Revolution: Religious and Social

By Alan Zaitchik and Chaim Schnur

The question we pose and hopefully answer in this essay is twofold. First, what attitude towards contemporary American society, and its religious institutions, is most suitable, and, second, does the Orthodox Establishment in its relationship to modern America reflect this halachic-conscious perspective or not? We will not attempt to deal in specific halachic categories for the purpose of push, a task far beyond our capabilities and authority, but rather we will strive to offer an original experience of halachic-consciousness a general pronouncement on the now-scene.

This pronouncement is not direct nor narrow in the sense of judging, as a halachically determined obligation, a specific course of action, but is rather descriptive to the extent that we claim that anyone who is intensely aware of halacha and its presuppositions and values must, of necessity, adopt one general attitude to every antithesis. He is the solution of for his son Mammon.

The category is unintelligible to him ... and thus halachic revolution is bent on murdering Halacha, for Halachic-man does not cooperate with the digits of pain-pleasure calculus, neither does he respond to the jolts and tugs of the "big bright green pleasure machine." Halachic-man is not interested in jetams-for-sale, vomit-for-rent. Thus, society decides: "He must be destroyed."

What is the response of the halachic-conscious Jew to a society bent on his eradication? In the words of Jeremiah, he decides, "To root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to overthrow; and to build and to plant." He accepts the challenge; the duel will be fought. Senseless destruction roads of the temporal," social community is achieved. "In a movement that rises first to God and then returns from Him to other self" (Tillich). The halachically aware individual sees his dual extensions: this shadow cast upon the weavers and his shadow cast upon the ground. The halachic revolutionary stands before man in his stance before God.

The revolutionary social dimensions of halacha as sketched above grow out of an even more basic radicalization of halacha. To set off this radicalization in its sharpest colors, let us first turn to the "Orthodox Establishment" and examine, albeit only in generalizations, its values and world-outlook.

Who is at ease in modern Zion? Those who are content in the marketplace, the turned off, gas-heated, would-be-Jews who live better through chemistry, the very Jews who may claim to be, or are, think of themselves as the faithful proponents of traditional Judaism in its highest level of achievement.

On the Left, Orthodox leaders are phar­macists trying to sell a pill they present as easy to swallow. The halachic community, they urge, should open its doors, and dilute its message. Kierkegaard once wrote, however, that in a society where all are Christian (or thus think themselves) et tuyo, none are Christian. A spineless religion, jellied for easier consumption, cannot substitute for a firm approach to man and God.

“God is man idealized (humanist definition). Religion is the aspiration of man toward an idealized existence. An existence in which the functions of God and man are harmonious, even identical. Art is the movement forward, the understanding progress of man. It is feeling and making. A nation (social order) is made the way people feel it should be made. A face is too. Politics is man’s aspiration toward order. Religion is too. Art is an ordering as well. And all these categories are spiritual, but are also the result of the body, at one point, serving as a container of feeling. The soul is no less sensitive.”

LeRoy Jones

Our objections to the Orthodox Right are more sweeping and painful, for we are more akin the Right in its face-value acceptance of the centrality of Halacha. There are two trends in this community which are stifling and crippling halachic vibrancy. The first of these is the near solipsism into which the Right has pushed itself. The rationalization given is that, by clustering its groups into certain neighborhoods, it can henceforth sit back and refuse to confront and feel the challenge of those very issues which are making the foundations of the “external” world’s ethos. The Right has refused to understand that the irreligious world is also alive, up and moving, and searching individuals who have some extremely potent claims against today’s brand of Orthodoxy to disturb our mental inertia. In a similar situation, Kierkegaard once wrote: “When all combine in every way to make everything easier and easier, there remains only one possible danger, namely that the easiness of breathing that this should be too great; then only one want is left ... difficulty.” Orthodox Judaism has been a created mammon, and, translated to use a cliche, bourgeois. This has in turn led to complacency and the notion that no honest self-criticism is required, no fundamental reorientation is needed. The struggle for the genuine halachic Self is deemed suspicious.

