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SATIRE ON THE SOCIALIZATION OF RELIGION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1964

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PREFACE

This dissertation is first of all a literary and not a sociological or religious study. It does not avoid discrimination on Christian or other grounds, but it does purport to be a study of a literary kind and not another tract for the times. My first concern is with a large body of satire in relation to the men who produce it. Yet, the first two chapters are concerned not with the quality of the men behind the satire but with a quality of the world which they and others see, namely, religion's loss of historical and institutional identity in modern society; those chapters delineate the large but particular subject of the satire, by illustration and reference rather than by analysis. Then, the following two chapters are particularly concerned with the uses which the satirists are able to make of that subject—the socialization of religion—and especially consider what the satire itself is. My intention throughout is to examine from a literary viewpoint whatever relationships obtain between satire and religion, while trying to avoid wherever possible impertinent or presumptuous sojourns into the hard-worked fields of theology on the one side and social sciences on the other.
In approaching the subject of satire on the socialization of religion, I try to avoid the problem of identifying the reasons for such socialization, on the grounds that neither my immediate interest nor my academic training allows me to do otherwise. But I do try to understand as clearly as possible what the socialization of religion is, how that socialization is interpreted in sociology and satire. As I see it, my most immediate problem is that of literary genre: to determine how and where exactly such satire is different from politico-religious treatise on the one side and Inspirational Books on the other. There is a second problem which I think can be neither avoided nor easily solved, and which in addition to the problem of genre, has determined the categories and basic scheme of this dissertation. I have had to inquire into the reasons why satirists who evidently have different social and religious convictions do agree that the socialization of religion is a subject for satire, is somehow a moral wrong, and therefore think of themselves as having intellectual and moral sanctions for debunking.

I have tried to choose my theoretical way carefully, to keep from falling pell-mell into absurdity, and "to save the religious approach," as Morton W. Bloomfield has said, "without eliminating literature in the process." Though the charges of "dogmatic orthodoxy" and of "blasphemy" have been hurled frequently and indiscriminately at the satirists
I am concerned with (sometimes at the same satirist), I believe that their religious opinions are at least interesting even where they obviously have not been compelling or perfectly clear. And, though theology and the social sciences cannot be made to do the duty of literary theory, I do not see how they can be relegated to an "extrinsic" study either.

Part One then, sociological and historical, defines the subject of the satire as a real, modern phenomenon, and examines what it is as a fact taken up importantly in different literary forms: devotional, controversial, and satiric. It does not establish or recount reasons for the socialization of religion. Pointing to certain similarities between "ancient" abuses in religion and the particular "modern" fact of socialization, as subjects for satire, it does try to establish a connection between literature and life. Pointing to the difference between sociology, history and satire, it begins to define the satire and consider its value as specifically literary knowledge. My major references are to subjects called vice and folly, not only by satirists but by social scientists and historians as well.

Part Two differentiates the satirists according to biographical facts, at the same time pointing to what they have in common as satirists. Thus, with the idea in mind of seeing what is the intrinsically literary quality of the satire (despite its bulk and variety of forms), I would hope
to reveal how and to what extent the satire has been shaped by what it satirizes as well as by the satirists themselves.

The concluding chapter in Part Three summarizes the first four chapters and makes the central assertion about them. The dissertation as literary theory points to the relationship between artists, their art, and their society; and, in passing, it censures the theoretical folly of considering them independently, that is, of maintaining the categories of literature as autobiographic statement or literary form or social product. I would hope that the dissertation clarifies the definition of a complex word which signifies both a kind of literature and a spirit which finds expression in various literary genres.

For whatever literary awareness I may be credited with, I wish to acknowledge a special indebtedness to my doctoral adviser, Robert C. Elliott, and two other of my teachers at Ohio State University.
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PART ONE
THE SUBJECT OF RELIGIOUS SATIRE

CHAPTER ONE

PIOUS CRIME:
THE INEVITABLE CLASH OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

We recalled our priest (it goes without saying that we were not taught the "law" of ancient religion but the law of the United State). . . . "And what if he had been a living one? Like the ancient ones, eh?" . . . The ancients . . . preferred to believe that they saw heaven, even though it was a toy made of clay, rather than confess to themselves that it was only a blue nothing. We, on the other hand (glory to the Well-Doer!), we are adults, and we have no need of toys.

---Eugene Zamiatin's WE

It is probably safe to say that society at large and in all ages has provoked satire. Satire is written about society for society; the follies of mankind are the large-scale authorization for satire; a vast amount of it is not personal or personally allusive, but rather social or total in its implications. And religion in society, or more exactly, the abuse of religion, has always been attacked. However, religion's losing its institutional identity in society, that is, the specific abuse of religion becoming increasingly
social is another matter. The socialization of religion is a phenomenon not ancient but modern, a particular subject for satire in modern times. The perennial dilemma of maintaining and spanning a distance between Church and State has produced both anguish and comedy. Straddling often does. But the socialization of religion is something different from this dilemma. Nor is it identifiable in modern times precisely with the socio-religious forms customarily adapted by or credited to totalitarian states; it is more widespread than that.

The conflict of religious and social values goes back to pre-Christian eras. Antigone, in transgressing the laws of Creon's society, committed an act at once holy and criminal. In obeying the "immortal unrecorded laws of God" she committed a crime of piety.

CREON: . . . you dared defy the law.

ANTIGONE: I dared.

It was not God's proclamation. That final Justice that rules the world below makes no such laws.

Your edict, King, was strong, but all your strength is weakness itself against the immortal unrecorded laws of God. They are not merely now: they were, and shall be, operative for ever, beyond man utterly.

Creon for his part, in spite of admonitions from Antigone, Haimon, the Chorus, and Teiresias, learned too late that "The laws of the gods are mighty, and a man must serve them/ To the last day of his life."¹ Such conflict, if regarded

as inevitable and revealing of man's imperfection, necessarily
and always has aroused pity and fear—or laughter. But to the
extent that such conflict has become impossible or unlikely,
it has provoked laughter of a particular kind. Modern satire
on the socialization of religion provokes laughter as the
likelihood of such conflict wanes.

The conflict though insidiously complex is yet fundamental.
A Chancellor who became Archbishop in the England of Henry II,
Saint Thomas Becket defended the supranational authority of
the Church against the proposed canonical innovations of the
King, for example, the unreserved obedience of the bishops
to the English throne. Whatever the estimate of the cause
for which Thomas died, that he was a martyr is indisputable.
His cause was an old one, and, for members of the Church,
his murder in the cathedral is a reiteration of "an eternal
action, an eternal patience/ To which all must consent that
it may be willed/ And which all must suffer that they may
will it." Saint Thomas is caught at one point in history
in the inevitable clash of social and religious values. In
the play by T. S. Eliot, most of Part I is a dialogue between
Thomas and Four Tempters. The central action of the play
is whether and how Thomas is going to suffer martyrdom for
the authority of the Church. The Cathedral setting is,

2Citations from T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral"
as Francis Fergusson says, "neither Canterbury in 1935 nor Canterbury in 1170 but a scheme referring to both, and also to a social order like that which Sophoclean tragedy reflects." Like Antigone, Thomas Becket represents the paradox of martyrdom—the pious violation of the social order, the sacrifice of real earthly pleasure for the possibility of heavenly bliss—he is an actor in an action both piteous and joyful. The First Tempter offers Thomas pleasure:

Now that the King and you are in amity,
Clergy and laity may return to gaiety,
Mirth and sportfulness need not walk warily.

But the King and the Archbishop are not in amity; the conflict of values is unresolved, obviously, as the Tempter with "humble levity" takes his leave:

If you remember me, my Lord, at your prayers,
I'll remember you at kissing-time below the stairs.

The Second Tempter, also rebuffed, offers Thomas social power at the price of religious concessions:

Power is present. Holiness hereafter. . . .
King commands. Chancellor richly rules.
This is a sentence not taught in the schools.
To set down the great, protect the poor,
Beneath the throne of God can man do more?

Real power
Is purchased at a price of a certain submission.
Your spiritual power is earthly perdition.
Power is present for him who will wield.

But such sub-mission is a lesser mission in its lesser obedience. It is a "sentence" pronounced in a lower court. It is the yielding to rather than the wielding of power, lesser if also more real. The Third Tempter offers a "happy coalition of intelligent interests," in a revolt against the King. Thomas will not have that either: "If the Archbishop cannot trust the Throne,/ He has good cause to trust none but God alone." The Fourth Tempter ostensibly shows Thomas that his acceptance of martyrdom is itself motivated by non-religious reasons however religious a martyr's act may be. He charges--and praises--Thomas for his strength of pride rather than for his grace in love, for aiming at "general grasp of spiritual power" rather than at spirituality itself. Thomas concedes this possibility but regards it as part of the inevitability and suffering in the irresolution of opposing values:

The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason. . . .

Servant of God has chance of greater sin
And sorrow, than the man who serves a king.
For those who serve the greater cause may make the cause serve them,
Still doing right; and striving with political men
May make that cause political, not by what they do
But by what they are.

If politics can be regarded as the technology of social power, yet man--revealing his nature in the social patterns which he forms, and in the manner in which social power is distributed and exercised--cannot have his destiny articulated in overtly political terms.
In Part II of the play, the Four Knights replace the Tempters and as a group correspond to them. Accused by them as "the Archbishop in revolt against the King; in rebellion to the King and the law of the land," Thomas repeatedly enjoins and rebukes them:

This is not true.
Both before and after I received the ring
I have been a loyal vassal to the King.
Saving my order, I am at his command.

It is not I who insult the King,
And there is higher than I or the King.

Petty politicians in your endless adventure!
Rome alone can absolve those who break Christ's indenture.

To meet death gladly is only
The only way in which I can defend
The Law of God, the holy canons.

I give my life
To the Law of God above the Law of Man.

The Knights, having completed the murder, advance to the front of the stage and at considerable length address the audience on their own behalf:

We are not getting anything out of this. We have much more to lose than to gain. We are four plain Englishmen who put our country first. . . . When you come to the point, it does go against the grain to kill an Archbishop, especially when you have been brought up in good Church traditions. . . . King Henry—God bless him—will have to say, for reasons of state, that he never meant this to happen. . . . Had Becket concurred with the King's wishes, we should have had an almost ideal state: a union of spiritual and temporal administration, under the central government. . . . And at a later time still, even such temperate measures as these would become unnecessary. But if you have now
arrived at a just subordination of the pretensions of the Church to the welfare of the State, remember that it is we who took the first step.

In their collectivity, and acting as "we," they are virtual precursors of D-503 who, within the time of Zamiatin's novel, asserts that "'We' is from God, 'I' from the devil." The scene may not be Canterbury in 1170 or 1935, but it does precede the time of the glass paradise in a New World. The Four Knights who murdered St. Thomas of Canterbury are—in the play if not in history—comic rather than tragic archetypes. Thomas in history had been a living priest. And in the play he is "Like the ancient ones, eh?" In historical time the conflict of opposing values was perhaps both inevitable and unresolved. Conflict presupposes virtual equals; for if values, like forces, are unequal, a resolution or decision is never in doubt. But in the play the conflict—from the viewpoint of the Knights at least—is perpetrated and re-solvable. The "pretensions" of the Church are unequal to the "welfare" of the State. "We" have taken the first step on the stairway to paradise. The shift from Part I to Part II in the play, represented by the Tempters and the Knights, proceeds from tragic to satiric implications in the clash of Church and State. And the Tempters (who are allegorical or, in a religious sense, other-worldly) and the Knights (who are "real" or, in a social sense, this-worldly) represent ways in which the conflict of

opposing values can be terminated. The Tempters try to persuade Thomas that a resolution, on their terms, will not violate his pious responsibilities; the Knights attempt to persuade the audience that their act was no crime.

The idea of the separation of Church and State is an old one, certainly, as well as complex and fundamental. The long and variegated history can be traced from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The Pharisees and Herodians had been admonished by Christ—as everyone knows—to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Among large masses of men it is the inability to see or the reluctance to admit that there is a distinction—both historical and important—which can be regarded as new.

Some arguments today ostensibly in favor of the separation of Church and State, in the few or restrictive instances where it is held to be important, are unhistorical. In this country, one thinks of the problems of government support for schools (public or parochial), prayers in the classroom, policies regarding national or international birth control, regional depression, unemployment, and "relief." One muses that, regarding, say, the social encyclicals of Pius XI, opposition ranging from indifference to hostility is found inside as well as outside the Church. The recent Mater et Magistra of John XXIII gains a virtual notoriety, even while it is largely unread. Admonitions against atheistic Communism are misunderstood (all Communism being atheistic, in the popular mind). Some professional Christians have tended to take social evils for granted as work of the Devil which it is not necessary to study, only to resist. Recommendations on reconstructing the social order of the modern world fall on deaf ears to the left and the right. Regarding Russia, one thinks of the lack of religious influence in State executive, legislative, or judicial functions as a matter of policy developed only in the twentieth century, the Church being "tolerated" at the same time that it is officially unrecognized. In Russia, so some argument goes, the separation of Church and State is "bad," a cause of moral if not economic or academic degradation within the soviets. In America, so some argument goes, it is "good," a source of political and cultural
strength. The incongruities of such argument, sometimes heard from the same person, go unremarked. Though the idea of the separation of Church and State has modern practical consequences in arguments about economic or political expediency, it yet can scarcely be defined in terms of such consequences. One must question whether on this one point there is any difference between the Free World and the Enslaved Nations, between a society which only reluctantly complicates its goals with the "law" of ancient religion, and a society which pursues its goals expressly without religious considerations—whether, for example, the advertised goals of corporate organizations are different in kind or degree from the propagandized goals of a union of soviets. Better things for better living through Community; for the G.P.U. as well as at G.E., Progress has been proclaimed the most important product.

The phenomenon is perhaps a complex, with religion becoming social (culminating in America with, say, a rash of Community Churches) and society becoming its own religion (as, say, in several kinds of twentieth-century fascism). Noting that in the Middle Ages religion imbued all Europe with the same civilization, De Tocqueville, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, says that there are two great societies in the world, Russia and America, tending toward the same end although seeming to start from different points. Corresponding changes in

religious institutions then, though apparently different, also tend toward the same end:

The Americans not only follow their religion from interest [De Tocqueville writes], but they often place in this world the interest which makes them follow it. In the Middle Ages the clergy spoke of nothing but a future state; they hardly cared to prove that a sincere Christian may be a happy man here below. But the American preachers are constantly referring to the earth; and it is only with great difficulty that they can divert their attention from it. To touch their congregations, they always show them how favourable religious opinions are to freedom and public tranquility; and it is often difficult to ascertain from their discourses whether the principal object of religion is to procure eternal felicity in the other world or prosperity in this... Nor do I hesitate to affirm that among almost all the Christian nations of our days, Catholic as well as Protestant, religion is in danger of falling into the hands of the government. Not that rulers are over-jealous of the right of settling points of doctrine, but they get more and more hold upon the will of those by whom doctrines are expounded; they deprive the clergy of their property and pay them salaries; they divert to their own use the influence of the priesthood, they make them their own ministers—often their own servants—and by this alliance with religion they reach the inner depths of the soul of man.7

Both developments in the socialization of religion are most clear in their post-industrial revolution form. (They are dependent, it would seem, on mass media, that is, on the propagation of ideas which can be common rather than on the understanding of ideas; they could not have been possible much before the modern Apotheosis of the Common Man.) By mid-nineteenth century of course such socialization had developed far beyond its origins, and perhaps reached its

7Ibid., pp. 396-397, 566; Part II, chs. xxvi and xxxiv.
grandest Utopian formulation in France as "The Religion of Humanity" at the hands of Auguste Comte—who not only described it but approved it. And Comtism as a religion rather than a philosophy (considered below in Chapter Two) was articulated and widely popularized by such English writers as Harriet Martineau and Frederic Harrison.

Wherever its geographic location, a modern United State in present or future time may have its own "solemn liturgy," its State Services, its Guardian Angels, its Musical Towers, and its New Jehovah, but such a society can and does do without the Church as it has developed from the past. This is the point of the satire on the socialization of religion that is different from the point of other religious satire. These modern and social uses of religion have been characterized by satirists internationally. Zamiatin's denigrating references to the United State were not Soviet propaganda directed against a political enemy on the American continent. They are as much a criticism of Russian society as of ours; his works are still banned in his native land. The Czech Karel Capek's War with the Newts characterizes the special new religious system as "composed" for insurgent newts by the "popular" philosopher Georg Sequenz, but understood and honored by adherents among human beings everywhere; the ritualistic New Litany and the
amphibious, orgiastic Newt Dance become wide-spread in the modern world. This theme is traceable in such Anglo-American works as *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence*.

In its curious manifestations, this modern phenomenon betrays much that is primitive as well as ancient, that is, uncivilized or sub-human as well as simply old. In its castigation of the modern *merger* of religion and society, one of Bertand Russell's short satires makes clear, perhaps, the late linear or historical development of the socialization of religion at the same time that its manifestations of primitiveness, and even savagery, are emphasized. Though not as great a literary work as the Russian novel *WE*, it is yet in effect larger-than-life for being in the future, referring to the past, and critical about the present. In "Zahatopolk," some forty centuries hence, Professor Driuzdustades, head of the College of Indoctrination at Cuzco (the Peruvian city actually occupied by pre-Incan tribes), relates that during the Greco-Judean era some men publicly and without shame ate peas but did not, when the number of their children exceeded three, eat the excess to the glory of the State—and, ridiculously, they actually believed that a state could be stable in spite of fundamental divergences in the religious beliefs of the citizens. He lauds the

"holy religion" of the divine Founder Zahatopolk for effecting the "monumental stability of traditional orthodoxy," and he is baffled when Diotima, a beautiful and gifted student, refuses to sacrifice herself to the incarnate Inca. "Come, come," says her father, "You don't suppose, do you, that sensible men believe all that palaver about . . . what is called Holy Night; but . . . we know that these beliefs, however groundless they may be, are useful to the State. They cause the government to be revered, and enable us to preserve order at home and empire abroad. . . . Rash girl! You refuse to be a sacrifice to the Inca, but you have not thought that the true sacrifice is to law and order and social stability, not to a gross prince." And, "Come, come," says the Professor, "Do you not know that the truth of a doctrine lies in its social utility and spiritual depth, . . . that since the true is what is socially useful, the doctrines of our holy religion are true?" But alas, the skeptical heroine is unpersuaded and burned at the stake for her socio-religious heresies.

To suggest that the socialization of religion seems primitive or uncivilized is not to gainsay that it is modern; nor in the identification of social and religious acts is it unreasonable to insist that they are essentially different. Such an insistence may be unscientific, but it is not therefore

unreasonable. I am very much aware that Freud, following Sir James Frazer, says that "totemism is a religious as well as a social system" and is willing to forego the question of "whether the two sides—the religious and the social—have always coexisted or are essentially independent." For him, both religion and society originate from the remote past in the psyche of the mass and are a result of collective neuroses. However, if the play Antigone is to be regarded not simply (necessarily and sufficiently) as a manifestation of Greek social thought; and if the persona Antigone is the "eternal heroine of the natural law;" and if reading Murder in the Cathedral is not simply a matter of improvising a case study of the author, in which Thomas Becket the Saint is Thomas Eliot the Poet psychologized; then one rejects such an hypothesis. Jacques Maritain's rejection can be regarded as a representative one:


12This pious phrase is Maritain's. See his Man and the State (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1951), p. 85.

Without a smile, in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud explains that one day "the expelled brothers came together and killed and ate the father, thus putting an end to the existence of the paternal horde, and this cannibalistic act is not only the origin of totemic sacrifice and exogamy, but it gives the key to all religions. Freud concludes, "I can therefore terminate and summarize this brief investigation by stating that in the Oedipus complex one finds the beginnings of religion, morality, society and art at the same time." This, on the part of the father of the Oedipus complex, is pushing paternal pride a little too far.14

In attempting to explain away the difference between religious and social values, by identifying them "without a smile," Freud draws a picture of man in a conflict which probably cannot arouse laughter. His delineation may, or may not, be scientific; it is definitely not satiric.

From the point of view of Emile Durkheim also "the religious" is identical with "the social." For "in a general way . . . a society has all that is necessary to arouse the sensation of the Divine in minds, merely by the power that it has over them; for to its members it is what a God is to its worshippers."15 If this generalization is valid, it may not make much sense to speak of a society becoming its own religion. Yet, closer to the non-theological point of view


of, say, Bronislaw Malinowski, it ought to be possible to see "the character of the domain of the Sacred and mark it off from that of the Profane."[^16] without regarding religion more or less as a matter of explaining or projecting one's dreams, or of developing social conventions. Historically too, there is surely a distinction to be made between a primitive society which cannot see the things of God apart from the things of Caesar, and a modern society which has come to refuse seeing them apart. A further crucial distinction here is that between a society which regards religion primarily as a means to individual, immortal salvation and a society which regards religion as an essential means to collective, mortal achievement of either a psychological or economic kind.

The social sciences vie with satire for the same subject. And here—with the subject roughly established—a first step in the definition of satire on it can be made. Whereas sociology of religion, as Joachim Wach would have it, is non-evaluative and descriptive, an objective study of the interrelation of religion and society,[^17] satire is evaluative and supra-descriptive—hence both its difficulty and value as, to use terms from Wellek and Warren, a "structure of norms"


and a particular "mode of existence." It might thus be argued that the subject can be seen only (as a "structure") in satire, which (as a "mode of existence") is a specifically literary attempt to cope with it. The social sciences attempt to define the subject without a smile; satire demands a kind of laughter in the delineation of it. Kenneth Burke says that the "comic frame" in literature is "the most serviceable in the handling of human relationships," insofar as it keeps men alive not only to their "moral assets" but also to the ways in which they "cash in on" them. Sociology, which is not a literary "comic frame," describes rather than evaluates religion. Religion makes laudatory contributions to the preservation of society; it has also in the past had the effect of disruption and destruction as well. Nonetheless, "Sociology as a science is concerned neither with endorsement nor its opposite, but with accurate description and analysis," says one apologist for the commonly recognized view. "The thinking individual must take responsibility for his own course of action." In a punning manner of speaking, then, the satirist is not a scientist but a thinking individual.

18See *Attitudes toward History*, I, 137-140; and II, 247, where the comic frame is described as "halfway between the extremes of 'hagiography' and 'iconoclasm'."

He assumes the responsibility for seeing the difference between religion and the abuses of religion in society; his concern to make an endorsement or its opposite is implicit in his willingness to assume the burden of this responsibility.

Thus, though the social scientist vies with the satirist and expresses himself in terms which are similar, they are not equivalent; and a generic distinction can be made. Thorstein Veblen, for example, comes close to satiric utterance and breaks the tone of scientific objectivity in describing the socialization of religion economically (in both senses of the word) as the "pecuniary stratification of devoutness." According to Veblen, the "proneness to devout observances" is manifest in all classes; but the observances (church services, weddings, funerals, etc.) tend to be more religious than social among the lower class, much more social than religious among the upper class. The middle or "doubtful leisure" class, horribly sensitive and confused in their socially precarious position, are not able to correct or abandon the "devout habit of mind" of their social inferiors (who may also be relatives or even members of their immediate families), or to simulate the "great stress on ceremonial ... accessories of worship" expended by the upper or "leisure" class to which they aspire. But one may wonder whether

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Veblen's generalizations are accurate except for the muddling of social sensitivity with religious "accessories."

In the growing pretense of economic equality at least, one may question the total validity of his economic stratification, or the alleged quandary of the middle class. The satirist may employ similar terms, but he pursues his subject beyond finite economic limits. That some "accessories" of worship though stratified in cost are nonetheless uniformly "desirable"

Dennis Barlow, the English expatriate in Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One, learns upon his first visit to Whispering Glades— for all its grotesquity, easily identified as the Forest Lawn Cemetery. Mortuary Hostesses, like their sisters at airline and reception desks, happily make Before Need Arrangements, with smiling faces describe the existence and therefore the desirability of accommodations other than first-class:

The Park is zoned. Each zone has its own name and appropriate Work of Art. Zones of course vary in price and within the zones the prices vary according to their proximity to the Work of Art. We have single sites as low as fifty dollars. That is the Pilgrim's Rest, a zone we are just developing behind the Crematory fuel dump. The most costly are those on Lake Isle. They range about a thousand dollars. Then there is Lovers' Nest, zoned about a very, very beautiful marble replica of Rodin's famous statue, The Kiss. We have double plots there at seven hundred and fifty dollars the pair.21

In the reiterated, collective pronoun "We" there is an identification of "interest," in the ambiguous financial,
compassionate, incidental, and transcendental senses of the
word.22 Such as identification is, I think, an example of
what Kenneth Burke calls "corporate we's" and the "function
of sociality." It is transcendental "downwards" in the
sense that the loss of The Loved One is essentially economic,
involving a greater financial than compassionate interest.
The Whispering Glades, where the human Loved Ones are
taken to their non-denominational resting place, is scarcely
an exaggeration over the real one in sunny California and
little different from The Happy Hunting Grounds, the home
for dead animals and commercial enterprise for which Dennis
Barlow is secretary. When Sir Francis Hinsley, once chief
script-writer at Megalopolitan Pictures, commits suicide
after the Grand Sanhedrin of the Corporation tear him
vocationally and ritualistically to bits, his fellow
English expatriates assemble as though summoned by tocsin.
Their mutual concern is that

"His contract wasn't renewed."
They were words of ill-omen to all that assembled
company, words never spoken without the furtive
touching of wood or crossing of fingers; unholy words
best left unsaid. To each of them was given a span of
life between the signature of the contract and its
expiration; beyond that lay the vast unknowable.23

This economic and social twist of values occurs
repeatedly in the satire. Thus, for example, in the

22See Attitudes, II, 138-147.

23The Loved One, p. 33.
conversation between the Reverend Earl Bartholomew and Dennis Barlow on the occasion of his deciding to enter Holy Orders:

Dennis said: "Tell me, how does one become a non-sectarian clergyman?"
"One has the Call." . . .
"You just say one day 'I am a non-sectarian clergyman' and set up shop?"
"There is considerable outlay. You need buildings. But the banks are usually ready to help. Then, of course, what one aims at is a radio congregation."
"A friend of mine has the Call, Mr. Bartholomew."
"Well, I should advise him to think twice about answering it. The competition gets hotter every year, especially in Los Angeles." . . .
"My friend was thinking of making a specialty of funeral work. He has connections."
"Chicken feed, Mr. Barlow. There is more to be made in weddings and christenings."
". . . What he needs is Class. You would say, would you not, that a non-sectarian clergyman was the social equal of an embalmer?"
"I certainly would, Mr. Barlow. There is a very deep respect in the American heart for ministers of religion."24

Expeditiously becoming such a minister, Barlow's business cards read:

Squadron Leader the Rev. Dennis Barlow/ begs to announce that he is shortly starting business at 1154 Arbuckle Avenue, Los Angeles. All non-sectarian services expeditiously conducted at competitive prices. Funerals a specialty. Panegyrics in prose or poetry. Confessions heard in strict confidence. 25

The loss of Sir Francis, The Loved One, is also a democratized "socialization of losses."26 Like the beautiful

24 Tbid., pp. 122-123.
Diotima, he is a loss to his Peers as a kind of scapegoat, in a mode of expiation for crime or shame rather than for sin or guilt and therefore an expiation more economic than transcendental. He is used, economically and socially, by the corporate we, his colleagues. Says his erstwhile colleague, Sir Ambrose Amherst:

"This is an occasion when we've all got to show the flag. We may have to put our hands in our pockets— I don't suppose old Frank has left much— but it will be money well spent if it puts the British colony right in the eyes of the industry. I called Washington and asked them to send the Ambassador to the funeral, but it doesn't seem they can manage it. I'll try again. It would make a lot of difference. In any case I don't think the studio will keep away if they know we are solid..."

However, Waugh's satire, insofar as it is set in America, suggests that Burke's insights, though acute, are perhaps geographically inaccurate. "We [in America] are still far behind England in the extent to which the 'socialization of losses' has been democratized," Burke has said. Waugh's view, in contrast, suggests in its inter-nationality that we all are one in this. In any case, since the Christian tradition has always regarded death with an awful solemnity and dignity, then the sentimentality—or insensibility—which robs death of its terror or seeks by absurdly economic or social means to "equalize" the gulf that separates dead from

27 The Loved One, p. 36. Emphasis is textual.

28 Attitudes, I, 129.
living can be regarded a religious subject for satire wherever it may be found.

"Now we have only a middle class," Russell Lynes writes. "No one today would be so patronizing as to refer to the lower classes." In Great Britain as well as in America, the socialization of religion seems to be directly related not to class distinctions but to the lack of class distinctions. In a satiric compilation edited by Nancy Mitford, enquiries are made into the "identifiable characteristics of English aristocracy" by contributors hard pressed to find any at all. Regarding devout religious observances, Miss Mitford writes, "On the whole, the lords, in common with most of their fellow countrymen, have always regarded religious observance as a sort of patriotic duty. The Church is the Church of England and must be supported to show that we are not as foreigners are. A friend of mine voiced this attitude during the war: 'Well, you know, I don't do firewatching or Home Guard and I feel one must do something to help the war, so I always go to Church on Sunday.' I am sure he did not imagine that his prayers would drive back the German hordes; he went as a gesture of social solidarity." The socialization of losses is at least part of the socialization of religion. In Emergent Collectivism, what Burke sees as

Act V in his dramatistic Curve of History, secular prayer and the gospel of service are important. "In 'secular prayer' there is character-building, the shaping of one's individual character and role with respect to a theory of collective, historic purpose. . . . By the 'gospel of service' one refers to social service. It is a collective attribute."  

Will Herberg's admirable study of America's Faith, compounded of its three religious traditions and its national heritage, has a large descriptive validity.

It would be the crudest kind of misunderstanding [says Herberg] to dismiss the American Way of Life as no more than a political formula or propagandist slogan, or to regard it as simply an expression of "materialistic" impulses of the American people. . . . The American Way of Life is, at bottom, a spiritual structure . . . of beliefs and standards; it synthesizes all that commends itself to the American as the right, the good, and the true in actual life. It embraces such seemingly incongruous elements as sanitary plumbing and freedom of opportunity, Coca-Cola and an intense faith in education—all felt as moral questions relating to the proper way of life. . . . It is a faith that has its symbols and its rituals, its holidays and its liturgy, its saints and its sancta. 

Even so, his study, though not strictly economic, is geographically limited. Its implications pursued transcend national facts. Similarly, an excellent recent study in the

31 Attitudes, I, 204, 209.

sociology of religion by Louis Schneider and Sanford M.
Dornbusch draws an important connection between one curious kind of literature and life in America, and suggests further that the trends giving rise to the literature extended well beyond special cultist movements; but it is restricted in its view of that literary kind, Inspirational Books, as "part and parcel" of American culture and circumstances. "One can hardly doubt," they say, "that it is distinctively 'American' and reflects American values. . . ."33 The authors do not concern themselves with materials outside their geographically defined interest.

The "United States is a fragmentary, most imperfect, and in some respects a grotesque advance copy of a future world order," Wyndham Lewis warns. "It is a Brotherhood rather than a 'People'. Americans have something more than a nationality. In its place they have what amounts almost to a religion; a 'way of life.' " In the "sacramentalism" of

33Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1958), p. 43. The qualification I make regarding these last two studies I would make of others. E.g., A. Roy Eckardt's The Surge of Piety in America (New York: Association Pr., 1958), and Martin E. Marty's The New Shape of Religion in America (New York: Harper, 1959), in which the modern religious "revival" is manifestly neither Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, but rather an amorphous religion-in-general cutting across confessional boundaries and affected by "divine-human coziness." And, William H. Whyte's The Organization Man (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956), pp. 365-381, in which the development of the suburban "useful church" in America is described as a trend toward "social utility" and "sensitivity to practicality."
citizenship, Wyndham Lewis marvels, America "does not merely hand you something like a luggage label, but, rather, an authentic soul." If it is true that in primitive or in ancient cultures there must exist an intimate connection between social organization and religious belief, then in modern and technological cultures—by and large, beyond economic, geographic, and political limits—there would seem to be a confusion of religious organization and social belief. In a consideration of "the problem of presenting the English culture to that of general European culture," G. K. Chesterton wrote that "of all peoples we English are possibly the most purely patriotic, possibly excessively and narrowly patriotic, but anyhow tacitly taking the nation as a sort of religion or substitute for religion." But in another place, referring to and specifically identifying the Comtean "Religion of Humanity" and the "humanitarian sort of religion" (which I will again touch on in Chapter Two), he stresses its pervasiveness, its becoming more widespread as individual cultures become increasingly modern:

The modern world is madder than any satires on it. . . . The human beings become less human by becoming less separate; we might say less human in being less lonely.

America and Cosmic Man (Garden City: Doubleday, 1949), pp. 30-32.

The human beings become less intelligible as they become less isolated; we might say with strict truth that the closer they are to us the farther they are away. . . . The human unity with which I deal here is not to be confounded with this modern industrial monotony and herding, which is rather a congestion than a communion. It is a thing to which human groups left to themselves, have everywhere tended by an instinct that may truly be called human . . . . It is the one real rival to the Church of Christ. 36

It is almost as though evaluative statement becomes inevitable as the phenomenon begins to be seen whole. T. S. Eliot also, in speaking about the cultural absorption of religion in a society, goes beyond strictly non-evaluative or descriptive terms: " . . . there is an aspect in which we can see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture. And at the same time we must recognize that when this identification is complete, it means in actual societies both an inferior culture and an inferior religion." 37

To put it in a way I intend to develop throughout this dissertation, it is as though beginning to see the socialization of religion whole, in its various complexities, makes the social phenomenon satiric. For now, I would make a


37 Notes towards the Definition of Culture (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 31.
brief comparison of two writers on the same subject. George Santayana, say, is not much more than descriptive when he observes that "... it is astonishing how much even religion in America (can it possibly be so in England?) is a matter of meetings, building funds, schools, charities, clubs, and picnics."\(^{38}\) C. S. Lewis, on the same point, is evaluative; in *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape, an under-secretary in the Lowerarchy, writes to his nephew Wormwood, a junior tempter, who is in the process of wooing a "patient" from Earth to Hell. Wormwood, being new on the job, is inclined to dramatic techniques, but His Infernal Majesty, with the wisdom of many conversions, advises him: "Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours—and the more 'religious' (on those terms) the more securely ours. I could show you a pretty cageful down here,/ Your affectionate uncle/ SCREWTAPE."\(^{39}\) Santayana is sociological; Lewis is satiric.

The sociological approach is not whole in three senses. First, the phenomenon cannot be "seen" within political,


geographic, economic, or social limits. It is ultimately a modern phenomenon, coterminous with technological civilization but not equivalent to it. It is not the sociologist's responsibility to go beyond the facts which it is his responsibility to record, of course, but the point is that he does not. Secondly, "seeing" the phenomenon whole involves the use of imagination as well as reason, art as well as science. The imaginative implications are what lead to evaluative statements of grotesquity. And, thirdly, if the scientific intention of the sociologist is to be as objectively removed from his work as he possibly can be, the satirist by contrast attacks in others those weaknesses and temptations which he can "see" within himself. Even if his delineations are regarded as psychological rather than sociological, he nonetheless goes beyond careful subjectivity. The satirist counts himself in the world, a world thereby more whole than if he presumed to leave himself out. Hence he frequently uses the first-person grammatical form, which even if "only" fanciful or fictitious, is a constant reminder of the person behind the persona.

In this chapter where I am concerned, first of all, with what the satire on the socialization of religion is about, I have tried to indicate the particular value that the satire has as literary, unscientific knowledge. Sociology doesn't pretend to be art, of course, and satire doesn't pretend to be science. But insofar as
they both try to get at the "whole truth" about a unique and relatively modern phenomenon, they come to have the same generic symptoms (which I am most extensively and particularly concerned to identify in the following chapters).

With reference to Antigone and Murder in the Cathedral I illustrate a specifically literary interest in the perennial and inevitable "pious crime," that is, the clash of social and religious values; and I consider how such a recurring dilemma is neither to be deplored nor, from an historical point of view at least, to be regarded as resolvable. But though "pious crime" has in the past always been regarded as inevitable and unresolvable, it seems to be a demonstrable fact that the differences between this-worldly and other-worldly values have come to disappear, the things of Caesar indistinguished from the things of God, and the functions of the State and Church merged. This fact seems not to have political, geographic, economic or social limits, or to be defined or proscribed within them. One inference or consequence may be that satire is a particularly suitable form for the consideration of this fact to take. I try to show, anyway, that satire is perhaps more suitable than the social sciences in "seeing" the vast and complex nature of the socialization of religion, which is not a matter of conflict but of accommodation: "( . . . we were not taught the 'law' of ancient religion but the law of the United State)." Such various satirists as Eugene Zamiatin,
Karel Čapek, G. K. Chesterton, T. S. Eliot, Bertrand Russell, Evelyn Waugh, C. S. Lewis, and Wyndham Lewis—curious as a group, certainly—all evidently regard the dissolution or merger of social and religious values as an intellectual and moral sanction for debunking.
CHAPTER TWO

CORRUPTIO OPTIMI PESSIMA:
HERESY IN SATIRE AND HISTORY

Religion, they tell us, ought not to be ridiculed; and they tell us truth: yet surely the corruptions in it may; for we are taught by the tritest maxim in the world, that Religion being the best of things, its corruptions are likely to be the worst.

—Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub

The gross darkness of that night which has for many centuries obscured our holy religion, we may clearly see, is past; the morning is opening upon us; and we cannot doubt but that the light will increase, and extend itself more and more unto the perfect day. Happy are they who contribute to diffuse the pure light of this everlasting gospel. . . . I must now proceed to exhibit a view of the dreadful corruptions which have debased its spirit.

—Joseph Priestley, An History of the Corruptions of Christianity

I.

In this second chapter I propose to show that the socialization of religion, as a modern subject for satire, is a heresy definable historically and therefore, as a heresy, is like earlier and traditional subjects for satire; it is not a seditious heresy with reference to the institution of the State, but religious heresy with reference to the Church.
Further, having suggested in Chapter One some generic symptoms of satire and other forms of writing on a specifically religious subject, I propose to develop particularly what the satire itself is as a more complete—yet imperfect—way of seeing the subject. I argue the case for an essential similarity between some modern religious satire and religious satire up to at least the sixteenth century, stressing the point that although the subject of satire on the socialization is new, that is, unique and relatively modern, the satire as a religious kind is something old.

My interest is in a lineage of intention extending from Lucian, Langland and Chaucer, Erasmus and More, and Swift up to and including modern religious satirists; I try to establish some early literary and religious antecedents to modern religious satire and its circumstances, which seem to me to have a comparative simplicity, even though, as I am painfully aware, there is no critical agreement even about them. Three cautionary notes: first, I largely pass over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (certainly the high point of English satire in both quantity and quality) not because they are irrelevant but because they are too vast and not directly necessary to my purpose; second, acknowledging the fact of wide differences in theory of satiric forms, I take that fact to be a part of my subject and suggest that the imperfections inherent in satire make such differences
unavoidable; third, I take up critical and theoretical differences only so far as necessary to move my discussion forward, saving an appraisal of them for my concluding chapter.

My two dissertation questions are these: What is the satire on the socialization of religion as different from politico-religious treatise and from Inspirational Books? How is it possible that men very different in their beliefs can, all together, regard the socialization of religion as subject for satire? To ask these questions is to imply that literary criticism is a criticism of life, and that there is a connection between the literary form of satire and those human experiences of the spirit we call religious. If men have an identity in the social patterns they form and in the manner in which social power is distributed and exercised, so too in their literary forms and the manner in which they explore their "situations." I concern myself with the differences between satiric, controversial, and devotional kinds of literature which touch on the same subject, defining these three kinds by illustration and example. The answer to the first question is historical and generic, the second biographical and religious.

Historically considered then, satire on the socialization of religion is like early religious satire. Like the satire of Lucian, or Chaucer and Langland, in pointing at abuses of religion it may sometimes appear to be destructive
rather than constructive, or self-defeating in not always communicating clearly the differences between religion and the abuses of it; but, I try to show (contrary to much contemporary criticism), it would be inaccurate to think of it as un-religious or anti-religious on that count.

Further, as religious satire it is unlike other forms of religious writing. In my references to Erasmus and Thomas More I differentiate three religious kinds: devotional, controversial, and satiric. These differences I elaborate on and sustain throughout the dissertation. Especially in my references to Erasmus I take care to make my points about religious satirists and their satire, with some detail, the assumption being that then in Part Two I can avoid belaboring them.

Relevant to my second question, if in biographical inquiry Lucian or Chaucer and Langland can be, as they sometimes have been, regarded as un-religious or anti-religious, perhaps anybody can be. It has seemed curious to me that the openly avowed Christian satirists I consider in Chapter Three have been so regarded. And it has seemed curious to me that Thomas More, who was a saint, and that his close friend Erasmus, who was an Augustinian canon, can evidently be regarded as un-religious or anti-religious in the sense that they were harbingers of a new and un-Christian spirit. It can, I hope, be argued that despite
their different points of view these men were religious, and yet also satiric—that the two do not somehow cancel out. On the matter of religious satire there may conceivably be a kind of spiritual brotherhood between Chaucer and Langland, Erasmus and More, and my modern satirists, themselves different from one another as they are in their religious commitments. Not all satire is religious, of course, but if it is in the nature of satire to take a dark view and risk dark results, satire cannot on the face of it be called un-religious or anti-religious. To persist in looking at abuses of religion rather than the beauty in it, and to risk provoking abuses by calling attention to them, have been characteristic acts of saints and martyrs. To say this is to insist on the difference, however strange and baffling it may be, between a pious crime and heresy.

Satirists, in whatever century, have an allegiance or commitment to religion in its historical and institutional forms, and they regard its abuses as heretical. The abuses of religion, inevitably seen as through a glass darkly, have for both satirists and historians never appeared to be consistently or constantly the same thing. Anglican Dean Swift, for example, in an early eighteenth-century satire envisioned religious abuses as recent corruptions and schisms in an historically pure Christian faith, whereas Scientist and Clergyman Priestley, in a late eighteenth-century history, depicted the Christian faith as corrupt from the
very beginning and tending toward an ultimate perfection; in Priestley's view, representative of the Enlightenment, the corruptions of Christianity were perpetrated by "primitive christians" and "ancient christians," the history of religion being for him a gradual and linear purification. The intention of modern satirists is like Swift's rather than Priestley's in the way they see or envision what they write about as the corruptions of religion. The particular literary form their vision takes is conditioned by what they see; what they see, really, provides a sanction for what they do, imaginatively.

There is nothing at all new in the problem of distinguishing between religion and its abuses, nor in the sense of importance attached to doing so. It is a perennial problem, early in Church history as well as late. The limited problem of identifying religious satire as a literary genre, in its intention and effect, is part of this larger problem. There is an unavoidable and direct relation between Church history and my literary purpose.

In the early centuries of the Church, when the heathen were enrolled as catechumens during the Mass in the third week in Lent, the Epistle (Exodus 20. 12-24) and Gospel (Matthew 15. 1-20) were evidently selected to recall the prescriptions of the Ten Commandments and emphasize those dispositions of loyalty and deep sincerity with which the Commandments of God should be observed. According to Church
history, the Pharisees had added to the Commandments human traditions which consisted in entirely exterior practices to which they attached greater importance than to the law of Moses, the law of what had already become the "ancient religion." Christ having had to condemn them, it was evidently necessary for the Church to continue guarding against merely outward practice, whether of worship or fasting. Church history from the very beginning can be regarded as a virtual succession of heresies, whichever indeterminate meaning one gives that word: sects, sins, or crimes. Certainly by the fourth and fifth centuries, in which Saint Augustine did battle with Arians, Manicheans, Donatists, and Pelagians, the opportunity or necessity for ridicule was very wide indeed. Saint Jerome, for example, whose literary activity was astoundingly prolific, owes his place in history to his exegetical studies and revisions of the Bible, and to his staunch defense of the Church in theological controversies; but his Satirical Letters were with Saint Augustine's Confessions one of the works most appreciated by the humanists of the Renaissance. As a defender of the faith he was, in short, devotional, controversial and satiric.

If at this historical distance the specific abuses must perform be imperfectly perceived, so too the ridicule of them. The second-century satirist Lucian is castigated
by one of his earliest-known biographers, Suidas, a tenth-century Greek encyclopedist, for making fun not only of religious abuses but of religion:

Lucian of Samosata, otherwise known as Lucian the Blasphemer, or the Slanderer, or, more accurately, the Atheist, . . . is said to have been torn to pieces by mad dogs, because he had been so rabid against the truth—for in his Death of Peregrinus the filthy brute attacks Christianity and blasphemes Christ Himself. So he was adequately punished in this world, and in the next he will inherit eternal fire with Satan.¹

The religious satire in Peregrinus, pointing to other-worldly concerns in this-world, though ambiguous seems gentle enough; here, for example, is Lucian's reference to Christian belief in immortality, brotherhood, and the value of abstinence in a religious society:

The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody, most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property . . . . but then, after Peregrinus had transgressed in some way even against them—he was seen, I think, eating some of the food that is forbidden them—they no longer accepted him.²


The modern reader is inclined to the judgment of the eighteenth-century editor who believed that Dryden confuted the charge of Lucian's atheism, and that Lucian's satire would appeal to all "that are Friends to our Constitution in Church and State."³ And of Lucian's allegedly "rabid" tone, Dryden demurred that "for the most part, he rather laughs like Horace, than bites like Juvenal. Indeed his Genius was of kin to both; but more nearly related to the former."⁴ For the modern reader of Peregrinus it is not easy to see why church authorities of the sixteenth century placed it on the Index librorum prohibitorum. He sees rather Lucian's influence on a long line of satirists from Saint Thomas More and Erasmus who translated him, to Swift and H. G. Wells and Evelyn Waugh who imitated him—Waugh's The Loved One for example being called "the most Lucianic work of this century."⁵ It is clear at least that whatever Lucian satirizes in society, he does not satirize the socialization of religion. But it is no less clear that the difficulties involved in perceiving religious truth and the nature of a satiric defense of it do not lessen with time. If Lucian seems to a modern reader to make no attempt to

³Eminent Hands, I, "Epistle Dedicatory."

⁴Eminent Hands, I, 34.

⁵Paul Turner, Sketches, p. 17.
distinguish the blatant impostor from the true representative of a creed or principle; if Lucian was, as he claimed to be, the Apostle of Free Speech and the Interpreter of Common Sense to the rational minority of his day; if he seems to be carried away by personal enmity regarding a vast range of subjects, he cannot on the count of these latent distortions be called anti-religious. Not every satiric glass is a religious one, to be sure. But in looking through one that is, a consideration must be made for the possible myopia or astigmatism of the satirist, his skill in grinding it out, the wear it may have suffered in passing from hand to eminent hand, and the viewer's own visual incapacities. The effect is not dependent on the thing alone.

