierarchy choke leadership by forbidding them (students) to discuss important matters with students of secular universities."[9] Sponsors of this opinion apparently do not appreciate the necessity or prudence of the measure to which exception is taken. The National Federation of Catholic College Students, wherein the objection was brought to pointed example, is definitely a Catholic body. Everything that organization does, therefore, represents the Church and is so interpreted by the public at large; this is especially true when it does something wrong. Any error by the organization, consistently, could do serious damage to the Catholic cause. The secular universities, on the other hand, have no doctrines, except that all doctrines are absurd; so that such students represent no one nor anything, and the universities are not judged by the errors made.

Certainly the Catholic college does not wish to purchase a title to such anonymity by rejection of its principles. First of all, under divine Providence it could not thus flee into the arms of error. Secondly, it would not desire the immediate result achieved; it would gain social acceptability through the loss of the very elements that make Catholic leadership the only hope for the world. The risk is foolish even to contemplate. Apart from such conjecture, there are many better ways of accomplishing the objective. Jacques Maritain, furthermore, warns that there is a danger inherent for Catholics in a misguided application of Catholic action to the political sphere:

> The extreme care which the Church exercises not to let Catholic action be contaminated, even the least bit, by political action, corresponds to the nature of things. It would be the ruin of a fundamental truth of the Gospels, the ruin of the distinction of the things which are Caesar's and those which are God's, and as a consequence it would inevitably be a catastrophe, as a matter of fact, if Catholic action were itself to

become engaged in the affairs of the day and in political struggles (except when it is a question of defending, on certain precise points, quite superior to the conflicts of parties and of political forces, interests specifically moral and religious).[10]

In conclusion it may be said that Catholic educators themselves are not wholly satisfied with the Catholic college. The truly Catholic college does not exist yet: that is, the Catholic college as it would be conceived and developed if Catholic educators had an entirely free hand. To achieve the ideal, more funds, greater independence from secular schools, improved preparatory schooling, a more confident laity are necessary. For the present there is satisfaction in the fact that the Catholic college is more than holding its own with other institutions in preparing leaders. For the future, since American Catholic culture is vigorous and beginning to evolve a confidence in its own powers,[11] there is ground for optimistic hope that the leadership emanating from the Catholic college will be even more militant and widely accepted in the secular world.

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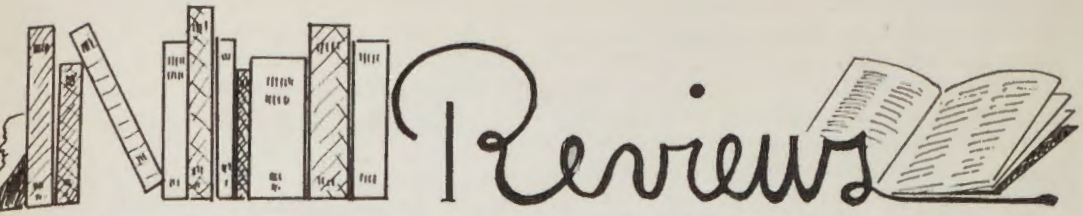
1. Walter Farrell, O.P., *A Companion to the Summa*, IV, 116.
2. Jacques Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 195.
3. "General Education: Its Nature, Scope and Essential Elements," *Proceedings of the Institute for Administrative Officers of Higher Institutions*, VI, 43-44.
4. E. R. Scanlan, "Catholic Colleges and Catholic Leaders," *America*, LXXVII (May 17, 1947), 178.
5. Robert M. Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America*, pp. 52-53.
6. Walter Farrell, O.P., "The Twentieth Century Apostle," *Thomist*, X, No. 2 (April, 1947), 133.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
8. Edna Beyer, "Prospects for Catholic Scholarship," *America*, LXXVII (February 1, 1947).
9. M. M. McLaughlin, "Catholic College Students Again," *America*, LXXVII (September 13, 1947), 655.
10. *Scholasticism and Politics*, pp. 210-211.
11. For an excellent discussion of the contribution by American Catholics to our national culture, see Theodore Maynard, *The Story of American Catholicism*, chapter 28.



Proud Destiny, by Lion Feuchtwanger, Viking Press, New York, 1947, 625 pages.

THE past master of the historic novel again weaves an engaging tale against the brilliant background of one of the most fascinating cities of history—Paris. The cold grey shadow of Revolution had not yet chilled nor dimmed the glittering splendor of the Versailles of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette when Benjamin Franklin arrived to negotiate an alliance between France and the American Continental Congress.