A whole new way of viewing and experiencing halacha is warranted. True, a priori acceptance of the halachic system as (Continued on page 2, column 1)
Revolution . . .  

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a whole is obligatory to remain within the 
holistic community. However, our experi-
ence and expansion of that mode of life must be qualitatively revamped. Tension 
and existential confrontation with those around, religious "discomfort in Zion" must 
be viewed as prerequisites for spiritual 
meaning. In short, what is warranted is the radicalization of the Torah committed 
individual through viewing himself as a 
lonely revolutionary, indeed as a guerrilla 
fighter—struggling against the wall of our 
manual, parental, or governmental, except that 
knowledge is a prerequisite for individ-
al and social action. This is perhaps what 
the Sifre envisioned on the verse, asher 
Avodot meteenukha hayayown — They shouldn't ap-
pear to you as an old royal decree but rather 
as a new edict to which all run.

In another place (Deut. 11:32), the Sifre 
speaks of doing and accepting mitzvot as 
though they had just been received from 
Sinai. The implications of this are twofold: 
a) Mitzvot should not be viewed as repeti-
tional rituals, but rather as exciting expe-
riences which are in themselves new and 
invigorating; b) that mitzvot themselves should be seen as revolutionary ideas — 
keilu kihnutem hayayon — as though these 
concepts had not existed before, and were 
not contingent on any authority, be it so-
cial, parental, or governmental, except that 
of the Divine Revelation. In other words, 
the confrontation in mitzvot of old and 
new must constantly be salient and ac-
knownledged.

Admittedly this radicalization of atti-
tude is not easy to master. A striking pas-
sage in Berachot 63a enlightens us about its 
attainments:  
R. Judah spoke further in honor of the 
Torah expounding the text: "Attend 
and hear, O Israel: this day thou art 
become a people unto the Lord thy 
God." Now it was on that day that the 
Torah was given to Israel . . . It is 
however to teach you that the Torah is as 
beloved every day to those that study it 
as on the day when it was given from 
Mount Sinai.

A clear connection is made between the 
existential re-acceptance of Torah and its 
intellectual pursuit. Once again we may 
make a double inference: a) the excitement 
of intellectually crystallizing the 
halachic system is in itself an act of reli-
gious commitment; b) learning the 
holacha without any "idols" to use Isaac's 
term is warranted. Our learning must in 
itsself be revolutionary in the sense that its 
authority is internal and method novel. 
By its very definition, learning must con-
tain some irrelevant elements to make it 
a sincere and healthy pursuit. This does 
not imply rejection of any sugia, but ra-
er a broad-minded and analytic pro-
gram in the interpretation and elucidation 
of the primary texts. According to this, 
the radicalism of our thought is the first step in the radicalization of our ac-
tions through asiyat haMitvot.

The dangers implicit in this approach are 
apparent since a new and sometimes fright-
ening emphasis and responsibility is placed 
on each individual, his confrontation and 
response. This subjectivism might in 
turn lead to religious anarchy. However, 
we must establish that we are working 
within a given system, a priori and demand-
ing. The question with which we are deal-
ing is how we will function and negotiate 
within that system. Furthermore, the Di-
vine Revelation, with all its communal and 
national aspects, was nevertheless an indivi-
dual communication, through which each 
person heard the Divine Voice being direct-
ded specifically and uniquely towards him-
self. On the first command of the Deca-
logue, the Ramban comments on the sin-
gular use: "He speaks to each individual . . . in order that they shouldn't think (that 
each will be judged) according to the ma-
jority, thus saving the individual." We are 
engaged in the first commandment against 
seeking religious abolution in the lax 
standards of our society, for through reve-
lation, moral relativity is declared obsolete.

Hiding ourselves in groups in order to 
avoid facing the conflict which surrounds 
us is a dangerous cop-out, striking at the 
inner vibrancy of the halacha by proclai-
ming its disinterest and irrelevance. This 
view can result only in the further deteri-
oration of the present marshmallow Ortho-
dox community. As Unamuno wrote: "And 
may God deny you peace but give you 
glory."