In English literature until the late fifteenth century surely, the awesome influence of religion—the importance of service to and adoration of God, the perpetuation of Christian dogma and the passionate concern for it in its most sophisticated and most homiletic forms, the perennial profession and practice of religious beliefs—indicates no waning as an historical and institutional force in society. The religious character of the literature cannot be explained away by the simple fact that most of the early authors and interpreters were clerics. When in addition to the oral literature published works also were anonymous, communal, and moral, more social perhaps than at any time since, the

strongly religious forces in them suggest no amorphous absorption of religion in society, no loss of religion's institutional identity. Breakdown, yes, and an exceedingly complex process of decay and regeneration, and of re-formation. But religion itself is there, recognizable despite its obtruding social manifestations.

Admittedly, the dangers of over-simplifying such a point are very large. C. S. Lewis (writing as an historian, not as a satirist) refers to "that whole tragic farce we call the Reformation." Yet contemporary historians of diverging views can say that Chaucer's England or Langland's England was Catholic England, and either Chaucer or Langland as, among other things, a religious satirist can be understood only when "seeing" that his whole life must have been conditioned and controlled by the Church. Chaucer's religious satire is possible because, if not only because, there is religion. If we can say that whatever claims reverence risks ridicule, then religion suffers ridicule to the extent that its claim to reverence is real. However imaginative or fictitious a satiric world is in its nature, Chaucer's satiric world does reflect his real world. Specifically,


8In connection with the work of other medieval satirists, C. S. Lewis writes: "Whatever claims reverence risks ridicule. As long as there is any religion we shall laugh at parsons." The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (London: Oxford Univ., 1953), p. 144.
Chaucer's pilgrims live in the world of "the hooly blisful martir" Thomas Becket, the world in which Thomas was an archbishop and is a saint; the paradox of martyrdom—the pious violation of the social order—provides the very context in which the pilgrims exist; because of the murder in the cathedral they have their collective identity.

In the World Picture of the satire there are two reflections, Chaucer's England and Catholic England. If we "see" them at all, we see the Canterbury pilgrims both ways, though in a "perspective by incongruity" I think our own looking glasses will have, willy-nilly, their own peculiar distortions:

Of all that was done in the past, you eat the fruit, either rotten or ripe.
And the Church must be forever building, and always decaying, and always being restored.
For every ill deed in the past we suffer the consequence:
The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without. . . .

In the view I develop throughout this dissertation, there is no point to the game of proving that Chaucer is more "enlightened" and Langland more medieval, humanistic as distinct from Christian, the one more this-worldly and the other more other-worldly. Generically considered, the antithesis is more convenient than descriptive. The gallery of Chaucer's religious portraits in the Canterbury Tales has a much greater particularity than the "fair feld, ful of folks" in the more solemn Piers Plowman. Langland's

poem (if it is Langland's poem) is surely a more completed and abstract survey of human life under the aspect of good and evil, "Al the welthe of this worlde - and the woo bothe."

_Piers Plowman_ is unquestionably religious in its social criticisms, the _Tales_ less obviously so. Yet, if the religious and moral differences between Chaucer's pilgrims are not always simply distinguishable—thus the labor of exegesis, the arbitrariness of grouping them, and a consequent part of the extensive secondary literature on the _Tales_, such differences nonetheless do come to mind.

These differences are an indication of the differences between the abuses of religion and religion itself. Scholars have not found a definite series or pattern of tales in Chaucer's pilgrimage; there is no manuscript that proves any arrangement having Chaucer's sanction; yet perhaps all readers will agree to an elementary grouping which excludes the fictional characters within the _Tales_ themselves and which depends on the characters introduced in the Prologue. The lay Christians, Churchmen all who outnumber the religious and clerics by about two to one, include: in one group, the admirable and aristocratic Knight, his son the Squire, their servant the Yeoman, the good though obscure Flowman brother to the Parson, Harry Bailly, and Chaucer himself; in a clearly more imperfect but also more affluent second group (again listed in a kind of descending order), the Franklin,
Man of Law, the five Gildsmen and their Cook, the Shipman,
Physician, the irrepressible Wife of Bath, and the Merchant;
in a third and lower class by themselves, the Miller, Manciple,
Reeve, and Summoner. Among the explicitly religious portraits,
Madame Eglentyne the Prioress is more carefully drawn than
the good Nun and the three priests accompanying her. And the
Monk, Friar, and despicable Pardoner are more conspicuous
in their failings than the great and good Clerk in his learning
and wisdom and the Parson in his virtue and responsibility.
The gallery of Chaucer’s portraits, so considered, is not
complete or abstract; but it is no less than Langland’s
satire, a Christian’s survey of human life under the aspect
of good and evil. That the number of satiric portraits
is larger than the eulogistic ones is a fact surely matching
the function of satire. It is when an institution like the
Church is so fundamentally safe and impregnable that any
number of disrespectful jokes might be indulged in. Chaucer,
like the author of the Vision of William, and many satirists
before and after them both, included himself in his satire.
He insulted himself with equal freedom. A man can make jokes
about himself or his institutions when he believes in them.

Chaucer and Langland believed in the Church no less than
in themselves; their Visions may be imperfect in portraying
religious imperfections without being called anti-religious
in their intention. And for the modern reader who believes
in the Church, their Visions because of the imperfections will not be called un-religious in their effect. Both Chaucer and Langland satirically apply other-worldly standards in their criticism of this-world. Their satire is an imaginative criticism of something they see in their real world; it is a religious indictment of social realities they regard as abuses or corruptions. What they write is not "purely literary." Their satire is their way of coping with (though not solving) a hard problem. Both the problem and the way they get at it are in their very nature bifocal.
II.

This synthesis of two worlds, rather than the Christian and humanistic antithesis, is particularly suited to a generic identification of religious satire and the spirit of religious satirists. With reference to a second pair of religious satirists, namely, Erasmus and More, I would want to demonstrate the relevance of this notion of double vision to a generic classification of satiric, controversial, and devotional kinds which I regard as applicable in our own time.

To select from so immense a sea of ideas about society and religion only the specimens that fit the meshes of one's own small net, and to label them "medieval thought," is, as the esteemed R. H. Tawney has said, to beg all questions. But then Tawney himself goes on to make a generalization about the historical pervasiveness and complexity of religion in society which few would try to gainsay:

Asceticism or renunciation, quietism or indifferentism, the zeal which does well to be angry, the temper which seeks a synthesis of the external order and the religion of the spirit—all alike, in one form or another, are represented in the religious thought and practices of the Middle Ages.

All are represented in it, but not all are equally representative of it. Of the four attitudes suggested above, it is the last which is the most characteristic. The first fundamental assumption which is taken over by the sixteenth century is that the ultimate standard of human institutions and activities is religion.¹⁰

It is from some such viewpoint that the satire of Erasmus and Thomas More, taken together, can begin to make sense, my point being especially that in their satires is revealed such a "temper which seeks a synthesis of the external order and the religion of the spirit." They seem to me as satirists to be at one and the same time this-worldly and other-worldly. Erasmus, once an Augustinian canon, whose humanism has come to be associated with his deep-seated aversion to monastic life and dislike of scholasticism, was a life-long friend of a saint. His repudiation and approbation of Luther is probably no more discreditable to him than, for example, in the next century, Dryden's shifting religious allegiances. In his own time none more extensively and effectively introduced the "classic spirit," but, it should be emphasized, only "in so far as it could be reflected in the soul of a sixteenth-century Christian."¹¹ And, though the three representative works I refer to were written in Latin, they were influential also as English translations.

It is with reference to Erasmus' interest in two worlds—the permanent tensions between the Christian ethos and the world, in Troeltsch's terms—that I wish to differentiate Erasmus' literary works in three categories.

One of his most celebrated and influential works, the

Enchiridion militis Christiani, is an instance of what can be called religious literature in a devotional sense. In its form it is a manual for an illiterate soldier to attain an attitude of mind worthy of a Christian, and in its substance, a theological program of action wherein every Christian is to understand Scripture in its purity and original meaning. There was nothing new in this. Joseph Priestley in his eighteenth-century history of the corruptions of Christianity is virtually blind to the distinction between ancient religion and its abuses, and so is representative of the beginnings of a unique historical (and heretical) outlook. But the corruptions of Christianity are a concern in satire and devotional literature at all times, in Saint Jerome's various kinds, and in Lucian and the early Church father Origen. The Prologue to Erasmus' Enchiridion reviews "the corruption of this world, and how far it is out of frame":

Yea, of so corrupt and perverse judgments are some, that they count it, even in priests, to be but a small vice, which is most abominable; and also esteem it to be an high virtue which hath but only the visor and appearance of godliness; thinking themselves better for the ceremonies, rules, and trifles of men's invention, and yet having no conscience at all to slander other men. Neither need men to fear, that the reproving of such abuses doth either subvert religion, or hinder true obedience. For whomsoever the Holy Ghost inspireth, is of his own accord, without any manner of compulsion, ready to obey.12

His argument chiefly aims at subverting, with the guidance of the great Fathers of the Church, the conception of religion as a continual observance of ceremonies, which, if they do not renew the soul, are valueless and hurtful. "The eternal law, which God hath created in the right reason of man, teacheth him to abhor all corrupt affections, and not to live after them; which thing even the heathen philosophers do also confess." Under the heading of "Opinions Meet for a Christian Man," Erasmus laments the extremes of pride of class, national hostility, professional envy, and rivalry between religious orders. He is concerned with religious abuses from the point of view of their social implications. "It is not merely religious feeling, it is equally social feeling that inspired him," Huizinga says. But the feelings, if equal and perhaps misdirected, are not confused. "To Erasmus the great problem of Church and State and society, seemed simple. Nothing was required but restoration and purification by a return to the original, unspoiled sources of Christianity. A number of accretions to the faith, rather ridiculous than revolting, had to be cleared away." Erasmus is a far way from creating a new Religion of Humanity and a Positivist Calendar of socio-religious observances whose primary benefit would accrue in this-world. The *Enchiridion*

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14 *Erasmus and the Age*, p. 52.

is devotional, despite its practical and argumentative concern with the social implications of religion in its faulty operations; its intention is to foster an attitude of mind and spirit according to ancient or "original" Christian standards, with whatever benefit to be achieved in an other-world. In its expression of reformatory zeal, it is not the harbinger of a new, humanistic spirit isolable in a point of historical time.

An example of religious literature in a controversial sense is Erasmus' Colloquies. The 1680 translation by Sir Roger L'Estrange, "Pleasantly Representing Several Superstitious Levities That were crept into the Church of Rome," clearly could serve to channel the scorn and irony of Erasmus to the "useful" and contemporary purpose of exonerating the reader as an opponent of the Papists, and testifying to an allegiance of the side of Titus Oates against the Papist sympathizers. It is no wonder that they have, especially in their severe criticism of the religious orders, an important place in polemical history. "The Religious Pilgrimage," "The Religious Retreat," "The Souldier and the Carthusian," "The Franciscan's Vision," and "The Gospel Carrier" would delight anyone who could believe.

who would want to believe, that every fire in London, even
the Great Fire itself, could be ascribed to the direct and
personal malice of the Pope, or that Milton was a frequenter
of a Popish Club, or that Cromwell was in league with the
Jesuits. Yet, curiously, L'Estrange deems it necessary
to clear himself of complicity in a note To The Reader:

The Fanatiques will have him [the translator himself]
to be a Favourer of the Plot, or (as all Episcopal
men are accounted now adays) a Papist in Masquerade.
The Author of the Compendium of the late Tryals, takes
him for a Fanatique: so that with Erasmus himself, he
is crush'd betwixt the Two Extremes. Upon the sense
of these Unkindnesses, he has now made English of
These Colloquies, as an Apology on the One hand, and
a Revenge, on the Other.

Perhaps Erasmus never realized how much he was shaking
the foundations of the Church. Yet it is surely true that
he did, despite the fact that like More he remained all his
life a believing Roman Catholic. John Aubrey in his
seventeenth-century biographic sketch wrote:

They were wont to say that Erasmus was Interpendent
between Heaven and Hell, till, about the year 1655, the
Conclave at Rome damned him for a Heretique, after he
had been dead 120 yeares.
His deepest divinity is where a man would least
expect it: viz. in his Colloquies in a Dialogue
between a Butcher and a Fishmonger. 17

In his indignation Erasmus not only hurt those who deserved
castigation and strengthened what was valuable, but also
hurt the good as well as the bad; in spite of himself he

17Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Ann
assailed both the institution and persons, and possibly injured without elevating them. This historic fact suggests that such is the mysterious Power of Satire. As Robert C. Elliott has demonstrated, it is possible to see in the relationship of the satirist and his society (even in sophisticated or complex societies, and not just in primitive ones) some reflection of virtually mysterious and magical ambiguities. The satirist's religious status with respect to society, it seems to me, is like that of the magician, that is, it is necessarily problematic. He, his "work," and his function are precariously esteemed in society. "Thus the satirical portraits of Chaucer, who seems to have been thoroughly orthodox in religion, have often been interpreted as evidence of his revolt against the Church; during the Reformation he and Langland were used for purposes doubtless far removed from their intent."18

The point I wish especially to suggest is that all satirists would seem to live in an Age of Reformation and for them if not for all of their "users" the idea of the Reformation tends to disappear. The notion struck me, following another cue from Elliott, that Huizinga's study of Erasmus and the Age of Reformation might bear a matching caption: The Satirist and Society. Every society for the

satirist in it needs reformation, and Huizinga's delineation of Erasmus' character (esp. ch. xiv, pp. 117-129, summarized here) remarkably matches the usual picture of the satirist; a very complicated moral character in a man taking himself to be one of the simplest in the world, he has a need of purity "driving him" to a consideration of what he finds scatologically and theologically revolting, a passionate desire for cleanliness and brightness leading relentlessly to descriptions of stuffy air and smelly substances; he is a "delicate soul in all his fibres," having a great need of affection, friendship, and concord, unable to be less concerned with or about public opinion; he has in him a dangerous fusion between inclination and conviction, an undeniable correlation between idiosyncrasies and precepts; he ascribes weakness to himself, dissatisfaction with himself and his work, and possesses a paradoxically self-centered modesty; he is a man who has "so many friends" and is nevertheless a solitary at heart; he nourishes the unhappy feeling of being charged by unlucky stars with Herculean labor, without pleasure or profit to himself, being restless but also precipitate, with an unusual horror of lies.

If Erasmus' conception of the Church was no longer "purely" Catholic, if the World Picture was no longer the one which Aquinas and Dante—and Chaucer and Langland—had described, according to their Vision, such perhaps is the nature of human institutions. The term institutions
here has the bi-part, literary and social, meaning that
Wellek and Warren give it: "The literary kind is an
'institution'—as Church, University, or State is an
institution. It exists not as an animal exists or even as
a building, chapel, library, or capitol, but as an
institution exists. One can work through, express himself
through, existing institutions, create new ones, or get on,
so far as possible, without sharing in polities or rituals;
one can also join, but then reshape, institutions."19 In
this sense (though Wellek and Warren could not say so; they
too are sensitive to intentional and affective fallacies and
have little to say about satire) the satirist works through
and exists in both his society and his satire, that is, in
the institutions of his society and his literature. In the
Vision of Erasmus, an Encomium Moriae, written in More's
house, is a praise of More, of Moros, of his Folly and
Moroseness, of the institutions which he represents. The
satirists and the subject satirized are joined and, in some
ways unintentionally, reshaped. The Church, seen through

19 Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949),
p. 235. Harry Levin consistently generalizes the problem
of the relation between literature and life (which he regards
as the 'first and primordial' point of his critical focus
and thus is different from Wellek's) in terms of a
reconciliation of the autonomy of literary forms with the
responsive counterclaims of society. "Literature is not
only the effect of social causes; it is also the cause of
social effects," he says, in "Literature as an Institution,"
Literary Opinion in America, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel (New
the looking glass of Menippean satire, has perhaps been changed or even distorted. The satire can nonetheless be called religious.

The *Praise of Folly*, representative of my third category and surely the most literary of Erasmus' works, has a complexity of form and intention of a kind different from the *Enchiridion* and the *Colloquies*, deriving, I believe, from its this-worldly and other-worldly concerns. It is satiric, qualifying as "Menippean" because it deals less with specific people than with their attitudes, and more deliberately stylized than colloquial or naturalistic. More than the *Enchiridion* or the *Colloquies* it is a literary Vision of two worlds according to a single imaginative pattern, a complex one—which Erasmus, willy-nilly, does not always manage to control. It is precisely when the satire seems to run amiss that it runs into its deepest channels, as when Folly directly censures rather than praises what Erasmus wishes to censure. Whether it is Erasmus' intention to praise Churchmen rather than bury them is not consistently clear. The difference between religion and the abuses of religion here is never as obvious or as clear as in the devotional *Enchiridion*. Yet they are both consistently brought to mind in a way which is not typical of the abusive *Colloquies*.

In *The Praise of Folly* about half the pages are given over to a generalized Menippean satire on all of mankind:

"In short, if a man like Menippus of old could look down from the moon and behold those innumerable rufflings of mankind,
he would think he saw a swarm of flies and gnats quarreling among themselves, fighting, laying traps for one another, snatching, playing, wantoning, growing up, falling, dying."

Through the eyes of Folly, Erasmus "looks down." Then the satire becomes more particularly directed against "them that carry the reputation of wise men and hunt after that golden bough, as says the proverb" (60 pages), and closes with a consideration of the great authors since antiquity, chiefly from the Old and New Testaments, who make Folly famous among men (25 pages). Those with reputations as wise men—clergy of all ranks easily outnumbering any and all other classifications—include, in order, grammarians, scholars, and philosophers, divines, the religious and monks "most false in both titles, when both a great part of them are farthest from religion," preachers, and begging friars, princes and courts, popes, cardinals, bishops, and lastly "the common herd of priests." While much of the satire is biting, none of it surprises. Whatever claims reverence, after all, risks ridicule.

If for Erasmus' contemporaries the importance of the Encomium Moriae was to a great extent topical or controversial, its lasting literary value has been something more profound and more obscure. Consider, for example, the end of Folly's oration, given over to "some testimonies of Holy Writ" in

behalf of herself. Folly (or Erasmus?) calls attention to
Saint Paul who himself in his Epistles to the Corinthians
spoke "like a fool":

And so last I [Folly] return to Paul. "Ye willingly,"
says he, "suffer my foolishness," and again, "Take
me as a fool," and further, "I speak it not after the
Lord, but as it were foolishly," and in another place,
"We are fools for Christ's sake." You have heard from
how great an author how great praise of folly; and to
what other end, but that without doubt he looked upon
it as that one thing both necessary and profitable.
"If anyone among ye," says he, "seem to be wise, let
him be a fool that he may be wise." And in Luke,
Jesus called those two disciples with whom he joined
himself upon the way, "fools." Nor can I give you any
reason why it should seem so strange when Saint Paul
imputes a kind of folly even to God himself. "The
foolishness of God," says he, "is wiser than men." ... 

And again, when Christ gives Him thanks that He
had concealed the mystery of salvation from the wise,
but revealed it to babes and sucklings, that is to say,
fools. For the Greek word for babes is fools, which he
opposes to the word wise men. To this appertains that
throughout the Gospel you find him ... diligently
defending the ignorant multitude ... but seems chiefly
delighted in little children, women, and fishers. ... 
And what does all this drive at, but that all mankind
are fools—nay, even the very best.21

When Holy Scripture itself sides with Folly, I do not know
that the relationship, or even the identification, of satire
and religion, in either literary form or human spirit, can
be put more strongly. Its religious implications as satire
are more confounding than the religious devotionalism of
the Enchiridion, and more complex than the religious
controversialism of the Colloquies. The one focuses on
the Christian or religious other-world, the other on the

21Ibid., pp. 136-139.
social this-world. The Praise of Folly is, as it were, a lens between this- and an other-world, through which can be seen some kind, a satiric kind, of religious correspondence, its intention and effect as a literary form corresponding to those human forms of experience we can call history.

Thus, if the persona Erasmus-as-Fool in the Praise of Folly is a kind of Saint Paul-as-Fool, the correspondence is not to be explained away in objective who-represents-whom terms. This is the same argument I raise against regarding Thomas Becket the Saint in Murder in the Cathedral as, simply, Thomas Eliot the Poet psychologized. The correspondence is religious, the institutions of satire and Church in society existing in two worlds at the same time; and the correspondence is satiric, both worlds being in focus, and not one or the other as in the case of religious devotional or controversial works. The praise of folly may risk a murdering in the cathedral, but it is significant that folly is delivered, in the senses that it is both elevated and spoken ex cathedra by Saint Paul.

Thus, in the case of Erasmus, there is an unmistakable, sustained polemic tone—what Huizinga perhaps would call a mixture of social and religious feeling—throughout the Enchiridion, the Colloquies, and the Praise of Folly. All

\(^{22}\)See above, p. 15.
three are religious in the sense that they are about religion or the abuses of it. But the *Praise of Folly* introduces itself as satire, is frequently imaginative and wistful to the point of fantasy. The *Colloquies*, despite the literary, or colloquial and dramatic, trappings that make them seem "Lucianic," are rather controversial in the sense that the dramatis personae seem only slight disguises, rooted so firmly in a criticism of this-world that their other-worldly implications come to seem unimportant, their literary delight coming from a who-represents-whom identification. They are less fictitious, more particular, than the *Praise of Folly*, and have an even stronger moral-didactic tone than the *Enchiridion*. The *Enchiridion*, in turn, can be called devotional; the reader is never confused about its form and intention, which are never complex however complex the religious subject may be. To make a generic distinction between them, based then with some theoretical presumptuousness on intention and effect, the emphasis in the *Praise of Folly* is both this-worldly and other-worldly, this-worldly in the *Colloquies*, other-worldly in the *Enchiridion*.

The unquestionable religious differences between the two famous friends, Erasmus and Thomas More, are signaled more clearly in their biographies than in their writings. As historically "significant" persons, they are frequently regarded as embodying separate tendencies of Christianity
and humanism in their lives, but in ways not clear from their literary works.

C. S. Lewis differentiates Thomas More's *Four Last Things*, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, and the *Utopia* according to the categories which I have borrowed in my discussion of three of Erasmus' religious works. Most of the prose of Thomas More, like that of Erasmus, is difficult to regard strictly as English literature, first because of the obvious fact that it was written in Latin and second because as religious controversy and translation, what C. S. Lewis calls "Drab" prose, it belongs rather to polemical history. When More writes in English, as he does in *Four Last Things* and the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, his language laboriously transforms tough theological points for simple noodles, and frequently ruptures under the load. But the *Utopia* was translated into English in his own century, thirty-five years posthumously; and he is credited with so many literary "influences" that his place in English letters cannot be passed over. His unquestionable sixteenth-century orthodoxy is relevant to his literary works, and is relevant to my particular purpose. That is, More's several literary kinds, the complexity of his character, and the historical occasion of his literary efforts are all cues by which the twentieth-century orthodox satires and satirists of the socialization of religion can be considered. Wanting to

define a particular modern social "occasion" and a literary way of coping with it, I am suggesting that More, like Erasmus, provides an opportunity to see how a kind of human spirit grappling with a particular kind of subject finds expression in various literary genres. A religious spirit, confronting abuses of religion which can be defined as heretical, finds expression in devotional, controversial, and satiric kinds of literature.

To be un-religious is the heretical "first way" of deviating from Christianity, "the way of infidelity common to Pagans and Jews." More important to this discussion, the "second way," restricting belief to certain points of Christ's doctrine "selected and fashioned at pleasure," is the heretical way of the anti-religious. Saint Thomas Aquinas defines heresy as "a species of infidelity in men who, having professed the faith of Christ, corrupt its dogmas." Simply put, the difference between the heretic and the believer is that the heretic, while professing to be a Christian, selects those parts of the Church's teaching with which he agrees and rejects the rest; the believer accepts the faith taught (even when not perfectly practiced) in the Church, accepts the truths (and the idea of truths) of revelation according to tradition and scriptures. The problem is a knotty one. From an orthodox viewpoint

"revealed truth by the very fact of its divine origin, cannot but confront reason with shadows which it will be unable to penetrate," and thus "not everything about heresy is false; it always contains a legitimate intuition, but this will be warped by the intrusion of a philosophic system contrary to faith, or by an explicit or implicit denial of the mystery of faith." A Churchman's difficulties and problems, as he sees them in himself or in others, do not in themselves constitute heresy. Though the difficulties involved in distinguishing between pious crime and heresy, between religion and the abuses of religion, have persisted through centuries, a Churchman insists on making the distinction. Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem.

It is possible of course to be abusive regarding the abuses of religion, and this even if unintentional would be self-defeating. The evil flowers of contumely, detraction, backbiting and immendo, ridicule and cursing, proliferate in evil soil, contumely having its roots in pride, detraction in envy, backbiting and cursing in discontent. Ridicule holds a man up to scorn for some evil or defect in him, and may be rooted in a contemptuous pride. Ridicule apart from


love is a form of murder, which like other sins and crimes involves the retribution of guilt and punishment:

You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not kill;' and that whoever shall kill shall be liable to punishment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'Thou fool!,' shall be liable to the fire of Gehenna.²⁷

But I do not think that a charge of abusiveness regarding More's The Four Last Things²⁸ can stand up. Though "More's scornfulness and irony remind us more than once of Swift,"²⁹ the work is religious in a devotional sense, a religious as well as literary exercise which though bordering on a libel of life is chiefly and explicitly a rebuke of sin. An uncompleted treatise composed on the last verse of the seventh chapter of Ecclesiasticus, "In all thy matters remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin," its grotesquery and humor are characteristic marks of much medieval homiletics; and its design, in which More starts out to apply the four last things (Death, Judgment, Purgatory, and Salvation) to each of the seven deadly sins, is plainly orthodox.

²⁷Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 21-22.


²⁹Ibid., p. 22. A. W. Reed's comment.
The Dialogue Concerning Heresies, alas, is much more difficult to appraise or defend from a literary point of view. In four books, about two hundred thousand words long, the Dialogue is as ponderous and plodding as a theological treatise; yet, relieved occasionally by humor, even perhaps dramatic irony, it is a readable argument in the form of a narrative discussion. Like Erasmus' Colloquies, it is informal conversation, and as a sustained narrative dialogue not unlike the Utopia. The "I" in the Dialogue is More himself, who, pretending to naivety or ignorance, successfully rebuts a young protagonist, the "Messenger," who, putting forward Luther's views, wished to discuss some of the controversial notions being spread about regarding the Church: "Wherein be treatyd divers maters, as of the veneracion and worship of ymages and relyques, praying to saintes, and goyng on pilgrimage, With many other thinges touchyng the pestilent secte of Luther and Tyndale, by the tone bygone in Saxony, and by the tother labored to be brought into England." R. W. Chambers attempts to show that "It was seditious heresy which More hated; to those in doubt or spiritual trouble he was the gentlest of advisers. . . .

More's hatred of heresy has its root, not in religious

30The title, interestingly, has been changed in the reprint edition of the English Works, to the Dialogue Concerning Tyndale, II, 1-324.
bigotry, but in the fear of sedition, tumult and civil war characteristic of Sixteenth-Century statesmen."31 But in considering the question of whether More is too big for partisan biography, W. E. Campbell insists that More was "a real reformer—for only real reformers know how to reform institutions from within—a statesman whose statesmanship was based on moral foresight, a steadfast friend, a faithful husband, a proper man."32 In this point of view, not a seditious but a religious heresy was More's primary concern; like reformers of institutions before and after him, for More the constant and baffling interplay of religious and social values did not obscure which ones had primary importance. Thus, Campbell distinguishes between More and Tyndale as representatives of two different and "very distinct" kinds of reformers. Their uniqueness in history is established on the fact that between them arose "the first great English vernacular controversy upon the doctrines and discipline of the ancient faith,"33 the one, a layman, reforming the Church from within, the other, paradoxically a cleric, reforming the Church from without.

It may not make much sense to insist that in this controversy the social implications of the "ancient faith"

33 Ibid.
are more dominant than the religious ones. More's assertion of the paramount authority of the Church, and Tyndale's reply by appealing to scripture and the ultimate resort to individual judgment have an historic significance which at the very least is twofold. The Dialogue may not be religious in the devotional other-worldly sense of The Four Last Things; nor, despite the fictitious or literary trappings, can it be called satiric. But whatever its partisan emphases, it is religious in a controversial sense, that is, in its focus on social or this-worldly implications.

Coming to the Utopia I am painfully aware of conflicting critical opinions about its Christian and humanistic implications, and its generic identification. But if I am right in accepting the fact that religious satire necessarily provokes conflicting opinion because of, first, some inevitable obscurities, second, the very nature of social and religion thought, and third, the latently self-defeating nature of satire on social and religious thought—that is, of satire which is itself social and religious—I can save myself from some theoretical despair.

Despite the general form, the fantastic humor, and the possible-improbable realism of Lucian's True History, Richard Gerber claims that Thomas More was the first significant writer to transform the idealized country from an object of naive mythical belief into an instrument of
sophisticated rationalistic hypothesis. Further, according to Gerber, all earlier Visions of an Earthly Paradise "fitted into a more primitive world-picture than ours," the implication being that More invented not only the word utopia, but a literary referent corresponding to a new achievement in history. In his generic delineation of a utopia,

... the accent is set on man in this world; the utopian is not primarily religious, but humanistic. In the early utopias, such as More's and Bacon's, the stress on man in this world does not lead to an anti-religious attitude, for man is still seen as surrounded by religion wherever he goes and whatever his actions may be. But all the same, the religious and the utopian view cannot be entirely reconciled: if this life is essentially sinful and imperfect, what is the good of bettering conditions? Is it not a futile endeavor? In More's and Bacon's case, their active temperaments break down the restrictions imposed by this essentially paralysing belief. Their spontaneous concern with man in this world and their insistence on what he may achieve sometimes becomes so strong that the religious background recedes.\(^3\)

In what Gerber calls The Rise of Utopian Humanism, More's Utopia marks a terminus a quo of social consciousness, before which religion in its other-worldly preoccupations prevented a bettering involvement in this-world, and after which occurred a molting of the other-world, socially and humanly.

While admiring overall Gerber's study of English utopian fiction, I cannot accept such an argument on the basis of

my own study of the literature. Admitting to the difficulties in explicating the *Utopia*, suggesting even that they are characteristically and institutionally inevitable— that, in short, the *Utopia* is satiric in a religious sense—I think that the antinomy of religion and humanism is false, historically and theologically. Gerber does not strictly deny that the *Utopia* is religious. Still, I argue against the idea that the *Utopia* is in an antithetical way "not primarily religious, but humanistic." In Part Two of this dissertation, I draw the analogy that in its other-worldly and this-worldly implications, it is both; I make a detailed generic criticism (in the second section of Chapter Four) which shows exactly how More's satire is like modern works of its kind (also commonly regarded as "not primarily religious, but humanistic") and written by satirists described in the same terms.

J. Max Patrick rejects the interpretations of *Utopia* as literary exercise, or social criticism, or forerunner of modern socialism or communism, and he, for one, acknowledges the possibility of giving it a theological interpretation. He sees More as a sincere Christian "trying to show how far natural man, unaided by divine revelations, could move toward the good life and toward Christian truth," and he believes that for More, a Christian martyr, a State which was truly

ideal would have to be a Christian one. Rejecting the conflicting interpretations of the historical significances, either unprogressively medieval or progressively modern, Patrick in his concluding judgment calls attention to the fact that More does not attempt to give lessons to God, that "As a Christian Humanist he describes a naturalistic society in which human qualities are developed to a maximum, and in which nature and its gifts are so intensively cultivated that they lead natural man logically to the supernatural." I subscribe to this view. One chief purpose of this dissertation is to establish the specific and continuous religious lineage of much of the satire which Gerber calls Utopian Fantasy and which he lists in his valuable appendix. Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Huxley's Brave New World, and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, for example, which repeatedly figure in his study, are in that line.

No doubt the difficulties in trying to understand a past period involve an effort to suspend the changes in thought that have taken place since. At least four centuries of Protestantism, of a powerful kind of religious interaction with society, tend to obscure Thomas More's approval of Church Reform. Yet it can be said that for him there was One Church; and Erasmus and other contemporaries did not desire schism. That the impending threat to the unity of the Church was immense or that a multiple schism
came rapidly does not obscure the fact that the idea of One Church was still deep-rooted. Thomas More, like Erasmus and Churchmen before him, because he pointed out weaknesses and abuses in the Church, cannot on that score be called heretical or anti-religious. That they have been called heretical or anti-religious indicates that the difference between a pious crime and heresy is not easily understood or perpetuated.

I am arguing the case for an essential similarity between some early religious satire and satire on the socialization of religion to the extent that the subject of religious satire is heretical. Up to this point I have been considering how the categories of devotional, controversial, and satiric religious literature may be differentiated even where they are mutually concerned with the abuses of religion. Now, while establishing in the following section of this chapter the fact that the socialization of religion is a unique modern phenomenon, I want particularly to define its essentially heretical nature and thus the "occasion" for a particular body of satire in the twentieth century. On this crucial point I argue the case for the "spiritual brotherhood" of religious satirists, despite their individual differences and separation in historical time. In the fantasies of their literary imagination they transcend those differences and separation.
III.

During the four centuries since Erasmus and More, most of the Western world has come to think that one religion is as good as another and that none is of much importance; consequently, the idea of heresy surely has little meaning in our own time, and the term more frequently has come to refer to political sedition rather than to religious abuse. As we have seen, even the title of More's Dialogue Concerning Heresies is changed to the Dialogue Concerning Tyndale, and the work is claimed to be concerned with seditious rather than religious heresy.

Heresy can be defined in an explicitly religious context in our own time nonetheless, despite the fact that it is not a popular idea. For example, in The Heresy of Democracy Lord Percy of Newcastle writes that "in the desperate insecurity of the modern world, what is at issue is not one more mistake in the technique of government, where every generation has multiplied its mistakes since the first syllable of recorded time, but a culminating error of belief which can accurately be described only in the language of religion."\(^{36}\) In his view, democracy as an heretical religion is the belief that *vox populi* is *vox Dei*—that the will of God, when it is important to discover it, is to be discovered in the will of the people, or, in any event, that when the

\(^{36}\) Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1955, p. 11.
majority wants something, that makes it right and there is no other test of right. Lord Percy contends that democracy as a religion is wholly incompatible with Christianity and that it leads inevitably to the twentieth-century exaggerations of nationalism or totalitarianism. Though the Christian tradition has been a tradition of dualism, Regnum et Sacrum, each with its own rights, when in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rival religious bodies appeared, each so strong that another could not conquer it, it was inevitable that the eventual victory should go to the State and that after a time people should begin to argue, "Do not these competing claims make it evident that neither side knows as much about these matters as it pretends?" According to a strange and pragmatic theology, God speaks to 51 per cent but not to 49 per cent of the people. A religious satirist pointing to developments in this context could not himself be called heretical.

It is not that such heretical developments are strictly speaking democratic; rather, when they occur they would seem to be totalitarian. J. L. Talmon, whose scholarship Lord Percy respectfully salutes at a distance, distinguishes between liberal democracy, which is amenable to Christianity, and totalitarian democracy which is not. In totalitarian democracy, Political Messianism—which postulates a preordained, harmonious and perfect scheme of things, to which men are irresistibly driven, and at which they are bound to arrive—
recognizes only one plane of existence, the political, and
widens the scope of politics to embrace the whole of human
existence. What Talmon calls the modern secular religion
of totalitarian democracy has had unbroken continuity as a
"sociological force" for over a hundred and fifty years, having
its origins in the eighteenth century.\(^{37}\) The philosophes,
never in doubt that they were preaching a new religion, attacked
the Church as an ineffectual sociological force insofar as it
introduced "imaginary" criteria into the life of man and
society, the Commandments of the Church being for them
incompatible with the requirements of society.

In some sense, of course, they were absolutely right on
both counts; from an orthodox viewpoint, a viewpoint of
absolutes, not everything about heresy is false.

But Voltaire and other atheists, in attacking the claims
of orthodox religious ethics, speak of the Church as a
deliberate plot against society. To speak of this is to go
far beyond the notion of "pious crime" or the inevitable
clash of social and religious values. Others like Rousseau
claim that a man cannot be a citizen and a Christian at the
same time. And Helvetius argued that it is from the
legislature alone that a beneficient religion could originate.
"The distinctive appeal of political Messianism," Talmon writes,

\(^{37}\)See "The Secular Religion," in The Origins of
"lies no more in its promise of social security, but in its having become a religion which answers deep-seated spiritual needs."\textsuperscript{38} There is nothing unique in the argument that the French Revolution should be regarded not as an act of liberation but as the beginning of thought and action culminating in a tyranny with the sanction of popular consent. But the point is that political Messianism as a "sociological force" and as an historical fact provides a kind of counter-sanction for debunking which surely can be called religious; its universality at least allows modern satirists to attack it left and right, independently of their political convictions, Left or Right, and independently of their national origins. The historical argument of both Percy and Talmon, it should be noted, is not particularly political, economic, or national, but rather religious. The implication of Talmon's study is clearly that modern men, whatever their political allegiances, are seeking in politics what can only be supplied in religion. The tragedy of liberal democracy is that the only foundation upon which it can successfully be based is a religious foundation that it renounced at the very outset; it is equally tragic that the revolutionary creed took the apocalyptic, pseudo-religious form which, Talmon says, also shaped the Bolshevik revolution. This apocalyptic crisis dating from the two revolutions,\textsuperscript{38}Tbid., p. 254.
French and Industrial, is a sharp break in historical continuity, not a break in the history of ideas but rather in the "climate of ideas, a frame of mind, we may say faith." But this crisis is not the schism of political ideologies which De Tocqueville was able to identify over a century ago and commonly identified today as the Cold War, even though it may be coterminous with it. Identifiable in historical time, it is yet not identifiable in a particular nation or people. The "Religion of Revolution" knows no political or geographic bounds, though it is identifiable within the bounds of modern time. The main thesis of Zevedei Barbu is that an international and anti-religious "psychological condition" has settled to a great extent the fate of American and French and British democracies, and the various forms of nazism and communism as well. Jules Monnerot, on a different tack, tries to show how both Communism and Islam are the same kind of "secular religions" in our time seeking to become a world state. His admonition is that if such religions are to be fought they must be criticized, but also that criticism is not enough; such religions fulfill an emotional need and can only be replaced.

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40 *Democracy and Dictatorship: Their Psychology and Patterns of Life* (New York: Grove, 1959).
by another religion. "If the faithful of these religions
are not comic," Monnerot says, "It is solely because they
are strong." (G. K. Chesterton is preoccupied with such
a comparison between Islam and British Imperialism in the
satiric fantasy The Flying Inn, which I take up in the next
chapter.)

As an historical fact—rather than as a phenomenon
appraised in the social sciences, say—the socialization of
religion is seen necessarily in time to be seen at all; that
is to say, it is a diachronic rather than a synchronic
reality. The sociologists' vision is restricted to the
present point in time; the historians' primary interest is
in the effect of the past on the present, or in the past as
a kind of present existence; the satirist sees the late
linear or historical development which I am calling the
socialization of religion, but the effect the satirist aims
for is, as it were, larger-than-life, what he "sees" being
set in the future (a generic mark of much satiric fantasy)
or set in its comic implications for the future. The
satire is a religious kind of prophetizing or prophesying
concerned with the past and critical about the present.
The satire as an imaginative "mode of existence" is written
within a factual context which makes it possible. It is

Sociology and Psychology of Communism, trans. Jane
Degras and Richard Rees (Boston: Beacon, 1960), f.n.,
p. 163.
not a "purely literary" exercise any more than sociology or history is.

This is the crucial point about the generic importance of the subject of religious satire; as an historical fact it is definable and identifiable as religious heresy. History in its generic—specifically, diachronic—form, like satire, serves a debunking function. Satire and sociology sometimes come to share the same generic symptoms. But satire is more like history in point of view of time; it is like history in its definition of what it purports to "see," namely, an abuse of religion historically and institutionally.

Has not such political messianism or social salvationism always been a manifestation of the Church itself throughout history? As an apocalyptic ideal can it not then be meaningfully called heretical in a political rather than in a religious sense? The fact is that the Apocalypse, a score or so of writings both Jewish and early Christian foretelling the future, especially regarding the Four Last Things, was never interpreted by the Catholic Church as a matter of faith. The Millenium, described in Apocalypse XX, has according to orthodox tradition referred to the spiritual reign of Christ in the Church on earth. A few early Fathers, mostly Greek, understood this Chapter as referring to a temporal and visible reign of Christ through
ten centuries preceding the general resurrection. However, this has always been regarded as an error, and even though revived intermittently by some Christian sects, has never been extensively held.\textsuperscript{42} Norman Cohn in The Pursuit of the Millennium indeed points out that the more carefully one compares the revolutionary messianism in medieval and Reformation Europe with twentieth-century totalitarian movements the more remarkable the similarities appear. However, Cohn makes some very careful conclusions. Thus, messianism is not fanaticism only (for historically it has sometimes been religious), but rather revolutionary fanaticism in particular. And it is not a sum total of medieval heresy either (for the varieties of religious dissent that have appeared and flourished have been many), but rather, more specifically, eschatological fantasy. It is least of all social revolt as such, for there are many species of social revolt; rather, it is something at once a revolutionary movement and "quasi-religious salvationism" whose promises are terrestrial and collective, not spiritual and individual. Cohn suggests that his history can be regarded as a kind of "prologue" to the vast revolutionary upheavals of the present century brought about by the ideologies of Communism and Nazism. The kind of fanaticism which he delineates through past centuries and which exists

today as a "secularized version of a phantasy that is many centuries old," ⁴³ is an historical and psychological but not a religious fact.

Such salvationism, then, not characterized within the traditional Church, is probably not to be attributed to bonafide Protestant denominations either. In Protestantism and Progress for example, an historical study of the relation of Protestantism to the modern world, Ernst Troeltsch insists that the early Protestant Reformers were "at one with Catholicism" in their recognition of Church and State, and that "the indications of the continuance of an essential homogeneity between the world of the Reformers and the modern world are ... mere straws." ⁴⁴ Troeltsch argues that a purely historical definition cannot be "immediately" formulated for differentiating between Protestantisms in a plural "historical general-conception." A chief problem for him (and it is more than an historical one) is that "Modern Protestantism, since the end of the seventeenth century, ... has forgotten ... its former doctrine ... of the identity of the Lex Dei and Lex Naturae; so completely forgotten it as to have lost all understanding of it." ⁴⁵

Thus, the particularity and discontinuity of that

⁴⁴Boston: Beacon, 1958, f.n., p. 29.
⁴⁵Tbid., pp. 45-46.
historical phenomenon I have been calling the socialization of religion is not a moot question. Considering Lord Percy, Talmon, Barbu, Monnerot, Coh, and Troeltsch, one may say that the historic significance of the socialization of religion as religious heresy is twofold; that is, the heresy is identifiably modern, having its origins in time since the French and Industrial Revolutions; and it is widespread, coterminous with technological civilization but having no boundaries of a geographic kind.

But history itself, not unlike sociology, has certain limitations as a literary kind and as a mode of knowledge. Swift's satiric point of view in the early eighteenth century, contrasted with Priestley's historic point of view on the eve of the French Revolution, suggests the particular value that satire has over history in distinguishing between religion and its socialized abuses.

The confusion or loss of identity between Lex Dei and Lex Naturae was surely a characteristic of the eighteenth century. The metaphysical optimism regarding the universe, and, on analogy, the social order (that is, the tendency to identify perfection of the universe with the existing social order) is a bygone historical fact of that century. What Basil Willey calls "Cosmic Toryism" may or may not be an inkling of the beginning or the possibility of the socialization

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43See The Eighteenth Century Background (Boston: Beacon, 1961), pp. 43-56.
of religion as it can be seen in English literature. But when society came to be regarded as good because God made it and evil only in the sense that the Vulgar or un-Enlightened were incapable of great good and simply content in their inferior unhappiness, the widespread use of religion as either the soma or the opium of the people, surely, was not very far in the future. Traces of the bitter taste of it can be found in Swift's Argument Against Abolishing Christianity. Shaftesbury's complaint that religion was perverted to political ends was nothing new from a moralist's point of view; yet his desire to base morality not upon rewards and punishments in the hereafter but upon human nature and the nature of things—in saecula rather than in saecula saeculorum—is manifestly the reason that Willey can call him an "apostle of the new religion." And, as Willey shows, he was not the only such apostle.

Swift was one individual voice arguing for the ancients against the moderns "because he saw history not as progressive amelioration, but as a struggle, often marked by phases of disastrous failure, to maintain the values fixed for ever by antiquity." Priestley's voice was one of a growing chorus. Singing in the Socinian Moonlight, he regarded religion and not science as "the core of his life, and the

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., p. 103.
propagation of what he believed to be true Christianity was the main object of his labours."^ For Priestley, on the side of the moderns against the ancients, the defense of Christianity involved not a satire on the abuse of its traditions, but an exorcism of nearly everything traditional; in this rejection of the doctrinal mysteries especially he would seem to be, as Willey calls him, representative of English "rational Dissenters" at the time of the outbreak of the French Revolution.

In the early eighteenth century any deviation from traditional Christianity might possibly be regarded as heretical; by the end of the century it would seem that for some allegedly Christian apologists no deviation from traditional Christianity is heretical. Opposed to the traditional doctrines of the Trinity, the Immaculate Conception, Original Sin, Atonement, "and other Sacraments besides Baptism and the Lord's Supper," Priestley considers the rite of the Lord's Supper, that is, the Mass, as the most "extraordinary" accretion of abuses in the whole history he has undertaken to write. Though he evidently approves of its social or public function among "primitive Christians," he deplores the fact that from its very inception it was regarded as a sacramental act of faith. On this point, even

^Ibid., p. 169.
the Reformation is for him baffling and inept: "It is remarkable that with respect to most of the reformers from popery in the sixteenth century, the article of the eucharist was the last in which they gained any clear light, . . . and in all public disputations their popish adversaries had more advantage with respect to this than to any other subject."

For himself, the particular value "to communicate" that this superstition continued to have is social or public. His prose has the ring of Swift's, and it is hard to keep in mind that what he is writing is intended as history and not as hyperbolic satire:

I would only advise the deferring of communion till the children be of a proper age to be brought to attend other parts of public worship, and till they can be made to join in the celebration with decency, so as to give no offence to others. This being a part of public worship, there cannot, I think, be any reason for making them communicate at an earlier age; . . . their attendance . . . is the object to be aimed at. . . . I flatter myself, however, that in due time, we shall think rationally on this, as well as on other subjects relating to Christianity, and that our practice will correspond to our sentiments."

