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The Jesus alternative/poetry/Shakespeare's golden apples/Satan: within or without/agony/idiocy
Beyond the Immutable Beyond

Before anyone else gets hurt in the raging debate about censorship of dramatic productions at Calvin, a perennial debate which was rekindled last fall with the Thespian production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and which has been stepped up several degrees this spring over the alleged censorship of several small parts of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the parties in the argument, notably the Chimes associates and the heads of the drama program, ought to try to agree on the nature of drama. Many of the ticklish questions might be resolved simply with a mutually agreeable definition of terms. But since the Speech Department has unfortunately been so reluctant to defend itself in this respect, let me play Hugh Scott to the Speech Department's Richard Nixon and propose that the members of the Speech Department are publicly withholding many arguments which might partially vindicate their actions.

The attacking party (for the sake of emphasis let me use the rather extreme letter appearing in the February 22 Chimes as a representative of this viewpoint) wants to defend the integrity of the playwright against drama directors and speech departments who would bend a play around their own sensibilities by censoring it over-cautiously for others' sake or out of their own moral indignation. The attackers feel that by prohibiting the full expression of the author's idea or using his play indirectly to express their own sentiments, the censors commit a gross act of plagiarism. The director, by this account, should always try to produce play as close as possible to the one which the playwright had in mind when he wrote it.

It takes a certain strength of mind to arrive at such a platonic conception of drama; not everyone has the greatness of soul to see past the mundane thing to the pure, the complete, the sacred, the immutable beyond. But it takes a much greater strength of mind, not to mention greater wisdom and understanding of people, to put away blown up phrases and see drama for what it really is—a *kinetic* art, an art consuming time and space, a performance art whose value always lies in process, in action, in collective motion. Drama is so valuable and exciting because, of all the arts, it has a texture and rhythm most like that of real life. And so the attackers at Calvin may do harm to drama by trying to enthrone it in the playwright's mind.

But if drama is a "kinetic" art, that is, an art existing in motion, it is so in a very complex way, for there are many (f)actors which must be moved in order to create a drama which is right for its particular time and place. Obviously, there are actors on the stage itself who move and move in complete interdependence. But there is also a more subtle movement going on at the same time between the producers of the drama and their constituents, between the director and his actors, between the actors and the constituents. This motion
takes place in the form of compromise. In order for a drama to be a meaningful communication between stage and audience, there must be constant compromise or adjustment or, perhaps better, reconciliation between the acting company and its environment of people and ideas. If the constituents cannot abide a certain oath or bawdy joke, the director and his team must move to rectify the drama. On the other hand, if the actors and constituents cannot abide a "softened" version of a play, the director must again move to fit the drama to the time and place. Above all, none of the parties—actors, directors, or constituents—can afford to tyrannize the others, for tyranny in any quarter is like a lockjoint hampering the movement of all.

However, before hanging this issue out to dry, I think one plea is in order, one which I am surprised not to have heard in these terms before. I think it is high time that students are recognized as the most important constituents the college has. They have no money, they have no power. But they are in the college now, learning, forming impressions, and making the college work. More than any other contributor they are doing this. They deserve something gentler than an iron hand.

RVM

To the Editor:

Joel Carpenter is to be commended for a sensitive and perceptive evaluation of Calvin's "educational cousin," Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, in the February issue of Dialogue. Rare indeed is the reporter who will take the time he did to get the feel of the subject about which he is writing and then report his findings in such an unbiased manner. His observations about the students' "cheerful acceptance of the disciplinary system," the absence of legalism because students are more concerned about living a godly, spirit-filled life, and the school's "gentle militancy" are usually missed or ignored by the critic who sees the specialized curriculum as "narrow" and the commitment to the authority of Scripture as "bigotry."

The article must be considered as having two distinct elements, however: the first a description of the school, the second an essay about the fundamentalist world view. It is the latter which I must help clarify. First of all, it is not true that the evangelical Christian ("Fundamentalist," if you wish) has swallowed the liberal dichotomy of the worldly versus the spiritual. In fact, champion of the fundamentalist cause during the Fosdick era evangelist Bob Jones declared that "there is no such thing as the secular and the sacred; to the Christian, all things are sacred." The term "full-time service" is merely a device used to consolidate the Christian ministries of preaching, missions, evangelism, Christian education, and other church related occupations into one easy-to-use phrase. It is to these fields alone that a Bible institute deliberately confines itself with no intent of declaring that one cannot or should not be led of the Spirit into other endeavors. It is a Bible institute conviction, however, that the redemption of souls is the most urgent task of our times. It is also a Bible institute conviction that a thorough knowledge of the Word of God is fundamental for any Christian in any occupation. "Investigating all fields of knowledge" can come later. Regardless of how much knowledge one attains, if he is not thoroughly grounded in the principles and precepts of the Word nor completely committed to the cause of Christ, he is totally unprepared to face the real issues of life. Many institute grads go on to further education, but their foundations are secure.

Perhaps the most serious difference occurs in the statement that "effectively giving forth the message of Jesus Christ means... living a life that in its totality demonstrates the existence of a God who is there and has spoken to mankind. This is no more fully done as a pastor or missionary than as an accountant or a truck driver." It is true that "the firmament showeth [God's] handiwork," but it must also be remembered that man defiled that handiwork by sin and became separated from God. Jesus Christ did not come merely to reaffirm God's claim to the universe, but He also came to die so that man might be reconciled to God. Man does not hear the message of God's love in Christ by any amount of observation of the created universe. He does not hear the message of redemption by studying the sociology, psychology, nor physiology of man. The message of Jesus Christ was "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," and it was "go ye into all
the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Yes, it is true that one can be led by the Holy Spirit into the accounting or trucking profession, but it is conversely true that men cannot “call upon him when they have not believed. And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ... How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:14, 15).

One wonders where we might be today had Peter considered his fishing nets as tools of evangelism, or if Paul had felt that he was declaring “the whole counsel of God” in his tent making and had ignored his preaching, teaching, and missionary efforts. Others may concentrate on making our present life comfortable, pleasant, challenging, and free from disease. Ninety-five percent of all educational institutions are busily involved in these necessary endeavors. But Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music believes it is the most important task of this age to equip men and women for the urgent task of bringing to bear “the glad tidings of good things” upon the souls of men, “For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

Sincerely,
Dean Ohlman
Director of Student Affairs
The Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music
FEATURES
The Jesus Alternative
Nancy Leesman

Does Mod Christianity, whatever that may be, represent an inevitable synthesis between tradition and innovation—part of a continuing series of syntheses going back even beyond the Greeks? Leesman suggests that maybe we needed the Jesus freaks to get high on that old time religion.

The Core of the Matter
Benjamin VanderKooi

Was Shakespeare a really great artist or just the Milton Berle of the seventeenth century? VanderKooi examines *Romeo and Juliet* in hopes of finding out.

Satan: Within or Without
Peter Slofstra

From *Rosemary's Baby* to *The Exorcist*, mass culture demonstrates that the supernatural is still very much in evidence in the consciousness of a "technological" society. Slofstra examines another period of supernaturalistic paranoia—the Salem witch trials.

FICTION
The Agony and the Idiocy
James Leunk

If truth is fiction on a short lease, Jazz L. had better not sign any long term contracts.

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The Jesus Alternative

by Nancy Leesman

Jesus freaks. Evangelical hippies... Under different names—and in rapidly increasing numbers—they are the latest incarnation of that oldest of Christian phenomena: footloose, passionate bearers of the Word, preaching the Kingdom of Heaven among the dispossessed of the earth.¹

So reads a somewhat accurate though cynical description of America's newest spiritual fervor—the Jesus Freaks or Jesus People or Street Christians as they have been variously called. It was inevitable, some have said, that Jesus would take his turn on the merry-go-round of a swift-changing culture which shoots the young from one fad or enthusiasm to another. But fad or not, the Jesus movement has
made an impact on American culture and is itself a reflection on it.

John Lennon of the Beatles casually remarked in 1965, “Now the Beatles are more popular than Jesus Christ.” Less than five years later the Beatles were passé and George Harrison was singing *My Sweet Lord*. Such an impact on culture deserves to be studied in order to discover why and how it relates to the society of which it is a part.