By Stephen Sadowsky  
The world is mechanistic: man is ma-
chine-like. The cosmos—so cold and im-
personal—is no longer compatible with the 
human element. Love, hate, pity, fear have 
no place in a technological world govern-
ated by cause and effect, by switch-on and 
switch-off. In fact, man can be viewed at 
a mere machine, while the universe at large 
is but one large factory, housing millions 
of the blood-producing man-machines. Such 
is the philosophy espoused by Diane Wa-
koski in her aptly titled, Inside the Blood 
Factory, her latest volume of poetry.

Reading Miss Wakoski's poems is a 
cathartic, almost traumatic experience. 
Powerful, shocking, impressive—these ad-
jectives all apply to her poetry. And yet, 
many of the thought patterns and image 
systems are hidden, masked behind obscure 
mental images. One "feels" the poem, ex-
periencing it, without the aid of intellectual 
analysis.

Miss Wakoski can perhaps be excused 
for her contribution to the obscure tradi-
tion in American poetry, for she has some 
reason, some method to her abstruseness: 
coherent, logical images were never her in-
terest. Instead, she wished to utilise a 
method of writing pieces quite analogous 
to the stream-of-consciousness technique 
used in prose writing—a style I will term 
the "psychanalytically" approach to poetry. 

The poet is the patient; the reader is the 
psychanalyst. The patient, Miss Wakoski, 
sits back on her couch and pours out her 
soul without regard to order or form: her 
visions of the world and herself, her fears, 
dreams and hang-ups all follow glibly. And 
we amateur psychiatrists read and read.

Portrait Of The Artist 
As A Machine  

times, we are moved to moments of passion 
and, at others, frozen dead like an iceberg. 
We cannot claim to understand all of the 
poetry—at least, we cannot verbally ex-
plain it in concise terms. However, we 
are moved. We experience. We live. And 
we change.

Miss Wakoski's choice of enigmatic, 
cryptic language takes on more signifi-
cance when we consider the function of 
language. T. S. Eliot in his essay, The 
Social Function of Poetry, states that poe-
try and language are local, meaning that 
both embody the ethos or culture of a 
particular people: 
"Emotion and feeling, then, are best 
expressed in the common language of 
the people—that is, in the language 
common to all classes: the structure, the 
rhythm, the sound, the idioms of a 
language, express the personality of 
the people which speaks it."

And Walt Whitman, in the 1855 "Pro-
face" to his Leaves of Grass, tries to de-
scribe the English language as being the 
best fit tool for the most powerful expres-
sion of Americanism and the American 
ideals. English "is the chosen tongue to 
express growth faith self-esteem freedom 

justice equality friendliness amplitude pru-
udence decision and courage," (sic—com-
mon left out by Whitman). Hence, Miss 
Wakoski's choice of vague, ambiguous 
language is but a mirror of today's mod-
era technological society, which, accord-
ing to her opinion operates without prin-
ciple, is incoherent and illogical and is 
devoid of meaning and purpose.

This disillusionment with the banal- 
like, materialistic-oriented society is best 
drawn in "Blue Monday," one of Miss Wa-
koski's most powerful poems. Weekly life, 
the weekdays, is dull: work is neces-
ary; money must be made; responsibilities 
need be fulfilled. This life is char-
acterized by "a blue business suit," a "glass 
cane, hollow" and "a banker." Love or 
any other human emotion is relegated to 
weekends. But Monday always comes, un-
hering in the workaday world, the week-
day life—tedious, repetitive . . . Boredom: 
"Blue Monday: Monday at 3:00 and 
Monday at 7:30 and Monday at 10:00."

On Blue Monday everyone is extremely 
time-conscious. Time, time, time-schedules 
must be adhered to; time, time, time-ridi-
(Continued on page 3, column 1)
Continuing her psychoanalytic excursion to a depiction of a great moment in black volt in the annals of American Negro slav­zer Prize. The book, chron icling what Sty­ron calls, "the onJy effective sustai ne­re­perhaps communic ate with someone else in oxygen, and blue is the color of frozen blood, · blood depleted of all its life-giving spirit, man _is dead.