Mr. Feuchtwanger shows the same meticulous regard for historic fact as he did in his *Josephus* series. Dealing entirely with historically traceable personages as main characters of his novel, he again gives evidence of his craftsmanlike ability to make minor figures live. Many of the lesser characters in the story are as interesting as the men who once lived—and live again in the story. Two outstanding examples of this phase of the author's skill are Paul Cheveneau, the loyal secretary wasting away from an incurable disease, and Desinee Mesnard, the gamin actress and toast of all Paris, who both help to further the intrigues of Pierre de Beaumarchais.

The potentially dangerous Paris mob and the gay, colorful, debauched Court at Versailles form a backdrop for the story. Marie Antoinette leads her chic but self-seeking Lilac Coterie, and intrigues for their advancement. The weak, petulant Louis XVI is a sorry figure of an absolute monarch, but somehow in his honest simplicity is appealing in human terms. Voltaire, hated by the King, comes back to taste the adulation of the Paris crowds once more before he dies. Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais, the worldly author of *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, plots his devious course towards fame as an author, playwright, financier, secret agent, and promoter of American liberty.

Towering above the rest is Benjamin Franklin, the powerful, simple, common man—certainly more powerful than simple. His simplicity, deliberately studied for its effect, his quiet patience and tolerant good humor are assets in his dealings with the course of the subtle and devious French diplomacy in the all-important negotiations for the arms, money, and official recognition without which the American Revolution might end in disaster.

The sophisticated Beaumarchais, lover of liberty yet wooer of intrigue and alliance, is a mixture of avarice and idealism, petty weakness and fiery spirit. The unworldly Franklin is a good-humored elderly philosopher, respected yet not completely understood. Each complements the other. They both work for the same cause—liberty, equality, and fraternity. Each worked upon the problem from a different angle; each is the quintessence of the characteristics of his own nation. Franklin works quietly and consistently; Beaumarchais works incessantly with his dummy export company and his fiery play-readings. Each finds it difficult to understand the actions or motives of the other.

Only an author of European background could have understood and put down the old-world aspects of the story, and only an author with a personal experience of the American tradition could depict Franklin and his cause with such sympathy and

understanding. Mr. Feuchtwanger, an exile from Germany by way of France, who has absorbed much of the American way since he came here in 1940, combines these points of view. This is an ideal combination to assess the values of the opposite points of view and to express the differences peculiar to each. Not just a story-teller, Mr. Feuchtwanger is also a historian vividly aware of the great sweep of world events—he constantly illuminates the problems of the present in the terms of the past. Underlying much of the material covered in story form is a question—Will mankind make the same mistake again? —*John J. Gaffney*

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Philosophy Without Tears, by Arthur Little, S.J., Desmond and Stapleton, 1947, 128 pages.

An unfortunate blight which mars the Catholic educational scene today is the apathy of college students toward courses in philosophy. Since most Catholic colleges and universities require a certain number of philosophical studies for a degree in any curricula, the general attitude of students is to regard these studies as mere hurdles to be overcome in the race for a degree. This becomes a tragic fact, indeed, when one considers that Catholic universities teach a definite philosophy, rather than a confusing welter of opinions under the deceptive title of Comparative Philosophy after the manner of secular universities.

The failure of far too many students to realize that the study of philosophy is fundamental to all other learning, and their inability to associate the present disorder of the world with the absence of a sound system of thought account in part for this apathetic attitude. No pleasure is derived by the student from probing the thinking of Aristotle, of Plato, of Aquinas and the Schoolmen because he does not recognize the pertinence of philosophy to the problems of the day. "Too abstract," he says, or "too dry and dull," or "just plain boring."

To students with this averse attitude, Father Little's book, *Philosophy Without Tears*, will come as an especially beneficial volume and a welcome supplement to the philosophy texts used for study.

Philosophy Without Tears was written primarily for those who lack the opportunity for the study of philosophy, but wish to have some philosophical foundation for forming opinions on current questions. It is not a lengthy, complex treatise written in the jargon of scholars. Rather, as its title states, it eliminates the "tears" so often associated with the study of such works by presenting the philosophical truths in a conversational style.