Priestley's disavowal of traditional Christianity must be regarded as something new in its inclusiveness. He concludes


47 Ibid., pp. 64-65.
his chapter on "the Authority of Tradition, and of the Scriptures, &c." with *this ipse dixit*:

So much were the minds of all men oppressed with a reverence for antiquity, and the traditions of the church, at the time of the reformation, that the protestants were not a little embarrassed by it in their controversy with the catholics; many of the errors and abuses of popery being discovered in the earliest christian writers, after the apostolic age. But at present all protestants seem to entertain a just opinion of such authority, and to think with Chillingworth, that the bible is the religion of protestants. We may however, be very much embarrassed by entertaining even this opinion in its greatest rigour.48

If Priestley can be regarded as a representative spokesman for the essentially new social, scientific, and progressive course that religion was taking, then Auguste Comte is its grandest formulator. To the extent that Comte wanted above all to change the world in the direction it was already going, his strategy was to elaborate a philosophy capable of sustaining the New Religion. In what Comte calls the "transitional modern period" since the Reformation, the destruction of the Catholic discipline first of all, then of the hierarchy, and finally, of the dogma, has been both inevitable and good. But it is important to note that his castigation is denominationally impartial:

We must beware of attributing the vices of hypocrisy and hostility to progress to Catholicism alone. From the moment that Protestantism changed its natural attitude of simple opposition, it shared those vices to the full. Catholicism became retrograde against its nature, in consequence of its subjection to temporal power; and

48 Ibid., pp. 376-377.
Protestantism, erecting that subjection into a principle, could not but be retrograde in at least an equal degree.\textsuperscript{49}

Comte's great historical influence was as the founder of positivism not as a philosophic system or as a method of scientific inquiry, but as a religion. To the extent that his works inspired the foundation of positivist Churches of Humanity at places as far apart as Brazil and Newcastle, "Comte is a reformer before he is a scientist, and it is small wonder that, sharing the preoccupations of his age, he should have ended as an archbishop."\textsuperscript{50} According to Comte, the father of sociology—the science of society—Humanity is itself its own true object of worship, its own Divinity, and is possible only now in history:

Towards Humanity, who is for us the only true Great Being, we, the conscious elements of whom she is composed, shall henceforth direct every aspect of our life, individual or collective. Our thoughts will be devoted to the knowledge of Humanity, our affections to her love, our actions to her service. . . . The conception of Humanity as the basis for a new synthesis was impossible until the crisis of the French Revolution. That crisis on the one hand proved the urgent necessity for social regeneration, and on the other gave birth to the only philosophy capable of effecting it.\textsuperscript{51}

The cult of "Sociolatry" is society's private and public


worship of itself: "In our static festivals social Order and the feeling of Solidarity will be illustrated; the dynamic festivals will explain social Progress, and inspire the sense of historical Continuity." There are nine "social sacraments," two more than the analogous but obsolescent Christian ones. In the new Positivist Calendar which is to replace the traditional Church Calendar, the "degrees of association," that is, the Nation, the Province, and the Town, are celebrated, as are the "four principal domestic relations," Communal, Parental, Filial, and Fraternal. In prayer the worshippers identify themselves more and more with the Being they adore. The buildings erected for the service of God "may for a time suffice for the worship of Humanity, in the same way that Christian worship was carried on at first in Pagan temples as they were gradually vacated." The Religion of Humanity "sets forth social feeling as the first principle of morality," and in the anachronistic Catholic Church "God would gradually change into a feeble and imperfect representation of Humanity, were not the clergy so degraded socially as to be unable to participate in the spontaneous feelings of the community" (italics added).

52 Ibid., pp. 379. Though the Catechism of Positivism was translated by Richard Congreve in 1871 and the Positivist Calendar by H. G. Jones in 1905, both widely circulated in England, for brevity this and following references in the paragraph are taken from ch. vi, "The Religion of Humanity," in A General View, pp. 355-444.
Because the voice of the people is identical with the voice of God, the principles of "systematic morality" are "identical with those of spontaneous morality, a result which renders Positive doctrine equally accessible to all." The Motto, Order and Progress, is the "principle of all political action for the future" and is to be inscribed on "the banner to be used in religious services," as appropriate to the "religious formula of Positivists: Love is our Principle, Order is our Basis, Progress our End." In the application of this formula, "Capitalists then will be the temporal chiefs of modern society," though "It is indeed to the working class that we look for the only possible solution of the great human problem, the victory of Social feeling over Self-love." Including even "the vast population of the Russian empire," the very conception of Humanity "is a condensation of the whole mental and social history of man."

It is exceedingly difficult to imagine in all this, as in Priestley's History, that the author was not even a little sardonic. It would be perhaps comforting to say that Comte went mad, which he did, as a result of his unhappy passion. Yet, as Jacques Barzun points out, "the books which expound the Religion of Humanity contain so much that proves his mathematical and analytic mind unimpaired that we are not allowed that consolation. And when we compare these dogmas of 1850 with the doings and sayings
of some of our contemporaries, we may be entitled to think that the explanation of both aberrations is to be sought elsewhere than in insanity. Religion of Humanity services might be regarded as a parody of Christian liturgy, but the fact is they were intended in dedicated seriousness by English advocates for much over three decades.

It is not just that he brought about the "conversion and conviction" of Englishmen like Frederic Harrison who became articulate and influential disciples. Nor even that the Religion of Humanity continues today to have its impassioned spokesmen. Thus, for example, the American writer of a Modern Utopia—so to call it—dreads such "tomes of despair" as George Orwell's 1984, which "catered to all those who enjoyed the masochism of seeing man at a crossroad with all direction markers pointing to chaos." Having "followed with amusement the talmudic debates about the relative impacts of heredity and environment," he bolsters his optimistic forecast with a laudatory chapter on "Religion 1976—Its Function and Organization." Writing intermittently


54 See e. g. Harrison's The Creed of a Layman: Apologia Pro Fide Mea (New York: Macmillan, 1907), an autobiographic testimony of widespread Positivist conversion, and a synopsis of the New Religion.

in a literary-historic past tense (vaguely suggestive of the "prophetic past" of satiric fantasy, which Chesterton employs, for example, in The Napoleon of Notting Hill), he is pleased to see that "as our devotion to the dogma and forms of organized religion declined, our many sects 'tolerated' each other with more outward grace," and that "as we prospered . . . the prestige of the clergy diminished," the churches becoming "truly social centers, filling up much of the new leisure-time of the people." Happily, "the church supper has roots more potent than the Rotary Club luncheons." The first great function of the church is to act as guardian of the distinction between good and bad, not relying on "ancient symbols" but rather in accord with changing conditions—and partly for practical reasons: "The shorter work week, which theoretically should allow more time for attendance at services, will in fact reduce the audience of the clergy." The second great function will be to make "the imponderable" or the "enormity of the unknown" more endurable to the masses of men, though, again happily, "the future will reduce the number who are worrying about immortality but don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy afternoon." As the functions of clergymen are infiltrated and destroyed by psychiatrists, marriage counselors, religious-psychological book clubs, nationwide "charity" drives for the sick and the aged, the schools, and the politicians, then the demarcations between many
sects will disappear, the joint use and ownership of church buildings as "more in the nature of consolidated religious and social gathering places" will facilitate the organization of single community churches in many towns. Who knows? "Maybe the churches will by 1976 attain greater prestige than ever before by leading us to forgive, and hence convert, the Communists, the Fascists, and all others who derogate the sacredness and freedom of individual man." But, in any case, according to this Utopian forecast, "the Ten Commandments will be brought up to date," and--this the concluding sentence in the book--"Our spiritual road will carry the direction pointers: 1976---This Way---Energy, Leisure, Full Rich Life."

The sociologist and the historian can be religious in ways which transcend their subject matter and which directly involve their intention. Priestley the historian argues as a matter of demonstrable fact that Utopia is dawning; he is more truly Utopian than Swift the satirist whose own Utopia is a matter of critical imagination. The modern author of Utopia 1976, as a kind of historian (or, perhaps, sociologist) is a declaimer of utopian satirists and believes, like Priestley, that the light he bears will increase, and extend itself more and more unto the perfect day. In concluding his Critique of a Heritage (1789-1914) with a review of Comte's program of action, Barzun speaks in, I may say, religious terms about Comte's "sudden conversion."
and his "mysticism," not as representative in all men surely but "in enough of them to make Comte ... represent mankind."

It occurs to him that "the points of similarity between Comte's second Utopia—which Mill called 'the regime of a blockaded town' --and totalitarianism need no enumeration," though he notes that "the country where theory and practice have gone farthest in the direction of Comte's later proposal is also that where the organization of positive science reached a degree of perfection that was but recently the admiration of the world."56 Which country that is today is a moot question.

My last generic point, thus, is that history, not unlike sociology, has certain limitations. Satire is a literary way of transcending them, or at least of trying to, having in its turn its own peculiar shortcomings. Nicolas Berdyaev (who provides the epigraphic theme to Huxley's Brave New World) like many historians sees modern political ideologies as essentially new religions. In The Russian Revolution and his other books that I mention in Chapter One, one of his constant preoccupations is extracting from the facts of Russian history whatever is true in communism, in order to understand the great anti-Christian untruths. This is a recurrent theme which Berdyaev found susceptible to historical analysis at once political, religious, and literary. Thus, for example, Dostoyevsky as a man of letters "wanted revolution, but revolution with God and Christ," and was

56 Loc. cit.
a "socialist on Orthodox grounds" who "constructed a theocratic
Utopia which is . . . a denial of the State and of Bourgeois
life," and sought "true Christianity as against the distortions
of historical Christianity." Berdyaev's cause célèbre was
repeatedly that "Communism in actual fact is the foe of every
form of religion and especially of Christianity, not as a social
system, but as itself a religion," and that "The spirit of
communism, the religion of communism, are both anti-Christian
and anti-humanist." He concluded the autobiography he wrote,
in exile shortly before his death, with the assertion that modern
Christianity is most sorrowfully blind to these developments,
that men cannot "see" these developments despite the fact that
they are not unaware of them:

There is a craving for belief in modern man, similar to
that which inspired the Russians throughout the nineteenth
and twentieth centuries. Faced with the futility of
existence the modern European finds himself stranded high
and dry. The trouble is not, of course, political in
the narrow sense. . . . Christians, therefore, . . .
will have to show a power to move men in extremis, without
looking to the right or to the left, coupled with a
genuine sensitiveness to the issues of our time. For my
part, I can see no solution of the betrayal of the world
by the Christians or the betrayal of Christianity by the
world until history is ended. Only beyond history is
there victory for the spirit of God and of man.

57 The Origin of Russian Communism, pp. 87-88.
58 Ibid., p. 158.
59 Ibid., pp. 184-185.
60 Dream and Reality: An Essay in Autobiography (London:
Because there is such a craving for belief in modern man, perhaps one affective function of satire would be to alleviate it and amend the futility that he has in feeling stranded high and dry. Because the trouble is not political in the narrow sense, and the devotional means of traditional Christianity are not always available to him, one possible way out may be literary. Satire may be a power available to him to move and be moved in extremis, politically neither right nor left, nor devotional, but yet with a humane sensitiveness to the issues of our time; in this view, the craving for belief rather than the abnegation of it (or an aesthetic indifference to it) would be at the bottom of the literary form of malefaction called religious satire.

This is, I believe, an isolable and definable part of what Robert Elliott calls the Power of Satire. It may be of course that all power corrupts in mysterious ways, destructive or self-defeating of the very ends it would serve, even while it presumes a rationality and control, and strives for ends which can scarcely be envisioned. But this was the counsel of the Tempters to Thomas Becket, and the cause of anxiety for Diotima's counselors. If only beyond history there is victory for the spirit of God and man, there must yet be a means in which this spirit can find expression. Perhaps not until history is ended is there a solution to the inevitable conflict between the two worlds, as Berdyaev claims, the
"betrayal" of each of the worlds he refers to in the title of his last book and in its last paragraph. Satire then is at least an attempt to cope with a problem or a trouble beyond history, to "see" the issues of our time beyond our time, and to explore those worlds in which Christians live and Christianity has its being, without betraying either of them. The particular craving and sense of futility though modern is amenable to and amended by a kind of symbolic activity which is itself very old.
PART TWO
THE INTENTION OF RELIGIOUS SATIRISTS

CHAPTER THREE
THE CHURCHMEN: ORTHODOXY AS A VESTED INTEREST

Of all that was done in the past you eat the fruit, either rotten or ripe. And the Church must be forever building, and always decaying, and always being restored. . . . And all that was good you must fight to keep with hearts as devoted as those of your fathers who fought to gain it. The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without; For this is the law of life; and you must remember that while there is time of prosperity The people will neglect the Temple, and in time of adversity they will decry it.

--T. S. Eliot, Choruses from "The Rock"

After all, the ordinary orthodox person is he to whom the heresies can appear as fantasies.

--G. K. Chesterton, Fancies Versus Fads

I.

In this second part of the dissertation I concern myself with satire on the socialization of religion in relation to some twentieth-century English authors who have produced it. I have already referred to works by T. S. Eliot, Bertrand Russell, Evelyn Waugh, G. K. Chesterton, and C. S. Lewis. In addition, I take up Hilaire Belloc, Robert Hugh Benson, Samuel Butler, E. M. Forster, Ronald Firbank, Aldous Huxley, Ronald Knox, Rose Macaulay,
Bruce Marshall, George Orwell, Dorothy Sayers, Bernard Shaw, and H. G. Wells. I take up roughly equal numbers of them in Chapter Three and in Chapter Four, drawing the line between them according to what has seemed to me their intention in their religious satire. In each chapter I attempt to develop the tri-part classification according to effect which I set up in my discussion of Erasmus and More, namely, the religious kinds of devotional, controversial, and satiric literature.

In Part One, I approached the subject of satire on the socialization of religion while trying to avoid the problem of identifying the reasons for such socialization; I concerned myself with what the socialization of religion is, what that socialization is as an historic fact, and how it is interpreted in sociology and satire. In Part Two, my very first concern as I see it is what the satire is as a literary genre: how and where such satire is different from devotional or controversial literature which touches on the same subject. In considering the complex problem of how and to what extent the satire as such has been shaped by what it satirizes as well as by the satirists themselves, different from one another as they are, I give no attention to ranking the satirists in a hierarchy of literary competence.

But having established the socialization of religion as a real phenomenon and recording (however incompletely) its interpretation by sociologists, historians, and satirists, my
second concern is with the puzzling fact that satirists who evidently have different social and religious convictions do agree that the socialization of religion as a subject for satire, is somehow a moral wrong, and therefore think of themselves as having intellectual and moral sanctions for debunking. Of course, Bertrand Russell (whose "Zahatopolk" I discussed above) has for years engaged in warfare against all kinds of orthodoxy, social and religious. It is understandable further, that a Robert Hugh Benson, a G. K. Chesterton, a Ronald Firbank, or an Evelyn Waugh (as, for example, in The Loved One, also discussed above), all Roman Catholics, should write such satire. And one would expect it from staunch High Anglicans, such as T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, or Dorothy Sayers. But it is puzzling that an Aldous Huxley or a George Orwell, whose convictions are allegedly non-religious, if not irreligious (in any case not Roman Catholic or High Anglican), should write such satire. Huxley, for example, chastizes the "formulators of metaphysical doctrines and the believers in such doctrines" for their "meaningless pseudo-knowledge," the results of which throughout history have always been, he says, the "kind of mess that makes angels weep and the satirists laugh aloud." The traditional churches, or "organized religion (and organized religion, let us never forget, has done much harm as it has done good),"¹ are for Huxley a real bugaboo. And it is

equally puzzling that organized religion should sometimes try
critically to separate a black sheep like Waugh from the rest
of the fold in objection to his Black Mischief. A professed
believer in the Agnus Dei, Waugh is hounded on one side by
such watch-dogs of society as Rose Macaulay, Kathleen Nott, and
Edmund Wilson, who feel that his Catholic dogmatism limits the
artistic success of his satire; on the basis of the satire he
is also censured by the clerical shepherds (most harshly in the
diocesan newspapers), and by the laity, for not being really a
"good" or "proper" Catholic.

To begin an explanation of this puzzle, I draw a line between
the satirists in Chapters Three and Four according to sociologist
David Riesman's basic conceptions of "social character" and

2See The Lonely Crowd (Garden City: Anchor, 1954), chs.
i, xii, et passim. Riesman's basic conceptions are frequently
regarded as subjective rather than scientific; they are in
any case international, historical, and professedly fictional;
in their implications too they do carry beyond the subject of
American character. Pointing up the connection between
literature and life in many ways, the book may belong to a
literary rather than a scientific genre. As "modes of conformity"
within "social strata," defended for their use in sociological
analysis, his terms and referents have a remarkable coincidence
with Wellek and Warren's literary apologia for careful analytic
distinctions: "A modern analysis of the work of art has to
begin with . . . complex questions: its mode of existence, its
system of strata." (Theory of Literature, p. 18.) Riesman's
tendency toward categories which have a satiric fictionality
and are buttressed with literary references is one explanation
why the book has raised some eyebrows in sociological circles.
Generically, I regard the book as a literary and sociological
study suited to the use I make of it.
"characterological struggle." That is to say, in Riesman's terms, the socialization of religion might be regarded as an "adjustment" in what is becoming an increasingly "other-directed" society. Satirists—whatever their social and religious convictions—have in common at least that they are neither "adjusted" nor "other-directed" (otherwise they probably would not bother to write satire, would not see anything in society that demands criticism). Rather, they are "anomic" or "autonomous" (roughly speaking, that is, malcontented or impervious) as all satirists have been always or at least have claimed to be. They are "tradition-directed" (primarily religious) as Benson, Chesterton, Eliot, and such others would seem to be; or they are "inner-directed" as, say, Russell, Huxley, and Orwell would seem to be.

Chapter Three thus includes those "tradition-directed" satirists whose religious orthodoxy is unquestionable and who would seem to have therefore a vested interest in religion as well as a moral sanction for debunking abuses of it or in it. Intending a direct comparison with my discussion of Erasmus and More in the preceding chapter, I take up first Chesterton and Belloc; then Benson and Knox; some minor satirists including Dorothy Sayers; Marshall and Rose Macaulay; Firbank, Waugh and C. S. Lewis; thus I span the twentieth century. The first two satirists are laymen, literary giants whose satires date early in the century; the second pair are clergymen who as satirists reveal some interesting differences; the next two groupings I
regard as a special opportunity to clarify religious satire, 
apart from ridicule, as a literary genre; I end the chapter with 
the most esteemed religious satirists and apologists of the 
mid-century, indicating why I think the esteem is deserved.

Chapter Four includes the "inner-directed" satirists who, 
though they seem concerned to insure the preservation of traditional 
religious values, have been outspokenly hostile toward religion 
even in its presocialized forms. For example: Butler, Forster, 
Huxley, Orwell, Russell, Shaw, and Wells. These satirists, both 
calling attention to abuses in religion and wanting to insure 
the preservation of its values, not only reject traditional religious 
commitments but fashion others for themselves which seem--perhaps 
necessarily, I would venture to say--unclear or indefinite. For 
example, I think of Butler's belief in "vicarious immortality" 
and of the means he employed in his agnostic interpretation of 
the New Testament; I call to mind Shaw's "conversion" to Socialism, 
his belief in Life Force, and his a-religious notion of salvation 
as the experience of being seized by a mighty purpose; and I think 
here of Huxley's commitment, so to call it, to the Perennial 
Philosophy.

What they seem to have in common is an interest in a subject 
which however differently regarded does not make their interest 
self-contradictory in its literary expression. Christian or 
humanistic, with convictions predominantly religious or social, 
this-worldly or (in some ways scarcely definable) other-worldly, 
they reveal an interest which is at once argumentative and
ridiculing, amenable to standards both political and ecclesiastic.

"Modern literature is largely made up of deliberate, if somewhat ornate, pamphleteering," George N. Shusters says. In this chapter I include those authors whose works generically reveal "a sense of fellowship with the religious force which built up Europe from the ruins of Rome. . . ." My special generic problem is the difference between satire on the socialization of religion and devotional pamphleteering that touches on the same subject. First of all, I want to make very clear my generic use of the term "devotional" as distinct from "inspirational." The first is relevant to some work by my satirists, the second is not.

**Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America**, the recent study by Schneider and Dornbusch which I mentioned in my first chapter, is an examination of forty-six best sellers of religious inspirational literature published from 1875 to 1955. Inspirational Books are, we all know, a voluminous and unmistakable mark of mass culture. For the purpose of studying them, Schneider and Dornbusch arbitrarily select a limiting set of criteria which comprise a working definition. In addition to the best seller requirement, they use four criteria: the author must assume the general validity of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition; he must inspire the hope of salvation on some terms; he must offer his reader some "techniques"; and, finally, the author must address himself to

the "everyday problems" of "everyday people." Then, according to a kind of "arithmetic of the spirit," they arrive at an extended sociological description, in which they are able to distinguish themes and trends and relate contexts of the literature to functions of religion in the twentieth century. I want to emphasize the difference between the working definition and the description because the first applies to the devotional literature written by my satirists, though the second does not. Indeed, the extended description comprises a list of some facts regarding the socialization of religion which the satirists deplore (and which the sociologists can scarcely keep from deploping).

Such a set of criteria is sufficiently broad and abstract that "classical religious documents" like Saint Augustine's Confessions or Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ might fit into them. And it could identify the devotional works of my satirists en bloc. But not one of the writers taken up in Popular Religion (including, say, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Emmet Fox, Mary Pickford, Joshua Liebman, Thomas Merton, Daphne Du Maurier, and Norman Vincent Peale) can be called a satirist. Not by any stretch of the imagination. Nor does the intention of their Inspirational Books match that of the devotional literature of the satirists.

The most damning conclusion reached in Popular Religion is that the Inspirational best sellers are not, in effect, religious literature at all, but rather testify to the fact that in the twentieth century religion has been hollowed out and filled with substitutes. Best sellers no doubt are likely to suggest in their
themes and trends a connection between literature and life, to reveal at least a prior disposition of a book-buying public to pay out for the articulation of views with which it is already familiar; and, perhaps, because the literature is designed to have the widest possible appeal, there is a strong tendency for the authors to shy away from the avowal of specific denominational commitments. The literature, reproducing itself in a generic character quite divorced from historical Christian literature, with which it has a distorted kind of similarity, is essentially unique and self-perpetuating. Thus, Schneider and Dornbusch say, indication of what is or is not accepted from the Judeo-Christian tradition is extremely rare, and the subject seems to be not religion but magic. Specifically, on the matter of the hope of salvation and the techniques for achieving it, "an initial and evidently necessary distinction may be made between the themes of salvation in the next life and salvation in this. . . . The view that happiness can be expected in this world proves to be a dominant one, almost to the point of exclusion of such alternative views as that it cannot be expected or cannot be expected by most men." If there is an other-worldly strain in

Popular Religion, pp. 25, 27. Inspirational efforts to reform this-world by battling the godless take numerous quasi-literary forms. See, e.g., Richard Harris, "Dr. Buchman's Holy War: Moral-Rearmament," The Nation, May 20, 1961, pp. 423-430, which describes "Protestantism gone mad" in MRA-produced movies and plays, books, pamphlets and magazines: John Kay Adams, "Saving America, Inc.," The Nation, Sept. 30, 1961, pp. 191-195, tries to explain Billy James Hargis' monumental power of oratory in fostering the national crusade We, the People!, which the Reverend Dr. Hargis founded and directs.
Inspirational Books, it appears only in the sense that this-world does not really exist, but only exists, as Emmet Fox has put it, as "the out-picturing of our own minds." Schneider and Dornbusch repeatedly point to the simplistic insinuation that the most complex social problems are reducible to the terms of a personal and infallible morality, that, in short, religion will give life meaning now, make a better world here, give our nation and our cause "victory" (adaptable in Frank Buchman's doctrine of Moral Rearmament, to an inter-national encompassing of conflicting causes), promote optimism and "peace of mind," good health, and financial and business success. With frequent qualifications only with reference to Catholic writers—whose "concern with 'last things' is much more pronounced than the Protestant," for example, and who "on the hope of happiness in this world... are more inclined to pessimism," and whose emphasis on the theme that suffering had divine significance "is decidedly more marked"—Schneider and Dornbusch point out "a few outstanding features of the literature as a whole" which are the exact opposite of those

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5Ibid., p. 29. Since the publication of Popular Religion, Thomas Merton, Catholic convert and Trappist monk, has disavowed the "inspirational" intention of his books. In one of his most recent, a politico-religious examination of "the relation of the person to the social organization," which he considers the most important problem of our century, Fr. Merton's very first paragraph is an apologia; though it does not mention Schneider and Dornbusch, it is obviously directed at their charge:

A title like Disputed Questions may, from the author's point of view, have at least one definite advantage: it can preserve the reader from the delusion that the book is "inspirational." That is certainly not the case. The book is meant to stimulate thought and to awaken some degree of
features which can be called devotional:

It sets out a religion that is in many respects this-worldly. It stresses "power to live by" as a boon that religion will give. It is concerned with "happiness in this world," and ... happiness tends not to be seriously offered on terms of resignation to the will of God and the like. There are minimum eschatological preoccupations. ... The man-centeredness of the literature reinforces the this-worldly impression that it makes. This is all intimately related to the religiocultural climate within which the literature thrives. 6

Schneider and Dombusch indicate that in the relentless and powerful stress on "use of God and religion for the purpose of man, it is not surprising that there should appear a ... spiritual technology: ... an instrumental attitude toward religion, an accordant emphasis on technique or 'science,' and a magicalization of spiritual notions or principles." 7

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spiritual awareness. But it is not supposed to make anyone break out with a sudden attack of spiritual happiness, still less with pious enthusiasm and the conviction that all's right with the world as long as we make up our minds to concentrate on the bright side of things. For this, as I understand it, is what an "inspirational" book is supposed to do. If that is true, then I should like to lay claim to the honor of never having written one.


6 Ibid., p. 45.

7 Ibid., p. 60.
Schneider and Dornbusch do not imply that "classical" religious faith was never manifested by an interest in "results"; rather, they argue that such a manifestation is different from the presence of a "strong element of magic" in the Inspirational Books they examine; and they suggest that such books indicate a modern sociological and cultural transition in which possible consequences of religion have been converted into deliberately sought ends.  

They describe the transition in terms which define heresy:

One can give a misimpression of the religious heritage, which is one thing; but one can also make an arbitrary selection from it on the presumption that the selection represents all of it, which is something else. The lines blur at times, but the distinction is clear in principle: it is the distinction between inadequate rendering and rendering of the inadequate.

That Inspirational Books are not devotional, in the generic sense that I have been using the word, is unmistakable insofar as "the literature on the whole does not convey a strong impression of unworldliness or other-worldliness." Their final point is that inspirational religious literature may be seen to contain novel elements, but also elements that trace well back into the history of man. To wit, "The market for magic still appears to be very much alive, as it presumably was in far antiquity."

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8 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
9 Ibid., p. 136.
10 Ibid., p. 140.
11 Ibid., p. 144.
Following the lead of one thesis in Elliott's *Power of Satire*, I would say that the difference between inspirational and devotional books, as literary kinds, is the difference between the ritualization of magic and the sublimation of magic. That is, inspirational literature, like libel and archaic satire, is rooted in the efficacy of magic; devotional literature, like "true" satire, may perhaps have its genesis in magical belief but is something different from it.
II.

Many American literary artists—Eugene O'Neill, Hemingway, O'Hara, Farrell, Fitzgerald, Katherine Anne Porter, Mary McCarthy, John Ciardi—have broken with the Church, some of them shaped by it more than others. Some of them (and others who did not break with their religious past) have recorded bitter memories of religious abuse and have commented on the kind of development which Schneider and Dornbusch call popular religion. But the satirists I am concerned with in this chapter have, all of them, recorded the experience of a lifetime conviction within the Church, or a conversion into the Church, either Anglican or Roman Catholic. In their many works, the importance of the Church to them is unmistakably clear.

I take up G. K. Chesterton first as an example of one modern author whose works are amenable to classification according to the subject they deal with, the attitude of the author toward that subject, and the different literary forms he is able to give that attitude. Of the seventy or more separate works he published, I limit myself to works he published from five to eighteen years before his conversion to Catholicism in 1922, partly for the practical consideration of voluminousness, partly because in a short span of time he wrote some of his best-known works, and partly because they can, taken together, illustrate my thesis without suggesting a selection too obvious or too judicious. On this last point, I do not intend to argue that there is a kind of
humanitarian parable in the development of Chesterton's religious views from liberalism through humanism to the theism of his later years. But it does seem relevant to me to point out that many of his readers were surprised, on hearing of his conversion, that he had not been a member of the Church for the preceding twenty years. Relevant too regarding my selections is the fact that his four earliest satiric fantasies, The Napoleon of Notting Hill, The Man Who Was Thursday, The Ball and the Cross, and The Flying Inn, are his best. His politico-religious treatises of a controversial nature in the same period include Heretics, What's Wrong With the World, and Utopia of Usurers. His Orthodoxy, published in 1908, was the first of a long line of devotional works, the best being The Everlasting Man, which I have already made reference to.

The Napoleon of Notting Hill, written in the prophetic past and set in the year 1984, is at once medieval and futuristic. Perhaps the best of Chesterton's fantasies, this story of a war between London suburbs contains, Maisie Ward says, "the most picturesque account of Chesterton's social philosophy." It is also, his latest critic reminds, the book which Chesterton himself "always considered his basic statement of political belief." The theme of the book is that it would be better for men to die as men than to perform as machines; it would be better to disregard the


millenium promised in an exchange for an acceptance of efficiency-and-uniformity. The civil war on Notting Hill is in part an intentional parody of H. G. Wells’ scientific fantasies, in which political and scientific glory is achieved at the expense of individual men losing their individual identity. The social philosophy and political belief derive their imaginative force from the fictional form which, I suppose Gerber would say, enables Chesterton as a utopian to attain the closest possible connection with present-day reality and the reader’s mind. But there is no "quasi-religious belief in the miraculous power of unlimited evolutionary progress," a belief which Gerber characterizes as essential to utopian fantasy. In Notting Hill the narrator-persona "I" writing in the prophetic past is writing from a viewpoint after and "above" the false prophets in the story. His viewpoint, like that of Erasmus’ persona Folly, is Menippean.

Chesterton nowhere suggests that the imperfect this-world can ever become some finer other-world. He keeps his worlds apart at the same time that he points to their relation. Auberon Quin is an aesthete who sees the social and political ridiculousness of his joke. The absurdities of real London for their recognition depend on his imaginative juxtaposition of real London with a better if also less "real" place. Auberon sees the reformatory and social effect of laughter, the purgative and individual value of jokes
"received in silence, like a benediction." For him, "true humour is mysterious, . . . the one sanctity remaining to mankind." He regards his function as social and political leader to be "funny in public, and solemn in private," to "play the fool" in this "Paradise of Fools." (Notting Hill as a place-name, persona-Chesterton says parenthetically, may be derived from Nutting Hill, an allusion to the rich woods which no longer cover it, or may be a corruption of Nothing-ill, referring to its reputation among the ancients as an Earthly Paradise.) Though he does not, Auberon would like to believe he himself can provoke good in the world:

'Yes; a sense of humour, a weird and delicate sense of humour, is the new religion of mankind! It is towards that men will strain themselves with the asceticism of saints. Exercises, spiritual exercises will be set in it.'

He pretends or aspires to an other-worldliness he is uncertain about. "The King of the Fairies," the narrator says, "was, it is to be presumed, the godfather of King Auberon."

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14 A. G. K. Chesterton Omnibus (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 31. Page references to Thursday and Flying Inn also are to this volume, which is composed of the three fantasies complete.

15 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
16 Ibid., pp. 42-44.
17 Ibid., p. 33.
18 Ibid., p. 67.
The other major-domo in Notting Hill is "the new Adam, whose name is Wayne," and whom Auberon regards at first as the only other sane man:

"Yes," he cried, in a voice of exultation, "the whole world is mad but Adam Wayne and me. . . . All men are mad, but the humourist, who cares for nothing and possesses everything, Fools!—dolts! . . . You thought to spoil my joke, and bully me out of it, by becoming more and more modern, more and more practical, more and more bustling and rational. Oh, what a feast it was to answer you by becoming more and more august, more and more gracious, more and more ancient and mellow! But this lad has seen how to bowl me out. . . . He has lifted the only shield I cannot break, the shield of an impenetrable pomposity."19

But as it turns out, Adam is more simply impenetrable rather than pompous. It never crosses his mind that the idea of a Notting Hill idealism is ridiculous. Until the very end of the story he does not see Auberon's "deification of the ludicrous." But the biggest joke is on Auberon because he thinks he is only playing at being a prophet. Adam sees deification as ludicrous:

"Don't you really think the sacred Notting Hill at all absurd?"

"Absurd?" asked Wayne, blankly. "Why should I?"

"I suppose," said Adam, turning on him with a fierce suddenness, "I suppose you fancy crucifixion was a serious affair?"

"Well, I--" began Auberon, "I admit I have generally thought it had its graver side."

"Then you are wrong," said Wayne, with incredible violence. "Crucifixion is comic. It is exquisitely diverting. It was an absurd and obscene kind of impaling reserved for people who were made to be laughed at—for slaves and provincials—for dentists and small tradesmen, as you would say. I have seen the grotesque gallows-shape, which the little Roman gutter-boys scribbled on walls as a vulgar joke, blazing on the pinnacles of the temples of

19Ibid., pp. 69-70.
the world. . . . Peter was crucified, and crucified head downwards. What could be funnier than the idea of a respectable old Apostle upside down? What could be more in the style of your modern humour? But what was the good of it? Upside down or right side up, Peter was Peter to mankind. Upside down he still hangs over Europe, and millions move and breathe only in the life of his church.120

The difference between Auberon and Adam is not a social and political issue. The level of the issue is not that "real." The last chapter suggests that there may be no issue at all, at least not an issue between Auberon and Adam as monarch and provost; the conclusion of Notting Hill is a dialogue of Two Voices which follows the devastating Last Battle and occurs in a mysterious place of total darkness:

'Auberon's voice, . . . 'I never dared to break the colossal calm of your face. God knows why I should do it now, when my farce has ended in tragedy and the ruin of all your people! . . . !'

'Adam said, . . . . 'I will not stop to thank you,'[Adam] said.

... 'But let me say what is immediate and true. You and I, Auberon Quin, have both of us throughout our lives been again and again called mad. And we are mad because we are not two men but one man . . . two lobes of the same brain. When dark and dreary days come, you and I are necessary, the pure fanatic, the pure satirist. We have between us remedied a great wrong. We have lifted the modern cities into that poetry which every one who knows mankind knows to be immeasurably more common than the commonplace.21

The Man Who Was Thursday, subtitled A Nightmare, is like Bertrand Russell's gallery, a nightmare of eminent persons. Seven anarchists, "really" detectives in disguise, are led by the
foreboding Sunday, who as chief of the anarchists is
indeterminately a vision of destructive forces and of benevolent
forces, even perhaps of God Himself. The narrator "I" tells of two
poets who engage in a kind of flyting at Saffron Park, a suburb
with a "social atmosphere" like "written comedy." Lucian Gregory,
the satirist-anarchist, "seemed like a walking blasphemy, a blend
of the angel and the ape." Gabriel Syme, the story's hero, and a
kind of an archangel, is pitted against the anarchist. Lucian is on
the side of lawlessness in art and art in lawlessness; Gabriel is a
poet of law and order. Lucian "sees how much more valuable is one
burst of blazing light, one peal of perfect thunder, than the mere
common bodies of a few shapeless policemen." Gabriel argues that
Chaos is dull, and that man can make Victoria into a New Jerusalem.
His argument is forceful and affecting, for "a red patch appeared
on Gregory's forehead . . . and one could almost fancy that his red
mane rose." Lucian, his face darkening, insists that the comedy
of his conversation has a deeper, a more serious sense than
nonsence. Gabriel in spite of his seriousness is tempted to the
pleasure of the "very entertaining evening" in the company of the
Central Anarchist Council; the apostle of peace and order is offered
the delights of anarchy and accepts. Lucian wants to be elected to
the Council as the anarchist whose name is Thursday, but Gabriel
is chosen.

22Omnibus, p. 207.
23Ibid., p. 209.
24Ibid., p. 211.
They are all of them "philosophic policemen" involved in a "heresy hunt," who see their responsibility "to trace the origin of those dreadful thoughts that drive men on at last to intellectual fanaticism and intellectual crime." They are anarchists against a specific anarchy:

"Yes, the modern world[said Gabriel] has given up its more dignified work, the punishment of powerful traitors in the State and powerful heresiarchs in the Church.... I know that the modern world is full of lawless little men and mad little movements. But, beastly as they are, they generally have the one merit of disagreeing with each other. How can you talk of their leading one army or hurling one bolt. What is this anarchy?"

"Do not confuse it," replied the constable, "with those chance dynamite outbreaks from Russia or from Ireland, which are really the outbreaks of oppressed, if mistaken, men. This is a vast philosophic movement, consisting of an outer and an inner ring, the outer ring the laity and the inner ring the priesthood.... The outer ring... talk about "a happy time coming"; the paradise of the future; "mankind freed from the bondage of vice and the bondage of virtue", and so on. And so also the men of the inner circle speak—the sacred priesthood.

It turns out in the end that Lucian Gregory is an anarchist only in nonsense and not in bombs, and Gabriel Syme a violent and exaggerating poet in praise of tidiness and propriety. Order and anarchy, for them both, come to be the same thing.

But the basic issue of the story, which Chesterton himself called "a very formless form of a piece of fiction," has given many people trouble. He has given several explanations of the

25 Ibid., p. 245.
26 Ibid., pp. 247-248.
"real anarchist" called Sunday, who, "in one sense not untruly, ...
was meant for a blasphemous version of the Creator."27

Insisting that he was quite clear on the issue—that there was
for every man a final adversary, and that one could find a man
resolutely turned away from goodness—when Thursday was adapted for
the stage almost twenty years after publication, Chesterton
offered this clarification: "There is a phrase used at the end,
spoken by Sunday: 'Can ye drink from the cup that I drink of?'
which seems to mean that Sunday is God. That is the only serious
note in the book, the face of Sunday changes, you tear off the
mask of Nature and you find God."28 One possible explanation why
many reviewers have called the story irreverent is that it is
about Nature and about God, indeterminately real and un-real,
natural and supernatural, this-worldly and other-worldly at once.
It is scarcely devotional (what is the object of veneration?) or
politico-religious (what is the argument or controversy,
exactly?). Something like this seems to me implicit in Monsignor
Knox's description of the book as rather something like the
Pilgrim's Progress in the style of the Pickwick Papers. The lack
of critical agreement may not be due to what it is but to what
effect it has on the reader. I do not think, for example, that
the ideas in Thursday are more obscure than in the Orthodoxy


28Quoted in Maisie Ward's Chesterton, p. 136.
published the same year. Nor is it particularly a question of the fictional form being an "extraneous decoration only, a distracting and unnecessary element."29

Two things are essential to satire, Northrop Frye says in his Theory of Myths, "one is wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack."30 As Chesterton himself has said, "the ordinary orthodox person is he to whom the heresies can appear as fantasies."31 I suspect that a person who would find the myth in Orthodoxy unacceptable philosophically or muddled theologically would also find the story of Thursday confused in its sense of the grotesque and irreverent in its attack. But in neither case would such an effect in the reader necessarily mean that the literary work lacks clarity. In the form of satire called Menippean,32 violent dislocations in the customary logic of narrative should not be themselves an imposing difficulty. By definition, such satire is concerned with abstract ideas and theories rather than with facts, and is "stylized" rather than naturalistic. Though Menippean satire deals less with people "as such" than with mental attitudes, it yet

29See Garry Wills, Man and Mask, pp. 45-51.


remains that the satire does deal with both. When the mental attitudes are offensive (in both senses of that word), the people "as such," or the personae, may seem to be obscure. Possibly, the laity and priesthood of the outer and inner rings may not like what they see, and so refuse to see it. And yet, the fact that all the characters in Thursday speak like Chesterton testifies to a harmony of intention in the book and, from the analytic viewpoint of Northrop Frye, suggests a functionally consistent use of symbols within a framework of myth.

The satiric fantasy The Ball and the Cross begins with a discussion between Professor Lucifer and a holy man, a monk "one of whose names was Michael." As protagonists they are as differentiated, as functional in the framework of the myth, as the symbols they discuss. Michael had disclosed a number of "really very plausible and thoughtful heresies," but his misfortune was that the modern world is not intellectual enough to understand them or their disclosure. Lucifer, on the face of it, is condolent rather than condescending toward him: "It is a new world," he cried with a dreadful mirth. "It is a new planet and it shall bear my name. This star and not that other vulgar one shall be 'Lucifer, sun of the morning'." Swooping down over fog enshrouded London in a flying ship, they barely miss smashing the ball and cross atop Saint Paul's Cathedral, "looking like a buoy riding on a leaden sea."

The Ball and the Cross (New York: John Lane, 1906), pp. 6-7.
Arguing his ease against Christian humbug, Lucifer points to them:

"What could possibly express your philosophy and my philosophy better than the shape of that cross and the shape of this ball? This globe is reasonable; that cross is unreasonable. It is a four-legged animal with one leg longer than the others. The globe is inevitable. The cross is arbitrary. Above all the globe is at unity with itself; the cross is primarily and above all things at enmity with itself. The cross is the conflict of two hostile lines, of irreconcilable direction. That silent thing up there is essentially a collision, a crash, a struggle in stone. Pah! that sacred symbol of yours has actually given its name to a description of desperation and muddle. When we speak of men at once ignorant of each other and frustrated by each other, we say they are at cross-purposes. Away with the thing! The very shape of the thing is a contradiction in terms."

"What you say is perfectly true," said Michael with serenity.

The symbolism is clear despite its inherent complexity: the world and the other-world, the natural and the super-natural, Nature and God, the objects of rational analysis and of acceptance by faith.

But in this fantasy as in the preceding two, the chief protagonists cannot be so definitely differentiated in their character or their interest. The fantasy chiefly concerns two men: Evan MacIan, a simple Catholic lad from the Scottish Highlands, and James Turnbull, a sincere atheist. Like Anberon and Adam in Notting Hill, they are in effect "not two men but one man . . . two lobes of the same brain." They are more "real" or down-to-earth than either Lucifer or Michael; they are if not more

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 10.
complex, yet more indeterminate, perhaps necessarily. It is at
any rate their story which forms the bulk of the fantasy.
Chesterton's strategy is, as it were, to identify his complex
mental attitudes as people in order to depict a rather extensive
absurdity and, perhaps, to provoke attack.

Opposed to one another with a categorical enthusiasm which
allows no compromise, they both of them see no alternative but to
fight out their differences in a duel to the death. And yet, in
the end, they are reconciled. Evan is the only man to regard
Turnbull's secularist newspaper with real respect and seriousness.
It seems to Turnbull that as year after year of his life has gone
by, year after year the death of God in his shop in Ludgate becomes
less and less an important occurrence. The immediate cause of
their quarrel is the fact that young Evan smashes the window in
Turnbull's atheistic shop when he sees an insult to Our Lady.
Turnbull is overjoyed.

They are hauled before a magistrate who scarcely begins to
understand their quarrel. The religion of the stipendiary magistrate
is law and order quite divorced from the interests of the atheistic
Turnbull and young Evan. The shopkeeper of swords is greatly
amused about their differences on the subject of Mariology: "Well,
this is a funny game," he said. "So you want to commit murder on
behalf of religion. Well, well my religion is a little respect
for humanity."35 The pornographic bookseller from next door

35Ibid., p. 53.
concurs. Turnbull speaks to them with grating contempt:

"I will leave the religion of humanity confidently in your hands; but I am sorry I troubled you about such a thing as honour. Look here, my man. I do believe in humanity. I do believe in liberty. . . . I am going to die for it, if need be, under that sword on your counter. But if there is one sight that makes me doubt it is your foul fat face. It is hard to believe you were not meant to be ruled like a dog or killed like a cockroach. Don't try your slave's philosophy on me. . . ."36

But the whole of London is on the side of the pornographic bookseller and the journalists who, far and wide, play up the curious disagreement for its outlandish novelty. It comes about that MacIan and Turnbull are misunderstood by everyone, everywhere. Pursued by all the resources of modern civilization, they try to find a place to fight their battle in secret and, when found out, they try to explain themselves. But alas, to no avail. They are interrupted at every turn by simplistic men who, even when they lend a sympathetic ear, cannot hear.

The dilemma of the clash between them is not a clash between good and evil, as it was in the confrontation of Lucifer and Michael in their appraisal of two worlds. MacIan and Turnbull represent a dilemma of principles opposed and, perhaps, contradictory, but both of them true. They end up in the garden of a lunatic asylum near Margate. "Turnbull, this garden is not a dream, but an apocalyptic fulfilment. This garden is the world gone mad. . . . The world has gone mad," said MacIan, "and it has gone

36Ibid., p. 54.
mad about Us." MacIan and Turnbull represent religious and social values which in this world inevitably clash, and which can be resolved only in some apocalyptic fulfilment, or in this world gone mad.

Chesterton's The Flying Inn might be called Varronian in its deliberate, functional use of both verse and prose. But it has little other than a loose, episodic structure, and its most famous parts are the drinking songs. Gerber names it as one example of a "completely frameless utopian novel." Insofar as there is a basic theme, it appears in the suggestion that some inns in Pebbleswick-on-Sea are actually named after the symbols of national superstition: "Everywhere, ... homage paid to the holy symbol of the religion of the Prophet!" The paradoxical symbols in this fantasy are the cross of Christianity and the crescent of Islam. The story involves the extended dispute between Patrick Dalroy and Lord Ivywood. With imperial equanimity, Ivywood preaches a lukewarm gospel of toleration; not so illiberal as to deny "to the ancient customs of Islam what I would extend to the ancient customs of Christianity," he regards an international denominationalism as being the salvation of the world: "Ours is an age when men come more and more to see that the creeds hold treasures for each other, that each religion has a secret for its

37 Ibid., pp. 380-381
38 Utopian Fantasy, p. 116.
39 Omnibus, p. 418.
neighbour, that faith unto faith uttereth speech and church
unto church showeth knowledge."40 But it turns out that "Lord
Ivywood's become quite a Methody parson, you know, since he took
the Place; he's pulling down beershops right and left."41 The
immediate occasion of prohibition starts Patrick's furtive inn
flying:

'I carl it rubbish,' cried Patrick Dalroy, 'when
ye put the Koran into the Bible and not the Apocrypha;
and I carl it rubbish when a mad person's allowed to
propose to put a crescent on St. Paul's Cathedral... 'Something called Chrlam perhaps.'42

Patrick has the obvious if also unobtrusive sympathy of the
narrator "I". They share a common vision:

'I think modern people have somehow got their minds
all wrong about human life. They seem to expect what
Nature has never promised; and then try to ruin all
that Nature has really given. At all these atheist
chapels of Ivywood's they're always talking of Peace,
Perfect Peace, and Utter Trust, and Universal Joy and
souls that beat as one.'43

All roads lead to Rum says Lord Ivywood at his Church Congress;
but Patrick, who believes that "even a rascal sometimes has to
fight, the world in the same way as a saint,"44 is ultimately
successful in his missionary work. Rolling his round cheese and
keg of rum through the countryside, re-establishing the glory of

40 Ibid., p. 429.
41 Ibid., p. 435.
42 Ibid., p. 446.
43 Ibid., p. 466.
44 Ibid., p. 467.
"good jokes and good stories and good songs and good friendships," Patrick brings tidings of comfort and joy.