The rebellion, however, fails. The lava and the blood-life forces-are churned into blue to emote, tries to pour out her soul and

And I cannot remember what you, said though the harbor was foggy and your pee coat seemed to drip with moisture.

The sailor is dressed in seers (a sea man hanged) he is intercourse—the sym­bol of life, virility. But what did he say?

"Perhaps you told me you were not dead."

Life is a "perhaps," a conjecture needing constant affirmation. And the sailor, drip­ping with moisture, calculates a healthy amount of the living, of seers teeming over with thriving spermat ozoa, into the sterile environment. But the harbor is "foggy," the sailor bury, but the sail­or comes or comes in a dream: in real life, nothing comes. Miss Wakoski's vision is bleak, black—no longer merely blue.

In "The Father of My Country," Miss Wakoski is most: comfortable on her psy­choanalytical couch, pouring forth the source­ of her hang-ups and the reasons for her alienation from society. The world, she claims, has "military origins," fath­ered by "rough military men." The mili­tary is synonymous in Miss Wakoski's fings to the machinery, for her father, the military man, left the narrator's house when she was under two to be "replaced by other machinery." The "general," the "higher-ups," are the symbolic em­bodiments of life according to strict discipline and uncompromising order: life is stultified; rigor mortis sets in; communi­cation between human beings on a hu­man level is impossible, the human factor is excluded from life:

"My father is coming in a letter once a month for a while, and my father sometimes came in a telegram but mostly

Continuing her psychoanalytic excursion in "The Night A Sailor Came To Me In A Dream," Miss Wakoski attempts to es­cape from the real world. In order to come to grips with the everyday world, the poet retreats into a dream world:

"The structure of dream like an umbrella lowered over my head, around me."

The word "harness" implies that the poet is a captive, a prisoner in this dream world, never permitted to grasp life fully: "You haven't swallowed reality yet." Existence, life, is stagnant and people enrepeat, caught up, by the phantasmal world of dreams can onlyake away life, never breaching the well-of surrounding daily existence, as if they were "chickens come out of the living room— to peck for corn and the grains like old yellow eyes roll like marbles across the floor."

One night, however, a sailor comes, bringing some aspect of life, some bit of humanity:

"Come inside--"

The Confessions of Nat Turner by Wil­liam Styron was on the best seller list for many weeks, and has been awarded a Pult­zer Prize. The book, chronicling what Sty­ron calls, "the only effective sustenance to the annals of American Negro slavery," received nearly unanimous acclaim from white reviewers at the time of its publication.

The absence of black writers responding to a depiction of a great moment in black history prompted John Henrik Clarke, the editor of William Styron's Nat Turner. Ten Black Writers Respond, to elicit a response from black writers to Styron's conception of black history in general, and Nat Turner's revolt in particular.

The work is an important one, for it allows us to see how easily we may be
cated as one human to another human. Then life can be affirmed and the mech­anized cosmos can be personalized, hu­manized.

However, such optimism on the part of Miss Wakoski is unconvincing. How can such interpersonal communication exist in the world she has described? Can the glass telephone booth be opened? We never find out. Miss Wakoski's optimism is apparently unfounded. Miss Wakoski's poetry may also be viewed as being enclosed in a glass telephone booth, embroueded in obscure imagery. But when we do get inside the booth and pick up the receiver—as Miss Wakoski permits us to do with her "psychoanalytical techni­que"—we hear voices of gloom, voices of blackness, voices of desperation. Occasionally, a cheerful note is piped over the line, but it is out of place. Eventually we hang up the receiver, perhaps a bit puzzled and confused, but definitely moved at our inspe­ction, our inside view, of Miss Wa­koski's "Blood Factory.

Love is anterior to life— Posterior to death— Initial of creation, and The exponent of earth."