The United States in the late 1960’s found itself in the middle of a revival which had little relationship with the establishment church and, in fact, seemed to be drawing strength away from the church. The Jesus movement was a radical religious revolution which rejected the traditional values of the organized church and tried to rediscover Jesus through new means of his own—communalism, mystical experience, and outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

The Jesus movement from its beginnings in the middle sixties and continuing to the present has been extremely diversified. Most groups within the movement have their own interpretations of how to “live for Jesus,” and thus many have little or no contact with other groups in the movement. There may even be hostility between them. This lack of contact is a major reason why the Jesus movement came upon a self-consciousness of itself as a movement only gradually.

Historically, the Jesus movement began as a combination of two fronts on the West Coast. Coffee and communal houses were established which provided a shelter for the drop-outs of society, the “counter culture” who had turned from drugs to Jesus; and the Christian World Liberation Front was set up on campuses as an alternative to the militant New Left. The CWLF borrowed the social critique of the radical left but grounded this criticism in a Christian perspective. Thus, the movement’s beginnings combined rescue missions, religious revivalism, and a celebration of the counter culture life-style, all under a Christian “stamp.” The appeal to the young was the movement’s lack of ties to the “straight” churches.

What unified the movement despite all its diversity was a shared sense of mission in presenting the claims of Jesus to anyone who would listen. The Jesus People shared with other young people a dislike of the society in which they found themselves as well as their uncertainty about handling this sense of alienation. Jesus seems to have been the safe alternative to the present society or the solution to alienation from it.

The name “Jesus People” is more widespread than the actual philosophy has been, many young Christians taking the name as their expression of youth without really living out all that the name implied. The “real” Jesus People are the missionaries, the hardcore of the spiritual revolution, the ones who give up all to follow and live like Jesus.

Many in the Jesus movement are very young and join for peer approval or the resolution of personal identity crises. The “Jesus trip” is based on personal, unexplainable experience rather than on immediate social reality. Thus, they can avoid, at least for awhile, coming to terms with the anxieties and tensions of life. After all, as one young person said, “Jesus will provide every-
thing we need and solve all of our problems.”

Others who have joined the movement are those who have tried every other “trip,” fundamentalists who felt guilt at not giving all to Jesus, those who had a need of belonging, and those who craved discipline and authority. Blacks have not become a great part of the Jesus movement, but this is understandable, as the Jesus movement is geared to the younger generation’s rejection of the values of white society. Blacks have their own rebellion to fight and their own identity to establish.

The 1970’s gave the Jesus People a very favorable press. Reporters were impressed with the love and joy they saw and the lack of hate. Almost all of the major periodicals ran cover stories on the Jesus People. Two reporters are even said to have been converted while covering the movement. Such publicity had a tendency to make Jesus the thing to be involved in. Indeed, every social group did eventually get involved. Businessmen, police, rock groups, and entertainers such as Eric Clapton and Johnny Cash were all speaking of Jesus. Pat Boone has been known to baptize new believers in his swimming pool.

Many have felt that this infiltration by the press and the “straights” has made the Jesus movement a fad, has cheapened it. While this may be true, it may instead be the case that these fellow travellers are those who will carry on the values set up by the Jesus People, if the movement is a fad and does fade from society. The life-style of the true original Jesus People is often built on the book of Acts. Theirs is a communal life, though no two communes are likely to be the same. The communal groups intend to nurture new converts under the supervision of “elders.” In most, the life-style is very regimented. A day will include communal and personal prayer, Bible reading, work, and witnessing. Resources are shared; drugs and sex are strictly prohibited.

In most accounts of the Jesus movement, certain key names come up: Carl Park, a worker in Spokane, publisher of The Truth, an underground Christian newspaper; Linda Meisner of Seattle, who published Agape and established the well-known “Catacombs” coffee house; Lonnie Frisbee, a youth worker in California; and Sue and Tony Alamo, directors of one of the most well-known and controversial communal houses on the West Coast. But the person to whom the movement owes its initial publicity is Arthur Blessitt. Blessitt began his ministry on Hollywood’s Sunset Strip in 1965 with a coffee shop called “His Place.” It developed into the place to go and paved the way for the spread of the Jesus movement. Under his guidance, the Hollywood Free Paper was born which today has the largest circulation of any underground Christian newspaper.

On the music front, the Jesus movement has adapted rock music to fit its purposes. The most famous Christian rock singer has been Larry Norman, whose singing proves that “rock rhythm can, and ought to be, redeemed.”

It has been previously mentioned that the Jesus movement was a revival. Revival, defined as “a sudden, spontaneous expression of commitment to the Christian faith through the process of instant conversion,”3 has been a unique phenomenon in the American tradition. While in the American revival spirit, the Jesus movement yet radically differs in certain respects. One author, totally equating the Jesus People with previous religious expressions, wrote,
revisited; it is American frontier religion revisited with Volkswagens and amplifiers supplanting the horses, wagons, and saddlebacks of Cane Ridge, Kentucky, 1801.  

Though it seems that the Jesus People would object vociferously to such an equation, it is true that they reflect the American frontier in their de-institutionalization of Christian doctrine. America from frontier times has tended toward simple, unintellectual theology. After all, "people who had a continent to conquer could spend little time elaborating a theology."  

More importantly, the fundamental difference between the Jesus movement and past revivals (and from American culture itself) is its attitude toward established American institutions. Other revivals made little, if any, criticism of American social, political, and economic structures. Today's revival is based on a rejection of such structures—a rejection of patriotism, capitalism, and private property.  

Previous revivals identified religious consciousness and the success of Christianity with American democracy, capitalism, and the nation's success. Charles Finney in the 1830's, for example, preached Christian perfectionism through conversion and the striving of the rugged, self-made man. Dwight L. Moody, in a time of renewed social concern over Darwinism in the 1870's and 80's, combined individual responsibility, piety, and hardwork with his message about gaining a better eternal life. America, of course, was the place in which to accomplish this. Billy Sunday, during World War II, declared that the birth of America, along with the birth of Christ, was one of the four great events of the world. Finally, Billy Graham's evangelical crusades arose out of the frustration of post-World War II society. Americans could not understand why they were not able to achieve the goals of freedom, peace, and social harmony.
John Kirkland's Poem

Semi-retarded John Kirkland
wheels a trash cart
filled with bottles of blood around St. Mary's Hospital
his senses aren't dulled
he hates the rotting smells

His mother is dead
His father's outstripped
his son's incapacity
with a stroke

John's head tilts to one side
like a question
He believes in Jesus Christ

I think I see sometimes
what Jesus Christ could be
behind that stupid smile

John's got a bottle of Boone's Farm wine
stashed beneath his bed
hiding it from no one
He boasts about it and keeps it hidden there.

His immense puffed doltish face
is filled with acne
Uncatalogued germs
lurk beneath his pores

---

Thomas Konyndyk

---

Graham, with President Eisenhower's support, was able to draw together theological and patriotic ideals. Such a combination was bound to produce at least some new faith in the American Way and Dream. It was Graham's old-time revival spirit of the 1950's when mixed with the social awareness demanded by the 1960's which would lead to the most unique revival of all American history, that of the Jesus movement.

The Jesus movement was not the "production" of former revivals—its members were not an organized mass. Thus, it must not be judged on the values of other revivals but on its own values, which included a rejection of, or at least an indifference to, the American Dream and the American way of life.

The Jesus movement arose as an extension of the Counterculture movement of the 1960's. The hippies had arisen as a response to a society dominated by inter-locking corporations, government, and labor unions—all part of the great "industrial complex."

There had been a major shift in religious, moral, and social attitudes during the decades of the sixties. National confidence and social idealism were shaken by a collapse of what had been considered progress. The Civil Rights movement had seemed to be making headway when suddenly the Detroit, Newark, and other riots of '67 destroyed all of its strength. Martin Luther King was murdered. "The high ideals of 'We Shall Overcome' seemed only a bitter memory."

John and Robert Kennedy were assassinated and along with their death went the high ambitions and the hopes of youth that a better world was coming. The disillusionment of Vietnam was on national television for all to see, creating suspicion
of government and traditional American patriotism.

Man was ruining nature in the name of profit. There seemed nothing left in America to be proud of. Even the Church was declining. There was a sense of "bewilderment, betrayal, and humiliation" among the young in society.

In America, man had had an image of himself as independent, self-contained, and free. Indeed, immigrants had often come to America in order to participate in this image of society. When these ideals fell apart in the sixties, many an average American came to see himself, as it were, a "puddle of sensation extremely subject to further changes in the world around him." He was no longer independent, self-contained, and free.