Such are the immediate and yet abstractive terms in which Chesterton envisions, and derides, secular religion and Twentieth-Century 'Islam.' Secular religion disguises the fact that it is a religion, Jules Monnerot says, and it is inherent in its nature to pretend to be something else. "Certain Islamic sects exhibit a similar behaviour, as when heresy disguises itself as orthodoxy." Chesterton attempts to strip the disguise of orthodoxy from a body of heresy. By restricting the scope of his vision to Pebblewick-on-Sea, to that "real" place and the "real" people in it, he tries to show how the pretensions of "Christian" are as ridiculous as they are unseen, as comic as they are powerful. Belloc in Esto Perpetua set out to write an historical and geographic book about North Africa, especially the contact of Islam and the "genius of Europe" on that continent; in that book he examines the alleged mystery and militancy of Islam, taking up the subject of Islam as both Christian heresy and historic cultural invasion. Chesterton, in Flying Inn, as a utopian—rather than as a sociologist or historian, say—writes with the intention of re-forming rather than informing. The social and political belief derive whatever force they have, Gerber would say, from the fictional form.

The case is different in Chesterton's non-fiction in the same period. *Heretics* for example is a controversial book which aroused much animosity in a way that his satires *sui generis* would not. In this book he does not create personifications of his own thoughts and feelings about abstract matters which defy any other but "real" expression. He is rather concerned with real matters of dispute with real people, and seems content to state his case without persuasion or indirection—as though he believed that even a saint sometimes has to fight the world in the same way as a rascal, to paraphrase Patrick Dalroy's intention.

"Blasphemy is an artistic effect," which, Chesterton asserts, "depends upon belief, and is fading with it." His quarrel in this book is with those literary artists who because of the real body of doctrine they teach are incapable of communicating such an effect. And he is concerned to define and deplore that body of doctrine insofar as it has particular and practical consequences in this world. After his fashion Chesterton attempts to sustain a levity. Thus, Kipling is "a Heretic—that is to say, a man whose view of things has the hardihood to differ from mine." Bernard Shaw is "a Heretic—that is to say, a man whose philosophy is quite solid, quite coherent, and quite wrong." It is perhaps because of his own Negative

Spirit, Chesterton allows, that he is opposed to the popular, modern phrases and ideals of "liberty" and "progress" as H. G. Wells uses them. But Chesterton's levity while it may alleviate his anger does not keep him from his task.

Specifically, Kipling is a heretic regarding militarism as a "multitudinous vision of duty" and "the ideal of discipline... spread over the whole world. And the worship of it." Shaw is a heretic in "his sudden development of the religion of Superman. He who had in all appearances mocked at the faiths in the forgotten past discovered a new god in the unimaginable future." He admonishes Shaw because Shaw does not accept man as he is in this world. H. G. Wells is a heretic in his unqualified charges of hypocrisy against the religions of the past insofar as they allegedly and categorically "combined a profession of almost crawling humility with a keen sense for earthy success and considerable triumph in attaining it." Prophesying a gay and exhilarating progress of conservatism, Wells makes his main mistake, according to Chesterton, in maintaining that "there are no secure and reliable ideas upon which we can rest with a final mental satisfaction."  

48 Ibid., pp. 46-47.  
49 Ibid., p. 62.  
50 Ibid., pp. 68-69.  
51 Ibid., p. 81.
Excoriating "undenominational religions" and decrying "the absence from modern life of both the higher and lower forms of faith," Chesterton singles out the Salvation Army and Comtism as particular examples of the heretical (that is, partial) good of ritualistic "crash of brass bands" and "fantastic proposals for pontiffs and ceremonials." With particular references to William Morris, W. B. Yeats, and George Moore, he touches on the "very sad matter" of an admirable class of persons in the modern world "who really protest on behalf of that antiqua pulchritudo of which Augustine spoke, who do long for the old feasts and formalities of the childhood of the world." Thus W. B. Yeats "frames his steps in prehistoric dances, but no man knows and joins his voice to forgotten choruses that no one but he can hear."52

Chesterton laments "the carpe diem religion . . . of very unhappy people."53 Commenting on George Moore's account of his reason for leaving the Church, G. K. writes: "It is not the dogma of the reality of the other world that troubles him, but the dogma of the reality of this world."54 His main conclusion is that "The things we need most for immediate practical purposes are all abstractions."55 This is his own apologia as a writer of fantasies.

52Ibid., pp. 92-101.
53Ibid., p. 107.
54Ibid., p. 129.
55Ibid., p. 140.
He rejects the physical sciences, in this connection, as "an enormous amount of modern ingenuity . . . expended on finding defences for the indefensible conduct of the powerful." He particularly deplores the "deity of race" and the "ideal of nationality" and the entire apparatus for their justification.

G. K.'s own way out is Divine Frivolity, that is, "giving people a sane grasp of social problems by literary sleight-of-hand" despite the fear his critics have about "the danger arising from fantastic and paradoxical writers." He defends the function of satire written by "men who can laugh at something without losing their souls." The opportunity for Divine Frivolity is, in Chesterton's view, immense both because of the literary heretics and the ordinary modern man, whose daily life is, as a matter of fact, "One continual and compressed catalogue of mystical mummary and flummery." Most men "may think, and quite seriously think, that men give too much incense and ceremonial to their adoration of the other world. But nobody thinks that he can give too much incense and ceremonial to the adoration of this world."
What's Wrong With The World is also a controversial, politico-religious treatise which even though a collage of short essays in its structure has a recognizable unity. What's Wrong is a first formulation of Chesterton's politico-religious opinions; taken together with the later Outline of Sanity it is perhaps the best representation of his social beliefs, or rather, his beliefs as they seem to him to have social importance. "As in Orthodoxy Chesterton had formulated his religious beliefs," Maisie Ward says, "so in What's Wrong With The World he laid the foundations of his sociology."\(^6^0\) The politico-religious subject of Distributism I take up in my analysis of Belloc and "Chesterbelloc," Shaw's name for G. K. and Belloc together. Here, as with Heretics and Utopia of Usurers, I consider only Chesterton's explicit intention in writing the book, especially as it contrasts with the utopian fantasies (as he revealed his intention about them in Heretics) and the Orthodoxy.

Chesterton objects to scientific analysis which comes to be prophetic vision of the Social Organism by way of statistics, tables, population charts, and so on. Yet What's Wrong is a treatise, a "modern social inquiry" which takes into account the "normal human soul," and takes the one human institution of the family, especially, as a test of "cosmic and political tendencies." He directs his attack not against the old hypocrite, Tartuffe or Pecksniff say, "whose aims were really worldly

\(^6^0\)Gilbert Keith Chesterton, p. 205.
and practical, while he pretended that they were religious," but rather against the new hypocrite, "whose aims are really religious, while he pretends that they are worldly [sic] and practical." His is a battle of intentions. What is wrong with the world, Chesterton says, is "the huge modern heresy of altering the human soul to fit its conditions, instead of altering human conditions to fit the human soul." It is a disagreement over the nature of the conditions rather than the nature of the soul; but the two must be considered together. "This book must avoid religion," he writes, "but there must . . . be many, religious and irreligious, who will concede that this power of answering many purposes was a sort of strength which should not die out of our lives." Chesterton tries to make his argument fit the terms of both worlds because this is what his opponents seem to him to do:

Now all our sociology and eugenics and the rest of it are not so much materialist as confusedly Calvinist; they are chiefly occupied in educating the child before he exists. . . . But though Mr. Shaw and his friends admit that it is a superstition that a man is judged after death, they stick to their central doctrine, that he is judged before he is born. . . . There is at least quite as much to be said for the Christian theory that an element comes from previous existences. But this is not a religious work, and I must submit to those very narrow intellectual limits which the absence of theology always imposes. Leaving the soul on one side, let us

61 New York: Dodd, Mead, 1910, pp. 18-19.
62 Ibid., p. 136.
63 Ibid., pp. 152-153.
suppose for the sake of argument that the human character in the first case comes wholly from parents; and then let us curtly state our knowledge, or rather our ignorance.⁶⁴

Though the title Utopia of Usurers seems to promise a literary work both fictional and satiric, the book is actually, like What's Wrong, a collection of explicitly controversial essays of a politico-religious nature. It is only vaguely prophetic in an utopian way, projecting very little into the future, Chesterton's primary focus again being on this-world, here and now. Undenominational religion, as he is concerned with it in this book, is again something immediate, total, and material, rather than ultimate, individual, and spiritual. "The religion of the Servile State must have no dogmas or definitions," Chesterton writes. As a "virtue" with practical consequences, "modern broad-mindedness benefits the rich; and benefits nobody else. . . . Wait and see whether the religion of the Servile State is not in every case what I say: the encouragement of small virtues supporting capitalism, the discouragement of huge virtues that defy it."⁶⁵ Such a religion is a real matter, definable in expressly political and economic terms; and G. K.'s criticism is made in terms of real consequences.

Orthodoxy is the only devotional kind of book among Chesterton's many books which I mention here. It is a dominant

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 231-233.

kind I take up in my discussion of other satirists in this chapter; and I have intended primarily that my explication of Chesterton serve to test and illustrate all three of my generic distinctions with reference to a single modern writer. In choosing just one devotional work by him, I want to seem to be doing so on expeditiously representative rather than on drastically selective grounds. My procedure here forecasts my representative intention in taking up other prolific writers—Belloc next, for example, who published some one hundred and fifty books, about twice as many as Chesterton.

Chesterton asserts about *Orthodoxy* that "this book is meant to be a companion to 'Heretics,' and to put the positive side in addition to the negative"; it is "unavoidably affirmative" and "unavoidably autobiographical," "not an ecclesiastical treatise but a sort of slovenly autobiography." In *Heretics* Chesterton attacks the moderns who foreswear dogma in the name of progress, who, he says, sacrifice lasting values to the immediate gains of Progress; Christianity is defended only incidentally in that book. *Orthodoxy*, more truly a book than a collection of essays, is not a sequence of short arguments for orthodoxies applicable to daily realities but rather the story of one man's discovery of Orthodoxy as the only answer to the riddles of the universe.

In the first part of the book, the first three chapters,

Christianity is not depicted as an impersonal or scientific or objective hypothesis, or a fine code of common sense, but as "my faith," not the answer to all men's arguments but to his own dilemma and needs:

This at least seems to me the main problem for philosophers, and it is in a manner the main problem of this book. How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it? How can this queer cosmic town, with its many-legged citizens, with its monstrous and ancient lamps, how can this world give us at once the fascination of a strange town and the comfort and honour of being our own town? . . .

I wish to set forth my faith as particularly answering this double spiritual need.67

Chesterton believes no one can accuse him of controversial intention: "No one can think my case more ludicrous than I think it myself; no reader can accuse me here of trying to make a fool of him: I am the fool of this story."68 To be sure, many of Chesterton's utterances carry with them levity and vituperation:

The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad.

Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be.

Satire may be mad and archaic, but it supposes an admitted superiority in certain things over others; it presupposes a standard. . . . And the curious disappearance of satire from our literature is an instance of the fierce things fading for want of any principle to be fierce about.69

67 Ibid., p. 10.
68 Ibid., p. 12.
69 Ibid., pp. 30, 31, 42.
But there is always in them the implication of personal apologia rather than of argumentative defense.

In the middle three chapters Chesterton differentiates and defines his own personal conceptions of elfland and the natural world, magic and the laws of nature. The vision of elfland and magic is always a fact, he says. It is the notion of reality that is often a fraud. "This world," he says, "does not explain itself." Magic, or elfland—by which terms he refers to imaginative rather than calculable perceptions—or fairytales, as what is unreal might certainly not be true, but they are better than natural explanations. It is primarily because of such a vision that reality can be improved upon. "No one doubts that an ordinary man can get on in this world; but we demand not strength enough to get on with it, but strength enough to get it on." The last three chapters consider this possibility. For Chesterton, the chief merit of Orthodoxy is that it is the natural fountain of revolution and reform, the Eternal Revolution, a constant building and rebuilding. "In the upper world hell once rebelled against heaven. For the orthodox there can always be a revolution; for a revolution is a restoration." If a Christian can conceive of an ideal of progress, it must be both fixed and composite. "The whole case for Christianity is that a man who is dependent upon

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70 Ibid., p. 65.
71 Ibid., p. 72.
72 Ibid., p. 110.
the luxuries of this life is a corrupt man, spiritually corrupt, politically corrupt, financially corrupt."73 For Chesterton, the Eternal Revolution is a question of constant building and rebuilding. "I seem to hear, like a kind of echo, an answer from beyond the world. 'You will have real obligations, and therefore real adventures when you get to my Utopia. But the hardest obligation and the steepest adventure is to get there'."74 For Chesterton, the quest for Utopia carries to beyond this world.

And the Church must be forever building, and always decaying, and always being restored. . . .

Religious satirists, it would seem true, suffer misunderstanding not only in their satires. The intention of satiric, devotional, and controversial genres is not generally perceived by readers so much as anticipated or assumed. Very nearly everybody in the literary and journalistic world, Chesterton says, took it for granted that his Orthodoxy was not an expression of his faith in the Christian creed but rather a pose or a paradox, a stunt or a joke. It was not until long afterwards, when Chesterton formally entered the Church, "that the full horror of the truth burst upon them; the disgraceful truth that I really thought the thing was true."75

So too, even "before reading what Belloc wrote, the critics started to criticise what Belloc would probably write. They said he threatened us with a horrible nightmare called the Servile State.

73Ibid., p. 118.
74Ibid., p. 123.
As a fact, it was his whole point that it was not a nightmare, 
but something that we were already almost as habituated to 
accepting as to accepting the daylight." 

Far from reading 
*The Servile State* as a controversial, politico-religious 
treatise, in which Belloc argued for what he believed to be the 
only practical doctrine with real consequences in keeping with a 
Christian philosophy, "many supposed that it was a sort of satiric 
description of a Socialist State; something between Laputa and 
Brave New World." 

There can be no question that Belloc is, with Chesterton, 
Shaw, and Wells, among the Big Four of Edwardian Letters, or 
that he is Britain's foremost Catholic apologist in the twentieth 
century. His reputation notwithstanding, it remains a fact that 
even before his later years—when, no doubt, the chief purpose of 
all his writing was to proclaim the Church as the salt and savor 
of such civilization as has survived in Europe, and to lament the 
price paid by his own country for the loss of Catholic belief— 
there has been overall no careful attempt to distinguish between 
Belloc's apologetic kinds, between the possible forms which his 
intention has taken. His works have continued to be regarded 
determinately as polemic and propagandist, logically and even 
perversely parti pris. I think it is largely because of such 
assumptions about his intentions and his writings that whenever

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literary categories are mentioned in reference to Belloc, they are overbrimming and interleaking.

Belloc was no doubt an apologist more disputatious than confessional or satiric. Belloc, unlike Chesterton, was not a "personal" writer. The Cruise of the 'Nona', for example, was as close as he ever got to autobiography; and he scarcely ever argued against his contemporaries as such; when he did argue, which was often, his efforts to refrain from quarreling can be guessed at in his infrequent mentioning of persons by name (Wells and Kipling are the obvious exceptions). One big difference between Chesterton and Belloc is that Chesterton is more the satirist (page for page and proportionately writing more satire), given to literary flights of fancy or imagination. Belloc is more the historian (writing more history), given to an absorption in facts and the formulation of generalizations from them. Chesterton is given over to paradoxical complexities, Belloc to verifiable simplifications. There can yet be made, I think, a differentiation between those predominantly devotional works which achieve insight without argument, the satiric which exist in the realm of ideas and ideals as well as of men, and the controversial which promote explicit concepts or a course of argument in a practical vein. My point is that, taking into account and allowing for such literary confusion, satire on a religious subject, even though it may sometimes be as confounding as devotional or controversial religious writing, is at least religious in its intention. That
is, religious satire is religious not just in reference to its subject but also in what it tries to do about it, for the satisfaction of the "craving" of writer and reader alike. And, in reference to its subject it can scarcely be regarded as a kind of impersonal literary exercise or as a kind of confessional autobiography. It is all of this at once. As a religious writer who is sometimes a satirist, Belloc has interests or commitments which like Chesterton's are in different works identifiably this-worldly, other-worldly, or both. My purpose here is not a defense of those interests or commitments but rather a recognition of the forms they have taken. The structure of my discussion of Chesterton and Belloc is closely similar to my discussion of Erasmus and More, because I intend a close theoretical comparison.

However different Belloc and Chesterton might be as artists and as men, their social and political ideas are very much alike. Indeed, what is remarkable, Robert Speaight says, is that two men whose temperaments were so diverse should have thought alike on all important questions.78 If The Servile State and The Restoration of Property are set beside Chesterton's What's Wrong With The World and The Outline of Sanity, Maisie Ward says, "the Chesterbelloc sociology stands complete."79 The Servile State, Belloc's most important book on social problems, sums up those biases which Chesterton came to share: an esteem for peasants and monarchs;

79Gilbert Keith Chesterton, p. 217.
an emphasis on ancient Rome as a civilizing force in Western culture (especially in the centuries of occupation on English soil) rather than on the Germanic or Prussian heritage; an appraisal of the major task of modern society as essentially negative, that is, to check wherever possible the relentless and accelerating process of dehumanization since the industrial revolution. Belloc's fellow Churchmen and most sympathetic critics acknowledge that even if it was Belloc's temperament rather than his beliefs which was the cause of his failure in the House of Commons, the two combined together to make him less than a complete success as an historian. It can be allowed that The Servile State as representative of Belloc's interests or commitments in the world now is dubious in some of its historical generalizations. But my point is only that his interests in real consequences are testified to in the book's commonly being called, despite its inexactnesses or inaccuracies, a remarkable prophecy of economic totalitarianism of both Capitalistic and Socialist varieties; his concern throughout is with what is happening in this world. His argument may not be real in a strictly economic or political sense; he does not hold that the "dreadful moral anarchy against which all moral effort is now turned" is a material consequence which came about through a material process known as the Industrial Revolution: "No such material cause determined the degradation from which we suffer," he says. In this context his argument is real in human terms: "It was the deliberate action of
Belloc's ideal of the good social order is not a utopia. But Belloc does argue that it might be more closely approximated, and he argues against a parochialism of vision which does not extend beyond the last century in Europe or beyond the Reformation in England. This argument has a number of parallels in contemporary social theory; Shaw's legendary Chesterbelloc for example is the embodiment of such a parallel, as Shaw was able to see it. Further, for Belloc as for C. S. Lewis (as historians) the Reformation and the fragmentation of the politico-religious institution of the Church is the greatest scandal in the history of the West. For Belloc, in The Servile State, as for T. S. Eliot in Notes towards the Definition of Culture and The Idea of a Christian Society, society is conceived of as fundamentally traditional or "organic." Both see society in concrete terms: familial and private, allowing for those expressions of ancestral pride and patriotism which can be called chauvinism and the last refuge of scoundrels; or pluralistic and public, fostering a kind of economic life which can, though it will not always, nurture a fruitful political, artistic, and religious activity. There are differences of course. Belloc's ideal of modern British society is not like Eliot's, namely, aristocratic, post-Reformation, and Anglo-Saxon.

But my point is that the Distributive State, as Belloc calls it, though it is partisan, is neither abstractive nor perfect. I refer generically now to one book in which the subject of the socialization of religion is particularly important.

Belloc explores only one kind of world in his The Contrast (that is, the contrast between the Old and the New, Europe and America). His thesis in The Contrast is that "the New World is wholly alien to the Old,"81 but the contrast he draws is terrestrially limited, on both sides terra firma. Both the "superficial similarities" and the "essential truth" of differences are established from observable facts and in concrete terms, "the concrete lack of contact between the two sides of that very wide sea."82 Thus, the socio-politico-religious and controversial nature of his thesis is clear in its divisions and chapter headings: "the Physical Contrast which underlies the whole," "the Social Contrast—the contrast in those daily human relations which are the small external symbols of deep-seated spiritual motives producing them," "the Political Contrast: the contrast in the conception of government," and so on. No one can fail to see the religious bias in Belloc's thesis. But what I call attention to here specifically is the form which the religious bias takes, in its conception and intention distinct from the form of the religious bias in satire.

81 London: Arrowsmith, 1923, p. 22.
The essential mark of the American "social spirit" is, according to Belloc, publicity: "the spirit of the market-place," felt as a continual pressure of corporate opinion, a "spirit of common action" (similar in its delineation to David Riesman's "other-direction") at once economic, political, and religious:

This spirit of common action takes the form also of creating enormous markets even for the things of the soul. [For example] the "Best Seller": the book which spreads like fire through dry grass, not because it makes any special appeal to individual minds but because a crowd takes it up. . . . This spirit . . . shows itself much more importantly in the realm of ideas, from which all material manifestations spring. Social Doctrines are in America universal. . . . Again, the value, sacredness and efficacy of the vote. . . . The conception that a majority has a divine right to decide in any matter is universal in America, not as a conclusion of reason but as an accepted dogma.83

The spirit of the market-place, this spirit of common action, carries with it implications that go far beyond conspicuous consumption. It is not, in Belloc's view, directed toward an idolatrous worship of Mammon; "no modern society is so free from this detestable heresy as the American."84 The particular heresy which American society is not free of is identified by Belloc as a modern fact of history. The heresy consists in and dates from the American Worship of the Constitution, a "central institution" not yet a century and a half old: "The worship, not the rational acception, of the Constitution is the bed-rock

83 Ibid., pp. 68-70.
84 Ibid., p. 75.
upon which all that political world stands. It is upon that rock, Belloc argues, that Americans build their real church. In any State, and particularly in a State still new and founded upon a dogma of equality (that is, in Kenneth Burke's terms, upon a value assumed in the activity of "corporate will"), there has to be a fixed point of sanctity. That the religion of the Servile State must have no dogmas or definitions, Chesterton had argued in *Utopia of Usurers*; but that State is itself definable in religious terms.

The *Path to Rome* is a different kind of "polemic in disguise," yet also like *The Servile State* or *The Contrast* in that it is not to be explained away biographically on the basis of temperament, or literarily on the basis of descriptive genre. It is a pilgrimage more than a travel record. To read Belloc's books of travel is to become aware, Renée Hayes asserts, not only of the real root of his "temporal loyalty"—not so much England or France as Rome—but also of "an even more ardent spiritual loyalty to the Catholic Church," which though geographically centered in Rome is the object of a kind of loyalty "separate and distinct" from considerations of time and place. The pilgrimage is geographically and chronologically identifiable but its significance is not.


86 *Shuster*, p. 258.

The Path to Rome is in effect a sustained devotion, like the Corpus Christi processional or the Stations of the Cross. This is not to deny that there is much humor in the book. Though not an account of a sentimental journey, it is full of Shandian tricks: a foolish Preface; word puns; ellipses, brackets, italics, and other peculiarities of punctuation; illustrations; nonsensical and irrelevant breaks ("So to make a long story short, as the publisher said when he published the popular edition of 'Pamela' . . ."); cataloging and dialoging. Belloc offers an explanation—by way of humorous anecdote—of "why a pilgrimage, an adventure so naturally full of great, wonderful, far-off and holy things should breed such fantastic nonsense as all this."88

Yet, above all, the book is a first-person account of Belloc's "enchanted pilgrimage" to a Church Triumphant rather than in behalf of a Church Militant. The description of the mountainous passages is more visionary than visual:

When I call up for myself this great march I see it all mapped out in landscapes, each of which I caught from some mountain, and each of which joins to that before and to that after it, till I can piece together the whole road. The view here from the Hill of Archettes, the view from Ballon d'Alsace, from Glovelier Hill, from the Weissenstein. . . . They unroll themselves all in their order till I can see Europe, and Rome shining at the end.89

Two Inner Voices, a kind of representation of two lobes of the same brain, constantly interrupt in order to clarify what Belloc

89 Ibid., p. 52.
Belloc throughout entertains "a puzzling thought, very proper to a pilgrimage, which was: 'What do men mean by the desire to be dissolved and to enjoy the spirit free and without attachments?"91

The vision of the Alps drew from Belloc—and was drawn by Belloc—an expression more allegorical, more religious, than factual or descriptive:

So little are we, we men: so much are we immersed in our muddy and immediate interests that we think, by numbers and recitals, to comprehend distance or time, or any of our limited affinities. . . . I say that this kind of description is useless, and that it is better to address prayers to such things than to attempt to interpret them for others.

These, the great Alps, seen thus, link one in some way to one's immortality. . . . Let me put it thus: that from the height of Weissenstein I saw, as it were, my religion. I mean, humility, the fear of death, the terror of height and of distance, the glory of God, the infinite potentiality of reception whence springs that divine thirst of the soul; my aspiration also toward completion, and my confidence in the dual destiny. For I know that we laughers have a gross cousinship with the most high, and it is this contrast and perpetual quarrel which feeds a spring of merriment in the soul of a sane man.92

The Four Men: A Farrago93 is a satire by Belloc published in the same year as The Servile State and, on appearances, similar

90Ibid., p. 72.
91Ibid., p. 79.
92Ibid., pp. 113-114.
enough to *The Path to Rome* to invite comparison. A eulogy in praise of his native Sussex, the book was ordered by an American publisher but refused because of its "religious tone," a fact I think a symptom of its ambivalent nature. Like *Path to Rome* it too is a kind of pilgrimage, but even more full of "such fantastic nonsense," more fictional and satiric than autobiographic and devotional, more demonstrative of how "laughers have a cousinship with the most high." The narrator "I" or "Myself" is less Belloc himself, for example, than is the narrator in *Path to Rome*: "Myself" is less confessional in the autobiographic sense of personal revelation. He is less "real" as a person; he is indeed the other three personae: the Poet, the Sailor, and Grizzlebeard the philosopher; and the book he writes is, to use Northrop Frye’s definition of a confession, a sustained revelation of character and incident by a stream-of-consciousness technique. In *Path to Rome* Belloc is three men: I, Lector, and Auctor, the first only occasionally interrupted by the other two. In *Four Men* Belloc is Myself, Poet, Sailor, and Grizzlebeard in sustained colloquy. And the plot and scene as well as the narrator are subordinate to the purpose to which they are directed, and less directly identified with that purpose. The book is a travel fantasy: the personae represent no individual, real persons; and the locale though real enough is completely transformed in a dream sequence. This transformation is apparent from the beginning.

94 See Speaight, p. 325.
of the book: the frontispiece, for example, is a straightforward landscape painting of Sussex, while the first illustration (there are many, as in *Path to Rome*) following the preface depicts a fanciful, utopian "Regni Regnorum cui vulgo Sussex nomen est."
The time is "nine years ago" from October 29 to November 2, 1902—that is, Halloween, Feast of All Saints, and the Day of the Dead.

On a pilgrimage to "the land they know" (which is "really" Sussex in the dream of Myself), the four men sing Varronian songs on various heresies and religious abuses. The Sailor sings of Pelagius and a fictional "Bishop of old Auxerre":

Pelagius lived in Kardanoel,
    And taught a doctrine there,
How whether you went to Heaven or Hell,
    It was your own affair.
How whether you found eternal joy
    Or sank forever to burn,
It had nothing to do with the Church, my boy,
    But it was your own concern.

Grizzlebeard. "This song is blasphemous."
The Sailor. "Not at all—the exact contrary, it is orthodox. But now I beg of you do not interrupt, for this is the semi-chorus."

(Semichorus.)
Oh, he didn’t believe
In Adam and Eve,
He put no faith therein!
His doubts began
With the fall of man,
    And he laughed at original sin! . . .

(Chorus.)
With my row-ti-tow, ti-oodly-ow,
    He laughed at original sin! . . .
Whereat the Bishop of old Auxerre
(Germanus was his name),
He tore great handfuls out of his hair,
And he called Pelagius Shame;
And then with his stout Episcopal staff
So thoroughly thwacked and banged
The heretics all, both short and tall,
They rather had been hanged.

(Semichorus.)
Oh, he thwacked them hard, and he banged them long,
Upon each and all occasions,
Till they bellowed in chorus, loud and strong,
Their orthodox persuasions!

(Chorus.)
With my row-ti-dow, ti-coodly-ow,
Their orthodox persu-a-a-sions!

The Sailor tells the crowd listening that "every word of what we have just delivered to you is Government business." Nonsense, of course. So too the symbolism "when the Poet threw beer at a philosopher to baptise him and wake him into a new world." And the Man in the Chair at the inn of Steyning, the "Hideous Being" (H.B.T.), gives them a calling card bearing the fantastic name "Mr. Deusipsenotavit." All this no doubt has got a "religious tone" as the wary American publisher did fear. I submit that it is generically religious in its forcing a consideration of the differences between this-world and an other-world by way of an imaginative and necessarily nonsensical identification or confusion of them. This farrago has the effect of satire to the extent that the values of a real and an imaginary world--the world of Government say, and the world of heresy--are perceived as mixed

95 Four Men, pp. 92-96.
96 Ibid., pp. 146, 266f.
97 Reproduced on p. 154.
or scrambled and, therefore, ridiculous.

Arguing the case for Belloc's "integrated Christian humanism," one recent critic has asserted that "to grasp the essence of Belloc's integrated humanism is to possess the key to understanding his position as a satirist and controversialist." In that critic's view Belloc is no alienated man insofar as he neither "situates his destiny in this world" nor, despising the limits of the horizons, solely "contemplates the world beyond." If Belloc is almost incomprehensible to the post-war intellectual (even the post-war Catholic intellectual), he says, the lack of understanding can be traced to the amazing personal integration of the man, and to the lack of comparable integration on the part of those most representative of the modern spirit. This may be pressing the case for Belloc too much. It occurs to me, for example, that the University copies of The Four Men (which the critic calls "the most articulate and symbolic statement of the natural humanism underlying Belloc's militant Catholicism") and the other of Belloc's satires I quote from, except for the library stamp indicating my use bear not a single withdrawal date in recent years; and Belloc's name, despite its prominent place in literary history, does not come up in any of the general studies of satire I have referred to; if an author is not much read or examined it may be beside the point to insist that he is

incomprehensible. But the notion of an integrated rather than an antithetical Christian humanism does point to the kind of interest in two worlds which is, it seems to me, an unmistakable part of the form of religious satire I am writing about. And secondly, it points willy-nilly to the relative nature of any definition of satire and the precariousness of "success" of any such satire.

In Northrop Frye's literary theory, the Mythos of Winter includes both irony and satire, the chief distinction being that irony is a lesser satire, satire a more militant irony. In terms of this theory, and considering the setting and time of Four Men, I would say Belloc's satire is autumnal rather than wintery, ironic rather than satiric.

Considering the difference between irony and satire to be one of degree rather than kind, in Belloc's literary works the most "militant irony" is to be found in his political and economic satire: Emmanuel Burden, Mr. Clutterbuck's Election, or A Change in the Cabinet. His militant religious defenses more usually take the form of history, which is mostly what Belloc wrote (or, as his detractors would say, tried to write). His religious satire is both less frequent and less militantly ironic. As a series of literary skits, Caliban's Guide to Letters for example does not produce the artistic effect which Chesterton approbatively calls blasphemy. It has nothing of the tragedy or tragic irony leading to the large visions of evil in a personal form, as they are created by many other religious satirists. Thomas Caliban,
Doctor of Divinity and practicing journalist, solemnly asserts that "Whosoever works for Humanity works, whether he knows it or not, for himself as well." The "I" of the Guide is Caliban's literary executor, a punning word in the context, but his portrait of Caliban is pathetic rather than cruel. Belloc's attack in the Guide is directed against the imperialism of Kipling, but not against Kipling; a fundamentalist reading of the Old Testament, but not against the Old Testament; legal casuistry and the Anglo-Saxon myth, but not against British law.

Lambkin's Remains is more biting, but again, for a work by a prolific apologist, remarkably gentle as religious satire. The butt of the joke, Lambkin, is a clerical don, but his portrait is "immortal in a minor way" because of the "infusion of satire with affection." Lambkin (a diminutive Lamb of God?) is no ogre, and in his portrait we scarcely can begin to see "if we persevere with the mythos of irony and satire" the gentlemanly Prince of Darkness bottom side up. Here is the harshest passage:

Lambkin was essentially a modern, yet he was as essentially a wise and moderate man; cautious in action and preferring judgment to violence he would often say, "transformer please, not reformer," when his friends twitted him over the port with his innovations.

Religion, then, which must be a matter of grave import to all, was not neglected by such a mind. He saw that all was not lost when dogma failed, but that the great ethical side of the system could be developed in the room left by the decay of its formal


100Cf. Speaight, p. 123.
character. Just as a man who has lost his fingers will sometimes grow thumbs in their place, so Lambkin foresaw that in the place of what was an atrophied function, vigorous examples of an older type might shoot up, and the organism would gain in breadth what it lost in definition. "I look forward" (he would cry) "when the devotional hand of man shall be all thumbs." 101

Irony may be a lesser satire. Still, according to my interest in defining religious satire apart from other religious kinds, and insisting on its being religious in a way which goes beyond the obvious fact of its subject—namely, its religious intention and its effect depending at least on the recognition of that intention—I call to mind Belloc's essay "On Irony" as a statement of his intention. Irony is a sword, Belloc says, which must be used as a sword, but "which like some faery sword . . . cannot be used with any propriety save in God's purpose." It may be treated angrily where men love ease, he says, and be merely ignored when men have lost a sense of justice. And to many—the young, the pure, the ingenuous—irony must always "appear to have in it a quality of something evil, and so it has, for . . . it is a sword to wound." The intention of irony is to wound, and in wounding to effect "the curing and preservation of morals." In Belloc's view, "irony is in touch with the divine and is a minister to truth"; and in the perception as well as in the literary creation of irony

There is nothing less than the power by which truth is of such effect among men.

101 Lambkin's Remains, p. 248.
No man possessed of irony and using it has lived happily; nor has any man possessing it and using it died without having done great good to his fellows and secured a singular advantage to his own soul.  

It is a faery sword that the literary "executor" uses on Caliban. If a reader shares Belloc's view, the mutual assumption about irony is that even if it is "lesser satire" its effect is yet pain rather than pleasure, the intention of the writer and the reader alike being a kind of religious purgation.

Belloc and Chesterton were equally committed to religious orthodoxy. In this sense, the message of the Chesterbelloc was a consistent one. But the literary forms that orthodoxy took are various in their expression. Belloc is more disputatious than Chesterton, even vituperative, in his history. He is also more zealous in his desire for socio-political reform. But he is less "personal" when it comes to current problems in society and the non-utopian plan for attacking them which he formulated with Chesterton. But Belloc is less autobiographic and confessional than Chesterton in the devotional expression of their religious commitment. The Chesterbelloc is a legend of social or real views in which Belloc's is the more strident voice. And Belloc is a lesser satirist, not in intention, one may say, but in effect.

III.

According to The Borderland, a little book by Anglican Canon Roger Lloyd, such popular religious teachers as G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy Sayers, and C. S. Lewis inhabit a "country of the mind" somewhere between Christian Theology and English Literature. This country is not, as many supposed Belloc's Servile State to be, "something between Laputa and Brave New World." But it is in Canon Lloyd's estimation a country which "like such fabled lands of human imagination as Lilliput or Utopia" actually exists though its boundaries are vague and conjectural. In his view, there have always been inhabitants of this Borderland country who, interpreting the thought of professional theologians, attempt to communicate such thought to a vaster audience than would otherwise be reached. "Creeds have to be compressed into poems and doctrines into novels before most moderns will heed them," he says approbatively. Perhaps because of his own vested interest he praises the "amateur" theologians who have been at work since the very beginning of the Christian Church. His special concern however is with the twentieth-century apologists, beginning with G. K. Chesterton, "chief among the Borderland's permanent residents," whose Heretics in 1905, Canon Lloyd says, marks the beginning of

103 See above, p. 138.
105 Ibid., p. 28.
Christianity's modern recovery of intellectual prestige and the modern conceding of its claim to be taken seriously. The Canon may be saying too much for Chesterton's influence in a long line of theological progenitors, and for what he calls Christianity's "intellectual prestige."

His notion regarding the effectiveness of Borderland's inhabitants is at any rate insufficiently qualified. One thinks for example of the justification for the seemingly inevitable enjoiners whenever Religious Books are reviewed. One observes further that staunch admirers of Borderland's inhabitants concede the reasonableness of Kathleen Nott's *The Emperor's Clothes*,


107 See the review of Canon Lloyd's book, "On the Frontier" (editorial), *TLS*, July 29, 1960, p. 481, or "Ill Writ" (editorial), *TLS*, March 9, 1962, p. 163. Lead articles in the annual Religious Books Section consistently deride "theological merchandising"; see the one on "the copious outpouring of books, . . . the rising tide of volumes which can be classes as apologetics, sacred biography, scriptural commentary, applied theology or plain piety," *TLS*, May 6, 1955, p. i; or *TLS*, Feb. 17, 1961, p. i: "If we are to judge by the number of books on religion which are published each year then ours is one of the great ages of religious literature. Yet obviously, this is not true. It is not, primarily, a matter of theology since the Queen of the Sciences has gone the way of the commoners in this age of specialization. Theology, now, belongs with the textbooks and we must look elsewhere for religion's contribution to literature." This last article is largely a lament on the historical fact that, necessarily, "the task of telling it out among the heathen has passed . . . to the laymen: G. K. Chesterton, Professor C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Charles Williams and others."

108 Bloomington: Indiana Univ., 1955. The Canon nowhere mentions this book though it has been widely-read, and is mainly a hatchet-job on the kind of amateur theology and theologians he particularly praises, including, among the "others" alluded to in the jacket banner, Jacques Maritain, Basil Willey, and Evelyn Waugh. For a reluctant appreciation of Miss Nott's attack see
which, the banner on the jacket proclaims, is "an attack on the
dogmatic orthodoxy of T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Dorothy Sayers,
C. S. Lewis, and others." Many would argue that the Churchman
today is forced into a certain amount of propaganda merely to be
intelligible and not necessarily out of missionary zeal; others
would argue that the danger of setting up Orthodoxy as a literary
standard, of presuming on the literary intentions of the Holy
Ghost, is a danger which must not be lightly regarded. Still, I
think that Canon Lloyd's dates are right, and his main thesis,
insofar as it draws attention to the relation between a writer's
intention, what he writes, and what his cultural circumstances are,
seems to me a sound one. My purpose in this section of Chapter
Three is not to defend, or even to describe (any more than I
already have in the preceding section on Chesterton and Belloc)
amateur theology of either a devotional or a deliberately
controversial kind. My problem is the identification of a particular
literary kind as something different from these other kinds.

It does happen that some of the most prolific writers of
amateur theology are satirists. It also happens that they are
sometimes theologians. The two best-known of these, both converts
to the Catholic Church, both of them priests, both prodigious
apologists, are Robert Hugh Benson and Ronald Knox. But my
particular interest in them is as satirists, and not as apologists

Commonweal, April 22, 1955, pp. 83-84, and Martin Tur nell, "Belief
or priests. I want specifically to identify the nature of their major fantasies, namely, Msgr. Benson's _Lord of the World_ and Msgr. Knox's _Memories of the Future_. These fantasies are neither autobiographic nor, in the generic sense that I am attempting to use the word, devotional.

Benson's _Confessions of a Convert_, however, like Chesterton's _Orthodoxy_, or _The Catholic Church and Conversion_, or Belloc's _Path to Rome_, is representative of an expressly devotional kind of religious literature. Such books may pick real arguments by naming names or, on the other hand, display the earmarks of literary fantasy; but they have as their primary intention the communication of a commitment which is not essentially autobiographic or fantastic though perhaps it may seem to be both. Chesterton's _Orthodoxy_ intentionally expresses the "double spiritual need" for answering the problem of the believer's real world as "our own town" and as "queer cosmic town." Benson, in his apologia, insists not only on the similarity but also on the difference in the comparison of "... the sensations of a convert from Anglicanism to those of a man in a fairy story, who, after wandering all night in a city of enchantment, turns after sunrise to look back upon it, and finds to his astonishment that the buildings are no longer there." The man who is a convert is not an imaginary man but a real one. His intention however is not to be quarrelsome toward those real friends and acquaintances with whom he does _ipso facto_ differ; "he is conscious of no bitterness at all." Nor is he himself "really" as important as the "story" he has to tell.
Referring to himself in the third-person, Benson writes that "he is conscious of the appalling egotism of such pages as these; yet he has still to learn how an autobiography can be written without it." 109

Thus a religious genre which is nominally autobiographical can accurately be called devotional insofar as the writer in his intention does not consider himself as important as what he has to say. Chesterton says his Orthodoxy is unavoidably autobiographical, not an ecclesiastical treatise but a sort of "slovenly autobiography." And, what the writer has to say, though it may look like a "fairy story," is not imaginary; he may seem to be quarrelsome, but his weapon is neither a bludgeon nor what Belloc calls a faery sword. Autobiography can be distinguished from imaginative literature, even though it may merge with "creative" or fictional forms by a series of "insensible gradations," Northrop Frye says. 110 In Confessions of a Convert, Benson's intention would seem to be to avoid fiction but also some of the vagaries of autobiography. Northrop Frye's definition of a confession as a literary genre, as a "distinct prose form," does not take into account value-judgments, which are taboo in his theory of genres. A confession, Frye says, is autobiography regarded as a form of prose fiction, or prose fiction cast in the

form of autobiography. However, I do not think of Benson's work either way; nor do I see any reason to limit the term "confession" to a literary or generic sense which excludes its expressly religious implications.

It is probably more true of Benson than any other writer I am concerned with, that his entire body of published work tends to be devotional. Benson was not as much concerned with the social reforms which moved Chesterton and Belloc to literary expression (though as a matter of fact his brother E. F. Benson was a prolific and popular social satirist), and despite his wide acquaintance in clerical circles (his father was a broad Churchman, and Archbishop of Canterbury), he did not enter into religious disputes. He seems to have become a Catholic quite apart or aloof from the intellectual currents around him. His vested interest in orthodoxy was a personal rather than a public one. Thus, in a preface to a new edition of Benson's biographical Richard Raynal, Solitary — the "true" story of a hermit who, idyllically happy in his solitude, is called to deliver a single message to the world—Evelyn Waugh asserts that the book is an expression of Benson's earliest dream.

Still, Benson did write books of different kinds, and perhaps his best book is an extended satire on the socialization of religion. "Being concerned largely with spiritual cases," George N. Shuster says of Benson, "he never wrote without a religious purpose, and his books have some of the atmosphere of
And Evelyn Waugh asserts further that except for Richard Raynal, Solitary all other of Benson's books are "direct propaganda." Benson's Lord of the World is, I would say, as a matter of definition derived from these terms, concerned largely with spiritual cases and has some of the atmosphere of a tract; that is, though it may be direct propaganda, yet it is written by a man whose religious inclination was to be a solitary.

Lord of the World, published in 1907, shows the apparent triumph of evil at about the turn of the twenty-first century. The Christian faithful are reduced to a virtual handful, and Anti-Christ reigns. But though its theme is predominantly other-worldly, its narrative form, in time and space, is anchored very much in this world. That is, as an account of the end of the world anticipated by contemporary atomic malaise, it is much more imaginative than, say, Nevil Shute's On the Beach, and more immediate than Walter M. Miller's curiously hopeful A Canticle for Leibowitz. Written at a distance of a half-century, it has larger appeal (to the extent that pity and fear have an appeal) as accurate prophesy. As a socio-political account of the stages by which fascism can develop in different places, it anticipates

111 The Catholic Spirit in Modern British Literature, p. 217.
112 Chicago: Regnery, 1956, p. xiii.
113 See Marcus Klein, "A Slouch toward Bethlehem," The Nation, Nov. 19, 1960, pp. 398-402, for a discontented appraisal of these two recent apocalyptic novels, along with Gina Berriault's The Descent, Constantine FitzGibbon's When the Kissing Had to Stop, and Mordecai Richwold's Level 7.
WE, Brave New World, and 1984. Nations are on the eve of global war; the imminent and gruesome possibility is that whole cities will be destroyed by a single shell, fleets of silent airships will annihilate countries, and vast populations will be wiped out. Dominant over all of Eastern Europe and Asia is an Eastern Empire controlled by the Sino-Japanese (China and Japan had combined in the third quarter of the twentieth century to defeat and overrun Russia). America had stopped its advances into Europe, but not before England lost its identity in and control of the Commonwealth; and America had annexed Canada and most of the Western Hemisphere in the interest of freedom, of enterprise mainly.

Despite this anchoring of the story in geography, history, and economics, the reality to which most of the pages are devoted is religious; that reality in its literary form is fantastic, but it is not abstractive. Benson's story, far-ranging in the point of view of space, might have rambled into theorizing formlessness; but he controls it by limiting the "action" of the story, such as it is, to just two places, London and Nazareth, and the time span covered is something under two years. The number of personae is actually restricted to about a half dozen, and it is through them that the mode of action is developed: internal monologues or soliloquies, in which the complexities and implications of impending doom can be "seen" from different points of view; and simple dialogue or colloquies (just two or three speakers at a time) in which that doom works itself out. A preface and a prologue precede three separate books of four, eight, and six chapters respectively,
the books corresponding to dramatic acts and the chapters to individual scenes. In short, it has many of the formal characteristics of Menippean satire.