Emily Dickinson

"Love is anterior to life— Posterior to death— Initial of creation, and The exponent of earth."

Emily Dickinson

"Love is anterior to life— Posterior to death— Initial of creation, and The exponent of earth."

"Love is anterior to life— Posterior to death— Initial of creation, and The exponent of earth."
Nat's Revolt...

(Continued from page 3, column 4)

projections that William Styron falls vic­
tim to.

Styron comes under further criticism for ignoring history and choosing to cre­ate his own, by asserting that Nat's revolt was the only effective slave revolt in the annals of American slavery. All the writ­ers point out the fact that, as an historian, he states, "the records are full of black up­risings, plots and rumors of plots, from New York to South Carolina and Georgia, Virginia, Maryland and Mississippi." The refusal to recognize history is viewed as an implication of Styron's attempt to char­acterize slaves as docile sambos, happy to live like pigs with their enlightened mas­ters.

The collective sentiments regarding the reception of Confessions of Nat Turner by the late world are best illustrated in John Oliver Killens' essay, The Confes­sions of Willie Styron:

Malraux: Existential Anti-Philosophy

Americans loved this fake illusion of re­ality because it legitimized all of their myths and prejudices of the American black man, and further, because it cut yet another great American black man to the size of a boy. Nat Turner, in the tradition of most black Americans, was a man of tragedy, a giant, but William Styron has depicted him as a child of circumstance while reading the au­thor's egocentricity involved in believing that tent to which Malraux injects his own description of conversations at misfortune) to witness the makers of his­torical individual described by Hegel in the periphery, fundamental egocentricity takes a diff­

The latter criticism applies, in part, to Andre Malraux's Anti-Memoirs, but the problem that evolves from the writer's fundamental egocentricity takes a differ­

ent, less offensive form. Malraux, unlike most autobiographers, is not at the cen­
ter of his work, but only appears here or there in the periphery as an observer who had the good fortune (or in some cases, misfortune) to witness the makers of his­
tory as critical moments in their creative destruc­tive work. Most often the only ex­
tent to which Malraux injects his own personality into the work is in his reseter­
ing or description of conversations at which he was present.

To this extent, Anti-Memoirs affords us a unique insight into some of the "great" men of the Twentieth Century. I use the term "great" advisedly, since there is of­

ten disagreement as to what constitutes greatness. In Malraux's account of conver­
sations with men such as Mao Tse Tung and Charles de Gaulle, his definition is apparent. These are men who have shaped the destinies of their respective coun­
tries, and in doing so they have altered or created the history that intersects the course of those destinies. These are great men who represent for Malraux the world historical individual described by Hegel in his philosophy of history. The antithesis of a thesis doomed to destruc­tion is embodied in their nature.

To the extent to which such men share this characteristic they all partake of what Malraux conceives of as heroic qualities. That is, each is "ready to risk torture sim­
ply for the sake of his own conception of himself... because the risk of torture alone seems to him triumph over death." The quality is cryptic in that Malraux clearly holds the hero in great regard, yet the definition itself seems to cast him in an image of self-centered selfishness.

A man unable of sacrificing a nation to nourish his own image? Do great men conceive of themselves as co­

extensive with the people they lead? Malraux is not clear on these points. While at one moment his words suggest admiration for de Gaulle, at the next turn he provides an inhibiting glimp­se into the man’s frailty. Which de Gaulle are we to believe? Admire? Condemn? Mal­

raux does not tell us. He suggests.

Past reviews of Anti Memoirs have tended to emphasize these conversations as being most central to Malraux's intended purpose in writing his memoirs. Malraux is one of a very few truly artistic and expressive individuals who have been in­

ternate contact with world leaders. In this unique position he has become an invaluable liaison between the leader as a private man in public of­

ice and the loneliness of the people he leads.

But to say that Malraux actually an­

swers the questions he confronts is mis­
leading in the sense that the questions have no answers. Existential problems are formu­

lated into nonsense questions couch­

ed in deceptively rational form and are

meant to be indicative and exemplary of the fundamental point about which exis­
tentialism concerns itself—absurdity and purposelessness in the guise of reason and direction.