As a result, youth began to retreat from a society which had become counterfeit due to its reckless freedom, lack of restraint, and lack of accountability. Some turned to radical destruction, some to Jesus, others to both in the course of time.

The older generation, which was still waiting for solutions to society's problems to come struggling to the surface, could not understand the impatience of the young. But their children did not wish to wait any longer. They did not wish to work through the system, for they felt it had caused the evil in which they found themselves. "Why, indeed, buy the American Dream if this is what it created?"

Woodstock, for the first time, created a real social alternative for the counter culture. At Woodstock there were the possibilities of having peace and a whole new generation, a new culture. A new world where you could separate yourself and join other people and start a new religion that was a real religion you really lived and that you didn't just practice or pretend to practice and still live normally in society.

But Woodstock did not provide a satisfying answer, for religion with no real goals still leaves an emptiness of purpose and a scattering of plastic ideals of love and peace.

After Zen and transcendental meditation, astrology and spiritualism, black magic, scientology and Krishna consciousness, what can a hip, spaced out child of the counter culture turn to next?

For all the dreams and ideals of the hippie counter-culture, "Human nature, it seems, demands a messiah to follow, to believe in, and even to worship." Such a messiah can be many things, but nothing seemed to be valid until the Jesus movement opened a pathway to God. Faith in Jesus was able to satisfy a need for a purpose and authority which transcended human errors—a faith to lift them above the physical society they could no longer explain. Jesus was proclaimed as the first hippie, the first anti-establishment type, the true origin of the counter culture. Certainly this is not a reformed view of Christ. It is, instead, a projection onto history of one's needs at the time, more than a discovery in faith. Understanding this view of Christ is essential in recognizing the Jesus movement's ties to the counter culture movement.

The counter culture life-style of separation lent itself well to the fundamentalist life-style of communal houses and their isolation from the outside world. Indeed, much of the hippie ideals of a shared life had originally been drawn from the Bible.
The Jesus movement can be seen as an attempt to repurify the hippie notions of peace, love, and fellowship. Many communal houses were founded in hippie areas, for the transition was easy. Only the plastic had to be stripped away, not the freak culture goals. Both the hippie and the Jesus movements rejected material values of life, but while this was the main goal of the counter culture, it was a by-product of the Jesus People’s complete devotion to Jesus and dependence on Him.

Drugs, so much a vital part of the counter culture, had no place whatsoever in the legitimate Jesus movement. But paradoxically, it was drugs in part which paved the way for a spiritual reawakening. Over 62 percent of the Jesus People over 18 (44 percent of those under 18) came into the movement having used drugs, mostly hard drugs. Arthur Blessitt remarked,

The kids were turning to drugs because everything else was so empty. They were trying to look inside, but it didn’t work because they were doing it with no power from above. But they have found the answer in Jesus Christ. But such drug use—especially psychedelic drugs—did pave the way to Christianity for some.

Drugs reveal an inner self; they enable a person to transcend materialism and realize that rationalism may not be the answer to everything. Drugs first caused a spiritual awareness, then a crisis, and at this point many turned to Jesus. The Holy Spirit became the substitute for drugs. A religious experience is often described in terms of a drug high. “It’s a rush like speed,” or “I’m high on Jesus.” “You don’t need no pills. Jes’ drop a little Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Christ is the ultimate eternal trip,” says Arthur Blessitt.

Furthermore, drug experience caused a movement in the direction of the occult, astrology, and Satanism. Many young people while tripping had had real contact with supernatural forces. When these drug users entered the Jesus movement, the reality of angels, demons, and the supernatural realm did not have to be proven to the new converts. They knew these existed, and not as abstract forces but as real ones.

The violence and upheaval in the 1960’s and the resultant disillusionment with society is the first major factor which led to the young joining the counter culture and later the Jesus movement. In his book The Making of a Counter Culture, Theodore Roszak presents the second major force in society which led to a falling out of the youth—the American technocratic society. Roszak defines a technocracy as a “social form in which industrialized society reaches the peak... of an organizational integration.” As a result of the Industrial Revolution, capitalism, and, most important, modern technology, America had reached such a peak. Science, it was believed, could conquer any problem, be it social, economic, or political. But then, just at the time when man felt that he had all of the tools to completely conquer the universe, he made the crushing discovery that a spiritual vacuum had developed which technocracy could not fill. Man was being led into a technocratic Utopia, but at the cost of a loss of humanity.


The gadget happy American has always been a figure of fun because of his facile assumption that there exists a technological solution to every human problem. It only took the great psychedelic crusade to perfect the absurdity by proclaiming that personal salvation and the social revolution can be packed in a capsule.

Under the rule of scientific optimism, efficiency and successful management became the rule of the day. Progress fragmented the concept of God, as science and technology took the place of a personal God. A reporter for Look magazine visited the manned space center in Houston and confirmed this conclusion:

I became increasingly aware that I had come within the fastness of a new religious sect. There were holy places, entry to which was secured only by varicolored badges designating rank in a complex priesthood. The United States, I realized, had at last unveiled a new deity: Technigod! Here was a god of such power and reach that he might hope to unify the world.

But such a god had no fullness or meaning for the young who saw society coming apart at the seams regardless of what the conventional wisdom was proclaiming.

This so-called theory of inevitable progress is a myth and nothing more. It is based on what man hopes is happening and not on what is really happening.

The project of the counter culture, according to Roszak, came to be proclaiming a world so vast, beautiful, and different that technocracy would withdraw in its face. And if, by chance, technocracy would not disappear, at least the counter culture could be satisfied with having withdrawn from it.

Being in a very real sense part of the counter culture movement, the Jesus People also revolted against the technocratic society by withdrawal and a return to past ideals and values. They too felt the impact of a cold and meaningless society. Yet their purpose in life transcended this world, so they were not trapped by technocracy’s hold on society, as the hippies were. They rejected it because it had no faith beyond man, and their faith was in Jesus. The simplicity of their faith was totally antithetical to a complex, intellectual, industrialized soci-
Many critics see the Jesus movement as a simplistic choice between right and wrong. There is no search for a reasoned faith, they say, for one either becomes a fanatic or drops out of the movement.

"Instead of progressing toward adult ethics, the Jesus Person clutches tenaciously to childhood morality, with its simplistic black-and-white, right-and-wrong judgments," concludes one skeptic. Jesus People, some say, are using their spirituality as a defense against life.

There are also those who are enthusiastic about the movement yet fear that without maturity and a more solid grounding in Christian thought, the Jesus movement will become a "pop" Christianity.

In evaluating these criticisms, one must say that they are true in many ways. But can one judge them by the values of a society which they do not accept? Indeed, the Jesus movement has been exploited and commercialized, and there is much falsity and faddishness among the various sects of the movement. But the original Jesus People—the true visionaries—chose their life-style in the belief that it was the only one in which they could serve Jesus to the fullest extent. Can any Christian do less than seek to serve Jesus to the fullest extent? Such a life-style, a system of beliefs and values, is certainly not suitable for everyone, or even a majority. But it was suited to the Jesus People, and it proved itself in action. Ronald Knox in a book called Enthusiasm set out to prove the heresy of such a theology. But he came to the conclusion that society cannot exist without visionaries.

"Enthusiasm may not be the only virtue but, God knows, apathy is none at all." The Jesus People, frustrated by an unyielding society, may well disband as a movement in a few years. Yet their impact on culture may well make the established church more aware of itself as a unique Christian body.

The infiltration of "straights" into the Jesus movement makes it hard to define the limits of the movement today. The fringe groups to the Jesus revival—Campus Crusade, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship—will probably be the future continuation of the movement, for they are the moderation between the extreme counter culture Jesus movement and the Establishment Church. America, after all, is a nation built on compromises.

But it is the hardcore Jesus Revolution which has produced a social acceptability for being an outspoken witness for Christ. This is the foundation upon which future spiritual groups can build.

A Christian today might have the tendency to issue this challenge to the Jesus movement:

Will it make meaningful contact with modern culture, relate candidly to daily living, and effect responsible and moral renewal? Will the Jesus People only sit around holding each other's hands... or will their faith grapple with the central issues of life...