The prologue is a three-way conversation between Old Templeton, Father Percy Franklin, and Father Francis. In the structure of the fantasy, Templeton is on-scene only intermittently though importantly as a kind of soothsayer; like the "I" in Chesterton's Notting Hill his role is to "see" a subject and to prophesy about it. The two priests are major personae in the story; like Auberon and Adam in Notting Hill, I may say, they are not two men but one man, two lobes of the same brain, two ways in which Benson is able to get at his subject. I think that Percy and Francis do not themselves represent good and evil, or truth and falsehood. Rather, like MacIan and Turnbull in The Ball and the Cross, they are opposed to one another with a finality that allows no compromise, representing a dilemma of principles opposed and, perhaps, contradictory, but both of them true. They come to be "literally" the representatives of principles which exist as larger entities in the fantasy. That is, Benson's virtuous Percy is in the course of fantastic events appointed by Pope John XXIV to be his minister, Cardinal Protector of England, and is indeed ultimately elected Supreme Pontificate because no other priest in the world survives corruption or persecution. Thus he is "literally" even identified with the principle he represents. Francis, a kind of spoiled priest, cast in the same mold as Huxley's Mustapha Mond in Brave New World, becomes minister to the mysterious
Julian Felsenburgh, who himself is first President of Europe and then Lord of the World. The central and exploratory subject of the book is established, narrowed down, in this beginning conversation. "Prophesy, sir," Percy says to Templeton, "I mean about religion." The venerable Templeton, both old and wise, speaks with the special certainty of a choragos:

"Briefly," he said, "there are three forces—Catholicism, Humanitarianism, and the Eastern religions. About the third I cannot prophesy. . . . But in Europe and America, there is no doubt that the struggle lies between the other two. We can neglect everything else. And, I think, if you wish me to say what I think, that humanly speaking, Catholicism will decrease rapidly now. . . . but, on the other hand, you must remember that Humanitarianism . . . is becoming an actual religion itself, though anti-supernatural. It is Pantheism; it is developing a ritual under Freemasonry; it has a creed, 'God is Man,' and the rest. It has therefore a real food of a sort to offer to religious cravings; it idealizes, and yet it makes no demand upon the spiritual faculties. Then, they have the use of all the Cathedrals; and they are beginning at last to encourage sentiment."  

The effect of these developments on ordinary humanity is clarified in the personae Oliver Brand, a minor government official (as in most modern fantasies, virtually everyone works for the government), and his wife Mabel; they are "humanly speaking" the embodiment of Templeton's thesis. Oliver is a little troubled by the fact that his wife was brought up as a Christian for a few years, and it seems to him sometimes as if it has left a taint. Christianity for him is both wild and dull, wild because of its obvious grotesqueness and impossibility, and dull.

because it is so utterly apart from the exhilarating stream of human life. Mabel is sometimes troubled by imponderables, especially when they manifest themselves in outward signs. When a "volor" (a kind of rocket-jet that can hover like a helicopter) crashes in the station square at Brighton nearby, killing and maiming hundreds, she is somewhat distraught; she is mollified and her heart leaps in relief only when she recognizes Ministers of Euthanasia rushing to the scene.

Mabel contrasts the "selfish individualism of the Christian," who fears death or, at least, thinks of it only as one of the Last Things, with the "free altruism of the New Believer," who wants the Spirit of the World to triumph, and is "content to sink back into that reservoir of energy from which he drew his life." Like Aimee Thanatogenos in Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One or Clara in Love Among the Ruins (on such a specific point as this Waugh's satiric indebtedness to Benson seems unmistakable), Mabel is in a grotesque and ironic way, self-sacrificing. She finds the complete peace on earth which is the reward of suicide. She is her own lamb having mercy on herself.

In a kind of Retreat House (like Mountjoy run by the Ministers of Euthanasia in the Satellite City in Love Among the Ruins), a certain Sister Anne helps Mabel to understand the sublime morality of euthanasia and assists her in the final act of

\[115\] Ibid., pp. 106-107.
submission, wherein her sense of personal inadequacies is alleviated and her sense of social responsibility strengthened. Mabel loses her Christian taint. Oliver Brand, like D-503 in the United State of Zamiatin's *WE*, lives in a crystalline paradise on earth and finds justification for his faith,

> drinking in reassurance from that glorious vision of solid sense that spread itself before his eyes: the endless house-roofs; the high glass vaults of the public baths and gymnasiums; the pinnacled schools where Citizenship was taught each morning. . . . There it stretched away into the grey haze of London, really beautiful, this vast hive of men and women who had learned at least the primary lesson of the gospel that there was no God but man, no priest but the politician, no prophet but the schoolmaster.\(^{116}\)

Oliver no less than Mabel is branded by what Humanitarianism means. His answer to all his troublesome quandaries is the glorious creed of Humanity— that splendid God who died and rose again ten thousand times a day, who had died daily like the old cracked fanatic Saul of Tarsus, ever since the world began, and who rose again, not once like the Carpenter's Son, but with every child that came into the world. That was the answer; and was it not overwhelmingly sufficient?\(^{117}\)

For Oliver it is not that, as the popular phrase goes, "Christmas is for children." Christmas is children.

Numerous satirical speeches, or sustained soliloquies, running for pages in Benson's satiric fantasy, are devoted to the New Religion, as when Father Percy summarizes the state of the world for Pope John XXIV, "what has happened, what is happening,

\(^{116}\) Ibid., pp. 13-14.

\(^{117}\) Ibid., p. 21.
with a peroration as to what will happen." Briefly, Percy's theme is that "all the forces of the civilized world were concentrating into two camps—the world and God," the forces becoming increasingly centralized on both sides in a way never before occurring in history:

This was the more deadly from the fact that it contained so many elements of indubitable good. War, apparently, was now extinct, and it was not Christianity that had done it; union was now seen to be better than disunion, and the lesson had been learned apart from the Church. In fact, natural virtues had suddenly waxed luxuriant, and supernatural virtues were despised. Friendliness took the place of charity, contentment the place of hope, and knowledge the place of faith. . . . Humanitarianism would presently put on the dress of liturgy and sacrifice, and when that was done, the Church's cause, unless God intervened, would be over.  

The curious force of such a pat speech or "statement of fact" derives I think from the implication of value which defies strict chronological relevance or historical identification. Being in the future, referring to the past, and critical about the present, it has for its intention the "timeless" cathartic effect of literary art, and not the intentional objectivity of history or sociology, and not the contemporaneity or particularity of controversy. Like other utopian fantasy it has the tone of objectivity; but it is not easy for the reader to keep in mind that the "real" speaker is in his own way, like Joseph Priestley in his History or Auguste Comte in his General View, or like the laudatory prophesier in Utopia 1976, really serious and not trying

118 Ibid., pp. 132-137.
to be funny. The reader tends to forget that the book is intentionally a literary fiction to the extent that in its effect it may frequently seem to him to be more like history. When the book reads like history, it is effectively satiric.

The remarkable thing about Julian Felsenburgh is that, as "the Man of this movement," he had broken down the eternal division between East and West; "he had prevailed by sheer force of personality over the two supreme tyrants of life—fanaticism and party government." Thus he is one alternative Lord of the World. Percy's reflections or soliloquies more than the actual dialogue form the bulk of the narrative and carry the expositional weight of it; his reflections are sub specie aeternitatis. Menippean, concern the entire world and its two alternative Lords. Reflecting at the very last Consistory in Rome, about Pope John, he "sees" that the Pope, "the Lord of the world, . . . the Hope of the World, the holder of Divine Vice-Royalty" is "the other formulated answer to the problem of life. . . . One of the two, John and Julian, was the Vicar, and the other the Ape, of God."119 It is the difference between Ape and Essence. Percy continually re-presents the orthodox credo. Benson's narrative, to the extent that it moves along and is not merely an interruption of Percy's reflections, constantly tests this credo. Thus we see the fundamental form or generic structure of the narrative as satire: other-worldly commitment in

119Ibid., p. 144.
grotesquely, depends on or exists because of this juxtaposition. There are times, I think, when this juxtaposition of other-worldly commitment and this-worldly fact breaks down: as when the imaginative projection into the future is, or seems to be, too "real," the grammar of the "prophetic past" suggesting not fanciful prophesy but bygone and irretrievable history; or when the identification of Percy as the voice (and not one of several voices) of Benson is too obtrusive, the persona Percy occasionally seeming to be only a faint disguise for the person Benson. It is at these times that the satire breaks down into a kind of political polemic or devotional tract.

It would seem to be a fact, or an Erasmian folly, that this Vision of two worlds—which Benson, willy-nilly, does not always manage to control—seems to run amiss precisely when it runs into its deepest channels.

And yet in the oblique times that the satire seems to break down, the intention at least of Benson's book is clear; it is clear though the effect he tries to create may not come off. At the Consistory, for example, the Pope (whom Percy succeeds as the last Pope) flatly informs Percy of the weapons and the principles with which the war between the two worlds will be fought, "not with the weapons of this world, for neither is His kingdom of this world,"120 but rather by speaking "words to His

120Ibid., pp. 157-163.
glory," by condemning and anathematizing the opinions of those who do not hold to a primacy in the notion of two worlds, both of them good: "First, then, there should be established the peace of man with God, and after that the unity of man with man will follow. Seek ye first, said Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God—and then all these things shall be added unto you." It should be the intention of such speakers and condemners, notwithstanding their own weakness and ignorance, to "tread on what many have considered dangerous ground" anyway. Referring repeatedly to "Our intention," the Pope's speech is not so much an effective part of the narrative as it is a conventional apologia for the kind of book Benson writes.

Despite these qualifications, which perhaps are generically inevitable, I think Benson's book is effective as satire; though there is much direct statement, there is also a lot of literary art by indirection in the book. The news clippings from the daily New People, and the frequent epistolary exchanges, help to keep Benson at a distance from the story he has to tell. And his personae are differentiated. Francis, who becomes a spoiled priest, is introduced as Father in the prologue, and unobtrusively but effectively reintroduced as Mister when he reappears on the scene halfway through the book. Julian Felsenburgh, Benson's most complex persona, is impressively unbelievable not only in himself but in his "biography," a kind of ghosted Mein Kampf written in Newspeak; it is full of curious aphorisms: "No man forgives, he only understands." "It needs a supreme faith to renounce a transcendent
God. "A man who believes in himself is almost capable of believing in his neighbour." "To forgive a wrong is to condone a crime." In the pompousness of this array of remarks the reader possibly comes "to hate Felsenburgh, and to fear him; but never be amused by him." Felsenburgh is not just said to be Lord of the World. He is made to seem Lord of the World by the ecstatic and mystic effect he has on others. He is made to seem remote as well as aloof. The literary or psychological validity of Felsenburgh is sustained by his never saying anything in person in the narrative. His parables are "quoted" from parabolic object lessons in his biographical scripture and in news reports about him; and his secretaries deliver His Word. This literary portrait is perhaps necessarily indirect, something comparable to the problem of making Christ "true to life." In the context of the story Julian may be, like the Wizard of Oz, a revealed fake, or "really" the Lord of the World. But Benson's literary achievement is that Julian is one or the other or both, and not anything else.

Mabel's act of meditation is, as a parody of Spiritual Exercise, a delicately sustained fiasco, and the climactic joke of the Solemnity Service of New Year's is done straight-faced. Much of the middle book is an outline of Comte's liturgical year--Maternity, Life, Sustenance, Paternity--but in a narrative context. The expository argument can be extracted; but the Church is shown to exist no longer in the State but rather as part of

121 Ibid., p. 253.
the State. That National Worship does not mean the worship of God by the Nation, but rather the worship of the Nation by the Nation, is narrated rather than argued.

In this narrative, Christianity is depicted in circumstances that are starkly primitive and in hundreds of details comparable to Christianity of the first century. As in many utopian satires—Russell's "Zabatopolk" comes to mind—the events depicted are now, but the story is set in the future and concerns the past as well. The picture of this world is a montage of other times and places, the "realism" persistently and intentionally ambivalent. The apocalyptic close of the book, depicting the "widespread and final apostasy" and the "extermination of Supernaturalists" is unrelieved and uncompromising. With The Victory "in sight," Julian's secretary says: "It is also, surely, very significant that the scene of the extinction of Christianity is identical with that of its inauguration. . . ."\textsuperscript{122} It is the purpose of Benson's fiction to imagine both the scene of Christianity's inauguration and the scene of its extinction.

These two scenes are Benson's Borderland, which "like such fabled lands of human imagination as Lilliput or Utopia" actually exists; in the context of his satire these scenes are not, I think, vague and conjectural. They are specific and they are "real." On

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., p. 325.
the last page, the last Pope ends the last benediction:

PROCEDENTI AB UTROQUE
COMPAR SIT LAUDATION. . . .

Then this world passed, and the glory of it.

THE END

It is the deliberate fictionality that makes the book literary rather than polemic or devotional. And it is the deliberate ambivalences of the fiction (sustained to the simple, even "primitive" concluding pun) that make the book satiric.

In 1923, Msgr. Ronald A. Knox published his single utopian fantasy, a first-person "confession," *Memories of the Future: Being Memoirs of the Years 1915-1972 Written in the Year of Grace 1988 by Opal, Lady Porstuck*. As a record of conversations, epistolary exchanges, speeches, sermons and news clippings, it closely resembles Benson's *Lord of the World* in its form. But it scarcely evokes the same effect. Anticipating a kind of grotesquery and horror, the reader is surprised with gentleness, or perhaps disappointed by it. The literary machinery seems to grind for too small a purpose, or much of the time fails to grind at all. That is, the reader is obliged to feel that the generic structure is too heavy to support just an easy intention of poking fun at contemporary autobiographies of women of fashion. He feels that even this small intention is unfocused. Is Opal, Lady Porstuck a joke, or isn't she? For several pages at a time, as when she turns
to the Church, Lady Porstock loses her satiric identity altogether. Though she is left with a "permanent legacy" from early childhood, a "horror of spiders and of the Pope," the book she writes is— as prophetic fantasy, as memories of the future— astonishingly uncomplicated by that horror.

The comic embodiments of Church and State in Opal's Memoirs—Canon Amphibolus Dives, Rev. Didymus Rowland and his wife, Rev. Agape Rowland, Prime Minister James Holroyd, and Lord Brede—are not foreboding or frightening but ineffectual. The Westernizing of the High Churchmen (the making of the clergy into a political party); the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline; the revision and the vision of the Book of Modern Prayer; the legalization of Marriage and the institutional or social improvement of other sacraments; the ritualization of the modern instinct of Home Life; the Great War (of 1972); all these are seen, in literary retrospect, to be transitory, short-lived follies of the recent past rather than persistent vices extending to the present. The joke is let out and loses its force. The reader discovers in the context of the Memoirs that there is not and there cannot be any progress of an ideal kind in human society; and there will not be any loss. Society will continue to amuse itself; human folly will remain the same; as things were, so they will continue, with the Grace of God silently working on individual souls. Lady Porstock is not ingenuous, nor sardonic;

123 New York: George H. Doran, [1923], p. 2.
though the world is not "really" any better than it has ever been, it is not worse either. For Lady Porstock and, evidently, for Msgr. Knox, 1988 is a Year of Grace.

As a forecast demonstrating that the idea of progress is an illusion, the book is optimistic. The central problem it poses is important, but imaginary rather than difficult. In a long letter to her niece Opal, Miss Linthorpe is adamant rather than vituperative about it:

The lie you will find people telling all around you . . . is that the great movements of the human mind, whether in the arts or in politics or in morals or in religion, are similarly [i.e., as in science] part of an irresistible progress . . . .

I wish I knew what it all meant. But I think this: I think it is the result of man being born immortal, and thinking (like an ass) that he has only this world to satisfy his immortal instincts with. Despairing of immortality in this world, and forgetting it in the next, he makes the human race the immortal unit, and so endows it with life. And because he has been told that life means growth, he cannot be happy until he believes that the world in which he lives is growing, from something to something else. That is humanity's favourite dogma, and there is no atom of proof for it. Everything we know about history and natural history shows that there is a kind of progress in the world . . . from the less to the more complicated, from the less to the more organized: nothing suggests, except to our vanity, that there is a progress from the worse to the better . . . . Sweating away on the treadmill, humanity fancies that it is mountaineering, and that the dawn is just going to show above the next slope.\textsuperscript{124}

The explanation is facile, or rather, it is as though no explanation is really necessary. Humanity's dilemma of fitting ideal values in a real and imperfect world is illusory rather than problematic.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., pp. 69-71. Italics omitted for readability.
Memories of the Future, though similar to Lord of the World in form, is clearly different from it in intention. As prolific devotional and apologetic writers Benson and Knox would seem to have a lot in common, but as satirists they are different breeds. In the account of his conversion, A Spiritual Aeneid, which he calls a religious autobiography not intended as a tract, Knox says that he was first drawn to the Church by reading Benson. Though he met Benson only once, he "always looked on him as the guide who had led me to Catholic truth." Yet it might be supposed that there are differences between them as satirists that account for the difference in their utopian satires.

Evelyn Waugh, who was appointed by Ronald Knox as his sole literary executor and who knew Knox "primarily as a man of letters rather than as a priest," recalls that "Ronald always felt an affinity for R. H. Benson; perhaps because there was a physical resemblance between them and because both were the sons of Anglican bishops and both Etonians. To the observer [i.e., to Waugh] their differences of temperament and of accomplishment seem enormously wider than their similarities."

Knox's vested interests seldom take obtrusive shapes. His renowned translation of the Old and New Testaments, his Pastoral

125 London: Longmans, Green, 1919, p. 35f.
126 Ibid., p. 183.
128 Ibid., f. n. 2, p. 146.
Sermons, and his other expressly devotional labors in translating, revising, and editing, these indicate the vast bulk of a literary production neither apologetic nor controversial. Many of his contemporaries deplored the waste of his genius, his general passivity to the more important interests of the Church. Belloc had written to Knox that to remake Europe was their "intense and urgent call." But, in Waugh's view, Belloc was one of many who did not understand "the diffidence which held him back from controversy, and his constitutional dependence on his sacramental and vocational orders."\(^{129}\) Knox's sagacity, patience, and courtesy—indicating a strength of temperament, if diffidence and dependence suggest weakness—kept him clear of politics, as well as most religious quarreling. "It was repugnant to Ronald to make any political judgement," Waugh says, "and only once, during his chaplaincy at Oxford, did he preach a political sermon."\(^{130}\) If such was Knox's temperament, it would be well-suited to the kind of literary accomplishment for which he is best known. In social, political, and religious matters, it shows through his satires as well.

*Barchester Pilgrimage*, Knox's most ambitious work of the 1930's, is an elegant and effective imitation of Trollope's style; and, as Waugh says, "it is a dry, gentle satire on the social, political, and religious changes of the twentieth century," which "gave some

\(^{129}\)Ibid., pp. 200-201.

\(^{130}\)Ibid., pp. 227-229.
plausibility to the ever-ready criticism that the Church of Rome had not fostered his genius.\textsuperscript{131} That fortunately nowadays it is not necessary for a clergyman to have beliefs, only "moral tastes" and a manner of reading lessons; that a clergyman can occupy the pulpit for nearly three-quarters of an hour without making any allusion to Christianity; that he should not have to wear those collars that go around the wrong way or otherwise to seek to distinguish himself from the laity by any peculiarities of appearance;\textsuperscript{132} these are all part of the satire on the socialized Cathedral town in Barcestershire. The Bishop's old verger, Albert Bunce, establishes the theme of the book at the beginning and at the end:

\begin{quote}
The place ain't what it used to be, and folk don't come to it as they used to come to it. . . .

Now, sir, if you'll believe me, it's High Mass this Sunday and the Baptist minister preaching the next, and massed choirs—women, some of 'em—the next; and if you put your nose inside the building during the week, as likely as not you'll find yourself in the middle of a bathing-beauty competition like this here. The truth of the matter is, sir, that people won't go to church to say their prayers, not nowadays, and you have to wheedle them in by all manner of stunts.\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

Conceding that Knox's shell explodes at a target he has in sight, one must still say that the pattern of shot spreads so widely that it makes no kill. A covey of clergymen stand in front of the gun,

\textsuperscript{131}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 241.

\textsuperscript{132}\textit{Barcester Pilgrimage} (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936), pp. 64, 145, 149, \textit{et passim}.

\textsuperscript{133}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 3 and 272.
among them the Catholic priests, Frs. Shoehorn, Smith, and Flanagan of Saint Philomena’s parish; High Churchmen, Bishop Johnny Bold, prebendary Theophylact Crawley-Grantley, almost-seminarian Marmaduke Thorne (torn between the Anglican and Catholic fold, but ultimately a promoter of unsuccessful theatrical ventures in America); Low Churchmen, Dr. Catacomb, Rev. Easyman, and Rev. Obadiah Slope. They all incur slight injuries, but all survive. As a literary exercise, the book is considerably more polished than Memories of the Future, but as a satire it is no more ominous or foreboding or devastating. He might have, in his outright controversial tracts written at about the same time, Caliban in Grub Street, say, or Broadcast Minds, openly set out to vivisect the most famous symposiasts and scientific publicists; but his large-scale satire is, in any comparison with these tracts, remarkably subdued.

And yet, though Knox’s satires are either gentle or modest in their general design, and though they might largely be explained away as literary imitations, Knox himself testifies to the fact that the literary circumstances or occasions of his satires have provided a definite purpose for them. The purpose may be strikingly conventional, and his autobiographic apologies for the satires may be unsurprising. But they are unquestionably honest in their clarification of his intention as a satirist and of the effect of his satires; and they certainly indicate the nature of the orthodox, vested interest which he shared with other satirists. As an instance here, I take up the
first two "chapters" following the introductory definition of satire in his Essays in Satire\textsuperscript{134} (essays he wrote several years before his conversion in 1917), and his discussion of them in his autobiography.

"Ever since I can remember, or at least since the age of seven," he confesses, "I have been possessed with the devil of lampooning."\textsuperscript{135} The idea for Absolute and Abitophell (first published in the Oxford Magazine in 1912) he carried around in his head at first simply as a parody of Dryden's poem. Only after several months "it hammered itself out into solid form." It begins, as he says, with a sketch of the modernizing tendency in the Church of England. Then it takes up questions he disputed with several Anglican theologians, friends of his whose names were "hidden under Biblical or quasi-Biblical aliases, just as in Dryden"—but clearly identified in footnotes in the anthologized reprint. Knox wrote that "there was not a line that I had not weighed and turned over scrupulously; it was as faithful as I could make it to Dryden both in spirit and style." This would seem to have been Knox's major intention, and from his point of view an innocent if also deliberate one. But "a stray literary venture" is the way he describes his little parody, on the basis of its effect. "It was not, I hope, [Knox insists] in a personally unkindly spirit that the satire was meant; certainly it was not so taken by the objects of it. . . . But inevitably the whole thing was treated in


\textsuperscript{135}Spiritual Aeneid, p. 112. Knox's references to writing Absolute and Abitophell, pp. 112-115.
orthodox circles as a pamphlet, and I as a champion; the Old Guard of Tractarianism began to look more kindly on me. My lot was cast, as if in spite of myself. . . ." The reader may be puzzled about how or to what extent Knox was able to regard the spirit of Dryden as something different from Dryden's style; or whether he imagined his audience would differentiate them when as a matter of fact Dryden's audience did not; or how exactly Dryden's spirit, or even a copy of it, would not be regarded as a "personally unkindly spirit."

Knox insists that whereas Absolute and Abitofhell was the work of months, Reunion All Round was complete in four days. In 1914, devoting his full-time labors to a sequence of sermons, Knox says he incidentally renewed his acquaintance with "the admirable satirical vein of Dean Swift." The idea to "utilize his manner for the conveyance of an ecclesiastical message" became imperious to him. 136 Although it was possible, he says, to regard Reunion All Round as merely a graceful jeu d'esprit, he meant it for much more than this. Centering on an Anglican tendency to ignore doctrinal differences with other sects or churches in the interests of Christian good fellowship, the argument is a reductio ad absurdum: "... the spirit of satire carried me away, and I suggested with every appearance of misgiving that perhaps after all, given proper precautions, charity should demand of us that we should accept the submission of the Pope."

136 See Spiritual Aeneid, pp. 165-169.
Knox found that the secular press was more kind to him than the ecclesiastical, a discovery other modern satirists have come to make. Pleased that G. K. Chesterton, whom he calls "my earliest master and model," reviewed the piece with enthusiasm, Knox is baffled by the curious nature of the wide popularity of the piece; and he makes a reader wonder, in turn, about the curious and necessary qualifications which must be made concerning the notion of success in satire, or its intended effect:

If reports were true, it was read by a community of Catholic nuns, who supposed the suggestions to be quite serious; it was read in refectory at the English College, under the impression that I was a Catholic, and caused great doubts of my salvation when it proved that I was not; it was read to the Prime Minister as he sat in bathing costume on the river-bank in that hottest of summers. I was even told that it gained the hearts of the episcopate. . . .

Knox's intention in Absolute and Abitofhell was to be non-combative, he says; yet he acknowledges that he wrote it like a devil possessed, suffering something of a literary seizure during which "it hammered itself out." In spite of himself, and though the "objects" of the satire did not regard it as "personally unkindly," he says, the satire was regarded as a pamphlet serving an aggressive purpose. On the other hand, Reunion All Round, a more immediately composed piece, was not supposed to be merely a literary exercise; a graceful jeu d'esprit; not written in a vein of good-tempered exaggeration, he says, he expected the precise, even mathematical treatise to be abundantly clear. Yet, where it enjoyed wide popularity it was misconstrued. If modern literature
is largely made up of deliberate and somewhat ornate pamphleteering, as George N. Shuster says, a part of it is pamphleteering which is not deliberate. Absolute and Abitofhell, intended more or less simply as a literary exercise, was regarded as an expression of combative orthodoxy (even before Knox's first steps toward conversion). And, evidently, when some pamphleteering is deliberate, it is not recognized as such or otherwise "effective," as in the case of Reunion All Round.

It may be that when Knox's inclination as a satirist ran against the devotional grain of his nature, he was unable to be as "deliberate" as, say, Benson was. Or, when and if he was purposeful and intended to lash out in an impulsive way uncharacteristic of him, the result tended to be either baldly controversial, or ineffectually satiric. Knox's utopia is Utopian, Benson's is not. Unlike Belloc, Knox did not want to reform the world, or believe it could be or, for his own part, think that it should be. For Knox, the world was not a perfect place, but good enough perhaps to serve whatever greater purposes for which it was created. He could take it in his stride. "Ronald was no economist," Waugh says, and he caught only a "slight and transient infection of Socialism." Chesterton sends Patrick Dalroy's inn flying through a sequence of significant events which parody Christianity, any lukewarm gospel of toleration, all of Lord Ivywood's notions about international devotionalism as being the

See above, p. 103.

Life of Knox, p. 91.
salvation of the world; Knox is content to aim at such a subject, without any definite or sustained inclination to kill it. Benson and Knox, like Chesterton and Belloc, are members of the same spiritual brotherhood, clerical rather than lay Churchmen. Their intention as satirists seems to be the same; but the literary effect of their orthodoxy in the satire is not. Knox, like Belloc, expressly states his intention and amply argues the conventional case for his efforts as a satirist. But Chesterton and Benson wear the bays.
IV.

Throughout the history of satirical literature, Robert Elliott shows, the "primitive" belief that satire kills, that magical power inheres in denunciatory and derisive literature, persists, even today in obscure ways. "Magical art," H. D. Duncan has written, must have a greatly desired end, goal, or purpose in view before it can begin to work; and, far from making the subject of magical art "otherworldly," in Duncan's sense of that word, linking it with religion or aestheticism, it is rather an attempt to "glamorize," that is, to make attractive for practical reasons, but not to spiritualize or analyze. Working toward generic precision, and arguing that art is a sublimation of magic revealing a shift in concern from ritualistic efficacy to aesthetic value, Elliott establishes a working distinction between ridicule and satire, and shows how, in the uses of ridicule, we are all "primitive," whatever the level of our deepest selves.

Following this lead, one may say that ridicule, like Inspirational Books, is magical rather than literary, and therefore is as different from satire as Inspirational Books are from the kind I have been calling devotional. In this section of this chapter I propose to consider how ridicule is different from satire as a religious genre. The notion of ritualistic efficacy and aesthetic value can be further sharpened in terms of my tri-part classification;


specifically, the satiric expression of orthodoxy as a vested interest is identifiable in a range quite in addition to a difference from Inspirational Books (which, I have shown in the first section of this chapter, are not an expression of orthodoxy after all), and a difference from controversial and devotional kinds. The chapter ends with reference to some shorter satires and one longer Menippean satire to indicate the essential or generic similarity despite their difference in scope. Thus, once again, I take up the problem of literary form and content on the basis of intention and effect.

In his introduction to Essays in Satire, Ronald Knox's chief theoretical notion about satire is an historical differentiation. Literature before the nineteenth century, he says, has no conscious humor apart from satire, and, since the French Revolution satire is dying out though humor flourishes. Satire, unlike humor, he says, provokes laughter which has malice in it always; and unlike humor, "satire has an intensely remedial effect; it purifies the spiritual system of man as nothing else can do." In his view then, satire is unique in being at once malicious and remedial, and thus unlike humor. If Knox is right, one historical implication is that the possibility for laughter at once malicious and remedial is becoming increasingly unlikely; and one literary implication is that there are kinds of literature which (in their intention and effect) are malicious or remedial but not both, polemically ridiculing or devotional, but not satiric.

Ridicule, like satire, is denunciatory and derisive. But its purpose is practical or remedial in a this-worldly sense; satire may be practical or remedial but it is also "otherworldly," both religious and aesthetic. Ridicule is the half-way house of satire; perhaps intentionally a kind of purification by malice, ridicule is its own end rather than a means to an end, its concern being an immediate this-worldly malice itself rather than an eventual other-worldly remedy. The concern of satire, religious satire at any rate, is both.

The world of ridicule is the real world, here and now, populated by persons with the real names found in polemics, in controversy generally whether literary or not. In contrast, it is the deliberate fictionality of, say, Robert Hugh Benson's Lord of the World that makes that work literary, and it is the deliberate ambivalences of the fiction—primitive and modern, fantastic and real, past and future, real and abstractive, physical and spiritual—which make it satiric. In such a satire the persons are characterizations or ideal types who, despite their particularity, live in a borderland between two worlds. When such fictionality breaks down or is abandoned, there can scarcely be any imaginatively developed absurdities, any exploratory truths. Ipso facto, there can scarcely be any art.

Ridicule, unlike satire, tends to be cryptic or repetitive rather than sustained in its form, and vituperative or innocuously
humorous in content. I give here a half-dozen examples from Punbh, a magazine which could be raided for an anthology of pieces on the socialization of religion. Many of them are visual, that is, cartoons or caricatures. The examples I give here are, rather, discursive; although almost invariably supported or accompanied by graphic illustrations they are I think primarily textual in their force. I take them up in an order suggesting a shift away from ritualistic efficacy toward aesthetic value, away from ridicule toward satire, away from cryptic immediacy toward sustained imaginativeness.

In "The Hounds of Heaven," one article in a derisive series on Clothes and the Welfare State, the observation is made that

Even monks in England leave their comfortable and practical habits when they walk abroad and mingle with their fellow men.

Of course,

A certain complication is introduced by what is called the "padre." The padre is a clergyman—Anglican or Nonconformist—who has been, at some time in his life, an Army chaplain. His technique (and it is by no means an un-worthy technique) is to try to diminish the distance between himself and his flock—to be as completely "one of the boys" as his sacred profession will allow. So, although in uniform he wears, by regulation, a dog-collar, in civilian life he tends to discard this emblem altogether. He specializes in social activities, boys' clubs and the like, and he finds that "looking like a parson" hinders his work.

The suggestion, however, is that the Hounds of Heaven (a doubtfully appropriate allusion to Francis Thompson's poem, in this context), whatever their breed, would do well to wear their distinctive garb conspicuously and proudly: "Even a dog-collar can be a
psychic force not without its value in a day when so many fences are down," the writer concludes. 142

"Life Without Fig-leaves" is a review of Publish and Be Damned! (the actual title which the reviewer takes to be ironic), a journalistic history by Hugh Cudlipp, present editor of the British Daily Mirror; accompanied by parodies of the "comic" strips to be found in the Mirror, the review delineates and ridicules the function of newspapers as disseminators of social-religion:

This is the Book of the Prophet Bartholomew, a taciturn man who looks like a bishop and is known to his disciples as "Bart." . . . He is a man . . . who "instinctively knows what is right," and was thus inspired to create the Daily Mirror. . . . He is not well-read, he does not write, he seldom speaks. . . . But he has divined an important truth: that Man—or at least Common Man—has reached that stage of progress at which he no longer requires to read.

Marching "Forward with the People," the Prophet thus created for eleven million followers, in their own image and in the simple pictorial style of little children in the comic strips especially, a whole new pantheon of gods and goddesses. . . .

In these deities Common Man can see and worship himself, as he is or as he wants to be. . . . Mr. Cudlipp dreams of a newspaper strike when the Lord Mayor of London will read out the strips over the B.B.C., "so that the followers will not be deprived of their daily thrill, throb and sob."

The mantle of the Prophet descended on Mr. Cudlipp through a disciple called Nicholson, who "unfolded a grandiose plan by which, together, we would change the direction of the human race." . . .

The direction was changed by scriptures which, as man continues to progress, will doubtless be read as literature in appropriate anthologies: the brief but poetic UMBRELLA IN COFFIN MEMENTO OF ROMANCE; the descriptive MATCH-MAKING MAMMIES SHOO SPINSTER LOVELIES TO GIBRALTAR TO GRAB A JACK TAR HUBBY; the philosophic LOVE STILL GOES ON, GIRL IN SLACKS CANED, amid the irrelevancies of war. . . .

142James Laver, April 1, 1953, pp. 410-411.
The object of the Mirror is no longer to recount news, ... but to act as its readers' Confessional ("When were you first kissed?"); their Pulpit ("There is spreading among us today a spirit of raging resentment against cruelty to infants"); their Circus (a Mirror elephant once sneezed and dropped dead in the editor's office).

Also their school in the Things That Matter in Life, like Success ("Knock! Knock! Who's There? It is the younger generation. What is your ambition?"); Charm (in twenty-four lessons); Love (how to date the Post-Pituitary and the Thyroid); and finally Death ("What sort of a funeral will you want? Flowers? A long service? Tears and black clothes?"). It has even performed miracles for them.¹³

Some one-page installments, "Yule Laugh! Yule Roar!", for example, a fictitious composite of Readers' Letters, depend for whatever laughter they provoke on social irrelevancies in religious holidays: "Have you sent your FUNNIEST XMAS X-PERIENCE? ... More Uproarious READERS' X-MAS X-PERIENCES next week. ... 5s. will be paid for all SIDE-SPLITTING ANECDOTES printed!"¹⁴ Still others achieve a literariness or imaginativeness rather more sophisticated than this kind of heavily punctuated and heavy-handed brevity; Malcolm Muggeridge's "How to Become A Servile Society Without Knowing It" is a kind of thumbnail utopia. It shows how "by the end of the twentieth century the process of becoming a servile society was more or less completed." The Christian religion was destroyed not by the old-fashioned or Stalinist methods of persecution but rather by corrupting the Christian doctrine and

¹³ Lord Kinross, Sept. 16, 1953, pp. 342-343. The paper seems to have changed not at all during the past ten years. For a more objective and somewhat less derisive appraisal of the Sunday Mirror and editorial director Hugh Cudlipp, see "Sex, Sensation & Significance," Time, May 10, 1963, p. 55.

¹⁴ J. E. Boothroyd, Nov. 2, 1953, p. 10.
thereby rendering it anodyne:

Thus, for instance, the Pauline concept of salvation became identified with the "scientific" concept of progress. A condition of moral and intellectual vacuity was inculcated which sufficed to enslave the whole population of England, not only their bodies but their minds and souls as well. In this way a wholly collectivized, ant-heap-like society was produced, whose only religion was a fatuous belief in the material benefits its citizens were supposed to enjoy, and in the ostensibly progressive ideas and institutions which were supposed to govern their lives.

This is weighty stuff but carried only to the threshold of literary effort.

Dorothy L. Sayers' "Cosmic Synthesis" or "Pantheon Papers" in Punch has appeared as an extended series, and in that obvious way is different from the preceding one-shot affairs. It is also different from some other extended series, which are straightforward and topical rather than imaginative, and disjointed and arbitrary in sequence despite a unifying theme implicit in an allusively literary title. "The Road to 1984," for example, "a series of probes for proles" which ran for eleven issues touches on such diverse subjects as Church and State, Beatniks, the Kremlin, modern Germany, and Chicago, in no particular order or scheme.


146 My quotations are from the four issues of Nov. 2, 1953, Jan. 6, 13, and 20, 1954. I am concerned here with Miss Sayers only as a writer of ridicule. For a discussion of her as an orthodox apologist, in a comparison with C. S. Lewis, see Kathleen Nott's Emperor's Clothes, p. 284 f.; because her interest is not in satire and ridicule, I suppose, Miss Nott does not mention the "Pantheon Papers."

The "Pantheon Papers" have a kind of substance and form of literary parody similar to that of Knox's small satires. They are similar also to C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* which first appeared serially (in *The Guardian*, and the most recent of the Letters in the *Saturday Evening Post* in this country), or some of Bertrand Russell's satires which first appeared in various popular sources, or a short chapter from Ronald Firbank's *Valmouth* (first published periodically with the title of "Fantasia in A Sharp Minor"). They too may be good enough to warrant separate publication. But if they differ from an extended series like "The Road to 1984" insofar as they do not have the same immediacy or topicality, they are yet not quite up to the form or substance of the Lewis and Russell and Firbank satires; individually they lack development, and though they make up an extended series they lack continuity; nor are they explicitly fictitious. "Edited" by Dorothy Sayers, the Papers are offered as a scholarly find of large proportions. Writing to Didymus Pantheon, Professor of Comparative Religion in Mansoul University, Cosmopolis, Miss Sayers asks for help in identifying a color-plate of a stained glass window, of debased neo-Gothic type, dedicated to some kind of devotional cult which evidently "goes back to at least the 15th century." The plate is a rare "extra" one, not included in either the B. M. or the Bodleian copies of Elmsy's *Monumental Monstrosities of the Age of Unreason*. The plate "is in some way connected with that widely-distributed though elusive Community (so to call it; though it specifically repudiates communion) whose adherents are variously
known as Stylites, Polarites, Animamundanes, Egregians, Cacophonophilists (or Discordants). . . . It is claimed that its following embraces almost the whole population of the Western World (with the exception of a few strict Jews and fanatical Christian sects)." These Polarites or Discordants have a Calendar of Unholy and Dead-letter Days, which include the Beautification of St. Henna; Apotheosis of the Common Man, commonly called Lowbrow Sunday (an honorific rather than a derisive class distinction, of course); All Fool's Day, or All-Hollows; Trash Wednesday; Sacred Name of Science; Theophany of the Spirit of Progress, commonly called Petrol Sunday; Feasts of the Non-commital of St. Dubius, St. Cloud the Obscure, and St. Statisticus; the Adoration of Sacred Common Sense. Wishmas, a festival which has almost everywhere superseded the superstitious commemoration of Christmas, is celebrated by the exchange of cards, bearing wishes for the recipients' material prosperity, and frequently adorned with ice, snow, holly, and other Polar symbols.

Hagiological Notes on saints in the calendar, a kind of abbreviated Butler's Lives of the Saints, have been written. For example, St. Lukewarm of Laodicea: "He was so broadminded as to offer asylum and patronage to every kind of religious cult, however unorthodox or repulsive, saying in answer to all remonstrances: 'There is always some truth in everything.' This liberality earned him the surname of 'The Tolerator'." Also, St. Supercilia: She steadfastly refused to marry anyone who could not defeat her in
open disputation." When "her un-worthy father brutally commanded her to accept the hand of a man who, though virtuous, sensible, and of good estate, knew only six languages, and was weak in mathematics, . . . the outraged saint raised her eyebrows so high that they lifted her right off her feet and out through a top-storey window, whence she was last seen floating away in a northerly direction. St. Supercilia is the patroness of Pedants. Her feast, Eyebrow [sic] Sunday, falls in Cacophony, between Lowbrow Sunday and Derogation Day." But not all of the celebrated saints are fictitious: St. Marx the Evangelist; Sacred Veil of St. Schleiermacher; the Well-Meaning William Paley; St. Julian [Huxley] the Polymath; Fiery Loins of St. Lawrence, D. H.; St. Sigmund Freud Sub-Limine; Blessed Lytton Strachey the Debunker; the Venerable Bernard Shaw, G. O. M. The Creed of St. Euthanasia is at once a fictional Discordant Prayer or summation, and a real epithet:

I BELIEVE in Man, Maker of himself and Inventor of all Science. And in Myself, his Manifestation, and Captain of my Psyche; and that I should not suffer anything painful or unpleasant.

And in a vague Evolving Deity, the future-begotten Child of Man; conceived by the Spirit of Progress, born of Emerging Variants; who shall kick down the ladder by which he rose and tell history to go to hell;

Who shall some day take off from earth and be jet-propelled into the heavens; and sit exalted above all worlds, Man the Master Almighty.

And I believe in the Spirit of Progress, who spake by Shaw and the Fabians; and in a modern, administrative, ethical and social Organization; in the Isolation of Saints, the Treatment of Complexes, Joy through Health, the Destruction of the Body by Cremation (with music while it burns), and then I've had it.
Such unabashed directness is not necessarily brief or unmixed or piecemeal in the literary market. It makes up whole books which at least in their page length and hard-cover format aspire to be a more deliberately literary kind. Many "tradition-directed" novelists contend with the socialization of religion without ultimately coming to grips with it. The popular novels of Bruce Marshall are examples of ridicule aspiring to be satiric fantasy. Written in a realistic vein (with allusions to real people and real places) they suggest Marshall's awareness of momentous realities he fails to clarify; as conventional make-believe, his novels fall short in aesthetic value. The novels of Rose Macaulay, in contrast, are chiefly satiric fantasy, though laced intermittently with ridiculing allusions. The difference in degree or range results in a difference of kind. I take up five novels, three by Marshall and two by Macaulay, to illustrate the point.

The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith is evidently intended as a fictitious biography of a Scottish priest, from the time of his assignment in a hostile Presbyterian county up to the time of his last rites after a London air-raid three decades later. "Few stories have been written with greater gaiety and tenderness," the jacket blurb asserts. "No matter what one's faith (or lack of it), there is music, wisdom, comfort, laughter in Father Smith's affectionate sojourn in this world of the flesh." But of course, as a kind of Going My Way, it is like a lot of other stories;

\footnote{Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945.}
predictably, it later became a "Broadway success." The catalogue of characters is unexceptional: Fr. Smith himself, whose spiritual worth is supposed to be gauged by his real intentions and the practical consequences of his vocation; the saintly, long-suffering but perpetually happy and efficient French nuns in exile; the Bishop who, despite the rigors of his office and his strong hand, is forebearing and sensitive to the smallest qualities of humanity in his flock; the Msgr. O'Duffy, physically strong but intellectually weak and socially awkward, who wages simple yet effective war against simple sins; Fr. Bonnyboat, the liturgical scholar who, laboring fifty years on a matter of theological reform only to have his book indexed by the Pope, accepts grandiloquently the admonition of Mother Church and thus learns (before it is too late) that the life of the mind provideth not the joys of the spirit; Lady Ippecacuanha, the tweedy convert who despite her eccentricities does so much, as a noble example to lesser persons, for the propagation of the faith; the slut Annie, who drives her husband to murder; Elvira Sarno, who goes to Hollywood and stars in films in which "she has her bath and sings 'Ave Maria' just to show she ain't no floozie," but finally mends her unintentionally wicked ways.

Despite this uncomplicated (if also extended and kaleidoscopic) make-believe, Bruce Marshall's real intention is not marshmallow. Whatever qualifications a reader might want to make about literary merit, or aesthetic effect, Marshall is ridiculing rather than Inspirational. Fr. Smith hates as much as he loves in these pages.
He rolls at the thought of Protestant clergymen marrying people in diving suits at the bottom of swimming pools; he winds up into a tirade at a meeting of Catholic ecclesiastics (ch. xx), and addresses himself to the insidiously deceptive ways that the sweep of social morality has weakened the Church; he is chagrined at the COME AND BRING A CHUM sign advertising a "young folks' weekday evening service," and the degeneration of the valediction "goodbye" to "cheerio" or "cheery-bye" or, in certain parts of his diocese, to "cheery-ta-ta" as well. Even more, Marshall does demonstrate, as his jacket biographical sketch proclaims, "a malicious humor, and a savage dislike of bullies, stuffed shirts, humbugs and toadies"—a conglomeration of persons he identifies by name; and, make no mistake about it, they are all the worse for being compared with their opposite number in "this world of the flesh." Presumably, these persons are alluded to in kinds of internal monologues by Fr. Smith, but on virtually every page in the book, the third-person fiction breaks down. The monologues are fairly well sustained in reference to the fictitious personae who, however stylized, are composites of virtue and vice. But the real persons are Good Guys or Bad Guys. I pick here a number at random, to suggest both the range and the particularity of Marshall's derision. The standards of goodness are borne by Pope Pius XI (who also appears as a persona in the context of the story), Pope Leo XIII, Cardinal Newman, Belloc, Benson, Chesterton, Thornton Wilder, Erich Remarque, and an extensive number of the orthodox Community of Saints. Against them
are arraigned Hitler, Mussolini, Arnold Bennett, Aldous Huxley, Noel Coward, Shaw, H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence, Anatole France, Al Capone, Lytton Strachey, Bertrand Russell, Tallulah Bankhead, Gloria Swanson, Pola Negri, and all newspaper publishers both diocesan and commercial.

_Satan and Cardinal Campbell_ is stamped from the very same mold. A Scottish priest who is ordained shortly before the First World War, Fr. Campbell has a career which in its practical aspects parallels Fr. Smith's exactly but carries through fifteen additional years and several ecclesiastic promotions. The central theme is the same: "_L'Eglise Trepidante_. . . . The Church wobbles, but it never quite falls over." The only significant difference in the latter novel is that the catalogue of Good Guys and Bad Guys is longer. In addition to virtually all those alluded to by Fr. Smith, there are, on the one side: two more Popes, Cardinal Spellman, Jacques Maritain, Graham Greene, Bermanos; on the other side: Sir James Frazer, Freud, Gide, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Eisenhower, and Gina Lollobrigida. Marshall insists, in an Author's Note, that "With the exception of the two Popes [Pius XI and Pius XII], to whom invented conversations have been attributed, all the characters in this novel are imaginary."

Whether Marshall intends to be arch or not, the statement is patently false. And this novel does not offer the aesthetic satisfaction of fiction or the "craving" for it: Marshall does

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not show that the Church wobbles; he simply says that it does and names the people that in his view have been doing the most pushing.

The book Marshall has written which approximates a genuine satiric fantasy is one of his first, Father Malachy's Miracle: A Heavenly Story with an Earthly Meaning. In it the time is the real present and the place is specifically Edinburgh. But the fictitious characters are not forced to live side by side with real ones; references made to real persons living and dead are numerous, but they are made from the point of view of Marshall the storyteller, who occasionally identifies himself in the first-person, rather than from the third-person point of view of a character. Bald and direct ridicule intrudes itself infrequently in the imaginative context, and the fact and fiction are identifiably separate.