The book consists of a series of dialogues between Professor Thomas Plato, who holds a chair of philosophy at a university in Dublin, and a varied array of his friends and acquaintances. The seventeen dialogues are extensive in their coverage of subjects. They range from one outlining reasons for a study of philosophy to one dealing with Communism. A list of the titles reveals the variety of subjects: Why Philosophy? Appearance and Reality; Time and Relativity; God and Creation; Providence and Human Suffering; Evolution and the Human Soul; The Thoughtless Brute; Necromancy; Inside Free Will; Psychoanalysis on Trial; Conversation With a Burglar; Murder and Euthanasia; Uncivil Authority and the Gentle Anarchist; The Amateur Communist; The Planned Society; The Professor and the Pacifist; and Ultimo.

From the foregoing list, one might suspect that *Philosophy Without Tears* is a formidable volume of slow, plodding reading. On the contrary, the dialogues course brilliantly along sparkling with sharp Irish wit. At no point does this brisk pace slacken, nor does the crystal-like clarity fade. Father Little, in a pure conversational manner, expounds the lessons of philosophy with keen insight and with illustrations which will remain with the reader for their humorous touches alone, if for no other reason.

The study of philosophy, it is claimed, often fails to arouse a student's interest

because of the overworking of hackneyed examples or expressions by professors. Father Little's book, abounding with clever examples and new ways of expressing philosophical conditions, should prove a handy asset to teachers in refuting such criticism.

It is of curious interest to note that the dialogues in *Philosophy Without Tears* were broadcast in a series of programs over the Irish radio network, Radio Eireann. It would seem from this that the "$64 Question" in Ireland is of a more fundamental nature than that asked on American quiz programs. The fact itself indicates a startling disparity between the cultural levels of the Irish and the American radio networks. Perhaps, however, it is through the medium of books such as *Philosophy Without Tears* that Americans will be stimulated to an investigation of philosophic tradition and demand a worthier product from their loudspeakers. —*J. J. C.*

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Recommended Reading

The Rocky Road to Dublin, by Seumas MacManus. Filled with the charm of old Erin and replete with the wise and humorous touches of the MacManus' pen, *The Rocky Road* depicts life in the Irish countryside during the later years of the last century. It is the story of the boy Jaimie as he grew to manhood in the hills of Donegal. Actually an autobiographical work of the famed Irish author and story-teller, it brings the reader almost to the hearthsides of MacManus' boyhood friends and neighbors to enjoy the delightful tales of the *shanachie*. Its beguiling manner is certain to captivate the reader—whether Irish or not.

* * *

Speaking Frankly, by James F. Byrnes. The former Secretary of State discloses the behind-the-scenes activities at the conferences immediately following the war. Mr. Byrnes not only traces the diplomatic events of his tenure as Secretary, but adds his own forthright opinions and offers several predictions on the future foreign relations of the United States. In view of the present strained international situation, *Speaking Frankly* is a timely book which deserves wide readership.

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Back Home, by Bill Mauldin. The wartime chronicler of the adventures of the immortal Willie and Joe turns his caustic pen and his equally testy typewriter to social and political matters. His frank, hard-hitting comments, in both word and line, reflect the same acuteness of perception found in his earlier work, *Up Front*. Still leaning toward the Left, but seemingly cured of his earlier radicalism, Mauldin comments on the perplexities of the American scene with a candor and incisiveness which are humorous and stimulating.

* * *

Windows Westward, by Stephen C. Gulovich. A source of great confusion to many Catholics is the fact that the Eastern churches of the Byzantine-Slavonic Rite are associated with Rome. Father Gulovich's book clarifies this connection and points out the problems to be solved before a complete reunion between the Eastern and the Latin Rites can be effected. The history of the schisms, the differences in ceremony, and the origins of Christianity in Russia are adequately treated. *Windows Westward* is a fervent appeal to Catholics for an understanding of a strange aspect of the unity of the faith.

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Speaking of Cardinals, by Thomas B. Morgan. A non-Catholic reporter who covered the Vatican for twenty-seven years writes of the Cardinals as men. He presents their human side as men of business and diplomacy charged with unusually weighty responsibilities, both temporal and spiritual. Mr. Morgan devotes considerable space to the biographical sketches of the recently appointed American Cardinals. Of particular interest is the account of the disagreement between Cardinal Mooney, when he was Archbishop of Detroit, and Father Coughlin over the latter's radio addresses.

—*J. J. C.*