But upon closer examination one finds that this is not a relevant challenge at all. For if the Jesus People were to be deeply involved with society and grapple with society's major intellectual or cultural issues, they would be no different from other groups. Their distinctive anti-social stand creates their identity as a unique body, and without it they would be unable to witness to Christ in the powerful way they have. They are different and should be different, for their chosen life-style is different. Even if they would disintegrate within the next year, their purpose has been justified, for they served the ultimate purpose in life through serving and living for...
Down to River with Moon and Snow

Some might think me crazy
out alone skiing
under high-noon full moon
—so early that it's too late.

Who would venture out to find
This beginning of Day, the essence of Life;
The beginning of Life, this essence of Light?

To follow the path of luminous field
of unused snow down
to whispered baby cries of a living river,
musing, moving on,
you and it alone alive,
is to go somewhat crazy
Down to River with Moon and Snow.

To slide down around over
unbothered by fence, furrows, drift
(unpleasantries unrecognized
by softened gleam of moon)
down into frozen cloud of breathing river,
ghost spirit filling night still,
is to go somewhat crazy
Down to River with Moon and Snow.

To live one moment-life in
pale glow of Moon
déath stillness of Snow
murmuring spectre of River
is to live one moment-life in
light of Father
life of Son
call of Spirit
is to go somewhat crazy
Down to River with Moon and Snow.

Who would not venture out to find
This beginning of Day, the essence of Life;
The beginning of Life, this essence of Light?

If some would think me crazy
I wish we might all go,
especially you with me,
all together crazy
Down to River with Moon and Snow.

Ben Beversluis

FOOTNOTES

1“Jesus as the Ultimate Trip,”
3Erling Jorstad, *That Newtime Religion* (Minneapolis, 1972), p. 120.
6Jorstad, p. 39.
7Marin, p. 60.
9Jorstad, p. 49.
10McFadden, p. 188.
13McFadden, p. 31.
15*Jesus as the Ultimate Trip,* p. 32.
17Ibid., p. 177.
18Graham, p. 59.
on realizing what family isn't

the distance like that of two continents drifting through the time little knowing each other from the soft bodies of early brains to skulls held out only against vastness that may have formed from the fears of predators and protecting the soft part the distance from one inside to another only from the you to the me became large the area becoming space to think that the time never held any of the distance

Marc Lagerway

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Core of the Matter ★

Shakespeare's Golden Apples in Romeo and Juliet

by Benjamin Vander Kooi

LONG AGO IN GREECE, a young man named Hippomenes challenged a young lady named Atalanta to a foot race. She had never been beaten before, but he turned the trick for the first time by dropping a golden apple full in her path. Alas, as she stooped to pick it up, her slower partner passed her by and earned the gold medal, not to mention three million dollars worth of TV endorsements. VanderKooi answers the charge that Shakespeare will do for a pun what Atalanta did for an apple. -ed.

How every fool can play upon the word!
I think the best grace of wit will shortly
Turn into silence, but discourse grow,
Commendable in none only but parrots.
(Merchant of Venice, III, v, 48-51)

Lorenzo’s lament in response to Launcelot Gobbo's habit of quibbling ironically chastises the author of the line, William Shakespeare. The chastisement takes substance in later critical comment by Samuel Johnson. “A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveller,” Johnson states in his 1765 “Preface to Edition of Shakespeare.”

He follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire... A quibble is the golden apple for which he
will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation... A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it.

With characteristic exaggeration, Johnson is here generalizing about the propensity for puns which characterizes Shakespeare's writing style. True, the master playwright does occasionally pursue the golden apple, forgetting perhaps that "all that glisters is not gold." However, an examination of what has been called one of Shakespeare's most punning plays, Romeo and Juliet, reveals that in most cases his wordplay contributes significantly to the development of plot, theme, and characterization in the play.

At least two problems immediately confront an individual who attempts to recognize and discuss puns in Shakespearean plays. Recognition of puns, the first problem, is doubly difficult, as reliable texts for the plays are non-existent and the gap between Elizabethan and Modern English word meanings is wide. The variance in spelling from one quarto to another is the main textual difficulty for the researcher of puns. What may appear to be a hilariously incongruous malapropism could be no more than an editorial mispelling of the word in question. The wide gap between the language of the Globe's groundlings and twentieth century Americans further frustrates a search for puns.

I have applied a rather arbitrary solution to both facets of this first problem. In most cases I accepted as puns those words glossed by prominent Shakespeare scholars ranging from Samuel Johnson to G.B. Harrison.

The second problem is to determine the role puns play in the development of a Shakespearean drama. Mahood speculates that "we might expect to emerge some pattern of development in the use of this poetic wordplay similar to that which has been traced in his use of imagery; or of the
distribution of puns to certain types of characters or certain moments in a play's development.” However, he concludes,

There can be no secure and objective evidence from which inductions about the development and distribution of Shakespeare’s puns can be made. Every attempt to count the number of puns in a particular play yields a slightly different total, because ... every reading ... is a recreation, a fresh attempt to interpret Shakespeare’s intention. 3

* * *

The very first line of action in Romeo and Juliet is the progenitor of four separate puns exchanged between Sampson and Gregory, two servants from the House of Capulet. What begins as a boasting, punning exchange between the two gradually degenerates into a bawdy wordplay on the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads (I, i, 30). The later blending of sexual double-entendres into meanings which connote both male anatomical parts and manual weapons is no accident.

Shakespeare is quite subtly drawing the playgoer to the edge of his seat, making him strain to catch the meaning of every packed phrase. The excitement aroused by the sexual imagery is gradually transferred to the violence which is inevitably approaching with the arrival of servants from the House of Montague. While Sampson’s biting of his thumb is the main provocation for the scuffle, his ambiguous use of the I/aye pun (line 56) adds to the insult which he has already non-verbally symbolized.

Tybalt’s fourfold punning insult on heartless hinds (line 73) effectively destroys any temporary calm which Benvolio’s appearance has created. Harrison’s gloss of the quibble explains that “hind” means ‘servant’ and ‘female deer,’ and heartless ‘without feelings’ and ‘without harts’ (male deer). 1 To the typical Elizabethan audience, the insult would have been clear. Tybalt questions the manhood of Montague’s servants and calls them servants without feelings in the same breath.

The first scene, then, reflects two ways in which puns are used to create tension as an aid in the development of plot. Shakespeare either begins a punning exchange between allies, whose sexual puns bolster their bravado and stimulate an onslaught of violence, or has somebody use a pun to insult his enemy and thereby provoke him into a fight. In both ways, puns function in this scene to bring the two feuding families to physical blows.

Another example of the same use to which Shakespeare puts the pun is found two acts later when Mercutio and Benvolio are discussing the hot days in which the mad blood is stirring (III, i, 4). After a witty digression on the root cause of Benvolio’s brawling temperament, Mercutio faces Tybalt’s entrance and answers his insulting statements with intentional misunderstanding. Puns on the two meanings of consort (lines 49-52) and my man (lines 60-62) serve as a verbal appetizer for the following duel, during which Mercutio is skewered on Tybalt’s rapier and left a “grave man.”

While puns figure prominently in creating tension before the fight scene between Mercutio and Tybalt, Mercutio’s final pun helps to relieve the tension which has been built. Having brought his audience to a climax, Shakespeare helps to ease the tension briefly with the same device he used to create it. The double meanings of grave man as corpse and as eternally solemn punster encapsulate in one sentence the play’s action and its fatal effect on Mercutio’s ability to pun again (III, i, 101). The ironic humor of the statement coming at a moment of high tension and activity tends to diminish the tension and prepare the audience for another high tension point in the same scene with the death of Tybalt. Otherwise, the sustained tension would have been too much for the audience. The moment’s repose afforded by Mercutio’s last wordplay functions well in this context.

An example earlier in the play further demonstrates the role of puns in relieving tension. The protestations of love in the balcony scene (II, ii) and the following scene between Romeo and Friar Laurence are lightly juxtaposed with the heavy punning bout between Romeo and Mercutio (II, iv). While relieving some of the tension and lack of activity in the two preceding scenes, the extended wordplay also helps to make sharper the contrast between the seriousness of the balcony, Friar, and wedding scenes and the gaiety of the street quibbling contest.