Significantly too, the central action in which the characters are drawn up is fantastic. Fr. Malachy Murdoch is indistinguishable from Fr. Smith or Fr. Campbell, but what he does is clearly on a different plane. Of course his mind, like theirs, becomes as black as the coat flapping about his legs when he reads church notice boards of this kind:

COME TO EVENSONG.
IT'S CHEAPER
THAN
THE PICTURES.
GOD DOESN'T MIND IF YOU HOLD HER HAND.1

He too finds all things distasteful in advertising divine service

150 Garden City: Image, 1960, p. 34. First publ. 1931.
as though it were marmalade or a Chrysler Six. But the blackness and distaste function within the fictitious narrative and are not simply disjointed vituperation. "Surely we must bring religion into line with modern thought, must we not?" the neo-Reverend Humphrey Hamilton asks him rhetorically; in the extended colloquies with Fr. Malachy, he and the priest battle over the nature of the Unselfish Society and "living religion," the forms of religious socialization which are the bane of Fr. Malachy's existence. "I am afraid, sir, that you are not a Christian," Fr. Malachy argues. "Not as you interpret the word, perhaps," Hamilton replies. "But if you mean by being a Christian is meant serving others and not self, then I think I may humbly claim the distinction."\(^{151}\) And Hamilton is only one of many; "his convictions, or rather his unconvictions, are shared by all clergymen popular enough to write for the Sunday newspapers on Mixed Bathing, Marriage, or the Spiritual Aspect of Face Cream." In a moment of fanciful speculation, Fr. Malachy is struck by the physical and institutional resemblances of the Reverend Hamilton's Church and the Garden of Eden; the two buildings symbolically set the theme of the book:

Through a coloured glass door an electric light burned mysteriously, like the far-away sanctuary lamp of an eclectic religion. Perhaps modern young women were even now giving instructions to would-be initiates. . . . And on the outside there was a huge notice . . . , not unlike that outside the Reverend Humphrey Hamilton's church, which announced that tomorrow night Saturday, the tenth

December, was what was technically known as a LATE NIGHT and the chorus of the *Whose Baby Are You?* company ... had, of their graciousness, condescended to be present.

So, on the anniversary of an ancient miracle, the translation from Nazareth to Loretto of the house in which Our Blessed Lord became incarnate by Our Lady, Fr. Malachy prays for a modern miracle which will demonstrate, to Hamilton and an apathetic world, at least the power if not the glory of God. That Saturday night, the Garden of Eden is translated lock, stock, and brothel across the Firth of Forth to the top of Bass Rock.

Two-thirds of the book then is an account of Edinburgh's unwillingness to accept the miracle as genuine. It is this unwillingness specifically which constitutes the central action of the book as a *reductio ad absurdum*. Beginning with the "ordinary" or little sign, in the sense that Fr. Malachy regards it, the story proceeds to fantastic limits. Within three days the miracle becomes the leading topic of conversation and a matter of world-wide journalistic interest (*WONDER DANCE HALL STILL ON BASS ROCK; FATHER MALACHY SAYS ACT OF GOD. IS ISAAC NEWTON DISCREDITED? DRAMATIC STORY OF SCOTTISH MYSTERY MONK'S LIFE*), but does not otherwise have the effect which Fr. Malachy anticipated. George Bleater, the manager of the *Whose Baby Are You?* company, and J. Shyan Bell, manager and owner of the Garden of Eden, and Mr. Ink, who can produce and promote *Get Me, Girlie!* or Handel's *Messiah* with equal facility, transform the Garden of Eden into a

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\[152\text{Ibid., p. 43.}\]
national shrine and then an international one, attracting in person or in spirit those "to whom fashionable hotels, champagne, and jazz are the ultimate beatitudes." Americans cable to reserve tables for the Great Good Friday Novelty Night, believing that "it was right up to God's last minute and then some." The premiere is a quasi-religious service. Jimmy Bell's benediction is an expression of gratitude for the connection between his personal success, everyone's interest in a good time, and the sense of Faith he shares with his audience:

"I'm not what is known as a religious man, but what religion I have is very dear to me and is summed up in the phrase: 'Never do the dirty on a pal'."

This time the applause was a positive thunder of approval. Stockbroker, chartered accountant, matron, and pretty daughter... felt that they had at least heard the eternal verities intelligibly and pleasantly propounded.153

This benediction is followed with a sermon by the Very Reverend the Dean of St. Stephen's, "There Lives More Faith in Honest Doubt."

It is broadcasted shortwave, while the silk stockings Miss Gertie de la Huette had worn during the flight of the Garden of Eden are raffled as an attraction for the less splendid noodles who might find the sermon somewhat tedious. And there is a kind of communion shared and community established: "... everybody was in everybody else's arms, dancing."154 This is not quite Huxley's Solidarity Service perhaps, but vivid and curious nonetheless. In the context

153 Ibd., p. 188.

154 Ibd., p. 191.
of the story, the miracle itself—like Patrick Dalroy's flying inn, or like the flying ship of Lucifer and Michael in the beginning of *The Bell and the Cross*—is "real" and believable. And yet, the flying dancehall is regarded rather differently from different sides at the same time that it culminates, from the viewpoint of the reader, in an earthly vision of spiritual pandemonium. Marshall succeeds in this book in ways he scarcely begins to approximate in his later ones.

In a differentiation between satire and devotional literature which touches on the same subject, one may say that Marshall's intention is more ridiculing than aesthetic. The effect of his novels, as a kind of ritualization, is more polemic than devotional (more real than other-worldly); ridicule, being the half-way house of satire, has the appearance of both kinds, but tends definitely toward the former. Rose Macaulay's novels, on the other hand, are a kind of sublimation, her intention being more aesthetic than ridiculing. They are, in short, satiric, and their effect is more devotional than polemic.

*Orphan Island*, an early novel by Rose Macaulay, has the earmarks commonly ascribed to that genre: character differentiation and development within a circumstance chronologically ordered and realistically depicted. It is fantastic to the extent that it is unlikely a society would exist much less develop through seventy years after a shipful of children foundered on an unknown Pacific island; but this circumstance is set in a brief and surprisingly
uncomplicated opening chapter. The narrator "I," herself not a complicating part of the story, tells it objectively, with a grace, fluency, and witty precision that keeps the plausibility of it all from seeming strained, the effect of the novel on the reader being "experiential" rather than "intelligible." The absurdity of the Victorian taboos and class distinctions on the tight little island (complete with Hibernian appendage) has an abstractive force which is not a reductio developed objectively but rather a "real" matter-of-fact told with sophisticated charm. The reader is at all times, directly rather than ironically, aware that this prose narrative is an explanation for and a criticism of the real society on which the Orphan Island is "really" modeled.

Miss Charlotte Staith, in the beginning simply a governess, a "kind-hearted lady of thirty or so," undergoes a metamorphosis by the time the Thinkwells arrive three generations later. No longer a human being but a socio-religious deity, she represents an identification of Church and State which survives a propensity for trade in the island and the missionary efforts of a Jesuit priest. Throughout the book, Mr. Thinkwell, a Cambridge sociologist who heads the little expedition, presses for an understanding of this phenomenon. The Old Testament of the Smith-Religion, he finds, is based on a small volume entitled Mixing in Society, or Everybody's Book of Correct Conduct:

Here, decided Mr. Thinkwell, was Miss Smith's Bible of Manners, the code which summed up her attitude toward life and conduct. Even in the raging storm she had
clasped this volume to her bosom (and that in preference to the Bible of the Jews) before she consigned herself to the deep. Mr. Thinkwell opened it at random, and saw passages heavily scored. It was divided into different sections—the Duties of Life, the Pleasures of Life, Dress and Toilet, the Studious Part of Life, the Formation of Habit, Conversation, Letters, the Heart and Conscience, and so on. 155

The Smithy priest carves on the trees little aphoristic slogans, adapted from Bunyan's Holv War but formed in the Newspeak of Julian Felsenburgh or Big Brother. A calf-bound Martial, untranslated, which belonged to the ship's doctor (who, alas, died after ten years of "marriage" to Miss Smith and ten children by her), no one is able to read; the New Testament of the religion as it develops is recorded by Miss Smith in its blank pages, wide margins, and the spaces between the epigrams, "sometimes even between two lines of one epigram, which had the effect of contrasting, occasionally very curiously, the remarks of Miss Smith with those of Martial." 156

Her Journal constitutes the longest sustained joke, and with the ostensible subject of a "kind of satiric history of Smith Island" 157 by Hindley Smith-Rimski, provides the main expository focus of the book.

On both sides of Rose Macaulay's family there were direct connections with the Church, her grandfather and great grandfather both Anglican parsons, and before that several of the line had been Presbyterian ministers. But, the religious ideas which

156 Ibid., p. 180.
157 Ibid., pp. 247-248.
Rose Macaulay was committed to, as distinct from the ones she opposes, do not lend themselves to convenient formulation; and they were indefinitely formulated even after her reentry into the Anglican Church late in her life. There would be something unreasonable in expecting a formulation of dogma in a body of ideas which are expressly anti-dogmatic. Her long alienation from religion and from her family tradition, and her return to the Church of England only after a long-life outside it are surely not matters which one may presume to analyze. But one may see for himself something of the literary expression of these matters in her last book, The Towers of Trebizond, which though in the form of a novel, she refers to in the posthumously published Letters to a Friend as being "a great nostalgia for the Church."\(^{158}\)

The narrator "Laurie" is in some of the facts of her life identifiable with Rose Macaulay. The structure of her story is unexceptional, rooted in the present time, and, despite an obvious fictionality, directly concerned with some real people in real places; in addition to the fictional personae, literary and political persons are alluded to in great numbers, and extended discourses made on the subjects of the Cold War with Russia, the

\(^{158}\)The second volume of them, Last Letters To A Friend: 1952-1958, ed. Constance Babington-Smith (New York: Atheneum, 1963), p. 225. These gracious and witty letters to the Anglican priest, Father Johnson, disclose some of the intricacies of her un-organizational catholicity. The letters of 1956-1957 record her intention in her last book and are a running commentary of the curious misunderstandings, among professional reviewers and readers of best sellers alike, of that "blend of satire and fantasy."
BBC and the general culture of England, the missionary efforts of Seventh-Day Adventists and Billy Graham, Israel, tourism in Jerusalem, and so on. Much of the action occurs in Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean, these locales frequently described objectively rather than in fantastic terms. The book is no utopia, no fantasy either, in any sustained way; it could be called simply, like most of Bruce Marshall's novels, a "popular novel" (it was in fact a best seller).

As a travel book, however, which is also a compendium of religious speculations, it is more like Belloc's Path to Rome, that is, a kind of sustained devotion, a sentimental journey which though "true to life" has a kind of significance which is not geographically and chronologically identifiable. It too is a pilgrimage to a Holy Land more than a travel record. The first references to Trebizond are as objective and unambiguous if also as "glamorized"159 as they would be in a travel folder:

Trebizond, having once been for seven years the last bit of the Byzantine empire, has cachet and legend and class, besides being so near to where Xenophon and the Ten Thousand marched down from the mountains, and went mad from a surfeit of the local honey. Perhaps the Billy Graham missioners would also be there, and perhaps the Seventh-Day Adventists, having a rest before they set out for Ararat and the Second Coming, and no doubt a lot of writers scribbling away at their Turkey books. And, of course, a number of British and Russian spies. Life in Trebizond, I thought, would be very sociable, animated and peculiar.160

159 In Hugh Duncan's usage. See above, p. 186.

Yet, in the context of the story, its significance becomes increasingly complicated. "I mean, with religion you get on a different plane, and everything is most odd," Laurie says. "It only goes to show that human beings are odd, because they have always been, on the whole, so religious." Whether or not this is a fact, this is the perspective of Laurie as it becomes, during her journey "over the range," increasingly dark and at the same time illuminated. David (who, like Laurie and her aunt Dot, has in mind the practical purpose of writing a travel book rather than the spiritual intention of a pilgrimage) comes to ask her: "Of course you believe in the Church, don't you; I keep forgetting that. Tell me, Laurie, do you really? Believe it, I mean? It seems so fantastic." Laurie replies, "It is fantastic. Why not? I like fantastic things." Her explanation is hardly less satisfactory to herself than to her companion: "What I mean is, it wasn't only what happened in Palestine two thousand years ago, it wasn't just local and temporal and personal, it's the other kingdom, it's the courts of God, get into them however you can and stay in them if you can, only one can't. But don't worry me about the Jewish Church in Palestine, or the doings of the Christian Church ever since; it's mostly irrelevant to what matters." It is after a visit to the curious and schismatically structured Church of the Holy Sepulchre that, in a dream, she is able to formulate her belief in terms

161 Ibid., pp. 199-200.
that are meaningful at least to herself:

Then, between sleeping and waking, there rose before me a vision of Trebizond: not Trebizond as I had seen it, but the Trebizond of the world's dreams, of my own dreams, shining towers and domes shimmering on a far horizon, yet close at hand, luminously enspelled in the most fantastic unreality, yet the only reality, a walled and gated city, magic and mystical, standing beyond my reach yet I had to be inside, an alien wanderer yet at home, held in the magical enchantment. . . .162

It is in this dream that Laurie finds a resolution to the quandary of rational understanding: "Churches are wonderful and beautiful, and they are vehicles for religion, but no Church can have more than a very little of the truth. It must be odd to believe, as some people do, that one's Church has all the truth and no errors, for how could this possibly be?"163 She sees the Church,

. . . its fantastic beauty heightened by insecurity; one sees it at times like a Desiderio fantasy of pinnacles and towers, luminous with unearthly light, rocking on their foundations as if about to crash ruining in decadence and disaster. . . . Yet, though for ever reeling, the towers do not fall: they seem held in some strong enchantment, some luminous spell, fixed for ever in the imagination. . . . Such to me, I thought, is the Christian Church. The fact that at present I cannot find my way into it does not lessen, but rather heightens, its spell.164

Like Belloc's Path to Rome, Rose Macaulay's travelogue is an "enchanted pilgrimage," more visionary than visual.

Thus, the kind of spirit I have been identifying largely with reference to satiric fantasy clearly finds expression in other literary forms, not only devotional and controversial (and

162 Tbid., p. 200.
163 Tbid., p. 226.
164 Tbid., p. 234.
sub-literary) ones which the satiric sometimes resembles closely, but also the novelistic. The nature of religious satire as distinct from that of ridicule must be continuously rather than contiguously identified. It is no less confounding in novels than in more brief literary pieces. Yet, regarded as a pervasive spirit which finds expression in various literary modes, it can be identified. The key literary manifestation of this spirit is its unmistakable ambivalence. It is the fictionality which makes the manifestation literary, and the ambivalence which makes it satiric.

In the so-called "short novels" of Ronald Firbank, the ambivalences are extra-ordinarily sustained. Firbank's Cardinal in the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli or Cardinal Doppio-Mignoni in Valmouth are not by any stretch of the imagination like Marshall's Cardinal Campbell. They are much more unbelievable, much less "factual," and yet more real; peculiar and caricaturistic, yet representative of a large and ominous reality. They are grotesque and have a darkness in them which never occurs in the prelatial portraits of Marshall. Firbank's men of the cloth are cut from different material. And the narrative settings are patterned differently as well. Firbank's literary world, unlike Marshall's, is like that of Waugh or Huxley: ominous at the same time that it is comic, the fiction fantastically distorted but at the same

165 Five Novels: Valmouth, The Flower Beneath the Foot, Prancing Nigger, Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli, The Artificial Princess, intro. Osbert Sitwell (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, [1949]). All page references are to this volume.
time rooted in reality. In *Valmouth*, the delineation of St. Veronica's parish is altered by a "bluey twilight," and suggests a feeling "something of Limbo, perhaps."\(^{166}\) The climactic Marriage-Baptism in the last chapter of *Valmouth* precisely suggests the monumentally successful union of Margot Beste-Chetwynde and Paul Pennyfeather in Waugh's *Decline and Fall*; these two literary works, subtitled "romantic novel" and "illustrated novelette" respectively, are unmistakably satiric. The Comtian basilica in *Valmouth* is at once real and unreal: a tapestry curtain depicting The Birth of Tact and showing Taste supine on a flower-decked couch amid ultra-classic surroundings, an esoteric altar-piece of the School of Sodoma, the mystic windows revealing the astonishing life of St. Autonoma Meris. The sacramental parody implicates the reader in a religious insouciance and social fervor which defy the imagination by relentlessly stretching it. They are, from the viewpoint of Huxley's brave new world, an implication of a pretechnological Solidarity Service.

Not that the intention or the effect of this ambivalence is unmixed for all that. Like most religious satirists, Firbank is variously read. His novels are short, and an artistic rather than a ritualistic achievement; but they are unevenly appreciated. It is as though satire cannot achieve what ridicule attempts. In trying to have the best of both worlds, the satirist willy-nilly extends himself beyond his real limits.

\(^{166}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 74.
Firbank's "novels" and Firbank in real-life, say the reviews of the complete, one-volume edition of his work, allegedly reflect an exceedingly odd imagination rather than an exceedingly odd world. In the current literary vogue, Firbank is praised by E. M. Forster, and credited with a direct influence on the novels of Aldous Huxley, Waugh, Angus Wilson, and Anthony Powell; and at the same time he is criticized for his limited literary range and limited popular appeal. The man is divorced from his work, and what the work means is kept separate from what it says: "In spite of his Roman Catholicism, and the fact that his irony is directed forcefully against the futilities of society, his is essentially an amoral world." The world he creates evidently has no relation to the world he inherits. The man is commonly regarded as a Paterish, blue-flaming aesthete rather than a social critic with an interest in this world: "Ronald Firbank was irresponsible, adolescent and fantastic; he was utterly unconcerned with the health of society, yet I cannot imagine a novel more in love with life, or indeed more likely to make its reader in love with life than "Prancing Nigger."..." Firbank's intention as a satirist and the effect his work has are regarded as antithetical: "Contrived and perverse as it is, Firbank's world seems curiously real." And yet, the coincidence of contrived perversity and curious reality


go unremarked: "Moral judgments do not apply to Firbank's innocents any more than to the characters in Through the Looking Glass."\(^{169}\)

But the comparison of Firbank's world with Lewis Carroll's wonderland is suggestive in a generic way. As the name of an attitude, satire is, Northrop Frye says, a combination of fantasy and morality. And the Alice books are perfect Menippean satires.\(^{170}\) In such respects, not very apparent or evident perhaps, Firbank's Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli is a literary kind like Benson's Lord of the World and not like Marshall's Satan and Cardinal Campbell. It is, in short, satire rather than ridicule.

The antithesis is commonly resolvable in literary reviews in terms which only tangentially touch upon Firbank's religious commitment—a commitment which, like that of all the satirists I take up in this chapter, can be identified according to biographical facts which defy a rigorously dogmatic definition: "His . . . message? The omnipresence of human folly, uncertainty of anything else. Oddly, his burden agrees with Yeats, and the medieval visionaries: gaiety in the end."\(^{171}\) The business of contrasting or reconciling the "seen" and the "unseen" perhaps inevitably


\(^{170}\)\textit{Anatomy of Criticism}, p. 310.

leads to medieval brooding, as Mrs. Wilcox says. Such business may sometimes take the form of ridicule. In the case of the satirist, at any rate, it leads to art. That Firbank's novels are not a conflagration of moral passion is clear enough. But satire as a kind of literary 
{
indignant
} consumption—or purifies?—where it smolders even as much as where it flames incandescently. An Horatian mode is none the less forceful or illusive for being restrained. At least, so one would think. Sophisticated though it may be, and obscure and impalpable its ways of affecting writer and reader alike, Robert Elliott argues, satire still retains an enigmatic connection with its primitive past. That the connection seems sometimes to be severed is as much a commentary on the satirist's audience as on his art.

And yet primitive the connection surely is, despite its literary sheen, and therefore—I would say—Firbank's satire has a curious, elaborately scrawled clarity. The primitive past is depicted in the present. His Weariness the Prince in *The Flower Beneath the Foot* is not an aesthetic exercise only, but a primordial character; the Flower Beneath the Foot is a primeval, festering weed, and not a *Blue Blume*. Firbank's Prancing Nigger, at once noble and savage, lives in a world at once fantastic and corrupt; he is more literarily exotic than The Savage in Huxley's *Brave New World*, but is like him nonetheless. "Oh, Cuna-Cuna! Little city of Lies and Peril!" is also "Cuna! City of Moonstones; How
faerie art thou in the blue blur of dusk!" This Haitian world is a blue blur, of harsh realities mollified in a faerie dusk. Cuna-Cuna does not have the technological validity or the mathematical organization of Orwell's Oceania; but the fact that Firbank actually made an extended stay in the Negro republic of Haiti is no more relevant to the story he tells than the fact that Orwell did not actually live in 1984. Firbank's Cardinal Pirelli is not Bertrand Russell's "priestly" Zahatopolk or Zamatin's Well-Doer in some futuristic glass paradise. But there is a generic resemblance between them.

For whatever reason, when ridicule becomes satire it would seem to lose in "effectiveness" some of what it gains in artistic value. As we can see from the commentaries of Firbank's critics, matters of practical morality and of aesthetic delight seem to be regarded as existing in an equipoise which is paradoxical where it is not contradictory. Ronald Firbank (says Osbert Sitwell in his introductory biographical sketch) was not given to feuds and treasured hardly a single hatred; he was something of the ecclesiastic in his manner and appearance, and he "suffered rather than gained from the fact that he was a true, born artist, with no propagandist axe to grind." Yet, Firbank is credited with experiencing "some piece of grotesque fantasy" in his many trips to London, and seems to have had a persistently "familiar, fantastic

172Prancing Nigger, pp. 289, 303.

173Introduction, p. xxix.
sense of humour." The chief aesthetic claim advanced for Firbank is his stylistic polish, his "startling technical achievement" as a writer. Yet he had an "intense relish and understanding of the silly and absurd in modern life," Sitwell says, and "he was in many ways so near the things he so beautifully skimmed and parodied that perhaps he was genuinely superstitious." It is a curious fact that Firbank, though a convert to the Church, was much given to fortune-tellers, crystal-gazers, givers of Egyptian amulets, and soothsayers. Perhaps it can be said that ridicule becomes satire at the point where the writer counts himself into the subject he satirizes—as, indeed, he does appear in Cuna, that fetid and "cultured" Garden of Eden:

... in their malignant splendour the orchids were the thing. Mrs. Abanathy, Ronald Firbank (a dingly lilac blossom of a rarity untold), Prince Palsiret, a heavy blue-spotted flower, and rosy Clive Moonlight, were those that claimed the greatest respect from a few discerning connoisseurs.174

Here the satirist is, in a direct if also brief way, satirized. Firbank makes just a single parenthetical reference to himself. But, like the little footnote in Erewhon in which Higgs makes a single passing reference to Butler, it does not go unnoticed. Firbank thus counts himself in, and yet it is within a narrative context which is impersonal. That is, quite unlike Bruce Marshall, for example, he refers to no specific person other than himself; and he does refer to himself in the context of what he has to say. The world as he sees it is not made up of Good Guys and Bad Guys.

174 Prancing Nigger, pp. 311-312.
All of Firbank's persons are personae—imaginatively, a horticulturally mixed breed which represent his thoughts about people rather than people themselves.

Such a work as the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli would not seem to have an immediacy or practicality about it, for it is so utterly fantastic. It is, one would say, satire and not ridicule; there is nothing actual in it and so must be meant rather for delight. Yet, one questions whether the personae inhabiting it are so unbelievable and amoral after all. If they are, then so too the personae of Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One; but Waugh’s subtitle, an "Anglo-American tragedy," is a generic identification that suggests an implication of real-life in the fantastic, the unbelievable and the amoral, Firbank's Cardinal Pirelli, to which The Loved One bears a definite generic resemblance, cannot be called chiefly a "technical achievement" or, on the other hand, an explicitly ridiculing attack. The dichotomy, one decides, is false. Firbank's novels are short; they are also satiric. Firbank's range, his striving for aesthetic value, places him with Macaulay and Waugh rather than with Sayers and Marshall. The grotesquery, for all its unreality, is unrelieved from the start. The epicene Cardinal is no more unbelievable—or repulsive—than the utterly vacant Duquesa and the confusedly stupid Monsignor Silex, and indeed everyone else in that curious diocese. I refer here, as an illustration, to the first narrative action which is then reiterated in the satire. In a flurry of excitement and festivity, the Duquesa
of DunEden (dystopia?) brings her dog to the Cathedral font to be baptized:

Society had rallied in force. . . . Rarely had he witnessed before the font, so many brilliant people. Were it an heir to the DunEden acres (instead of what it was) the ceremony could have hardly drawn together a more distinguished throng. . . . Here Saints and Kings had been baptized, and royal Infantas, and sweet Poets, whose high names thrilled the heart.

Monsignor Silex crossed his breast. He must gather force to look about him. Frame a close report. The Pontiff, in far-off Italy, would expect precision.

. . . the Cardinal had arisen for the act of Immersion.

Of unusual elegance, and with the remains, moreover, of perfect looks, he was as wooed and run after by the ladies as any matador.

"And thus being cleansed and purified, I do call thee 'Crack!" he addressed the Duquesa's captive burden.175"

In a "function of sociality" (to use Kenneth Burke's term for a phenomenon hard to pin down) there is no implicit difference between the administration of the first sacrament to a beast, and the ritualistic burial of house pets in Dennis Barlow's Happy Hunting Grounds. The alpha and omega are the same, both ceremonies like the ones in Whispering Glades. Just as the point of Waugh's satire is the shock of recognition that the Christian tradition has always regarded death with an awful solemnity and dignity, Firbank's satire forces the consideration of baptism as a matter of first importance whereby a human being is spiritually regenerated and made capable of receiving other sacraments. In that tradition,

175Cardinal Pirelli, pp. 333-335.
baptism imprints a "character" on the human soul and admits the recipient in the Church. The human sentimentality—or insensitivity—which robs death of its terror, or birth of its individual glory, and which seeks by absurd social means to "equalize" the gulf that separates dead from living, or human life from lower life, and thereby ruptures the particular notion of humanity as a universal and definable brotherhood, this is a religious subject for satire. Firbank's Madrid is Waugh's Los Angeles.

It is just such an insensitivity, a "slovenly sentimentality" as Chad Walsh calls it, which permeates all the actions of the chief characters in Waugh's Love Among the Ruins. This little book of five chapters is more than a little pessimistic about the future of humanity; but I think Chad Walsh is incorrect in referring to it primarily as an anti-socialist reaction, a kind of political tirade "written with a morose hatred of the advancing, semi-socialist welfare state in England." There can be little question of Waugh's social and religious "conservatism," something quite different from the "liberalism" of that vast segment of Christian orthodoxy who have regarded the great John XXIII as, literally, a


Qodsend. Yet there is plenty of room for clarification about the forms that that "conservatism" has taken in Waugh's art, and about the intention of that art. There is, heaven knows, little critical agreement about it. But I do not think the problem is insurmountable. Love Among the Ruins is a utopia. Though the purpose of a utopia may be, as Walsh and Gerber say, man's earthly welfare, it is not true of all utopias. Waugh's referents are not concrete nor his personae directly identifiable (as indeed they are not, but rather completely fantastic), Love Among the Ruins is not a ridiculing polemic but a satire. Ridicule, again, is like satire in being denunciatory or derisive; and the purpose of satire may be practical or remedial or this-worldly in the sense of "earthly welfare." But it is also other-worldly and impersonal, religious and aesthetic, as far from ridicule as it is from devotionalism or a socio-political tract.

Precisely on this point, it seems to me, Walsh's perception of "slovenly sentimentality" is relevant. It is an attitude rather than a fact that Waugh is getting at, and as an attitude satire is a combination of fantasy and morality. Love Among the Ruins is a "small" satire, certainly, numbering only some fifty-one pages, with nine of them being "decorations." Its generic similarity to Dorothy Sayers' illustrated "Pantheon Papers" is unmistakable.

(if also more successful) in its machinery and in its intention; like virtually all satires on the socialization of religion, however small, the fictional perspective in *Love Among the Ruins*\(^1\) is large and Menippean; in a dehumanized world beyond accidie and immersed in boredom, the most popular Social Service is euthanasia; in their expletives, "Great State," "State help me," "State be with you," the people reveal that the State has made them, and it has made them into its own image (the hero's name is Miles Plastic, and he is a kind of molded neo-Adam); the fourth chapter is set in Santa-Claus Tide, during which only children sing old ditties about peace, goodwill, and tidings of comfort and joy; on December 25th only a porter in Experimental Surgery is engrossed in a television performance of an old, obscure folkplay which past generations had performed on Santa Claus Day, and only because the strange spectacle—of an ox and an ass, an old man with a lantern, and a young mother—dealt with maternity services before the days of Welfare. The Final End or Ultimate Good is euthanasia; here, as in longer satires—Benson's *Lord of the World*, or C. S. Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet*, in which the *hneu* are transposed to a different state of being by Qyarsa, the spiritual overlord of the planet Malacandra—the themes have a vast and abstruse context.

\(^1\)London: Chapman & Hall, 1953. It too was published periodically, complete with decorations, in *Commonweal*, July 31, 1953, pp. 410-422.
But in this vast fictional construct of Waugh's little satire there is a curious particularity which itself defies at the same time that it provokes a direct correspondence with the real world; in this respect, it is something like E. M. Forster's short fantasy "The Machine Stops," which is so down-to-earth its action is underground. Like the "romantic" Valmouth of Firbank, Waugh's satire has a central limiting action: the courtship of Miles and Clara, and Miles' socio-sacramental marriage to Miss Flower. Subtitled a "romance of the near future," what it is about is the human sentimentality—or insensibility—which robs men and women of their identity (who can tell which are which? like Firbank's personae, they are an exotic breed). The idea of marriage, the climactic or terminal event in the book, is reduced to an absurdity. At Satellite City and Mountjoy, Sterility and Euthanasia and Full Family Life are, from the viewpoint of the reader, absurd social means to "equalize" the gulf that separates the living from the dead, and the yet unborn, and the living from each other, and from themselves. Just as "The Loved One is a very deep, if somewhat inverted, exposition of the doctrine of the Communion of the Saints—of the doctrine that most of us can remain human in human company, but that few of us are strong enough to remain human in subhuman company,"181 so Love Among the Ruins is a depiction of the fantastic possibility that human company can cease to exist.

As both titles of these satires indicate, they are concerned with love as human experience or attitude; such experience, one may say, is not a matter of ritualistic efficacy.

Similarly, C. S. Lewis' collection of small epistolary fictions called *The Screwtape Letters* have an extended range despite their fragmentary and small design, as I showed in my first chapter. This kind of particularizing focus within a large scope is a generic mark also in his long fantastic trilogy: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-ups*. Lewis has written other satiric fantasies, of course, but I limit my discussion here to the last book in the trilogy, as the one most relevant to my subject, the most comprehensive satire Lewis has written. It is, in the several respects I have been concerned with, like the short fantasies of Forster, Firbank, and Waugh; and, as a part of a trilogy it bears a resemblance to an installment in an "extended series." In its basic conception though, just as in its total number of pages, it is a more imposing job; in an imaginative sense, it is very clearly "otherworldly."

Since World War II Lewis' literary production has been prodigious; he has sometimes published two or three books in a single year. Some of them are not the argumentative apologies for which Kathleen Nott takes him to task. Many are, rather, devotional in their nature, commentaries on Scripture, and the like: *The Four Loves* and *Reflections on the Psalms* are noteworthy examples. His literary reputation for being an apostle to the
skeptics, as Chad Walsh calls him, is firmly established and his work overall does not call for generic definition. But it is I think an interesting fact of his life that he has not been known to be taken up by a practical reformatory zeal. "Lewis is not a 'joiner,'" Walsh writes. "So far as I know his name does not appear on the letter head of any organization designed to reshape England or the World." 182 Lewis' novels and children's books are rigorously allegorical and mythic, his satires take up matters very much out of this world. The connection is symptomatic. One notes that Belloc and Chesterton, who did have an interest in practical reform and were joiners, wrote a lot relevant to that interest as satirists. On the other side, Shaw and Russell, say, have been notorious joiners for practical causes, the one interested in social and economic equity, the other in sheer human survival; Lewis differs from these in writing with a religious rather than a socio-political slant. But my point is that in the satire the interest in practical reform would not in itself seem to matter.

In That Hideous Strength, the third of the so-called "interplanetary novels," the Omnipotent Devil comes to inhabit the earth as a disembodied head—the face of Big Brother more or less in the flesh—supplied with blood and saline solutions through rubber tubes. Thus, existing in a way which demonstrates the Triumph of Scientific Knowledge, he leads his earthly brothers in organizing the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments.

which tries to gain control of England and the whole world in the Name of Science, Progress, and Society, the new trinitarian doctrine. The central character in the novel (which like many of its kind does not really have a "plot") is Mark Studdock, a muddled fellow in sociology, at Brockton College. The N.I.C.E. alternately flatters and terrorizes him into joining the Cause, in much the manner that the Party acts on Winston Smith in *1984*. Studdock's long indoctrination or "training" is in the hands of a Professor Frost, a kind of spoiled priest or black St. John the Baptist; their relationship is very much like that of Brother O'Brien and Smith in *1984* or that of Mustapha Mond and John Savage in *Brave New World*. The proposed "element of social planning" finally seems to Studdock a suitable project for "sciences like Sociology." Hingest, a professor of chemistry at Brockton, is unconvinced of the worth of the Cause and he argues with Studdock.

"There are no sciences like Sociology as Studdock would have it . . . . I happen to believe that you can't study men; you can only get to know them, which is quite a different thing," he says. "Because you study them, you want to make the lower classes govern the country and listen to classical music, which is balderdash. You also want to take away from them everything which makes life worth living and not only from them but from everyone except a parcel of prigs and professors."¹⁸³ Needless to say, shortly after this argument Professor Hingest disappears.

The earthly, evil brothers, Professor Frost and Mad Parson Straik among them, are really a bundle of reflexes, and what they principally respond to are the promptings of demonic spirits. New members of the N.I.C.E., not yet really evil, are entered into a process of being "converted." The Devil and his earthly brothers use their supernatural powers—and of course the techniques of science, including applied psychology—to create a New Human Nature, a New World in which rational and moral man has been completely eliminated. "The Kingdom of God is to be realized here—in this world," Mad Parson Straik says. "And it will be... Theology is talk—eyewash—a smokescreen—a game for rich men... The Kingdom is going to arrive: in this world: in this country. The power of science is an instrument. An irresistible instrument, as all of us in the N.I.C.E. know." 184

The effect of such a "real" belief in progressivism or scientism is frequently expressed in virtually "unreal" terms, as in this description of Wither, one of the demonically possessed characters: "He had passed from Hegel into Hume, thence through Pragmatism, and then through Logical Positivism, and out at last into the complete void." 185 This is more a sort of religious conversion than a commitment to a set of socio-political standards. That Hideous Strength gets at reality by being unreal. Though "interplanetary" and fantastic, its purpose is down-to-earth. Its scope is vast

184 Ibid., p. 82.
185 Ibid., p. 420.
and sublime, but the effect is immediate and ridiculous. That
Hideous Strength depicts an England which is grim and drab. In
it, the socio-religious integration characteristic of Huxley's
Brave New World or Orwell's 1984 is not complete. Lewis' novel
ends with such integration at least temporarily halted, the Comtean
clutches not yet closed. The danger is imminent however, and
foreboding. The England of Brave New World or of 1984 is in the
future, the England of That Hideous Strength is in the present.

For an apostle to skeptics it may be that the form of his
literary expression is problematic; a Churchman writing for readers
outside the fold has to strain after more than a negotiable
vocabulary. The success of any form will depend not only on what
he has to say, and to whom, but also how well it is that he is
able to say it. It may be especially problematic when the form
of his literary expression is "imaginative." When a Christian
writer knows that his assumptions are not shared by the majority
of people who will read his novel, says a recent and anonymous
essayist, there are five alternatives open to him:

He must either force his assumptions upon them by the
magic of words and the power of imagination; or he must
disguise them by a more generally accepted mythology;
or he must content himself with an audience that thinks,
more or less, as he does; or he must imaginatively share
the assumptions which are contrary to his belief without
betraying it; or, if he has sufficient genius to carry him,
he must go his own sweet way.186

186"Faith and the Writer: Christian Dimensions in Literature,"
Concerning the socialization of religion, it seems to me that a writer, as Christian and as satirist, occupies himself primarily with the first of these alternatives. Why a man with a vested interest in orthodoxy should choose that alternative is not necessarily a practical consideration. As practical considerations go, there are after all other alternatives open to him. If it is true that the Christian writer knows ' . . . that his real business is with eternity and that in the consummation of time even the greatest words will pass away,' then, perhaps, he finds the "low" or common genre of satire particularly suitable to himself and to what he has to say about the world he lives in as he lives in it. The "magic of words and the power of imagination" then is his way out of a dilemma which is not, strictly speaking or exclusively, literary.

In my reading of the Churchmen as satirists, and in the evidence I find in their lives as well as their works overall, I infer that a critical interpretation must be religious as well as literary. To say this is not to insist that one is bound to accept dogma of a Catholic or High Church variety; it is perhaps no more necessary (even if it were possible) to do so than it would be to value their various literary intentions according to the terms in which they are expressed. But one is obliged to see the relevance which religious commitment has to an interpretation

187 Ibid.
of the forms which that commitment takes. That commitment exists not as abstractions of indefinite size and shape, but rather as constitutive elements in literary works. An interpretation of the satire profits, I think, from an identification of those elements; an appreciation of the satire is a recognition (not an "acceptance") of the variety of forms which orthodoxy takes.
CHAPTER FOUR

LITERARY MALEFACTORS:
APOSTASY AND SCHISM AS A MEANS OF REFORM

The saving feature of the Erewhonian Musical Bank system (as distinct from the quasi-idolatrous views which coexist with it, and on which I will touch later) was that while it bore witness to the existence of a kingdom that is not of this world, it made no attempt to pierce the veil that hides it from human eyes. It is here that almost all religions go wrong. Their priests try to make us believe that they know more about the unseen world than those whose eyes are still blinded by the seen, can ever know.

—Samuel Butler, Erewhon

As usual, the corruption of the best is the worst.

. . . The representatives of the organized churches begin by putting haloes on the heads of the people who do most to make wars and revolutions, then go on, rather plaintively, to wonder why the world should be in such a mess.

—Aldous Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy

I.

This chapter is like the preceding one, in attempting to demonstrate how the subtle differences in commitment to social and religious values have a discernible effect in the work of the satirists in generic ways. But I do not duplicate that demonstration. Whether this dissertation stands or falls, as a collection of evidence which tests or "proves" itself, does not
seem to me to depend on that kind of effort. In considering how
apostasy and schism are different from orthodoxy not theologically
but in literary expression, my focus is on the analogous
relationships, the similarities rather than the differences, which
the non-orthodox satirists have with one another and with those
I call Churchmen.

If all my satirists are members of a reforming kind of
"spiritual brotherhood" with Saint Thomas More and Erasmus, as
I have been trying to show, then my biographical discussion of
Erasmus would seem to pertain with particular relevance to the
satirists in this chapter, there being an affinity between More
and the satirists grouped in the preceding one; but I trace the
lineage of satire of non-orthodox authors too from orthodox origins,
in More. Distinctions I make between non-orthodox satirists are
based, as in earlier chapters, on a process of literary
illustration and reference rather than theological analysis. It
is one thing--and not an easy one, I have found--to take up
religious considerations with reference to literary men who have
been or presumably are rigorously clear or relatively uncomplicated
about them, in the biographical facts of their lives if not always
in their literary works. Religious conversion or Church membership,
one may say, is a rather clear fact even though the implications
about it may be obscure or conjectural. It is quite another thing
to take up or to argue matters of fact and definition which are
even more obscurely and conjecturally literary in their
implications. I do not presume to do so. What I do intend to
do is show how a group of satirists, as a matter of biographical fact quite different from the group I have just finished with, have been similarly concerned.

Though the biographical facts regarding the satirists are quite different they are not unrelated. These facts, regarding both their interests in religion and their work as satirists, have a bearing on an essential similarity in the satire. An explanation I have offered is that the subject of an "other-directed" nature which the "inner-directed" satirists see will be the same as the "tradition-directed" satirists see it, though the implications about it will differ. This difference in itself should not be surprising, since, as I have tried to show at least, the vision of the orthodox satirists is itself various and carries with it a changing weight of implications according to the individual viewpoint of the individual satirists. In this first section, then, I consider how the facts of life of an "inner-directed" satirist, Samuel Butler, much like those of "tradition-directed" satirists, have a bearing on what he writes. In the following section I specifically take up some generic similarities in the satires, not ignoring their range certainly, but stressing rather some of the facts of their lineage. The second section then resembles the last section of the preceding chapter, stressing generic resemblances.

Samuel Butler published important religious satire before and after the turn of the century. Like Benson and Knox he was
originally destined for an ecclesiastical life; like Benson and Knox he had a father who was Canon in the Church, a respectable clergyman of conventional mind, the head of a family with all the marks of orthodox "circumstances" and social responsibility and family tradition which, one might assume, would have prepared Butler to take similar steps, not away from but within the Church. Yet, one of his first published works, The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, later expanded into The Fair Haven, was a pamphlet which argued that no good evidence for the Resurrection occurs in the gospels of the New Testament or elsewhere; with this argument Butler seems to have been content for the rest of his life. And though "A Clergyman's Doubts," written when he was forty-five, was his last disputatious theological tract—not only published anonymously like the Evidence for the Resurrection but written under cover of the curious disguise indicated in the title\(^1\)—he continued to the end of his life to poke fun at the conventional God of the religious.

It might be said, as a simplification, that this contradiction in Butler's life, so regarded, led to a kind of contrariety in what he wrote. As is frequently said of Chesterton, like Butler a layman, Butler "loved a paradox above most things,"\(^2\) and his major literary works are satires which identify and wrestle with


some of the major paradoxical facts of his life. It may be the
one great paradox of Butler's literary work—his copious
Note-Books are full of little paradoxes—that in his satirical
fantasies he continued to write about the religious matters which
in real life he chose to ignore or to run away from. Unlike
Chesterton, and of course Benson and Knox, he took steps in his
adult life which carried him ever greater distances from the
middle ground of Anglicanism in a direction away from orthodoxy.

He seems not only to have rejected the clerical career for
which he had been brought up, but also proceeded from rejection
to religious doubt and then to those forms of social and moral
infidelity which obtrude so conspicuously in the story of his life.
Concerning the "stages of conversion considered as a practical
process . . . through which a Protestant or Agnostic must have
passed," Chesterton speaks first of "patronizing" the Church,
second, of discovering the Church, and, third, of running away
from the Church. It is, as Chesterton says, with diffidence that
anyone born into the Faith can approach the "tremendous" subject
of conversion; yet perhaps, employing Chesterton's terms, it can
be said that Butler's conversion was a running away, in a direction
marked by literary signposts. As a kind of "practical process"
Butler's "conversion" may have been in a direction different from
Chesterton's, but the literary results bear similar marks of

3The Catholic Church and Conversion (New York: Macmillan,
paradoxical inversion and ambivalence. The syntactical patterns and aphoristic expressions in his Note-Books, and, in the satires, the simple grammatical devices whereby the names of his personae and Utopian places suggest an identity at once real and unreal, symbolic and topical, abstractive and immediate—these are among the more obvious instances of an ambivalent intention.

As a satirist Butler seems to see the same subjects for debunking that Chesterton or Benson sees, but the literary implications of the way they are seen are different. First of all, what seems to be an individual particularity of Butler's Note-Books and his satires is that it is seldom apparent whether his intention is satiric, or (in Ronald Knox's sense of the term) humorous, or matter-of-fact. My supposition is that when a vision becomes increasingly private rather than shared, "inner" rather than "traditional," this is an increasingly inevitable result.

His attitudes toward what Thomas More would call the four last things are equally paradoxical in their syntactical patterns and in their admixture of humor and metaphysical speculation:

Death is not more the end of some than it is the beginning of others. So he that loses his soul may find it, and he that finds may lose it.4

Time is the only true purgatory.5

4Note-Books, p. 23.
5Ibid., p. 219.
Heaven is the work of the best and kindest men and women. Hell is the work of prigs, pedants and professional truth-tellers. The world is an attempt to make the best of both.6

Butler frequently tackles the subject of God, and man's relation to God, with the abandon or presumptuousness of a mystic. Or at least so it seems. How these notes are intended, individually or together, is difficult to say:

God does not intend people, and does not like people, to be too good. He likes them neither too good nor too bad, but a little too bad is more venial with him than a little too good.7

To love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature and a fair balance of cash in hand. . . .8

An Apology for the Devil

It must be remembered that we have only heard one side of the case. God has written all the books.9

To put one's trust in God is only a longer way of saying that one will chance it.10

Our ideas, or rather, I should say, our realities, are all of them like our Gods, based on superstitious foundations. . . .11

God is the unknown, and hence the nothing qua us. He is also an ensemble of all we know, and hence the everything qua us. . . .12

6Tbid., p. 35.
7Tbid., p. 28.
8Tbid., p. 33.
9Tbid., p. 217.
10Tbid., p. 223.
11Tbid., p. 309.
12Tbid., p. 324.
Butler's Note-Books clearly testify to the fact that he thought long and hard about the most profoundly difficult religious subjects. But the reader can never be sure precisely what Butler thoughtfully intended, and how, say, his milder reflections of a generalized and abstractive nature square with his persistently and strongly derisive attitudes toward actual clergymen in the Church, whom he observed with a careful and a jaundiced eye. In the Note-Books the line between satire and ridicule simply cannot be drawn.

If such theological and literary attitudes are almost always puzzling, it is not just because they are involved in subjects which are of course abstruse, or because they are cryptic. What I would call their essentially "inner-directed" nature can perhaps be seen in those of Butler's repetitious statements which concern religion as an individual experience and as a social institution, subjects which have a concrete or physical as well as an abstractive or metaphysical complexity, and which have an especial prominence in his satiric fantasies:

The foundations of morality which we would dig about and find are within us, like the Kingdom of Heaven, rather than without.  

The true laws of God are the laws of our own well-being.

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14Ibid., p. 24.

The Kingdom of Heaven

The world admits that there is another world, that there is a kingdom veritable and worth having, which, nevertheless, is invisible and has nothing to do with any kingdom such as we now see. It agrees that the wisdom of this other kingdom is foolishness here on earth, while the wisdom of the world is foolishness in the Kingdom of Heaven. In our hearts we know that the Kingdom of Heaven is the higher of the two and the better worth living and dying for.

The question is, where is this Heavenly Kingdom, and what way are we to take to find it? Happily the answer is easy, for we... follow the dictates of ordinary common-sense.16

A religion only means something so certainly posed that nothing can ever displace it... It is an attempt to get an irrefragably safe investment, and this cannot be got, no matter how low the interest, which in the case of religion is about as low as it can be.17

It is because both Catholics and myself make faith, not reason, the basis of our system that I am able to be easy in mind about not being a Catholic. Not that I ever wanted to become a Catholic, but I mean I believe I can beat them with their own weapons.18

To be at all is to be religious more or less. There never was any man who did not feel that behind this world and above it and about it there is an unseen world greater and more incomprehensible than anything he can conceive, and this feeling, so profound and so universal, needs expression. If expressed it can only be so by the help of inconsistencies and errors.19

The Irreligion of Orthodoxy

We do not fall foul of Christians for their religion, but for what we hold to be their want of religion—for the low views they take of God and of his glory, and for the unworthiness with which they try to serve him.