It is, one must realize, the attempt to describe and comprehend that besots on one the only immortality he can ever enjoy. The victory of knowledge of the existential type is the only victory within human reach. Malraux succeeds beautifully in visualizing for us the full breadth of possibili­ties in the fusion of meaning and vacuity, sense and nonsense, life and death. Unfortunately much of the impact is lost in a hopelessly cluttered catalogue of trivia an autobiography inevitably in­
cludes. It is on this point that my initial criticism of autobiographies applies to Malraux. Far too many details, facts and incidents are of so highly a specialized and restricted nature as to be of no in­

terest or benefit to the reader. Too much is included suited for Malraux’s own knowledge and interests; so much is shallow, inconsequential and undistin­

guished.

For all this and all that, reading Anti Memoirs is an individual effort not dis­
couraging task. Malraux, fortunately, has made that which is truly worthwhile dis­

tinct from that which is incidental—both in his life and in his writings.

But Malraux’s most substantial and meaningful contribution as a creative and sensitive thinker is not repetition of con­

sideration but analysis and description of the confrontation with death he has seen and experienced so often. This is, in fact, Malraux’s greatest concern and inspir­ing force. He considers the confrontation as he has witnessed it, in every possible common form—from suicide to that vio­

ger of suicides, death in war.

It is in this area that Malraux shows uncom­

mon insight into the fear that plagues a mortal who senses the immortal within him. Once man has been glorified, public or private, death can only come as an insult, a tragedy, an absurd negation of what life leads one to believe it is true. Malraux reveals to us the unfolding of the existential psyche with sensitive simplicity. The instant of confrontation that terminates an individual existence is stretched into pages of dialogue between the self one has idealized and the self one knows at the stark, un­

Did you know that this text is an excerpt from a larger work? If so, how do you think the full context would change your understanding of the themes discussed? 

**THE DAY IT ENDED**

**The day it ended**

We pulled back
Trots and times;
W e dismantled the bunkers
And our thoughts—leaving
The muddy air and dead
Tangles of transplanted
Trees and sweat-sullied
W eavands.
W e carried from the heat
Of sharpened screams
And leveled bars
In the sunset and dread
Of flashing nights.
W e left little
But a child
Confused by the settling Dust.

Kenneth Hain

* * *
Religion And Modern Man—
Shortage Of Response, Excess Of Need

Religious commitment is also subjected to a second, different type of attack. It is an attack far from being under-involved with society. It is an attack that some people have found very emotionally involved with it and rather than being indifferent to its ultimate effects, challenge it. It is from these people that we have a different attack of terms like existentialism, anguish, crises and men like Camus, Sartre and Nietzsche. The problem raised by these people is not necessarily unique to our period but is aggravated and brought to the fore by the tumultuous upheavals of this century and the nature of modern society. The problem faced is that of the existential crisis, i.e., how to find meaning in a meaningless world, a world stripped of purpose and goal described by Camus in the Myth of Sisyphus.

It happens that the stage sets collapse, Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office of the factory, meal, streetcars, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays, Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythms — this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the "why" arises. . . .

Contemporary man is injected into a situation where his past values, systems and beliefs break down. Stepping off the treadmill he turns around and asks "why?" This is the question on which the whole world is balanced, and it is the one traditionally asked from all his labors. Yet, religion doesn't project itself into man's being to give him the answer and he is left with the question "why believe?" Often he wishes with all his power to believe but cannot. It was not casually said that modern man does not have the ability to pray.

This then is the two-fold attack on religion. From one side it is asked to draw a commitment from people who refuse to involve themselves; and from the other side it is beseeched to give a total answer to those who earnestly seek one yet cannot find it in the established religion.