The appearance of the punning musicians led by Will Kempe, the company’s clown, after Juliet’s feigned death (IV, v, 97-150) serves as another respite for the audience from the tension of the play’s action. While the audience is aware of the deception planned by the Friar and Juliet which will put Romeo’s wife into a death-like trance for forty-two hours, the poison speech creates some doubt as to whether Juliet will really awaken after that time period or not (IV, iii, 14-58). Moreover, the mourning exhibited by members of Juliet’s household in rather lengthy eulogies further inten-
sifies the plot at this point. The musicians are needed, then, to counterpoise the grief of the preceding scenes and to brace the audience for Romeo's melancholy and tragic death in Act V.

A final factor in the construction of plot is the enrichment of meaning brought about by wordplay. This function will become clearer in the discussion of thematic development below.

At least two puns in Romeo and Juliet seem to confirm Johnson's criticism that to Shakespeare, "a quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation." There seems to be some core of truth in the accusation that the wordplay gets in the way of the play.

The first is Juliet's reaction to news of Tybalt's death from the confused Nurse in the "Eye of Cockatrice" speech (III, ii, 45-51). The profusion of puns on eye, aye, and I serves only to confuse Juliet's meaning in a complicated conceit. While such confusion is the natural heir of the Nurse's fatal error in falsely implying that Romeo was the victim of suicide, Juliet's retort is not at all characteristic of her usual perspicuity. The lapse, falling as it does in the middle of an expression of grief over Romeo's supposed death, is inappropriate. Had Shakespeare heeded the advice of Lady Capulet that "some grief shows much of love, but much grief shows still some want of wit" (III, v, 73-4), then he might have concluded that too much wit diminishes the force of grief and shows too little love for the audience. In short, the wordplay obfuscates plot development in this instance.

The other example of poorly planned punning occurs in the next scene when Romeo curses his banishment (III, iii, 33-41). He constructs an elaborate conceit in saying, "more honorable state, more courtship, lives in carrion flies than Romeo" (lines 34-5). The jarring pun which concludes Romeo's conceited imagery destroys completely the mood demanded by the rest of the speech. When Romeo says, "this may flies do, but I from this must fly," Johnson's accusation comes crashing down in judgment on Shakespeare's head.

With the exception of these two puns, however, Shakespeare's wordplay tends to further the plot development of Romeo and Juliet. Tension-creating, tension-relieving, and word-enriching puns characterize all but two of the quibbles used in the construction of the plot.

Love is quite clearly the theme of Romeo and Juliet, as the Chorus so succinctly says:

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.

(Prologue, 5-8)

Shakespeare, however, is never content with a simplified explanation of human behavior, especially when considering such a complex, supra-rational phenomenon as love. His exploration of love in the context of Romeo and Juliet focuses on two manifestations of love which he blends into a third statement, the nature of true love. Puns play a predominant part in focusing attention early on the thematic development of love in the play.

The cynicism prevalent in the punning Sampson's introductory remarks on love characterizes one side of the "debate" on love. As a male chauvinist, he initiates the bawdy sexual puns which place the male in a dominant position over the female in a "love" relationship (I, i, 30-9). Mercutio and the Nurse join Sampson in a cynical appraisal of love as man's dominance, especially in a sexual sense, over woman.

Romeo's initial infatuation with Rosaline furnishes an opposing view on love. The essence of this approach is the idolization of woman by man; man worships woman in a quixotic way, "pure and chaste from afar." Romeo's textbook kisses do not go unnoticed by Juliet (I, v, 112), and Friar Laurence rightly diagnoses the ill-fated course of Romeo's "pedestalization" of Rosaline when he notes that "she knew well thy love did read by rote and could not spell" (II, iii, 87-8). Even the intricate chain of paradoxes devised by Romeo to display his grief over Rosaline's bawdy love and loving hate are tinged with a bookish aura (I, i, 177-88). Romeo, until he meets his Juliet in the balcony scene, is a captive of a stillborn, conceptual, classical love.

The synthesis of the two poles in the dispute over the nature of love is, of course, realized in the relationship between Romeo and Juliet, a relationship based on openness and not a small amount of egalitarianism. Juliet emphasizes the paradoxical quality of this kind of love when she declares,

My bounty is as boundless as the sea
My love as deep; the more I give it thee
The more I have, for both are infinite.

(II, ii, 133-5)

An equality between lovers based on a paradoxical giving and taking arrangement—what could better transcend the previous dipolar distinctions and place love on a supra-rational plane?

The early puns in the play significantly contrast the two views on love. The concept of love as male dominance takes form in quibbles which emphasize male physical abuse of females. Sampson's sexual puns have already been cited to illustrate this male dominance (I, i, 30-39). Mercutio's two punning bouts with Romeo (I, iv and II, iv) portray him as a bawdy character, the type of man one might expect to find pictured in the ad, "What kind of man reads Playboy!" Mercutio's hedonism is clearly expressed in his quibbles; he is obviously
dedicated to the proposition that the “pursuit of pleasure” is very close to the meaning of life. Therefore, his cynical treatment of Romeo’s grief for Rosaline described below pits the punning power of the unattached male against the lead-souled impotence of the love-enslaved Romeo.

The Nurse represents the viewpoint of the submissive female. She is the character who lasciviously delights in thrice repeating her husband’s lewd questioning of the young “fallen” Juliet: “Thou wilt fall backwards when thou has more wit, wilt thou not, Jule?” (I, iii, 42-3). The submission of the woman to the male is also implied in the Nurse’s pregnant pun on Lady Capulet’s loving toasts Juliet:

Lady Cap. So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him making yourself no less.
No less! Nay, bigger. Women grow by men.
(I, iii, 93-5)

The Nurse certainly does not here refer to the paradox of infinity which Juliet explains later in the play. She instead is recounting the simple biological fact that when a man impregnates a woman, her abdomen begins to swell. Quite clearly here and throughout the play, the Nurse’s quibbles indicate her acceptance of male dominance in love and the reduction of love to its simplest biological component.

The first punning contest between Mercutio and Romeo neatly contrasts the notions of love held by each at this stage in the play. While Mercutio’s quibbles are free and cynically light, especially his “Queen Mab” speech,

Romeo’s lumbering puns are the wordplay of courtly love: the other masquers have nimble soles, he has a soul of lead: he is too bound to earth to bound, too sore from Cupid’s darts to soar in the dance.

The whole-hearted participation of Romeo in the second punning bout (II, iv) comes significantly after his meeting by moonlight with Juliet. Restored from his melancholy and now in love with Juliet, his appetite for punning is so voracious that Mercutio can barely keep up with him. Toward the end of the match Mercutio pauses to catch his breath and then quibblingly queries,

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; Now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. (I, iv, 92-4)

The change in Romeo between the two contests is so spectacular, as Mercutio notes, that Juliet must be the cause of the transformation. The new Romeo who is happy in love unites with Juliet in the wedding scene which culminates (and consummates) Act II.

While the play has thus far been filled with joy and only the faintest adumbration of tragedy in Tybalt’s vow at the party to convert Romeo’s intrusion to bitterest gall, matters quickly reach the point of Mercutio’s death on Tybalt’s sword and “the spitting of Tybalt’s body on Romeo’s rapier.”

From that point until the end the tragedy builds as the lovers face one impediment after another which they struggle to overcome, but cannot. In the end, they commit suicide over what each perceives, wrongly or rightly, to be the other’s dead body.

The central irony of the play is that, with their sense of what true love is, Romeo and Juliet lack a sense of reality. They appear to be mere pawns moved at whim by familial pressures or some “fate in the stars.” At several junctures Romeo passes up possibilities of combining the love he and Juliet share with a grasp of reality which, when understood and taken advantage of, would have solved their problems. Romeo fails to capitalize on the love which old Capulet has for him (I, v, 67-70). He does not restrain himself and kills Tybalt, thus creating a whole host of problems which he could have avoided. Finally, Romeo inexplicably fails to take Juliet with him to Mantua to share his banishment.

Perhaps the tragic flaw in Romeo and Juliet which accounts for the tragic ending is their youthful impetuosity. The Friar’s repeated remon­strations to Romeo about acting too hastily (II, iii, 93-4) seem to fall on deaf ears, as it is the speed with which Romeo arrives at Juliet’s side in the monument which kills them both. Had he been more patient or arrived just a few minutes later, the tragedy could have been avoided. In light of impetuosity as Romeo’s tragic flaw, his final quibble is as rich in meaning as Mercutio’s. As Romeo drinks the poison at the monument he toasts Juliet:

Here’s to my love! O true Apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. And with a kiss I die (V, iii, 119-20).