16 Ibid., p. 168.
17 Ibid., p. 329.
18 Ibid., p. 336.
19 Ibid., p. 347.
Society and Christianity

The burden of society is really a very light one. She does not require us to believe the Christian religion, she has very vague ideas as to what the Christian religion is, much less does she require us to practise it. She is quite satisfied if we do not obtrude our disbelief in it in an offensive manner. Surely this is no very grievous burden.20

The World

The world will, in the end, follow only those who have despised as well as served it.21

The Fair Haven, a much more deliberately sustained literary work, of course, presents yet much the same problem. Centering on Butler's controversialist interests which developed during his years spent preparing for holy orders—namely, the efficacy of infant baptism and the miraculous element in Christianity—The Fair Haven is one of the most characteristic though not one of the most popular of Butler's books. Its nature as theological dispute is clear enough, and in Butler's concluding comment, that "Candour . . . is the pilot that has taken us safely into the Fair Haven of universal brotherhood in Christ,"22 there is no mistaking his intention of carefully articulated dissent. But the book bears a heavy and curious subtitle: "A Work in Defence of the Miraculous Element in our Lord's Ministry upon Earth, both as against Rationalistic Impugners and certain Orthodox Defenders, by the late John Pickard Owen, with a Memoir of the Author by William Bickersteth Owen." One wonders why the "elaborate

20Ibid., p. 360.
21Ibid., p. 365.
paraphernalia of mystification" in Butler's originally publishing the book as the posthumous work of a fictitious character and prefaced by a memoir of the deceased by his alleged brother. The Evidence for the Resurrection, a theological pamphlet of a straightforward, polemical kind, purports to show that there is no good evidence for accepting the most important fact of Christian history; it is an argument that cannot be called satiric or humorous. But in The Fair Haven Butler reproduces the argument in an expanded form which is ostensibly satiric, or humorous, or matter-of-fact, or all three. Anonymously like the Evidence for the Resurrection, and with the inference of religious authority as in "A Clergyman's Doubts," the result this time is a work which baffles an attempt at generic classification.

In his preface to the second edition of 1873, the same year as the first edition, Butler offers an apology for his use of the satirically conventional form of a memoir. The fact is, he says, that he was in a very awkward position: "My previous work, Erewhon, had failed to give satisfaction to certain ultra-orthodox Christians, who imagined that they could detect an analogy between the English Church and the Erewhonian Musical Banks." Butler professes that it is inconceivable that this should be, and so had it in mind to dispossess all readers of the notion that "something in the

23 Comment by R. A. Streatfield, intro., p. x.

24 This and the following quotes in the paragraph are from the Preface, pp. xv-xx.
way of satire had been intended," claiming that if he had been suspected of satire once, he might be suspected again. The fictitious Owen brothers, having almost a year before served their purpose, he says, of exonerating him from ultra-orthodox recrimination, he can now "safely appear in my true colours as the champion of orthodoxy, discard the OWENS as other than mouthpieces, and relieve the public from uneasiness as to any further writings from the pen of the surviving brother." Complaining, like Ronald Knox and Chesterton, of wide misunderstanding of his personal intention, Butler identifies his personae as functional carriers of his ideas rather than as literary exercises. I suppose that one must regard this apologia itself as a satiric jibe. But as a bona fide literary convention, with its own uses, it itself evidently was no jest. In the first place, Butler catalogs and quotes from the various critical receptions of The Fair Haven, which in the aggregate could not distinguish whether the book should be regarded as a biographical record or a theological treatise, as an "ironical defence of orthodoxy at the expense of the whole mass of Church tenet and dogma" or as a "serious defence of Christianity." For his own part, Butler professes, "This is very dreadful; but what can one do?" He himself resolves the apparent antinomy by identifying it as really specious. Absolving himself of responsibility for the wide misunderstanding of his intention, Butler insists that the book "should present a very different aspect according as it is approached from one side or another," and that "the reader should kindly interpret according
to his own fancies," and that the widely conflicting opinions of it are "proof that the balance has been evenly held, and that I was justified in calling the book a defence—both as against impugners and defenders" whom he refers to in his subtitle.

But this candid apology for a literary convention was no more effective than the book in which it appeared in serving the author's intention; regarded as ambiguous or ambivalent, it intensified the literary infraction it was intended to mollify. The Fair Haven evidently did Butler grave harm in the literary world.25 Perhaps the world will, in the end, follow only those who have despised as well as served it, as Butler says. The Fair Haven is derisive, certainly, and the preface to it also. But it would seem to indicate that if the Irreligion of Orthodoxy was reason enough to fall foul of Christians, and they might perhaps be beaten by their own weapons, perhaps Butler did not despise them enough. If Butler really believed in an unseen world greater and more incomprehensible than he could conceive, and yet felt the need to express the conception anyway, his satire testifies to his suspicion that it can only be expressed by the help of inconsistencies and errors. Perhaps what the Church represents no less than the Church itself must be forever building, and always decaying, and always being restored. Not all of the choruses from the rock express themselves in harmonious or melodious voices.

Commenting on the pitiable vagaries of his dear departed brother, William Bickersteth Owen denigrates the "false system of training which teaches people to regard Christianity as a thing one and indivisible, to be accepted entirely in the strictest reading of the letter, or to be rejected as absolutely untrue." Yet John Pickard Owen had in his own lifetime come to see that "We have cut down Christianity so as to make it appear to sanction our own conventions; but we have not altered our conventions so as to bring them into harmony with Christianity." In the grammar of his utterances, John Owen implicates himself in what he criticizes. And his brother speaks approbatively of views he would rather reject. Their ideas do not cancel out one another in any mathematical way. Like Chesterton's Auberon and Adam, they are two lobes of the same brain. And like them they see the consequences of their dilemma. John Owen, for example, sees the ridiculousness and the rationality of Dean Swift's *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, namely, that although it is only "Conventional Christianity" which will stand a man in good stead to live by, "true Christianity" never will do so. Christianity's inevitable failure is so obvious, he says, that no age or country has ever been mad enough to carry it out in such a manner as would have satisfied its founders.

26 *Fair Haven*, p. 19.
And what if some unhappy wretch, with a serious turn of mind and no sense of the ridiculous, takes all this talk about Christianity in sober earnest, and tries to act upon it? Into what misery may he not easily fall, and with what life-long errors may he not embitter the lives of his children? In his satires Butler did not absolve himself from the values of the society he was brought up in. The Way of All Flesh may be a novel rather than a satire, in Northrop Frye's schema, in the sense that it is "experiential" rather than "intelligible," and like the fiction of Marshall, Firbank, and Waugh, it presents some problems of descriptive identification. That matter aside, I would establish a biographic and generic point. That is, whatever caricaturizing "real life" injustice there is in the portrait of the father Theobald Pontifex, The Way of All Flesh testifies to a strength of feeling about what Canon Pontifex represents. And Ernest Pontifex, the son, modelled of course after Butler himself, is hardly a flattering portrait. Butler's mouthpiece and Ernest's friend, Overton--the omniscient narrator "I"--makes it clear that Ernest is a fool, as when, in his passion for regenerating the Church of England, and through this the universe, Ernest subscribes to Fryer's plans for a College of Spiritual Pathology; this College would not have to do with supernatural graces but with efficacy, "approaching both Rome on the one hand and science on the other--Rome as giving the priesthood more skill, and therefore as paving the way for their obtaining greater power,

29 Ibid., p. 48.
and science, by recognizing that even free thought has a certain kind of value in spiritual enquiries.\textsuperscript{30} To whatever extent Butler may have been apostate or unorthodox regarding religious and social values of his family, that he did write about them indicates that they were important to him; his autobiographic and confessional inclinations suggest that however unconventional he may have been in his private life, it is not inaccurate to say that in his public utterances, his publications, he valued the public conventions of social and moral order. Butler's satiric intention, like the intention of the orthodox satirists, was reformatory rather than anarchistic. Even though his vision may have been "inner" or private, the public forms it took were "traditional," like the forms of the "tradition-directed" satirists.

In the \textit{Note-Books}, \textit{Fair Haven}, and \textit{The Way of All Flesh}, Butler shows that he was not blind to the social and religious curiosities in the world, and that he counted himself into his denigrations of them. He wrote about the world, the flesh, and the spirit from an individual and yet not uncommon point of view. But whether or not Butler's denigrations can be regarded generically as satiric and religious depends, in any of his works, as much on definition as on fact, as much on the way the reader reads as on what he reads. So even—or especially—with his two renowned literary utopias, \textit{Erewhon} and \textit{Erewhon Revisited}, I am wary.

Richard Gerber asserts that the role of religion in a modern utopia is by and large unimportant; that as far back as More's *Utopia* religion in utopian literature was "important but by no means dominant"; that modern English "religious utopias" have mostly been written by converts to Catholicism, but that in any case modern religious utopias are rare and a religious utopia is a *contradiction in adjecto* anyway; that only Dante's *Divine Comedy* might possibly be called a "truly religious utopia"; that a "truly religious utopia . . . should not depict this world, but the next"; that the most significant theme for the modern utopian is scientific organization and the reaction against it.31 What a literary work *is* can be (perhaps inevitably must be) confused with what one thinks it *should* be; categorical imperatives tend to be obtrusive and contradictory in these matters, and I think the problem may be even more imposing than in the preceding chapter. But I do disagree with Gerber on those points of his which I have just listed; with reference to *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited*, the very first two works in Gerber's chronological list of modern utopian fiction, a number of significant themes seem to me demonstrably religious in generic ways at least as clear as in the *Note-Books*, *Fair Haven*, and *The Way of All Flesh*. What Gerber calls the "role of religion" is exceedingly important in them.

31 *Utopian Fantasy*, pp. 57-60. See above, pp. 68-70.
Erewhon, Or, Over the Range is no doubt a kind of "symbolic journey," as Gerber says,32 both allegorical and utopian, both "dreamlike in a certain vagueness" and also "hard matter-of-fact," a bridge between the two worlds of psychological perception and general social complexity. It is to "this unknown world"33 that Higgs says he hopefully journeys. Considering that Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday is something like Pilgrim's Progress, as Ronald Knox has said, so too the Erewhon Books. Like Thursday, or The Flying Inn, the Erewhon Books may have a structural looseness, but they also have a discernible focus. Or, like Knox's Barchester Pilgrimage, though Erewhon does not strictly speaking have a plot, it does have a central theme, a religious one, established in the very beginning and sustained at the very end. It is Higgs' two-fold intimation that he imagines himself to have made a discovery and to have chosen a course of action of an extraordinary and prophetic kind, "as has not been attained by more than some fifteen or sixteen persons, since the creation of the universe."34 The discovery, of course, is that the Erewhonians are the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, a matter of historical fact which in its legendary aspects impels an imaginative consideration both Biblical and contemporary, real and unreal. The Ten Tribes really were lost, but still are not

32Ibid., p. 108.
34Ibid., p. 1.
lost in the sense of the Anglo-Israelite theory which identifies the Ten Tribes with the English. Nonetheless, Butler does artistically make the distorted identification of time and place. And Higgs' growing and reiterated intention to convert the Erewhonians presses the curious implication, in the precise ways that give the satire its bite, that England-as-Erewhon is not really a Christian nation.

This allegorical and purposeful theme—the conversion of lost tribes—is anchored at the beginning and at the end of the story in a number of ways. Speaking of Chowbok, his lost guide whom he has baptized "reverently and, I trust, efficiently," Higgs says, "I had set my heart upon making him a real convert to Christian religion, which he had already embraced outwardly."35 Yet it becomes increasingly clear that Higgs is himself not really a Christian, and is more concerned in the end—reverently and, he trusts, efficiently—with the outward acts of Christian zeal, whereby the imaginative effort of missionary conversion will yield a hard monetary return. The idea that Higgs, no less than Ernest Pontifex or John Owen is like Butler, himself involved in the story told, is strengthened by autobiographic inference:

I used to catechize him [Chowbok] . . . and explain to him the mysteries of the Trinity and of original sin, with which I was myself familiar, having been the grandson of an archdeacon by my mother's side, to say nothing of the fact that my father was a clergyman of the English Church.36

35Ibid., p. 35.
36Ibid.
Higgs has intimations of his shortcomings. "Let us be grateful to the mirror for revealing to us our appearance only," he says; at first his alleged purpose in assuming the task of conversion is that it "might in some degree compensate for irregularities and shortcomings in my own previous life, the remembrance of which had been more than once unpleasant to me during my recent experiences." He does indeed seem to be on a kind of pilgrimage or spiritual journey. But it is with appearances only that Higgs is concerned, and he is highly impressionable in limited and limiting ways; his thoughts are subordinate to his feelings. Repeatedly he gets the "impression" that the Erewhonians are not a religious people, the very glances of the Erewhonian women making him forget "all thoughts of their conversion in feelings that were far more earthy"; the Erewhonians, in his view, "appear to have little or no religious feeling." He confesses that he "cannot bear having much to do with people who think differently from myself." His is that

37 Ibid., p. 18.
38 Ibid., p. 36.
39 Ibid., p. 52.
40 Ibid., p. 57.
41 Ibid., p. 69.
42 Ibid., p. 76.
"certain low cunning" of the potato which he reads about in The Book of the Machines:

Apropos of its intelligence [Higgs says], had the writer known Butler he probably would have said—

"He knows what’s what, and that’s as high,
As metaphysic wit can fly."

The "dual commercial system" of the Musical Banks is the institution of "mercantile transactions," and Higgs describes it in detail. His powers of observation are keen, but he is merely baffled by the "strange system" he sees. He perceives that the Musical Banks in their duality and strangeness are like the Churches of England, and at the flying height of his metaphysical wit he articulates that duality and strangeness. England, he says, and all countries, have always like Erewhon had a "law of the land, and also another law." This other law, or rather the need for this other law, he speculates, "must spring from something that lies deep down in man’s nature." In its historical aspects it is "inner" rather than inherited, and derives from man’s evolving and internal nature rather than from a constant and "traditionally" regarded external reality; what is real is what seems; "indeed, it is hard to think that man could ever have become man at all, but for the gradual evolution of a perception that though this world looms so large when we are in it, it may seem a little thing when we have got away from it." Higgs seems to perceive "the

\[^{43}\text{Ibid., f.n. 1, p. 225.}\]

\[^{44}\text{The following quotes in this paragraph are from pp. 150-152.}\]
everlasting Is-and-Is-Not of nature," which operates in the world and all it contains, including man. But in Higgs' notion of everlasting man there is no place for the Everlasting Man that Chesterton writes about in the book that bears that title; there is no mention anywhere of Christ, or of the historical and factual foundation of religious faith. When man had grown, Higgs says, to the perception "that the world . . . is at the same time both seen and unseen, he felt the need of two rules of life, one for the seen, and the other for the unseen side of things." For him this is an abstractive, internal dilemma rather than a real, external one. Like Mrs. Wilcox in Howards End he chooses not to brood on the superiority of the unseen to the seen; his way out, like hers, is not to contrast the two but to reconcile them. He points to the "saving feature" of the Erewhonian Musical Bank system which bears witness to a "kingdom that is not of this world," but which bears witness in such a way that there is no responsibility, no need, to know anything about it. "The saving feature of the Erewhonian Musical Bank system (as distinct from the quasi-idolatrous views which coexist with it, and on which I will touch later) was that while it bore witness to the existence of a kingdom that is not of this world, it made no attempt to pierce the veil that hides it from human eyes." Traditional Christianity is of course a composite of just such "quasi-idolatrous views." Take away

\(^{45}\text{See above pp. 27-28.}\)
their validity, their historical roots, and what happens is that those socialized forms of religious activity which exemplify the Church Militant in this world are precisely the details of the Musical Bank in "this unknown world" of Higgs' records. Take away the past from the present and there is no future. If the Church is not Suffering, Militant, and Triumphant, all three, then it is a sham, a fantasy, a figment of imagination.

The reader finds, in the end, that the conversion Higgs has in mind for Chowbok and the Erewhonians is not a religious conversion; Higgs' purpose in writing of his adventures is not a religious purpose. They scarcely exemplify the Pauline Character and Conversion as John Owen explores them, and Higgs is surely not the embodiment of the Christ-Ideal. On a point such as this, the theological nature of Fair Haven contrasts sharply with the satiric nature of Erewhon.

A fundamental contrariety or ambivalence in the story is Higgs himself. It is Higgs and not Chowbok who, as Higgs says of him in the beginning, "exceeded all conceivable limits of the hideous," and it is Higgs who shows the reader, unwittingly, that "the ridiculous and the sublime are near." Claiming for himself a personal competence and an honorable intention he scarcely


47Erewhon, p. 12.

48Ibid., p. 37.
lives up to, Higgs is involved in the very scene he presumes to describe and to change. The reader comes to expect the contrarieties. Higgs does not see that England is like Erewhon, or, if he does, he is able to see it without thinking about what it means. His metaphysical wit can scarcely get off the ground. It is this that constitutes the major narrative irony. The reader comes to see with increasing clarity that Higgs is unaware of the truth he is a part of telling. Higgs comes even to want to hide the essential nature of his story. In unfolding his Modest Proposal, his scheme for the conversion of the Erewhonians, he "would advise that no mention should be made of the fact that the Erewhonians are the lost tribes. The discovery is one of absorbing interest to myself, but it is of sentimental rather than commercial value, and business is business."\(^49\) His scheme of course is to herd the Erewhonians aboard ship ("they could be packed closely and fed at a very reasonable cost\(^50\)) and sold into slavery. They would be thoroughly grounded in the Church Catechism, the whole of every Sabbath devoted to singing psalms and church-going; but this would be done efficaciously and practically, to quell "any uneasy feeling" about the hard means of conversion to the desired end of practical results, thus to give the comforting reflection of saving souls and filling pockets at the same time.

\(^49\)Ibid., p. 302.

\(^50\)Ibid., p. 304.
But if Higgs is a more or less clearly delineated contrariety, Chowbok is a mystery, not only to Higgs but to the reader as well. In the particularly grotesque concluding chapter, Chowbok is reintroduced as the native missionary Habakkuk. Higgs refers to him as his "old friend," and yet the reader knows that despite Higgs' protestations of concern and affection the references to this "old friend" have been infrequent, desultory, and extraordinarily condescending. Habakkuk is the name of the Old Testament book which has the form of a colloquy between God and the prophet concerning the wickedness of people and their coming punishment, and which closes with a hymn of praise for God. Symbolically bearing the name of this prophet included in the Roman Martyrology, Higgs' old friend and guide really has become converted to the Christian religion and is embarked on a kind of work in Erewhon which Higgs and his Evangelization Company can only regard as a competitive enterprise. How this has come about or what the consequences will be is not clearly indicated. Higgs' concluding postscript on "a probability of complication which causes me much uneasiness"51 has an ominously apocalyptic as well as ingenuously practical ring.

If ultimately there is no "real" explanation for a Pauline Character or Conversion, similarly there is no resolution to the problems posed by the character of Higgs and of Chowbok. How these are even to be regarded is difficult to say. Not enough

51Ibid., p. 308.
of Chowbok is known for the reader to contemplate the wonder of his transformation or its consequences. And if in the end Higgs is a focus for the reader's scorn, it is not unmixed with sympathy or pity. Higgs' dilemma is cast in imaginary terms, but the reader knows that it is a real one. In the middle reaches of the tale Higgs wrestles with the new knowledge he confronts, seeming rather to try to grasp it than to use it. Higgs does not himself see the analogy between the Musical Banks and the Church of England; but he "could never think that their professed religion was more than skin-deep" anyway. He does see that Ydgrunism is the religion that the Erewhonians "carried with them in all their actions." Morally Higgs is insensitive, and as an observer he may be astigmatic, but he is not blind. To the extent that religion as an institution is something other or more than its visible habitations and signs, Higgs sees, however darkly, the "real" religion of the Erewhonians.

It is in this, the worship of Ydgrun, that Higgs sees not only a correspondence to the religion of his native land but to his own beliefs as well. But how this is to be regarded is difficult to say. The reader cannot be sure which views are Higgs', and which are Butler's and what his own attitudes within the fiction and toward the fiction are intended to be, as, for example, when Higgs admires the Ydgrunites who, he believes, have got about

52 Ibid., p. 164.
as far as it is the right nature of man to go in the matter of human conduct and the affairs of life.\textsuperscript{53} The difficulty or complexity is like the one in understanding Swift's intention in depicting Gulliver's appreciation of the Houyhnhnms. Reflecting the Ydgrun belief, Higgs confesses that "the example of a real gentleman is, if I may say so without profanity, the best of all gospels"; then, observing that the Erewhonians "had no sense of a hereafter, and their only religion was that of self-respect and consideration for other people," Higgs asserts that he knows his own religious convictions "were the only ones which could make them really good and happy, either here or hereafter."\textsuperscript{54}

The reader is not sure whether Higgs is being in any way consistent, or, more exactly, whether Butler's characterization of him is a meaningful complication of an apparent ingenuousness or a lack of artistic control of materials which defy manipulation. When Higgs directly censures rather than praises what one might expect Butler wishes to censure, it would seem that the satire is flawed. Whether it is Butler's intention to praise the Ydgrun, or censure Higgs, or vice versa, simply is not clear. As in the case of Erasmus' \textit{Praise of Folly},\textsuperscript{55} the difference between religion and the abuse of religion becomes muddled. It is when the satire seems to run amiss that it runs into its deepest channels. Higgs

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{54}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 168.

\textsuperscript{55}\textit{See above}, p. 57.
seems not to know what to think about the small but growing sect of Ydgrunites "who believed, after a fashion, in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection from the dead." The problem of such a belief is raised but it is not answered.

This kind of confusion, intentional or otherwise, occurs not only in Higgs' discussion of Ydgrunism—social conventionality in its religious manifestations—but in his discussion of the World of the Unborn myth, which, Higgs says, he has "taken the liberty of referring to the story as familiar to ourselves." It is a kind of confusion which seems wedded to the subject under consideration. That is, as a fictitious myth wrapped in an enigmatic fantasy, it is bound to be unavailable to immediate understanding; the World of the Unborn is set in an imaginary framework of time with a primacy over the Erewhonian imaginary framework of place. When the Erewhonians force Higgs to such a consideration, his metaphysics may be crude, but carried up on wings of fancy nonetheless and, conversely, reaching a depth otherwise uncharacteristic of Higgs throughout his story:

We can see but little at a time, and heed that little far less than our apprehension of what we shall see next; ever peering curiously through the glare of the present into the gloom of the future, we presage the lines of that which is before us, by faintly reflected lights from dull mirrors that are behind, and stumble on as we may till the trap-door opens beneath us and we are gone. . . . For the future is there as much as the past, only that we may not see it. Is it not in

56 *Erewhon*, p. 170.

the loins of the past, and must not the past alter before the future can do so?58

Saint Paul's epistle makes clearer sustained sense, but this recorded reflection of Higgs does not suffer from its apparent similarity. Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem.

The advice given to the unborn, in the lectures which Higgs obviously admires, is that if there is a spiritual world, one should turn one's back on it and find it again in immediate work: "If any faint remembrance, as of a dream flit in some puzzled moment across your brain, . . . fly—fly—if you can remember the advice—to the haven of your present and immediate duty, taking shelter incessantly in the work which you have in hand."59 This is not the Fair Haven of universal brotherhood in Christ which Butler had written about theologically and disputationally in Fair Haven, nor in the indirection of its fantastic form does it satisfy the literary criterion of "candour." One is unsure whether Higgs is to be condemned or condoned. But the advice is, as Northrop Frye says,60 apparently close to Butler's own view, and the same doctrine of rediscovery of faith through works may be found in a number of contemporaries, Bernard Shaw among them.

The same subject from a similarly involved viewpoint comes up in Erewhon Revisited—Twenty Years Later. (I say "involved"

58Ibid., pp. 180-181.
59Ibid., p. 188.
60Anatomy of Criticism, p. 154.
insofar as the story is cast as a transcription by Higgs' son, of a record of Higgs' comments by the Erewhonian Dr. Qurgoyle which Higgs' son says his father says he never made.) Qurgoyle's pamphlet is an exposition of Butler's doctrine of "vicarious immortality" or "vicarious life," a doctrine Butler deduced from evidence he found acceptable regarding unconscious racial memory, in which serviceable habits are stored up, and which asserts itself through the "identity" of parents and offspring. Though I am not sure I can refer to this doctrine as a revelation of an "inner-directed" character, I do think I can speak of it as a religious one. It was Butler's intention in Erewhon Revisited, as his Preface says, 61 to imaginatively consider how "the development of all new religions follows much the same course," specifically, to ask himself what course events would take in Erewhon after Higgs left. His concern is with the "course of events" rather than with the actors in them. Qurgoyle's pamphlet argues that "as we had a right to pester people till we got ourselves born, so also we have a right to pester them for extension of life beyond the grave." 62 In our lives of a Purgatory of Time, "our sense of moral guilt varies inversely as the square of its distance in time and space from ourselves." 63 As in the lectures on the World of the Unborn, it is the perspective of large-scale

61 Erewgon Revisited, pp. 311-313.
62 Tbid., p. 440.
63 Tbid., p. 441.
events in time which has a primacy, and which may account by
default for the sketchiness of the personae.

_Erewhon Revisited_ was the last book Butler published in his
lifetime; it is sometimes regarded as a better formed satire than
_Erewhon_, and more noteworthy as fiction than the posthumous _Way
of All Flesh_. Yet his intention here seems to succeed no better.

Asserting in his Preface that he had never ceased to profess
himself "a member of the more advanced wing of the English Broad
Church," it is nevertheless commonly as an Earnest Atheist, as
Malcolm Muggeridge calls him, that Butler continues to live his
"vicarious life." If what Butler has done is to make for himself
a "private religion," part of the price he has had to pay is a
certain incomprehensibility.

This seeming confusion of effect in his literary work, a
certain kind of literary "blur," characterizes his satire
particularly. My tri-part classification I think holds useful
on this point. Like some satirists with a vested interest in
orthodoxy—Belloc or Chesterton, for example—Butler did write
many polemics with a major concern for practical consequences;
his travel books, amateur theology, history, and art criticism
are in the nature of practical polemics. But unlike those satirists,
Butler did not write in a devotional vein, even though he was
concerned with the subject of religion from the beginning to the
end of his writing career. There is no gainsaying Butler's
this-worldly, practical bent; that is, his concern is with the uses or consequences of religion rather than with its meaning. The result is that one is never sure where and whether Butler distinguishes between religion and its abuses, its successes and its failures. But one is inclined to be sympathetic about his efforts. If Butler does not always seem to fight on the side of the angels, Lewis Mumford says,\(^6\) it is perhaps because the angels have a horrid way of getting into bad company. At least, in the view I have adhered to throughout this dissertation, though the distinction between this-worldly and other-worldly values, like the idea of the separation of Church and State, undoubtedly has practical consequences, it cannot be defined in terms of such consequences. A chief point about Butler's satire, like that of orthodox satirists, is that the modern and social uses of religion have evolved without the Church as it has developed from the past. Claiming for himself a connection (albeit a tenuous one) with the Church, in his satire it is the development of new religions on which he focuses his attention. Yet, what he does have in common with the orthodox satirists, as a utopian, say, rather than as a sociologist or historian, is that he does write with the intention of reforming. Whatever practical force his beliefs might have, in a social and political way, derive from the fictional form he gives them. This seems to me Butler's intention,

\(^6\) Erewhon Revisited, intro., p. xxvii.
which is inclined to be reformatory in a controversial rather than a devotional way.

Now I wish to consider the generic and historical lineage of "inner-directed" satire. I wish especially to show (contrary to Gerber) how in its "traditional" forms it, no less than the satire of the Churchmen, is "truly religious" in its effect.
II.

C. S. Lewis, in trying to cut through the conflicting appraisals of Thomas More's *Utopia*, suggests that it is perhaps a "satiric glass" having its real place not in the history of political thought but in that of fiction and satire. It is, he says, a "holiday work, a spontaneous overflow of intellectual high spirits," which like *Gulliver* and *Erewhon* is not intended to give us directly practical advice; nor, though it has serious and even tragic elements, is it a "consistently serious philosophic treatise." In such a looking glass the lineage of More's satire can be perceived through four centuries.

In drawing attention to the generic similarities of works written by men who have lived in different times, and who have held to different standards, there is the constant danger of ignoring the differences, or not seeing the one and exaggerating the other. One of the commonplaces of literary history and theory is the ebb and flow of reputation; scarcely even the greatest or most "significant" work are praised or blamed for the same reasons. More's *Utopia*, as I discussed earlier, is just such a work. Such dangers and problematic considerations are confronted by A. R. Heiserman in "Satire in the Utopia." This essay (which unfortunately appeared after I had finished formulating this dissertation) is an attempt to establish the historical continuity

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66 See above, pp. 68-71.
67 *PMLA*, LXXVIII (June 1963), 163-174.
of literary form in the work of Plato, Lucian, Chaucer, Langland, Skelton, Erasmus, and More. I think Heiserman succeeds; I would speculate in this section of my chapter that what he calls the "satiric principle" is as operative in English literature since the early sixteenth century as it was before, and would point out some of the religious implications relevant to it. His vocabulary is different from mine, but his literary problem coincides with mine: to consider to what extent More's Utopia is not "essentially a jeu d'esprit," nor a "serious didactic argument" either; to reconcile More's "real intention" with his "alternating seriousness and parody"; and to resolve the question "Why should a canonized Lord Chancellor ever have constructed an 'ideal' commonwealth so manifestly antithetical to his orthodoxy?" His critique of More's Utopia is an attempt to demonstrate that More's work is, in its form and substance, "shaped to satisfy a satiric intention." He is not primarily concerned to prove that Utopia is a satire or that its devices and objects are more or less simply conventions; these problems, so framed, he regards as the wrong ones. Starting from some of the same primary sources that I have, but working from different secondary ones, Heiserman's conclusion is that satire is characteristically an oblique via diversa, that is, a structural amalgam of Platonic dialogue, tall travel tale, conventional personae, and imaginary places, which are intended not to embody "ideals" of a commonwealth,
nor a program for practical reform, but to condemn current follies in a way "meaningful for his own and our time."

Thus, the *Utopia* as a kind of intention is his explanation of the apparent discrepancies between More's real-life career and his "ideal" state, and accounts for the fact that the *Utopia* has seemed an "enigmatic document in the history of ideas." A kind of intention—not necessarily utopian, I would argue—might also account for seeming discrepancies in the life and work of contemporary satirists as well. I would not force a consideration of the many parallels with *Erewhon* which are at once anachronistic and striking in the *Utopia*. But I do call attention to several matters of form and substance which I have seen in much of the contemporary religious satire I have read.

The *Utopia*, like many of its kind, touches on a mass of social and political subjects not apparently related to religion: communism, social protocol, sexual practice, war, and so on. But the first subject which Hythloday begins to describe and to ridicule in Book I, for example, is not a secular or royal court but the court of the reverend prelate, the good Cardinal John Morton; and the last part of Book II is given over to a construction of Utopian religion. Quite apart from the multiplicities and sustained diversions which are a mark of satire (as distinct from ridicule, or from other forms of fiction), it would seem from this that the satire is anchored in the beginning and at the end by a religious perspective. The concluding part
is a virtual catalogue of religious subjects. To name just a
few: Mithra-worship; the various divinities and faiths in contrast
to Hythloday's Christianity; the connection between sedition and
religious commitment; King Utopus' decree in favor of religious
freedom for the primary purpose of social order; the propriety
of beliefs held by the living and the dead in religious community;
the responsibility of a man to his forebears and to his unborn
progeny; the relative importance of intelligence and charity in
the spiritual life, and of faith and good works; the proper office
and sphere of magistrates and priests. Some of the topics
discussed have an especially modern ring in their social
implications. Regarding the Utopian religious instruction of
youths, Hythloday reports that the priests instruct them no more
diligently in learning than in "virtue and good manners,"
endeavoring after "good opinions and profitable for the conservation
of their weal-public." The tone is Priestlean rather than
priestly. The liturgical year is a lunar one, the days and months
being marked off in a kind of Comtean calendar of feasts. The
church buildings have a kind of communal, indeterminate structure

because it is not there of one sort among all men, and
yet all the kinds and fashions of it (though they be
sundry and manifold) agree together in the honour of
the divine nature, as going divers ways to one end,
therefore nothing is seen or heard in the churches, but
that seemeth to agree indifferently with them all.69

68 Utopia, trans. Ralph Robinson (1551), rev. edn. with A
69 Ibid., p. 125.
The "common sacrifices," that is, the social observances, are so established as not to offend or prejudice anyone. And the Utopians worship a deity only by the name of Mithra--like the name of Ydgrun, Well-Doer, Zahatopolk, Big Brother, or Our Ford--"in the which word they all agree together in one nature of the divine majesty whatsoever it be." In prayers there is a spiritual innocuousness and practical sociability, "such as every man may boldly pronounce without the offending any sect," their being directed toward the real end of "good success and fortune," thus acknowledging in a twofold way the responsibility each person has toward all others.

I am not sure that Raphael Hythloday comes to a bad end, in the sense that Lemuel Gulliver and Mr. Higgs and Winston Smith are morally corrupted, or that John Savage dies. This matter does not come up in the afternoon's talk terminating Book II; nor does Peter Giles know, in his postscript, which of the various rumors about Hythloday are true. In the beginning Hythloday may or may not be a good man or an ingenu like Gulliver or Higgs. But their experiences and their detached way of recounting them are similar. Hythloday (like Gulliver not as an Englishman but as a fantastic voyager, at any rate) in Book I comes to England after his experiences in the island of Utopia and other remarkable places; in Book II he contrasts England with that "new world"
wherein there are very few wars, no poverty, no unfair or unreasonable working conditions, no religious oppression (except for non-believers), nor untoward concern for worldly goods. Lemuel visits "ideal" societies and comes to criticize English society in comparison. Swift's Gulliver is like More's Hythloday a recount of nonsense, but the shifts in perspective are more extreme, the subjects more grotesque, if not caricatured, and the nonsense harder to look at. The effect of the shifting perspectives in the structure of the satire is to demonstrate a basic distortion in the character of Gulliver, a distortion which is not completely clear in Hythloday. Yet, there can be little doubt that Hythloday, in his total impression on the reader, and Gulliver of the Fourth Voyage are both "alienated philosophers, . . . . the very foundations of the ironic views of More and Swift." 71

If the Utopia is rather more a fiction than a satire, intelligible and delightful, as C. S. Lewis says, starting many hares and killing none, the same cannot be said for Gulliver's Travels. Swift's intention is more clearly to castigate the cardinal sin of pride, in its individual and also its collective forms: man's pretensions regarding his mind and the pleasures of his body, but also the monstrous behavior of human society, the gross forms of mob psychology as well as the nuances of "normal" psychology.

The Travels are an account of what Gulliver sees but also of how he sees it, and it is important for the reader to notice the difference. Swift says in a prefatory note to The Battle of the Books that

Sitire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it.72

It is a curious fact that the "memoirs" which a literary historian of the period can call the most mature, pondered, and complex of Swift's works, and "as near a tragic work as the age ever got,"73 is frequently edited as a modern juvenile reader. Not only in Chaucer's time has it been possible for a satirist to be used for purposes doubtless far removed from his intent.

Gulliver's fantastic experiences, like Higgs', do not lead to moral knowledge. Rather, Gulliver undergoes a conversion "into the cult of misanthropy," as Elliott says.74 This is brutally revealed at the very end of the Travels, as at the end of Erewhon. In the last pages of Book IV, Gulliver, regarding himself as "perfectly blameless," confides that he looks at himself often


74Power of Satire, p. 188.
in a glass, trying to get used to himself, "if possible habituate
myself by time to tolerate the sight of human creature." He
says several times in his concluding statements to his "gentle
reader" (an affectionate form of address which is affectation
in the context) that his "principal design was to inform, and
not to amuse thee." He writes "for the noblest end, to inform
and instruct mankind, over whom I may, without breach of modesty,
pretend to some superiority, from the advantages I received . . .
among the most accomplished Houyhnhnms." By self-adoption a
member of that fantastic horsy set, he is notably scored with
the particular human quality he sees everywhere about him:

... when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases
both in body and mind, smitten with pride, it immediately
breaks all the measures of my patience; neither shall I
be ever able to comprehend how such an animal and such a
vice could tally together.

In the beginning, Lemuel seems, like Higgs, to be a decent and
forbearing man if not a wise one. In the end, he is neither,
but a gullible Gulliver. Despair is the sin against the Holy
Spirit; in Lilliput and Blefuscu he is able to see the smallness
of men without despairing; in Brobdingnag he can see the largeness,
the grossness of the human mechanism and man's mortal condition
without becoming totally upset. But in Laputa and Balnibarbi,

75 *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 353.
he begins to take a decidedly dark view of man, individually and
as a social and political animal. In the highest achievements of
new and of accumulative learning, in the Grand Academy of Lagado,
he sees, or at least the reader sees through him, reason for ridicule
or scorn. The world is bleak; the struldbrugs, who "enjoy"
immortality in that world, are sorry creatures.

Gulliver finally is not sure whether he is a Yahoo or a
Houyhnhnm, or cannot see that he is both. He cannot see the
grotesqueness of the Houyhnhnms, of reason as a solitary guide.
If a Yahoo is a man, then he is totally depraved with no chance of
salvation; if a Yahoo is a libel on mankind, there can be salvation
but no damnation. Gulliver and Higgs are the satirist satirized,
and are seen in the strongest or harshest light in a comparison of
character as it can be seen in the beginning and as it is in the
end. Whereas it is their expressed intention as "I's" to inform
by way of unadorned truth, the intention of the satirists, the
"eyes" of their personas, is to reform in an oblique and diverse
way, to show or at least to suggest how they, their personas, and
their gentle readers are all implicated in what it is they see.

Though Gulliver and Higgs are themselves important in the
tale they tell, the satiric focus is not so clearly or personally
set in twentieth-century utopian literature. In the holocaust
of social and political pride, individuals seem less important,
or just less able to do anything. Winston Smith and John Savage
are, at least, less vital. Existing in a future time which is
necessarily therefore less "real" than the present in its immediate impact on the reader, yet their total circumstance is no less ominous than imminent, and they are seen to be even less able to choose a course of virtuous action than Gulliver or Higgs. In contrast to the *Utopia*, or the *Travels*, or *Erewhon*, it is true, *1984* and *Brave New World* are "futuristic" and therefore would seem to be less immediate in their effect; yet they do have an intensity as satire in their implication that the possibilities for satire are growing short. The satire comes to seem straight narrative. If the function of satire has always been to teach virtue by an attack on vice, the implication in them is that vice will soon be universal and complete—not seen as vice, and that it is now in fact relentlessly and inevitably winning out. Oceania in *1984* and England in *Brave New World* are what social-planning and man-as-society are coming to be. Real society is not contrasted with Utopia but identified with it. In the earlier satires, real society suffered by the comparison. In the modern ones, it is Utopia that, despite its seeming grandeur, comes off poorly.

There is a kind of geographic or global scope to the *Utopia* and the *Travels*; but *Brave New World*, being projected a further distance and onto a larger screen, gains in panoramic effect what it loses in individual interest. It is not a "pleasing" effect, any more than the technological marvel of wide-screen cinerama is necessarily more "pleasing" than the older black-and-white motion pictures; the effect is not a spectacular blur however,
but rather contributes to an understanding of the scope of
de-humanization. It may lack the artistry of the shifting
perspectives and the "personal" or even psychological niceties
of Swift's satire, but it does have a largeness of view that is
appropriate to its subject. It is also in a functional and
sustained way "religious," showing how the most influential
symbolisms transcend personal revelation, conscience, or guilt.

In the New World of this anti-Utopia, society forms
individuals rather than vice versa. Only the state, and science,
exist. In the Fordson Community, individuals have only a
scientifically controlled, social existence; they are bred, by
Predestinators and Fertilizers, rather than born. The World State's
motto is COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY. Its neo-trinitarian
meaning is learned during the bi-weekly Solidarity Services
conducted in the Fordson Community Singery: the President-as-Priest
making the Sign of the T, the choir of electronic instruments and
solemn synthetic music, the consuming of the dedicated soma tablets

79 Huxley refers to Erewhon as an expression of Butler's
skepticism about collective pride, or social hubris, a "religion
of Inevitable Progress" which is a violation of the Perennial
Philosophy he regards as the true religious faith existing within
and without (but mostly without) the organized Churches. But he
can also refer to Swift's "beloved and morally perfect Houyhnhnms,"
which, in his reading, indicate "sufficiently clearly what the
Dean of St. Patrick's thought of the religion by which he made
his money." While Huxley's comments on the intention of Erewhon
are precisely to the point I am making, needless to say, his reading
of Book IV of the Travels does not jibe with the one I fit into
my discussion. See The Perennial Philosophy (London: Fontana, 1961),
pp. 88-91, 102-103.
and the drinking of strawberry ice-cream soma as a kind of
eucharist ("Better a dramme than a damn"). This social and
religious "ecstasy" is the final consummation of the Greater
Being; and as a spiritual experience as different from the ecstasy
of religious orthodoxy as is possible to imagine, it is a measure
of the difference between the Greater Being and God. The "yearning
stanzas" of the Solidarity Hymns are an expression of the suffusion
of sex and religion, both officially encouraged by the State:

"Ford, we are twelve; oh, make us one,
Like drops within the Social River;
Oh make us now together run
As swiftly as thy shining flivver."

"Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,
Annihilating Twelve-in-One!
We long to die, for when we end,
Our larger life has but begun."

"Feel how the Greater Being comes!
Rejoice and, in rejoicings, die!
Melt in the music of the drums!
For I am you and you are I."

"Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun,
Kiss the girls and make them One.
Boys at one with girls at peace;
Orgy-porgy gives release."

The devotions Bernard Marx attends on alternate Thursdays are
like the Great Good Friday Novelty Night in Marshall's "Heavenly
Story," or the seasonal Worship of Belial in Ape and Essence,
insofar as they are curious modern distortions of religious
observance, resembling ancient fertility cults too, but without
having anything to do with fertility.

80Brave New World (New York: Bantam, 1955), pp. 54-56.
Italics omitted for readability.
The book, MY LIFE AND WORK, BY OUR FORD, published by the
Society for the Propagation of Fordian (sometimes called Freudian)
Knowledge is a kind of neo-New Testament. By putting into use
its socio-religious tenets, His Fordship Mustapha Mond, the
Cardinal-like Resident World Controller for Western Europe,
maintains order among his subjects like the spoiled priest Francis
in Benson's Lord of the World. Under the Sign of the T, they
live the lives of Yahoos.

"But isn't it natural to feel there's a God?" [the Savage
asks Mustapha.]

"You might as well ask if it's natural to do up one's
trousers with zippers," said the Controller sarcastically. . . .
"People believe in God because they've been conditioned to
believe in God."

"But all the same," insisted the Savage, "it is natural
to believe in God when you're alone--quite alone, in the
night, thinking about death . . . ."

"But people never are alone now," said Mustapha Mond.
"We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so
that it's almost impossible for them ever to have it."81

Their lives of technological splendor are no different from the
lives of the nuclear monsters--kinds of modern Yahoos--ruled by
the Arch-Vicar of Belial, under the Sign of the Horns:

Church and State,
Greed and Hate:--
Two baboon-persons
In one Supreme Gorilla. . . . 82

The glorious tranquillity and technological grandeur of
Huxley's Brave New World of six hundred years from now are not
yet achieved in the Oceania of Orwell's year 1984. Instead of

81 Ibid., pp. 159-160.

the elaborate and soul-satisfying Solidarity Service there is only the rudimentary and irritating Two Minute Hate. In 1984 Emmanuel Goldstein the prophet is "really" an Enemy of the People, like Julian Felsenburgh in Benson's *Lord of the World* more than like Mustapha Mond in *Brave New World*. Emmanuel (meaning "God is with us"), the reader is told, has the "face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a sheeplike quality." He is in effect the *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi*, of earlier civilizations.

There is not yet the book, written by Our Ford; in the year 1984 there is in existence, though suppressed, a "terrible book . . . the book," a collaboration and anthology, which at least superficially (and whoever its author or whatever its intended purpose may be) bears a resemblance to the earlier, almost forgotten Book. There is still an interruptive awareness of religion, albeit a rapidly fading one, in the society of Oceania. In the Brave New World there is an awareness only of society.

Winston Smith's first meeting with O'Brien (the temptation is to call him Father O'Brien) is a kind of Confession and Black Mass. It is clearly a travesty of the older religious forms. There is a sorrow for past sins and promise of redemption; O'Brien ritualistically offers Smith wine and a "flat white tablet," something half-way between the eucharist and a *soma* dosage. It

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is also a falsity; O'Brien is not "really" a disciple of Emmanuel, as he pretends to Smith, though even in the climactic betrayal, "He had the air of a doctor, a teacher, even a priest, anxious to explain and persuade rather than to punish." Ultimately, Winston Smith is "converted" to the new faith.

Big Brother is not a character of vice, rather, an indefinite but pervasive symbolism of society in which an individual cannot sin as an individual but only commit political or social crimes. The people of 1984 are not yet created in their own image as they are in the Brave New World. But neither are they created in the image of God. Rather, a god, Big Brother, is created in the image of the people. In a history of the socialization of religion, the year 1984 marks the end of the beginning of the Religion of Humanity. For Swift, Yahoos and Houyhnhmus are allegories of vice and virtue, of man's dual nature which cannot be bifurcated. According to Huxley and Orwell it is not at all clear that man has—or in the future will have—such a nature.

It is difficult to see where utopian satires go from here. It is a moot question which way is through the looking glass, or indeed whether there is one anymore. A quarter of a century after writing Brave New World, Huxley has revised his timetable for the emergence of the completely organized society, which, in his view, is an immeasurably greater evil than an organized religion. "The

85Tbid., p. 249.
nightmare of total organization," he says in *Brave New World Revisited.* "is now awaiting us, just around the corner," and he sees the prospects "more in favor of something like *Brave New World* than of something like *1984.*" That his sequel is a straightforward, controversial collection of essays rather than a second fiction is a generic fact which not only jibes with his intention to argue this point, but may in larger ways indicate the connection between literature and life. The working distinction between utopia and anti-utopia may be a matter of definition; but when the difference between Utopia and nightmare is no longer satiric, that is a matter of fact with more than literary consequences.

Of course, a utopian fantasy doesn't have to be satiric, and utopian fantasies which bear on the subject of religion are not necessarily denunciatory or derisive. The Berdyaev quotation with which Huxley prefaces *Brave New World* suggests that perhaps a new century will begin in which the intellectuals and the cultivated classes will dream of how to avoid Utopias and how to return to a non-Utopian society, less perfect and more free. Huxley's *Island* is possibly such a dream. *Ingemu* Will Farnaby, fortuitously shipwrecked on the island of Pala, is intended to seem aware of his own wretchedness and the corruption of the world to which he belongs and from which he has arrived at that island.