The drugs are quick in that they, through death, give Romeo second life which he plans to spend with Juliet. They are also quick in the sense that their poisoning agent speedily dispatches the drinker. Had the impetuous Romeo but drunk a slower-acting poison, he might have witnessed the “quickening” of Juliet. Instead, the tragedy of Romeo’s suicide is heightened by her death.

Quibbles significantly add to the development of themes in Romeo and Juliet. They thread together a statement on the nature of true love and the tragic impetuosity of the star-crossed youthful lovers who continually “stand on sudden haste.”

An overview of wordplay in Romeo and Juliet reveals a host of functions for most of the puns which Samuel Johnson so despised. What remains to be broached is why those two cases of alleged
A View from the Sixth Floor

The sunlight is licking down
the streets of this fat soiled city
as an incompetent mamma cat
she circles her days
like so many accomplishments
warming our hearts
like only well practiced and futile devotion can

Thomas Konyndyk

abuse cited above occur. G. B. Harrison contends, and I agree, that this play
was written when Shakespeare was still more of a poet than a dramatist. Again and again he holds up
the action for a poetic speech or an exchange of wordplay... The excessive wit, the puns, and the
double and triple meanings with which the play abounds... soon went out of fashion as poets and
dramatists became more interested in human beings and their problems and less fascinated by the game of
playing with words. 6
Fortunately for us, however, most of the puns in
the play serve more than the one master of
fascination with wordplay. The use of quibbles to
quicken the pace of the play and to quiet the
tension is a second master. A third is the richness
which double meanings lend to the themes of love
and tragical impetuosity. Delving into the core of
the matter, then, we have discovered only a very
few seemingly golden apples for which Shakespeare
willingly stoops to the detriment of his dramatic
work.

FOOTNOTES

1Samuel Johnson, “Preface to Edition of Shakespeare
(1765)” in Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare, pp.
125-26.
2M. M. Mahood, Shakespeare’s Wordplay, p. 164.
3G. B. Harrison, Shakespeare: Major Plays and the Sonnets,
p. 233.
4The origin of these ideas on theme in Romeo and Juliet
can be traced back to Mahood’s excellent chapter, “Romeo
and Juliet,” pp. 56-72. My discussion differs from Ma­
hood’s, however, in three ways: the synthesis statement is
more clearly formulated here, more and different evidence
is used, and the conclusion is radically different.
5Mahood, pp. 61-2.

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1948.
So peculiarly fascinating is the love of the marvelous...

Satan: Within or Without?

by Peter Slofstra

The following twenty-two persons—Bridget Bishop, Sarah Good, Sarah Wildes, Elizabeth How, Suzanna Martin, Rebecca Nurse, George Burroughs, John Proctor, George Jacobs, John Willard, Martha Carrier, Martha Corey, Mary Easty, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Margaret Scott, Wilmot Reed, Samuel Wardwell, Mary Parker, Giles Corey, Sarah Osburn and Ann Foster—had this in common: all of them died in 1692, victims of the witchcraft delusion of Salem Village. Nineteen persons were executed by hanging. Giles Corey, an eighty-year-old man, was pressed to death with stones at the hands of the sheriff and his men when he refused to confess that he was a witch. And Sarah Osburn and Ann Foster died from illness due to the inhumane conditions of the Salem jails (or cellars).

The Puritans living in Massachusetts in 1692 did not set a precedent in executing witches but rather participated in one of the last episodes of witchcraft delusion until the present day. The belief in witches, i.e., "...persons supposed to have formed a compact with the devil to torment God's people, and sometimes to cause their death," did not significantly disappear after 1692, but executions of such persons generally did.

In various sources, and explicitly in George Miller Beard's book, *The Psychology of the Salem Witchcraft Excitement of 1692*, it is estimated that in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries 500,000 witches were executed. In England witches were still executed in 1712 and in New England, aside from those executed in 1692, twelve persons were executed as witches from 1648-1688. These statistics make it clear that belief in witches was widely held by leaders and common people on both sides of the ocean.

Such, specifically, was the case of the Puritans in America, who were not yet affected by the rationalistic explanations of the Enlightenment but rather influenced by Calvin's doctrine of total depravity and the consequent hell/damnation sermons of their ministers. And such, more specifically, was the case of the Puritans in Salem who, out of fear, invoked God's commandment in Exodus 22:18, "Thou shalt not permit a witch to live," against their own Christian brothers and sisters when they interpreted the attention-getting antics of eight girls as evidence of the devil's continuing work by means of witches.

In brief, the events originated from the infrequent gatherings at the home of the Rev. Samuel Parris of certain girls who met there, not for the sake of the minister, but rather to dabble in
palmistry and voodoo with the minister's slave, a West Indian Negro woman named Tituba. In January, 1692, Betty Parris and her cousin Abigail Williams, aged nine and eleven respectively, became very sick. It did not take long before the rest of the girls joined in their affliction, an illness characterized by absent-mindness, babbling, barking and convulsions. Diagnosed as demon possessed, the girls were examined and questioned in order that their tormentors (Satan's human accomplices) would be exposed. Three persons were named: Tituba, an old hag named Sarah Good, and Sarah Osburne, an unfaithful churchgoer.

And so things began to snowball, far out of proportion to what the girls had expected. On February 29, 1692, the first warrants were issued. On April 4, the church council examined the steadily increasing number of accused witches. On June 2, the General Council assembled, and consequently on June 8 "... the General Council legalized the sentence (of hanging) by reviving an old colonial law making witchcraft a capital offense," by which one person was hanged on June 10, five more on July 19, another five on August 19 and finally a last eight on September 22, not to mention Giles Corey's death on Sept. 19.

In the final count, 162 persons had been accused of witchcraft, 34 persons had experienced fits and thereby qualified as accusers, and 22 persons died as a result. It is impossible to "guessimate" how many more would have died if the central group of possessed girls, whose very word was proof enough for execution, had continued to accuse normal, lower class people. But they made the mistake of accusing "too high." When the wives of Governor Phipps and Rev. Hale of Beverly were accused as witches, and even Rev. Samuel Willard was charged with witchcraft, the General Court took stock of itself. Throwing out all "spectral" evidence (referring to the devilish activities of a person's evil spirit or "shape," unknown to the defendant but well known to the possessed girls), the Court no longer had any condemnatory evidence. There could only be one eventual result: a wholesale jail delivery in 1693 which ended the entire affair. Consequent confessions on the part of the girls and repentance on the part of the magistrates and ministers (including Increase and Cotton Mather) who had been taken in by them certifies the delusionary character of this regrettable affair.

If one thing stands out in particular, it is the totality of the delusion. As the opening paragraphs show, the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries were completely taken in by witchcraft. And now, once again in Salem Village, the awful results of misdirected fear of witches were seen because, in the final analysis, the real demonism lay not in that group of 162 accused and 32 accusers but rather in the epidemic which laid hold on everyone. Beginning as infatuation (hence the sub-title of this paper, quoted from James Thatcher's book An Essay on Demonology), it became an infection of demonism: "... people shrank back from the touch and look of neighbours, no long-
er sure who was witch and who bewitched." And "... the life of no person was secure. The most effectual way to prevent an accusation was to become the accuser; and accordingly the number of afflicted increased every day, and the number of accused in proportion."

That there were not more people opposed to the affair was not hard to understand. John Proctor's life is such a case in point. He had stated that "... if they were let alone so, we should all be witches and devils quickly; they should rather be had to the whipping post." On August 19 John Proctor paid for his truthful diagnosis: he was among the five persons hanged that day.

John Proctor's worst fears were realized. Those who confessed their "guilt" were repeatedly dismissed, whereas those who held to their innocence were executed. This irony was expressed by Marion L. Starkey in her book *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Inquiry into the Salem Witch Trials*: "The fact was that until now (after nineteen hangings) the rope had been reserved not for those who pleaded guilty, but for those who professed innocence" (p. 202), and it was not until the Court realized this irony, this ultimate injustice, that this experience was brought to a halt and exposed for what it was. In the background of this injustice, the abnormalities of the trial proceedings become not focal points, but rather examples of a larger, encompassing pattern. I refer to such abnormalities as the magistrates' reliance on the words of the possessed girls, which gave them such incredible power over life and death; the courtroom antics of the girls who went into convulsions, pricked themselves with pins, and generally put the Chicago Seven to shame; the obvious trickery employed by one girl who claimed she had been stabbed by the defendant and held forth as proof a broken knife blade, which in reality someone in the
The explanations of the Salem witchcraft trials have some variation. Both the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge and the Encyclopedia Americana explain these incidents in terms of the Puritan's superstitious beliefs in the devil, and I have found no writer who disagrees with that thesis. The only difference from these encyclopedias is that other writers have tried to give a more thorough diagnosis in terms of psychology.

As early as 1831, James Thatcher blamed "... nervous affection and diseased imagination... [results] of sedentary habits and a free use of strong tea" (p. 28) for the witchcraft trials, because they "... pervert the understanding with which we are endowed by our Creator to regulate our belief, guide us in our pursuits, and enable us to trace effects to their true causes" (p. 47).

Writing somewhat later, in 1882, George Miller Beard posited that "the basis of the Salem witchcraft trials was composed of the complex phenomena of trance, insanity and hysteria, and it was ignorance of the phenomena of trance, insanity and hysteria that made those trials possible" (p. 14). Marion Starkey wrote in the same vein in 1949, stating that hysteria was the cause of the girls' disorder, and claiming that "Some of the girls were no more seriously possessed then a pack of bobby-soxers on the loose" (p. 46). (Today we would replace the word "bobby-soxer" with "Beatle freak" or "groupie."!) And finally, for John Demos, writing in the American Historical Review in June, 1970, the high incidence of young girls among the accusers and middle-aged women among the accused indicated an unhealthy mother/daughter complex. Somewhat along the same lines as Marion Starkey, who blamed Calvin's emphasis on sin, depravity, and hell as the breeding ground of the girls' hysteria, Demos writes: "Witchcraft accusations provided one of the few approved outlets for such impulses (i.e. aggressive) in Puritan culture" (p. 1322). And finally, picking out the emphases of the disturbed girls on biting, sucking, and eating irregularities, Demos demonstrates the importance of the mouth in the Salem Witchcraft delusion, thus making a case for relating the disturbance of the girls to some problem in their oral period—that time of life in a child when he or she is concerned primarily with eating.

Despite some differences in explanation of the witchcraft trials, these interpretations have one thing in common: a disbelief in the devil. Close examination of the trial documents and the additional confessions of the girls at their exposure, indicate that true demon possession as we understand it from the New Testament was indeed not the case in Salem Village. But there was demon activity in the more figurative sense which the Bible uses more often in explaining sin, and on this point Marion Starkey must be commended for her realization that "... the true devils [were] the small spites that had so long embroiled the village in petty squabbles" (p. 254).

The Salem witchcraft trials are a stark picture of the destruction which men can commit if they look past the all-pervasive sin of their own hearts and try to pinpoint the activities of Satan in particular human beings. The deaths of those twenty-two innocent persons in 1692 has perhaps never been as relevant as today, a time when interest in a personal devil is high, and demon possession and exorcism are not only commonly discussed but even profited by in such a movie and book as Peter William Blatty's The Exorcist. In the light of today's occultism, the events at Salem Village do not make us frightened of individual persons such as the 32 possessed persons or the 162 accused. Instead, they make me fear another epidemic threatening to overrun all of society, whereby we too will fear our neighbors, lock our doors, and carry guns to protect ourselves. Perhaps it was such a thought which caused Stephen Vincent Benet to write the following in 1937:

We have no reason to hold Salem up to obloquy. It is no stranger to hang a man for witchcraft than to hang him for the shape of his nose or the colour of his skin. And once we light the fire of intolerant fanaticism we cannot foresee what it will finally consume—any more than they could in Salem, 245 years ago.

We must reexamine ourselves and our beliefs, for we too are in that Calvinistic tradition which created the Puritans' religious environment. Are we living in another "Age of Salem"? In our concern with the devil and demon possession are we too fascinated with Satan's ontology (definitely proven in Mark 1:34) and thereby blinded to the more important concern with sin to which the Bible addresses itself and to which John Calvin addressed himself in his doctrine of total depravity? Are we playing into the devil's hands, as the Puritans did, by trying to isolate Satan, thereby giving time and interest to something which deserves healthy fear and non-interest? Obviously these are leading questions—to which I, for one, answer yes!

Perhaps John 8:7 speaks both to Salem and to us today in their and our preoccupation with...
isolating the devil or sin outside of ourselves, whereas Jesus says, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” Or at anyone, for that matter.

The Salem witchcraft trials are therefore relevant for us; hopefully, we may learn from the experience of the Puritans to put much higher emphasis on sin as compared with Satan, lest we shirk our own responsibility and place our misdeeds solely on the shoulders of the devil: “The devil made me do it.” Perhaps the participants in the Salem fracas, and perhaps we again today, need to be reminded that “...what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man” (Mat. 15:18-20).

FOOTNOTES

1 Thatcher, An Essay on Demonology, p. 63.
2 Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts, p. 156.
3 Nevins, Witchcraft in Salem Village in 1692, pp. 246-47.
4 Quoted in Thatcher, p. 63.
5 Starkey, p. 83.
6 Thatcher, p. 120.
8 Nevins, pp. 57, 58, 119.

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by James Leunk

I.

He laughed the laugh of an accomplished cynic. The air of self-conscious omniscience was unmistakable. It seemed to amuse her, and he suspected she liked very much to be with him. “You’re the most foolish person I’ve ever met,” she sighed. “But underneath that ridiculous facade is a fast disintegrating personality. Angry young men are the tragedy of our age.” Her wry smile betrayed the world-weary voice she reserved for occasions requiring mock solemnity. Her irreverence was one of the things he liked about her, especially when it was directed at him.

He realized she had very little understanding of what he was like but decided to continue the conversation in the present vein. “No, please! Try and understand!” he cried, sinking to his knees in front of her. “I’m sick. I need help. Please!”

Anyone else would have been embarrassed to have some wretched figure pleading with her for love and understanding, clutching her hands desperately in the middle of a crowd of flabbergasted onlookers. But she knew exactly how to handle herself. She slapped him across the face and, backing toward the stairway with her arms waving wildly, shouted in a terrifyingly brutal voice, “Shut up! Just shut up and leave me alone! I’ve had enough of your stupidity, your sniveling weakness! Go to hell and leave me alone! I don’t ever want to see you again!” Then, with a look of enormous disgust and hatred on her face, she whirled around and hurried down the stairs, leaving him sobbing in anguish on the floor. Finally, he rose and staggered out in the opposite direction. The astonished audience was completely silent, turning their backs on the aftermath of such a disconcerting spectacle.

“Holy Toledo,” someone gasped.

II.

When they met again in the library that night they laughed themselves into tearful convulsions on the floor of the theological section. An irate librarian rushed over to suggest in a seizure of hyperkinesis that they were disturbing nearby students and should regain their composure immediately. They lay flat on their backs

Four Episodes in the Life of a Calvinist
in acquiescence, panting and sweating profusely. The librarian rolled his eyes and stalked off, mumbling.

Eventually, she got around to asking him what he was doing in the theological section, anyway. “You mean you didn’t know what a devout religious personality I am?” he asked, propping himself up on one elbow, feigning both surprise and disappointment. “I’ve been here over an hour searching for a translation of part of the Holy Toledo.” He mimicked the scholarly tour-guide style of the departed librarian, “The Holy Toledo is the sacred text of Lamaism, recently discovered by a tribe of nomadic Kurds in northern Afghanistan. Only one percent of the 1000 volumes has been translated from the original ancient Tibetan.”

“You don’t say,” she explained.

“On the contrary,” he replied, “as the revised standard version has it: Wālāwāḥ ḫwā ḫægers hīwes menn sindon ṣām swæartan deofle underþæodde!”

“Hwæt?”

“Yes, the original is in a museum in metropolitan Kabul. They’ve got experts translating it, looking for references to extraterrestrial visitation.”

There were very few people who appreciated his wit, so once he started actually amusing someone he usually rambled on for quite a while. Furthermore, it was well-known that he lacked the discipline to make himself do anything serious.

“Then this is the same book noted for its interesting doctrine of the origin of Satan?” she queried.

“I really don’t know. What I don’t understand is how they can be so sure it’s a sacred text when they don’t know what’s in 99 percent of it. And how did it get to Afghanistan? Is this evidence that beings with a higher technology visited earth and transported it there many centuries ago? What is this about Satan, anyway?”