Farnaby compares himself—and so the reader also, through him—with the happily integrated Mahayanist Buddhists, who achieve with some remarkable success a spiritual state of tathata by means of prayer, liturgy, ceremonies involving ritual lovemaking, and soma-like dosages of a concoction made from yellow mushrooms. Huxley seems seriously to suggest that Pala is what modern society is not but might be; the natural, bare-skinned issue from the happy marriage of such a religion with scientific thought. Farnaby may perhaps represent the sickness in the soul of modern man as Berdyaev has identified it. But I am not sure that a utopian fantasy like Island does anything for it. The book is imaginatively argumentative, perhaps even Inspirational in the positive and benignly religious implications. But as satire it is a step down from Brave New World, in its intention if not in its form.

As I have shown earlier some modern utopian and religious ideas, like older ones, can be historically and sociologically identified apart from the fact that they may take fantastic forms, and look like satire though they surely have not been intended as such. I want to take up H.G. Wells' Modern Utopia as a special case. Wells, whom Gerber calls the most important of twentieth-century utopian writers, was also as prolific and reformatory as any; his Fabian interests and membership in the Reform Club, and his extended controversy with Hilaire Belloc (also a member) about the Outline of History, for example, testify to his social, political, and religious inclinations. Wells' Modern Utopia is reformatory,
certainly. What I wish to do here is to consider, contrary to Gerber, how that utopia is religious and in what specific respects it is neither the first nor the last modern utopia but rather one of a long generic line. And, contrary to Chad Walsh, who says that A Modern Utopia is "no flight of fancy, no voyage into whimsy," I wish to show how it has a place as fantasy in my generic classification of satire on the socialization of religion.

A Modern Utopia in some respects seems to be no fiction at all. The title portends a literary, imaginative journey; but like Chesterton’s Utopia for Usurers or Huxley’s revisitation, the concern is with unimaginary or real facts, and their practical consequences. Its form seems to belie its intention. The majority of pages are a colloquy in which "I" the speaker addresses "you" the reader, in the future tense and occasionally in the subjunctive mood. The convention of a dream vision is established in the first thirty pages, and is kept discursively separate from the pat discourses by the use of the present and past tenses; but it occupies very few pages up until the very end. Much of the effect of fantasy is maintained through the book by an evenly spaced sequence of seven full-page illustrations. In a prefatory Note to the Reader, Wells says that he tries to present "an ideal in reaction with two personalities." Those two personalities

87 Utopian Fantasy, p. 67.
88 From Utopia to Nightmare, p. 52.
are the "author" (whom Wells wishes not to be identified with himself) and his "Utopian Self"; and the ideal he has written into it is his "heretical metaphysical skepticism" and the "established methods of sociological and economic science."

Claiming that a sort of "lucid vagueness" on the matter of social and political questions is his intention, he aims throughout "at a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophic discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other." If Butler's Erewhon is generically "dreamlike in a certain vagueness," so too this book, at least in its intention. It is intended as an "entertainment . . . neither the set drama you are accustomed to read, nor the set lecturing of the essay you are accustomed to evade, but a hybrid of these two."

Though Wells envisions the Modern Utopia as kinetic rather than static, not as a "permanent state" but rather as a "hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages," the topography of this narrative hybrid is set in two distinctly different and distinctly identifiable worlds: Utopia, which is "an imaginary whole and happy world," and "the world of Here and Now."

90 Ibid., p. 2.
91 Ibid., p. 5.
92 Ibid., p. 6.
93 Ibid., p. 8.
These worlds are "literally" whole planets, Wells' Utopia being a planet topographically identical to our own. In the dream vision, it is an "other world," but as another world "the modern Utopia must have people inherently the same as those in the [real] world." Thus the real people on earth are represented as having a two-fold existence, as they are "really" in this world here and now, and as they are in Utopia," . . . themselves, but with a difference."

It is within this framework that Wells explores the myriad problems of "Man versus the State." As in all utopias these problems are taken up then without explicit references to organized religion. But beyond the fact that this framework might itself be regarded as religious, religion does come in prominently for serious discussion. It is the "poietic" or creative and imaginative Samurai for whom it has most significance. "All religious ideas, all ideas of what is good or beautiful, entered life through the poietic inspirations of man." Wells' approbative presentation of such ideas is directly and repeatedly identified with the name of Auguste Comte. But Comte's inclination to distinguish between

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95 Ibid., p. 23.
96 Ibid., p. 27.
97 Ibid., p. 31.
98 Ibid., p. 267.
99 Ibid., pp. 273-274, 319-320, 326.
the spiritual and material, the "poietic" and "kinetic," strictly in terms of the activities of the state, according to Wells, "mark how deeply he went under."100

Wells is himself of course clearly unorthodox—"heretical" about "speculative and metaphysical elements," in the words of his prefatory note. He insists that man is basically good and getting better all the time. "The leading principle of Utopian religion is the repudiation of the doctrine of original sin,"101 and though Wells sees the need for moral and intellectual discipline in man, this world, in his view, exists for man to do with as he likes. The religious participation in Man the Undying precludes a consideration of the world Here and Now as the handiwork of God. The Samurai, at least, "accept Religion as they accept Thirst, as something inseparably in the mysterious rhythms of life." A Utopia "will have its temples and its priests," but the Utopian rulers "will have escaped the delusive simplification of God that vitiates all terrestrial theology."102 The religious ideals of the Samurai are transcendental and mystical. The Greater and Lesser Rule in the Book of the Samurai is a prescription of spiritual exercises; it is not the equivalent of the book by Gur

100Ibid., p. 274.
101Ibid., p. 299.
102Ibid., pp. 300-301.
Ford, nor the book forbidden to the lesser mortals of Oceania. Yet one questions to what extent the purpose or the consequences of the ideals of the Samurai are different from those of the inhabitants of Oceania or Brave New World:

So far as the Samurai have a purpose in common in maintaining the State, and the order and progress of the world, so far, by their discipline and denial, by their public work and effort, they worship God together.103

One speculates that Brave New World is not so much the reverse of the Wellsian medal as it is a sharper minting. In drawing the line between an ideal and organized Book of Rule which has the ideal measured in practical consequences, and "the religion of dramatically lit altars, organ music, and incense" which measures practical consequences in terms of an ideal, Wells did not stretch his imagination very far, or, one might say, reduce it to an absurdity unintentionally. Wells is pleased to think of the transcendental results of the seven-day annual religious retreats of the Samurai, "of this steadfast yearly pilgrimage of solitude, and how near men might come then to the high distances of God."104 In the visions of Huxley and Orwell, the purpose of maintaining the State in such a worship takes the grotesque form of the Solidarity Service, or the Two Minute Hate and Hate Week.

Taken on its own terms, Wells' utopia is perhaps less intentionally satiric but, I think, no less religious than the

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103Tbid., p. 302.
104Tbid., p. 310.
anti-utopias of Huxley and Orwell. Wells does see the difference between this world and another one. That the two may at some Messianic future time be one and the same Wells may believe in a way which seems, in the perspective of a half-century later, naively optimistic. But Wells does seem to acknowledge the limitations of his personal vision. "Utopias were once in good faith, projects for a fresh creation of the world and of a most unworl worldly completeness; this so-called Modern Utopia is a mere story of personal adventures among Utopian philosophies."105 His concluding chapter, "The Bubble Bursts," is solemnly wistful in its acknowledgment that his double vision of corresponding world-planets and of "Author" and "Utopian Self" is unsatisfactory. The tone of this chapter contrasts sharply with the seemingly brash assertiveness of the opening one. Though Wells' Modern Utopia surely comes to different conclusions, than, say, Benson's Lord of the World, I will still say that it is nonetheless generically identifiable as a kind of other-worldly vision of this-worldly "fact."

Modern utopias have a variety of formal characteristics though the kind of ambivalence which seems to me a mark of religious satire cannot be identified in strictly formalist ways. Religious satire has never been amenable to one or another incidental literary

105 Ibid., p. 372. Dialogue in italics is Wells' punctuational convention to indicate his own sentiments apart from those of the Two Voices.
form only, but rather would seem to be a kind of pervasive spirit, most abundant perhaps in what can be called utopian fantasy; but the delineation of utopian fantasy depends on a recognition of that spirit which finds expression in a range of formalistic sophistication and accomplishment, some of it less satiric than ridiculing. In its higher reaches, one may say, the literature is in its very nature fantastic, perhaps always, though not always utopian.

It is fantastic even, I think, when it is based on observable or empirical fact. No less than any other mode of knowledge, it starts from gross experience as a point of departure. George Santayana argues that "if we do not know our environment, we shall mistake our dreams for a part of it, and so spoil our science by making it fantastic, and our dreams by making them obligatory." "The art and religion of the past," Santayana says, "have fallen into this error. To correct it would be to establish a new religion and a new art, based on moral liberty and moral courage." 106 But it may also be that if we do not know our dreams, we shall mistake our environment for a part of them, and so spoil our fantasies by making them scientific, and our obligations by making them dreamlike. The value of literature as a mode of knowledge is that it forces an awareness of these differences.

I think Santayana is provocative in forcing a consideration of the art with the religion of the past, and the art and the religion of the consequential future. Yet I could not argue that such an un-traditionalist writer as, for example, Bertrand Russell is doing anything new, formally or intentionally, artistically or religiously, in his fantasies. In "Zahatopolk" and "Faith and Mountains," the two long short stories in Nightmares of Eminent Persons, Russell is certainly not a spokesman for the "religions of the past." Yet, like most satirists, past and present, he works from the general premise that "folly is natural to man," and he seems particularly inclined to put the screws to conservative political doctrines and dogmatic religious beliefs, drawing conclusions which are clearly reformatory. In the prefatory note to his first collection of stories, Satan in the Suburbs, Russell declared that his intention was not to "point a moral or illustrate a doctrine" but simply to be "either interesting or amusing." But Nightmares of Eminent Persons, written two years later, he warns in the short preface, is not primarily for amusement. Some of his nightmares are "purely fantastic" but, he says, "Zahatopolk" is meant to be "completely serious" and "Faith and Mountains" will appear fantastic only to readers who "have led sheltered lives." "Faith and Mountains" depicts the struggle between two rival and utterly phony "spiritual" religious leaders, and like "Zahatopolk" takes the reader into a future world as terrifying as Huxley's or Orwell's.
One may question Russell's capacity as writer of fiction, while admiring his achievement as a philosopher. His stories are crude demonstrations of traditional story-telling methods. But though his two slim volumes are an uneven imaginative effort (being, as Russell says, "a new departure at the age of eighty") and though he has no metaphysical propensities, it is a fact that one of the great problems he has been concerned with in over a hundred other books is the analysis of moral judgments and religious beliefs, and of their historical consequences. One might say that, like Samuel Butler, if Russell rejects metaphysical theses it is because they are not supported by anything which he himself can regard as adequate evidence. But the fact that theology does not bear rational examination shocks him less than the fact that its ministers have so often abused their power. It is in its social and political aspects that Russell has been hostile to religion.

Though his popular reputation is as a scientific apologist, he has been most voluminous in his social and political writings. His reformatory intention as a social and political writer may be fantastically misunderstood, but there is no gainsaying its clear articulation. To a critic of The Principles of Social Reconstruction, for example, he says he did not write "as a 'philosopher' " but rather "as a human being who suffered from the state of the world, wished to find some way of improving it,"
and was anxious to speak in plain terms to others who had similar feelings." The book is derisive in temper and reflects Russell's distrust of both social and religious institutions. But, one speculates, it is not his tone which accounts for the unhappy reception of his ideas for the reconstruction of the modern world. It is the reformatory intention, despite its clear articulation. The curious fact is that the twentieth-century Popes of the Church (never derisive in temper and, surely, not distrustful of social and religious institutions) have shared the same fate.

An anthology made up from a wide selection of his social and political works, Bertrand Russell's Best: Silhouettes in Satire—with only two extracts from his attempts at fiction—would seem to support the idea that satire is a kind of spirit rather than a particular literary form. All of the extracts are brief, scarcely ever more than a single paragraph, and so lack


sustained imagination. But they are at least "silhouettes" in satire, in their combination of humor and deadly seriousness, something more than ridicule and other than polemic. As a manifestation of a pervasive spirit rather than a particular genre, they indicate, in a way that Huxley's revisitation does, a connection between literature and life.

Thus, the range of religious satire of the Malefactors is similar to that of the Churchmen. It is identifiable in the extended fantasies and in the more brief and fragmented literary pieces—Butler's Note-Books and Russell's Silhouettes no less than Dorothy Sayers' articles in Punch. Regarded as a pervasive spirit which finds expression in various literary modes, it can be identified in novels and plays also.

E. M. Forster, a novelist who clearly is not orthodox, contends with the socialization of religion in his novels without really developing his interest in it. So, for example, it is touched on by the materially prospering and social-climbing heroine, Mrs. Margaret Schlegel Wilcox, in E. M. Forster's Howards End: "A funeral is not death, any more than baptism is birth or marriage union," she thinks. "All three are the clumsy devices, coming now too late, now too early, by which Society would register

the quick motions of man." Concerning the first Mrs. Wilcox's
death (and at the time she had not yet married the widower Mr.
Wilcox), "Don't brood too much," she advises her sister, "on the
superiority of the unseen to the seen. It's true, but to brood
on it is medieval. Our business is not to contrast the two, but
to reconcile them." But it is not in the novel form generally
that the subject of the social significance of religion and the
contention of the "seen" and the "unseen" is strongest or most
deliberately sustained. It is specifically in the form of the
satire as I have been defining it that the subject is seen most
substantially. One of Forster's several fantasies, "The Machine
Unders" for example, though a long short-story of a dystopian
kind largely concerned with the pragmatic and evil effect of
machinery on humanity, also shows how machinery warps men's minds
in a religious way. The "refinement" of Forster's underground
world is horrifying in itself, but the delineation of the official
religion of "undenominational Mechanism" contributes to that
horror. It is in this kind of ambivalent fantasy that the
subject appears as most real.

The subject also appears ambivalently in many of the plays
of Bernard Shaw. Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch,
starting, after the expository preface, "In the Beginning: B. C.

112 In Forster's Collected Short Stories (London: Sidgwick
and Jackson, 1948), pp. 115-135.
and ending "As Far As Thought Can Reach: A. D. 31, 920," is surely a utopian fantasy of a satiric kind, to be read, more than a drama actually intended for the boards. To label the spirit in which this subject is delineated a religious spirit presents in the context of my discussion of the satirists in this chapter a virtually insurmountable problem of definition. Yet perhaps I can say, with reference to Bernard Shaw, that though he is surely no Churchman in the sense that I have used the term, the facts of his life (if not his popular reputation) do indicate that Shaw's "interest in religion was profound and never declined," and suggest that he was "as nearly Christian as it is possible for a man who repudiates the greater part of Christian doctrine, to be."

In Chesterton's own view, the differences between himself and Shaw are acute and complete; logically and chronologically, from the beginning, on almost every subject in the world, he says, Shaw and he had always been on opposite sides: the institution of the family against Shaw's "Platonist fancies about the State"; Beef and Beer against vegetarianism and total abstinence; the Liberal notion of nationalism against the Socialist notion of internationalism; the "sacred limitations of Man" against the "soaring illimitability of Superman." One may possibly object to Chesterton's assertion that these sociological and political

matters of controversy are blurred rather than clarified in his identification of them as religious. "For in fact all these differences with Shaw come back to a religious difference," Chesterton says. With some precision (and no presumption of finality) perhaps the matter of definition can be made by literary reference and illustration.

An indefatigable preacher and pamphleteer for the cause of social reform in England, Shaw delivered hundreds of lectures, by way of the microphone and the popular press, becoming something of a controversialist World Statesman. His intention, in trying to convince people that the present condition of the world is a bad one which ought to be corrected, can be perceived even when the argumentative connection between Fabian theory and his practical application might not. And the real differences he draws between the practical consequences of the distribution of private property advocated by the monster he called "Chesterbelloc," or its abolition as advocated by Shaw himself, can be identified in their essential nature. The case is rather more complicated regarding Shaw's expressly religious commitment, though, I think, resolvable.

In a lecture on "Modern Religion," Shaw is straightforward and deliberate in his discussion of the institutional form which


116 Platform and Pulpit, pp. 110-130.
he anticipates religion will take in the twentieth century, and, in passing, he delineates his own beliefs and his own interpretation of the facts of Christian history. He speaks seriously and optimistically of the formulation of a great modern religion which will not be the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England or the Calvinist Church he was brought up in or, for that matter, any church at all. He asserts that there is an essential schism in human nature and, therefore, that there are two kinds of people: (1) those who require a church and require to be led by a priest, and who adopt the creeds and articles of a church; over against (2) those who are "always really mystics," not believing in priests, very often hating them, and hating churches, but who are nonetheless "deeply religious persons" insofar as they "believe in the direct communion of their own spirit with whatever spirit it is that rules the universe."

Shaw of course counts himself in this second group. Because of "that distinction between the churchman, . . . or institutionalist, and the genuine out-and-out Protestant mystic," there will always be, in Shaw's view, a certain conflict of interests. Any religion which is going to unite men—it is by way of religion that they will be so united, he believes—will have to be a religion which both kinds of people can accept.

I think I can say that his human kinds correspond to the "tradition-directed" and "inner-directed" categories I have been

117 Ibid., pp. 112-113.

118 Ibid., p. 113.
employing. What Shaw only briefly takes into account in this lecture (though frequently in the plays) is the possibility of the linear or historical development of religion in another direction—not either (1) a continuation of old abuses or (2) a new or chronological perfection—with the existence of a corresponding third kind of audience for his ideas. The basic concern in the lecture is pragmatic: "The first thing you have got to do if people are to have any religious, intellectual, or artistic life, is to feed them. Until you have done that they cannot begin to have any sort of spiritual or intellectual life."119 But the intention of his message is in some sense a religious one. Though he is not sure he is in favor of any institutional religion, he feels he does "get on perfectly well with Roman Catholics and dignitaries of the Church of England if they are really religious."120 He says he does "not pretend to get on with people who have no religious sense whatever" since he would only bore them. (This reference does seem to me to be to a third "kind of people" whose religious sense of direction is other than institutional or mystic, traditional or inner, and therefore outside the pale.) Speaking approbatively of the increasing awareness of "universal religion," he lauds the efforts of literary men in promulgating it:

The moment you clear up people's minds, and make them conscious of this, that moment you discover that the

119 Ibid., p. 118.
120 Ibid., p. 129.
roots of this religion are in every person, and you may get a common bond all over the empire.

This religion you will see growing up all through your literature, not only in Butler and Bergson, and even in my own works, but you find it coming in all directions, distinctly in the novels and poetry of Thomas Hardy, and everywhere in Mr. Wells.121

One presumes that, somehow like Butler and Wells, Shaw is Utopian and that, like them, although he is opposed to religion as an historical and institutionalized fact of life, as he sees it, he is in favor of what it is coming to be by way of "direct communion" of a spiritual kind.

The function of their literary efforts, if Shaw is correct, would be a religious reformation in which a process with practical results would be helped along. In reference to the work of another great modern dramatist, Shaw has said:

We need to be reminded that though there is in the world a vast number of buildings in which a certain ritual is conducted before crowds called congregations by a functionary called a priest, who is subject to a central council controlling all such functionaries on a few points, there is not therefore any such thing in the concrete as the ideal Catholic Church, nor ever was, nor ever will be. There may, too, be a highly elaborate organization of public affairs; but there is no such thing as the ideal State.122

Shaw has repeatedly made known his reformatory function or intention as a playwright, in forcing the public to reconsider its morals and in shocking the middle-class to an awareness of the Butlerian or Shavian "life force" within them: "After all,

121Ibid.

the salvation of the world depends on the men who will not take evil good-humoredly, and whose laughter destroys the fool instead of encouraging him."123

It is from this standpoint that one listens to the formulation of the Utopian state of mankind coming from the mouth of a mad priest. In John Bull's Other Island, the English civil engineer Broadbent is firmly convinced that he is bringing order and prosperity among the Irish, whereas the Irish smile at what seem to them to be illusions of his. Says Father Keegan, the unfrocked priest, to Broadbent:

Do not be offended, sir: I know that you are quite sincere. There is a saying in the Scripture which runs—so far as the memory of an oldish man can carry the words—Let not the right side of your brain know what the left side doeth. I learnt at Oxford that this is the secret of the Englishman's strange power of making the best of both worlds.124

As personae, Keegan and Broadbent are, one may say, two lobes of the brain of an Anglo-Irish dramatist. Broadbent the Englishman envisions the economic and social development of Ireland, the growing rapport between the two countries; but for Keegan "there are but two countries: heaven and hell; but two conditions of men: salvation and damnation."125

123Ibid., p. 212.


125Ibid., p. 610.
is a prophecy," he says to Broadbent, "every jest is an earnest
in the womb of Time." But he and Broadbent have different dreams:

BROADBENT [reflectively] Once, when I was a small kid, I
dreamt I was in heaven. . . . I didn't enjoy it, you know.
What is it like in your dreams?

KEEGAN. In my dreams it is a country where the State is
the Church and the Church the people: three in one and
one in three. It is a commonwealth in which work is
play and play is life: three in one and one in three.
It is a temple in which the priest is the worshipper
and the worshipper the worshipped: three in one and
one in three. It is a godhead in which all life is
human and all humanity divine: three in one and one in
three. It is, in short, the dream of a madman.126

As a matter of fact, Ireland from Swift's own time has only
nominally been John Bull's Other Island. In visionary terms
however, Utopia is John Bull's Other Island, or perhaps the
other way round. As in Erewhon or Oceania or the Brave New World
or Orphan Island, one cannot be sure.

The distance between the literary spirit of a Shaw and a
Chesterton may not be so vast insofar as that distance can be
seen and measured off in literary terms. Yet it remains that
their worth's unknown though their height be taken. Chesterton
speaks in approbative and fantastic terms of Shaw's literary
intention, and he reveals his understanding, in a qualified sense,
of the effect of Shaw's literary copiousness in the modern world.
Noting that Blanco Posnet was censored, so far as he could
discover, because one of Shaw's personae professes a belief in

126 Idd., p. 611.
God and states his conviction that God has got him, Chesterton yet would admonish the censor rather than laud the dramatist. "Not so easily does the prince of this world forgive," Chesterton avers; he calls attention to the fact that Shaw's training and instinct are not his own and concludes with an insinuating vision:

I end where I began: it is the old Puritan in Shaw that jars the modern world like an electric shock. That vision with which I meant to end, that vision of culture and common sense, of red brick and brown flannel, of the modern clerk broadened enough to embrace Shaw and Shaw softened enough to embrace the clerk, all that vision of a new London begins to fade and alter. The red brick begins to burn redhot; and the smoke from all the chimneys has a strange smell. I find myself back in the fumes where I started. . . . Perhaps I have been misled by small modernities. Perhaps what I have called fastidiousness is a divine fear. Perhaps what I have called coldness is a predestinate and ancient endurance. The vision of the Fabian villas grows fainter and fainter, until I see only a void place across which runs Bunyan's Pilgrim with his fingers in his ears.127

Who ultimately can be sure of the direction or extent of a Pilgrim's Progress? Probably it can only be guessed at or, better, imagined.

PART THREE
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGIOUS SATIRE AS A LITERARY GENRE:
THEORY AND PRACTICE

When the imagination finds no satisfaction in existing
reality, it seeks refuge in wishfully constructed
places and periods. Myths, fairy tales, other-worldly
promises of religion, humanistic fantasies, travel
romances, have been continually changing expressions
of that which was lacking in actual life.

— Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia

Religion is the vision of something which stands
beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of
immediate things; something which is real, and yet
waiting to be realized; something which is a remote
possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts;
something that gives meaning to all that passes, and
yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession
is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach;
something which is the ultimate ideal, and the
hopeless quest.

— Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World

I suppose that the transition from the early religious
satire of Part One to the modern religious satire of Part Two
in this dissertation involves a leap which is as much intuitive
as it is chronological. But I beg off the seventeenth and
eighteenth centuries, the high point of English satire religious
and otherwise, largely because of logistical difficulties. The
nature of the social and religious developments through those centuries is as complex and fragmented as the vast literature those centuries produced. The fact that one-half to three-fourths of the books published in the middle of the seventeenth century were given over to religion, morality, and divinity, Douglas Bush says, testifies to the main and often intense concern religion had for multitudes of people, and to the effect it must have continued to have even in the lives of those who were not especially devout.

The secondary literature is for the investigator no less imposing in its quantity than the religious satire itself. And, it is certainly not irrelevant to my delineation of satire as an historically inevitable literary expression of values which are at once Christian and humanist, other-worldly and this-worldly. What Douglas Bush sees as the compatibility of Christian and humanistic values, for example, seems to me incontrovertible and important. Thus, Milton is described as a "great exponent of Christian humanism" at the very time that a tradition of classical reason and Christian faith was becoming "a noble anachronism in an increasingly modern and mundane world." Milton was no satirist and did not much value utopian fantasy.¹ He cannot be approached, as

¹"To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian politics, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably." The Areopagitica, in John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957), pp. 732-733.
Erasmus and More can be, from the point of view of Elliott's chapter on The Satirist and Society. But there are parallels, relevant to my generic theorizing, in Milton's circumstances as a rebel with dubious friends and recent detractors, and in his philosophic and poetic character, less simple and obvious than friends and foes have often assumed it to be, yet explicable in part, as Bush says, in its balance as both Renaissance humanist and Puritan. With the misfortune of a tradition broken, toward the eighteenth century and afterwards, a Christian humanist if he would not have to be a satirist would at least find satire an amenable mode of expression. Like Swift he would write A Tale of A Tub rather than like Priestley write An History of the Corruptions of Christianity.

Sir Herbert Grierson, in his literary synthesis, sees evidence in seventeenth-century literature of the perennial and immemorial crosscurrents between the World, the Flesh, and the Spirit: between an other-worldly spirit and a this-worldly secularity of mind, between religion and "amusement," Puritanism and humanism, Christianity and the Renaissance. Drawing heavily on Ernst Troeltsch, he sees the opposition latent in the origins of the Western world between Christian askesis and the "needs and impulses of nature." Remarkling on this dualism in medieval poetry—the love of Laura and the love of God—Grierson sees an increasingly

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clear oscillation (rather than a separation) between secular and sacred values reflected in literature and life of the period:

Milton's Latin verse in contrast to the elegies and *Paradise Lost*, the secular and the religious poems of Spenser, Donne, Vaughan, and Marvell. He regards it as archetypal that the Earl of Rochester, profane and licentious, died an edifying penitent, and that Charles and James were both at bottom religious if also licentious.

In what might be called a palinode line of development in English literature, the retraction in Andrea Capellanus' *De Arte Honesta Amandi*, the two contrasting parts of the *Romance of the Rose*, Chaucer's concluding Parson's Tale and Book V of the *Troilus*, Shakespeare's *Troilus* in comparison with Chaucer's, are all followed by a vast body of literature which—with "new force" in its satiric elements after 1660, Grierson argues—points to a connection between this-worldly and other-worldly values. Such a connection, though argued by many literary historians and critics, is of course quite unresolved.

Thus, Marchette Chute finds it impossible to reconcile the explicitly religious other-worldliness in the last book of the *Troilus* with Chaucer's this-worldly humanism; the impossibility of such a reconciliation simply does not occur to a C. S. Lewis or a Willard Farnham. Or, James Sutherland, writing about Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transposed*, says that

... even by the standards of political and ecclesiastical controversy it is something of a hybrid. You can either
ridicule your opponent, in which case you can afford to be brief, or you can take him seriously, in which case you will have to answer his case fully. What you cannot do is to mix argument with ridicule at such length as Marvell does, without destroying the seriousness of the argument and losing the effect of the ridicule. The Rehearsal Transposed is to Marvell's work what The Parson's Tale is to Chaucer's; it is there, it cannot be altogether ignored, but it is now little more than a literary curiosity.\textsuperscript{3}

One may insist that a man as a satirist shows an interest at once serious and ridiculing, and argues fully according to standards both political and ecclesiastical, in a mode of literary expression which is not self-contradictory. But these are evidently hard possibilities to accept, and are frequently regarded as mutually exclusive.

This confusion or difficulty, call it what you will, in the delineation of generic form is perhaps ultimately unresolvable among literary men of good will. Thus Sir Herbert himself, acknowledging the view that "the very foundations of tragedy rest on religion," nonetheless argues that, whatever such foundations, among Jacobean and Caroline dramatists generally, Shakespeare preeminently was a "humanist"; that is, his plays close on no note of moral or religious commitment, he refrained from giving his plays any explicit ethical or religious significance, and he seemed not to be concerned with evil as sin, as the transgression of divine law and an offense against God. In short,

\textsuperscript{3}English Satire (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 81-82.
"... it was neither from Medieval Mystery and Morality, nor from Greek Tragedy, that Elizabethan dramatists derived the formula for tragedy nor the spirit which inspired it." Willard Farnham, guided by the conception that tragic expression is a special artistic and critical approach to the mystery of man's suffering on earth, asserts that "Gothic tragedy had its origin in a clash of otherworldliness and worldliness that came with the Renaissance." I do not for one moment want to ignore or pretend to demolish the generic distinction between tragedy and satire; but I speculate that even if it were true that the two kinds are alike in some characteristic intention and effect---purgative, for example---there are other ways to distinguish between them. Farnham at least sees no incongruity in the fact that the creator of the Wife of Bath wrote the Monk's Tale, and he would hold that the "most judicious critics" are the ones who believe that Chaucer for all his light-heartedness was a truly devout man to the day of his death and that his retraction following the Parson's Tale is genuine and honest.

Satire can be mistaken for other literary forms unless its emotional and moral effects are clearly defined and understood; so says Gilbert Highet, and with this I agree. But Highet also argues that "In the same way as it is difficult for a devout

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1Cross-Currents, p. 100. Emphasis added.


Christian to write a tragedy, so it is almost impossible for a devout Christian to compose a Christian satire dealing with death and judgment and the next world. The analogy seems sound. Who can say that art is ever easy? But there are many Christian satirists; that such satire is "almost impossible" would seem to depend on both the writers and the readers of it. C. S. Lewis insists that despite its "tragic elements" More's *Utopia* is a "holiday work." Bonamy Dobrée remarks that *Gulliver's Travels*, all its satire notwithstanding, is "a tragic work, at least as near a tragic work as the age ever got." Richard Gerber speaks with approbation of a Utopian Mood which he calls "tragi-comic," even though he is critical of *1984* as a utopian De Profundis, insisting that a literary utopia cannot bear such tragedy and only tends to be hysterical or sentimental when it does. John Traugott argues, with reference to the satiric fantasies of More and Swift, that the "strange combination" of the tragic and the ridiculous is the very condition of life for the philosopher in this world. Vivian Mercier defends Shaw for his "play-spirit," opposing some critics who insist that Shaw ruined a potential masterpiece of tragedy, *Saint Joan*, by the playful Epilogue he appended to it. Some of the critical disagreement regarding tragedy and satire suggests to me that what these two literary forms have in common is not so much what they are but rather how

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they can be regarded. The form and spirit of literature would
seem to be contingent upon writer and reader alike. In any case,
one hazards the generalization that though a religious act may
be a pious crime and serve as a subject for tragedy, the abuses
of religion may be heresy and serve as the subject for satire.
Though the intention of satire may be thus in a small but important
way different from that of tragedy, the effect may be similar
as well. It is hard to argue against Dryden's careful judgments
in the Discourse Concerning Satire. Not only does Dryden
differentiate and value, however tenuously, "tragical satire"
apart from "the comical." His concluding definition specifies,
first of all, that "the end or scope of satire is to purge the
passions."

If, as is surely true, the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries are the high point of English satire, preeminently in
Dryden, Swift, Pope, then I would say that my concern has been
to establish the beginning and end, as it were, of a satiric
kind, with the hope that what I have to say would be relevant
to what rises high in between. Regardless of the beliefs of
individual satirists, religious satire seems to me strikingly
whole or of-a-piece; the satire of Erasmus and More is like the
satire on the socialization of religion.
The terms I try to establish ought to be relevant to such
diverse satires as Butler's Hudibras, John Oldham's Satires
upon the Jesuits, Marvell's Poems on Affairs of State, Dryden's Religio Laici, The Hind and the Panther, or Cowper's The Task. The sheer number of satirists makes it impossible to shake hands with everybody; satire was even in the sixteenth century what Dryden called "a mixed kind of animal." The proliferation of devotional sects, and the sustained controversies regarding the nature and definition of crimes and sins, suggest an unavoidable opportunity—or necessity—for satire; all these matters have circumstantial relevance. I think that the "direct correlation," which no one doubts did exist, between the social, political, and religious upheavals of the Restoration and the many libels, lampoons, satires, and censures of the time can be made much more explicit than it has been. And the atrophying generalizations—that by the middle of the eighteenth century satire had become a "literary habit," or that it is "a problem of nicety to decide how far the satirical element in some eighteenth century poets . . . is natural to them, and how far it is the outcome of their literary environment,"

Among recent studies of English satire which I have not had occasion to refer to, religious and social implications particularly figure in John Peter's Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956). William P. Holden's Anti-Puritan Satire: 1572-1642 (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1954) mainly relates "popular material" to the religious controversies of the age. Albert M. Lyles' Methodism Mocked (London: Epworth, 1960) salvages a lot of anti-Methodist satire from obscure literary dustbins to show how deep-rooted its origins were and how multiform were the prejudices and proprieties of eighteenth-century England.

Sutherland, p. 68.
for example—can stand complication. The convention-environment-experience puzzle does not have to be discarded as unsolvable and unuseful in establishing generic classification; the intentional and affective nature of literature—of satire, at least—can be considered other than fallacious.

Alvin Kernan's admirable study of satire seems to me particularly cogent in his insistence on satire as a literary genre, despite the complex and seemingly disparate mass of prose, poetry, and drama which is English satire of the late Renaissance; and he demonstrates, or at least suggests, the affinity which satire has to tragedy and magic—"thus the resemblance of the satiric and tragic scenes—and both satirist and tragic hero suffer an agonized compulsion to appraise the ills of the world and cure them by naming them."¹¹ He is able to regard Hamlet, for instance, as the greatest instance of the combination of the two roles of tragic hero and satirist. However, Kernan's chief purpose and insistence is that "the Elizabethan and Jacobean satirists are best understood as conventional figures designed for a specific function in satire, not as spokesmen for the authors' views or direct reflections of their own character."¹² His basic contention is "that satire is not a form of biography or social history but an artistic construct, the parts of which—scene, satirist, and plot—are to be understood in terms of their function in the

¹²Ibid., p. 247.
saturic poem.\textsuperscript{13} Accepting his idea of satiric genre (as definable in the "strictly" literary terms of scene, satirist, and plot) and the affinity that he sees in satire and tragedy, I would yet enjoin that it is not always necessary or possible to make a distinction between the "form" of biography or history, and artistic "construct." Employing the very kind of historical and biographic methods he is dubious about, I cannot see (perhaps as a consequence) how such a distinction has a complete validity; I do not see how satire can be considered apart from social history and biography in its generic identification, or why one would insist that it should be.

In their formidable and important book, Wellek and Warren establish the nature of literature and subsequently the basis for literary genres by first making main distinctions between the literary, the everyday, and the scientific uses of language. But the difficulties they recognize in distinguishing such uses are intensified in a reading of the literary works which are the subject of this dissertation. Even literary satire, and not just sub-literary satire or ridicule or direct abuse, has been expressed in "everyday" language and has ostensibly never claimed a place high on Parnassus. The distinction too between literary and scientific language is difficult to see in genres which are saturated with scientific signs and referents, with scientific

\textsuperscript{13}Tbid., p. 250.
fantasies and realities. I do think that "the center of literary art is obviously to be found in the traditional genres of the lyric, the epic, the drama." But it is not clear to me how the highly complex and stratified organization of literary works can be discovered by a restrictive "intrinsic" approach, especially in an attempt to define a genre which is not exactly traditional and to see exactly what value such literary works have as knowledge.

Though Wellek and Warren have virtually nothing to say about satire, even in the most general terms, their methodology seems to me incontrovertible. First, according to their methodology, literary theory is impossible except on the basis of concrete works, some inevitable preconceptions notwithstanding. It is surely reasonable to insist that the criteria, categories, and schemes of literary theory cannot (or should not) be arrived at in vacuo. In its attempt at illustration and reference prior to analysis, I should like to think that this dissertation satisfies the dictum of literary concreteness. Secondly, I have hewn close to the importance they see in going beyond "preliminary operations" to a classification of literary genres, to an examination, necessarily involving value judgments, of literature as a social institution.

But I have also discovered, perhaps reluctantly, that biography, psychology, and sociology simply cannot be banished along with other forms of historical study to what one of their critics, Roy Harvey Pearce, has referred to as "the various levels
of that Hell they call 'The Extrinsic Approach.' " In the study of literature depicting various levels of Hell, I certainly have not been able to avoid such an approach. Cognitive or formalist criticism, as it is developed for example in W. K. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon*, has an austere attraction for me. Yet, in its fear of author psychology and professed intentions, I think it puts any critic at too cool a distance. That style and thought are intimately related is surely an acceptable literary principle. But it is only one. Because of the profusion of genres in the nineteenth century and afterward, Wellek and Warren believe that the classification of novels in sociological terms (political, ecclesiastical, academic, and so on) would have to be extended endlessly and so ought to be avoided. Yet, I wonder, accepting the importance they see in the generic classification of literature as social institution, what does such a classification involve? If I understand them rightly in their grouping of literary works according to "inner form (attitude, tone, purpose—more crudely, subject and audience)," such a grouping must ultimately involve sociological terms. Kenneth Burke's *Philosophy of Literary Form*, for example, and his *Attitudes toward History*, are consistent (if also sometimes aggressive or persistent) in pushing a theory of literary genres in that direction.

Following several "cues" from Burke's philosophy of literary form, I have come to see that the satires "all together, in a lump,
'statistically'," reveal themselves as "'representative' of a social trend" and as "equipment for living." Burke, though no formalist, allows that the "focus of critical analysis must be upon the structure of the given work itself." But he also contends that "observation about structure is more relevant when you approach the work as the functioning of a structure," see it as a "doing something" for the author and his readers, as a "strategy for encompassing a situation." In such "sociological criticism" every document, sociological, religious, or satiric, as symbolic action then has different strategies, the classification of which "would derive its relevance from the fact that it should apply both to works of art and to social situations outside of art." I have had further opportunity for generic perspective in Burke's classification of satire as a strategy for debunking the status quo with immunity, of social science as description of the "drama" of history, and of "inspirational literature" as a strategy for easy consolation; anyway, it seems to me that this classification does correspond to the tri-part classification I elaborate in my discussion of Erasmus and maintain throughout the dissertation. Considering symbolic action as common ground for all action, Hugh Duncan writes: "In the face of anguish, injustice, disease, and death, man adopts policies of acceptance and rejection. As a scientist, poet, or priest, he creates systems which require vocabularies."\footnote{\textit{Language and Literature in Society}, p. 249.}
as scientists, poets or priests—that is, in my terms, writing literature of socio-political, satiric, and devotional kinds—employ identifiable systems and vocabularies which correspond to identifiable patterns of acceptance and rejection.

In examining the satire primarily from the point of view of form, I think that Northrop Frye's "strands" of confession, anatomy, and "quintessential form" have particular relevance; however I do not make, as he does, a strong distinction between "criticism as knowledge" and "value-judgments informed by taste." I do not agree that "sociological values" and "theological standards" make for "nonsense in criticism." Considering the nature of my subject I do not think I can have avoided them. I derive some consolation-by-justification from Wellek and Warren, who in their theory of genres maintain that in passing from the experience of interest to the act of judgment in literature, consequences of value and evaluation are inevitable; and, as they say, in literary analysis, methods are still very clumsy and their basis in theory is still constantly shifting.

I am what I suppose the Chicago critics to call a "syncretist," who tries to reconcile the good parts of various theories thus to make his own. (This rather unpleasant word appears in the most approbative contexts; C. S. Lewis uses it in reference to his "Golden" poets and critics of the sixteenth century, especially Spenser; Wimsatt in The Verbal Icon uses it in referring to himself.) In theoretical matters, I would accept the generic
formalism of Wellek and Warren, explore Burke's dramatism, and then cautiously test two diverging byroads, namely, Hugh Duncan's study of literature as a social institution and Northrop Frye's meticulous generic classification; within this theoretical framework I would want to see how and where my boundaries are directly relevant in such an illustrative and referential study of literary works as *The Power of Satire*. It is on this last study that I have of course modeled my dissertation.

This dissertation, as exploration of the problems I posed for myself, is no doubt a bald simplification, merely one step in what seems to me to be the right direction. Satirists evidently have different social and religious convictions, convictions which seem to have, in any case, different emphases, social or humanistic or religious. I remind myself, for example, that Orwell's primary interest seems to have been in an eventually equalitarian society, and his hostility to religion and annoyance with asceticism testify to an interest in a this-worldly reformation; Russell, though not opposed to religious mythology as a "cultural characteristic," is sensitive to the historical fact of religious persecution and of the opposition of organized religion to humanitarian and scientific progress; T. S. Eliot sees religion as a requisite for culture and as a virtual equivalent to it. However, the differences between them, satirists *qua* satirists, may be more

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apparent than real. And so the simplification, however bald, is made.

It may be that all religious satires, specifically satires on the socialization of religion, are themselves various expressions of religious experience. Joachim Wach writes, "It seems highly desirable and necessary again and again to reflect upon the nature of religion which so often is much too readily identified with forms and institutions with which we are supposed to bear witness. Where in all the various expressions of religious experience is this spirit--still--present, and where is it not? Which are the criteria by which we can identify so-called 'genuine' religious experience?" It might be that the satires are religious as well as "strictly" literary forms. A religious "spirit," as well as a satiric "spirit," seems to be--still--present in them. In a sense this spirit may be one. It may certainly be significant that English satirists of the socialization of religion who were not born into a religious family, or into a particular religious tradition, have often recorded the mature experience of conversion. It may be that in their burden is the principle that reveals the structure of their unburdening; their conversions at least as much as their satires would seem to be "symbolic action," the real conversions of the satirists analogous to the conversions of some of their personae, their own confessions analogous to

16Sociology of Religion, p. 375.
their confessional anatomies (as Northrop Frye would call some Menippean satire). This would seem to be (again following a "cue" from Burke) a "borderline area, in which the symbolic act of art overlaps upon the symbolic act of life." Burke's "borderline" seems to me to be Canon Roger Lloyd's "borderland." The literary theorist could, I think, profitably explore the diverse conversions of Benson, Chesterton, Firbank, and Waugh to Catholicism, of Eliot and C. S. Lewis to the High Church, of Aldous Huxley to the Perennial Philosophy, and of Shaw to Modern Religion, for example. (And if Russell, say, is not a believer in God, he is nonetheless a fervent preacher; his commitment no less than that of Christian satirists has been criticized as sometimes getting in the way of his art.) Such conversion is in a direction different from that of Gulliver's misanthropic conversion, or that of Mark Studdock in Lewis' That Hideous Strength and of Winston Smith in Orwell's 1984. It is rather in the direction of Gilbert Pinfold (Waugh admits to an autobiographic identity), who "had been received into the Church—'conversion' suggests an event more sudden and emotional than his calm acceptance of the propositions of his faith—in early manhood, at the time when many Englishmen of humane education were falling into communism."\[17\] As Burke forewarns, "We can eliminate biography as a relevant fact about poetic organization only if we consider the work of art as if it were written neither

by people nor for people, involving neither inducements nor resistances."

If Georg Simmel is correct, there can exist "piety" without "religion." The satirists, for their part, are appalled by the fact that religious excitement may exist without religious knowledge. It is precisely the purgative revelation of this fact which constitutes the value of the satire as a literary mode. What the satirists point to as an increasing possibility is that social organization and religious belief may become horribly confused, that merely religious organization and strictly social

18 For these "sociological relations psychologically characterized," see Simmel's Sociology of Religion (New York: Wisdom, 1959), pp. 23-27.

19 Cf. William Sargant's Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brainwashing (New York: Doubleday, 1957), which documents the historical uses made of religious excitability for socio-political ends, and the hard consequences of the application of religious conversion to modern political brainwashing; Sargant refers specifically to the interest Msgr. Knox, Huxley, and Orwell have had in this subject.

In examining Mein Kampf, Kenneth Burke repeatedly refers to Hitler's "astounding caricature of religious thought." He draws several object lessons from that book. "But above all," he says in conclusion, "I believe we must make it apparent that Hitler appeals by relying upon a bastardization of fundamentally religious patterns of thought. In this, if properly presented, there is no slight to religion. There is nothing in religion proper that requires a fascist state. There is much in religion, when misused, that does lead to a fascist state. There is a Latin proverb, Corruptio optimi pessima, 'the corruption of the best is the worst.' And it is the corruptors of religion who are a major menace to the world today, in giving the profound patterns of religious thought a crude and sinister distortion." (Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 188.)
belief may develop under the aegis of manipulative science. That the criteria by which "genuine" religious experience are themselves difficult to identify, can hardly be questioned. I have no doubt that the division I make between the satirists I take up in Chapter Three and Chapter Four is a tenuous one. But the satirists in their satire are not primarily or, rather, exclusively interested in any particular criteria, any one religious doctrine by which they can identify "genuine" religious experience in modern society. Indeed, it may be that their satire is even destructive of such an interest or such an identification. Orthodoxy and malefaction (how distinguish between them at all points?) both involve reformatory destruction which is willy-nilly hard to control. Yet it remains that the satirists' common fear seems to be that a time is coming in the not distant future when there will be no "genuine" religious experience or the sharing of such experience. Their intention at least would seem to be to express such a fear, and in expressing such a fear to share it.

In my view there is a relationship rather than a transition in the satires I have discussed. The seeming transition from Utopia to Nightmare insofar as it can be identified in the literature itself has not seemed to me the significant point; that is, the utopian vision has not so much declined as changed to fit historical circumstance, formally identifiable as the same "strategy" but for the encompassing of a different "situation." One need not be startled to find that recurrent themes in them have a
"biblical ring" or that dystopian writers seem to have a "prophetic role." "Inverted utopias also bear witness—and somehow it comes as a surprise in the context—that man is incurably religious," Chad Walsh says. This dissertation can be regarded as an attempt to show that "in the context" such surprise can be vitiated. If, as Wellek and Warren say, literature has as its prime function the provision of experience, then satire, I would say, can be a religious experience. I see some evidence in one large body of literature that satire can be both a religious spirit and a religious genre.
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