“Well, there’s this holy book, see, and I think it must be the Holy Toledo, that says that Satan was a Calvinist, and that’s what got him into trouble in the first place.”

“Fascinating. Do go on,” he said intently as they assumed places facing each other, leaning back against the stacks. He relished every opportunity to impersonate a pseudo-intellectual.

She folded her legs and leaned forward, eyes wide open, whispering as if she were revealing some dark mystery.

“The story says that as an angel of God, Satan was assigned (no doubt, because of his stern Calvinist disposition) to continually test and evaluate the morality of the earth’s human population. When he found that humanity was utterly corrupt and jumped at every temptation he offered, he became quite bitter about the whole affair.”

“And the results of successive trials only increased his frustration and reinforced his cynicism,” he anticipated. He had an instinct for jumping to conclusions.

“Quite so. Being, after all, a Calvinist, Satan developed an uncontrollable self-righteous anger, constitutionally impossible for other angels. He performed some perfectly horrible acts of retribution on the most heinous of the offenders.” She rather liked that word—heinous.

“Now, God, of course, had demanded that vengeance be exclusively his, and since he didn’t like Satan’s attitude, he expelled him from heaven.”

“And all this is the Holy Toledo? I had no idea.”

He performed his special laugh for her again. She cast a quick, apprehensive glance at him from under her eyebrows. He knew her next sentence would begin with a philosophical “You know . . .” and it made him feel somewhat uneasy.

“You know,” she obliged, “you cynics are the same way. Only you’re more sympathetic characters because you’re most angry with yourselves, even if a lot of that anger and frustration gets taken out on others.”

“Yeah, we’re all frustrated idealists looking for someone to blame and finding only ourselves,” he scoffed. “Our own worst enemies and all that.”

His irritation was becoming more and more apparent, even if they were only talking about cynics as a group and not about him specifically. It occurred to him that perhaps she understood more about him than he gave her credit for.
"Credit?" he mused.  
"What?"

This was the first time that she had failed to respond to the cue of his laugh by assuming the role of irreverent mocker. Things were happening for which he wasn't at all prepared.

"I'm sick! I need help!" he cried, reaching out toward her with what he hoped would pass for mock desperation. But she would have none of it and pulled away, gazing at him with a sadness so perfect it should have been funny. He was driven to distraction. She refused to repeat her lines.

He got up and walked away. This was altogether too serious for him.

He wasn't paying much attention to where he was going when she appeared beside him, walking at exactly the same pace, hands in pockets, eyes straight ahead, her left eyebrow raised curiously. He slowed down. She slowed down. He speeded up, and so did she.

"The old Road-to-Emmaus trick," he thought.

He got the feeling she was expecting him to speak first, but he remained silent, although he was rather glad to see her again, despite their last meeting.

"You look terrible," she said eventually. "Are you sick?"

He attempted a scowl.

"Yes, terribly," he mumbled. "I need help. Try and understand."

"I'm sorry. That was the wrong thing to say. But you really do look sick."

"I haven't eaten in three days. My mother is conspiring against me. She puts salt peter in my food. I found out, so I don't eat it."

He cracked a smile, and so did she, but she still hadn't looked at him.

"What've you been doing these past few days?" she continued.
He breathed easier. At least she wasn't going to bludgeon him with the Four Spiritual Laws. After all, if God had a wonderful plan for his life, it would have come out by then.

"Perhaps it's a secret plan," he thought.

She reminded him that she had asked him a question, albeit an innocuous one.

"Oh, yeah. Sorry. Actually, I've been trying to get together a brass quintet. Hal Lindsey and the Four Spiritual Laws."

"Look, if you want me to just shut up and go away, you could try the overt approach and tell me to just shut up and go away. It's worked before for some people I know."

"But that's not my style. Besides, I'm captivated by your probing intellect. Now, what was the question again?"

She was ready to throw up her arms and spew forth a stream of expletives, but he saw he was reaching the end of her patience, so he broke in quickly with a suitable answer. He didn't want to drive her away, only punish her a little for getting serious with him in the theological section.

"I've done very little, really. Nothing noteworthy."

Except avoid me for five days."

"Okay, except avoid you for five days. Listen, let's forget that, alright? So what if my life is a mess. At least let me have a comfortable slide to destruction."

She gave in, but reluctantly.

"I have a confession to make," she revealed melodramatically. "I've gone astray. Since I saw you last I've become hopelessly entangled with all the things of the world that interest youth these days. You know—astrology, numerology, Satanism, metaphysics."

"Holy Toledo," he chuckled.

IV.

They walked on, bantering inanely. He was a bit surprised that they didn't come to a destination.

He regretted now that he had been mean to her before. It wasn't as if he disagreed with her assessment of him. What had bothered him was that he preferred to keep the sordid details to himself, while she thought nothing of talking openly about the whole business. Quite simply, he didn't like to give people the chance to patronize him with some bleeding-heart attempt to straighten him out.

But she wasn't a bleeding heart, and she had never been patronizing where he was concerned, and he cursed himself for his meanness.

"How are things in general?" he inquired in his most conciliatory tone.

"What am I supposed to answer to a silly question like that?" she snickered.

"I don't know, but I answered your stupid question. I'll make it multiple guess for you: (a) docile; (b) circular; (c) obtrusive; (d) eleemosynary; (e) shitty."

"All of the above."

He frowned and snorted his annoyance, then imitated the apprehensive, out-from-under-the-eyebrows glance which she gave him when she was going to say something serious that she didn't think he would want to hear.

"Don't you go getting serious now," she complained. "It would be entirely out of character. Just because you wanted me to pick (e)."

"Look, I'm trying to get around to apologizing to you for being stupid and disgusting these past few days, and dammit, you're not being very cooperative."

She was surprised. This was the first time he had failed to respond to her according to the established pattern, and it had happened quite unexpectedly after she had relented, thinking he had had enough serious talk for a while.

"Oh," came her uncertain reply. "I'm sorry."

Okay. I'm sorry, too."

"Okay."

She couldn't think of any reason why his mood should take such a strange turn. Bewildered, she tried to sort through his last comments for some kind of clue. He could see she wasn't having much success.

He stopped walking and pulled her arm to turn her toward him.

"I've got another surprise for you," he disclosed with a somewhat stronger voice, owing to a rare sense of knowing exactly what he was doing.

He took his left hand out of his coat pocket for the first time during the conversation and showed her a small caliber pistol.

"Oh my God! Please don't!"

She reached for his arm, knowing this wasn't their usual melodrama. They never needed props for that. He was serious.

"Take it easy. I'm not going to use it."

The only reason she had for believing him was that she was hanging on his arm. She wasn't about to let go.

"I obviously intended to use it, but I'm not going to now."

The self-assured manner with which he spoke convinced her to relax. She was beginning to realize that he had orchestrated the whole encounter, but had changed his mind part way through.

"You didn't sneak up on me, you know. I had it planned that way. I was going to steer you into the same lobby where we did our last melodrama and blow my brains out right in front of everyone."

It was a strange thing to say, but her curiosity got the better of her as the flow of adrenalin subsided.
“Why in the middle of a crowd of people? Why would you even do it in front of me? Why not alone someplace?”

“I wanted to get back at you for being serious with me in the theological section, and I wanted to really shock that audience of boors. Vengeance, I guess. You’ve got to admit, it would have been a supremely contemptuous thing to do to them. And to you.”

“Why did you change your mind?”

“I don’t know. I just did. Maybe I wasn’t serious about it at all. Maybe it would have been just a pathetic attention-getter and I never would have gone through with it anyway, but I think I would have. It would have been the one thing in my whole life that I didn’t regret, simply because there would have been no opportunity to regret it.”

“You don’t regret now that you didn’t do it, do you?”

“No. No, I don’t,” he smiled. “I wonder if my whole life would have been different if I had had one more cheerio for breakfast some morning. That certainly would have been a different possible world. A whole new ball game, so to speak.”

She smiled, too.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: I have been asked whether “Four Episodes” is autobiographical. My reply is equivocal: some of it is and some of it isn’t.

I had intended to end the story with a double suicide, but I just couldn’t bring myself to do it. My apologies to those who were hoping he would do it. I don’t think I’ve betrayed you, but if you think I have, I suggest you write your own story. I’d like to see it.

My apologies also to some of my friends who were expecting to figure prominently in the story. You just didn’t appear along the path of least resistance. Maybe next time.

—Jazz L.