Three thousand years ago the same questions were raised by Ecclesiastes, "What profit hath a man from all his labor which he labors under the sun?" The answer was a suspension of doubt to achieve a faith which overides questioning. Such an answer requires a leap of faith which modern man is not willing to grant and from which stems both his greatness and his supreme loneliness. The answer is not to be uncovered.
Havurah: Stereophonic Relevance

By Sheldon Schor

Since the founding of the three great centers of Jewish thought before the turn of the century, there have been few major innovations in Jewish thought. With the exception of yeshivot which were transplanted from Eastern Europe, but followed the basic Orthodox trend, the leaders in Jewish thought have been Yeshiva University for the Orthodox, the Jewish Theological Seminary for the Conservative, and the Hebrew Union College for the Reform. The only other major denomination that has appeared since 1900 has been the Reconstructionist movement which was intended to be a trans-denominational movement within all of American Jewry. But the denominations retained their identity and resisted the unification under Reconstructionism. Thus, when the Reconstructionists established their seminary last year in Philadelphia, it was founded counter to their own principles. Realizing that they could not influence American Jewry from within the present structure, they established their seminary with the intent of influencing Jewry from without.

The Reconstructionists, however, make a point of their basic non-denominational viewpoint. They consider this structure of three brands of Jewish faith outdated and a fossilized remnant of the faith that was prevalent among Jews over a half century ago. Today, not all Jews feel comfortable in classifying themselves under the strict definition of either of these three modes of Judaism. There is a movement afoot to seek a newer and more compatible understanding of Judaism, not restricted by the ideologies of one or these three versions of Judaism. In this respect, the Reconstructionist Seminary is very similar to the other new form of seminary that was established in Cambridge, Massachusetts — the Havurah Shalom Community Seminary.

Dr. Charles Liebman, in his discussion of the new movements in Jewish Seminaries, stated that there are two main trends that permeate and motivate the Havurah: the non-denominationalism that was characteristic of the American Jewish Reform, and the direct reaction against the coldly rational, religious existentialist movement that characterized Jewish intellectual thought a decade ago, the Havurah believes in a philosophy that transcends the various restrictive denominations of Judaism and the restrictive rationality of the Self and tries to develop a philosophy which might help many of the boys attending Yeshiva College. I know that I, as many friends and acquaintances, am disappointed in what Yeshiva University has done for me. I came here to help keep alive the American spirit of Judaism itself, they are still searching for a satisfactory answer.

I found the Havurah approach an interesting method which might help many of the boys attending Yeshiva College. I know that I, and many friends and acquaintances, am disappointed in what Yeshiva University has done for me. I came here to help keep alive the American spirit of Judaism itself, they are still searching for a satisfactory answer.

The Havurah is searching for a way to make the service a worthwhile experience of life rather than merely an exercise in heart. Many prayers are meaningless repetitions in which the beginning and the end are known. The element of unexpectedness, an element so prevalent in life itself, is lacking in most prayers. The Havurah is searching for a way to make the service the meaningful part of the service with the ideas of the Past. As such, the Havurah is a dynamic and changing institution, and its particular appearance on that one Shabbat is not indicative of its make-up for every day.

The Havurah building is located on a small back street in Cambridge not far from Harvard Square. On the first floor, quarters of Rabbi Arthur Green (ordination from J.T.S.) who is the head of the institution.

This year was the first year of operation for the Havurah. As such, the student body is small — only eleven students — the faculty is small, and the course offerings are likewise limited. Courses at the Havurah are on a seminar basis in which the only distinction between a teacher and a student is that the teacher is better equipped to lead discussions. There are no grades. Classes meet whenever those students interested in a course offering decide to meet with the instructor. Great emphasis is also placed

ate for itself a religious awareness of the meaning of life in the presence of one's fellow man.

I visited the Havurah Shalom for a Shabbat towards the end of last March, I will try to describe briefly what I found there, though I want to emphasize that what I saw there was what went on during one particular day. The Havurah is a dynamic and changing institution, and its particular appearance on that one Shabbat is not indicative of its make-up for every day.

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Reflections On The Animal Human

By Abraham Klinktlinger

In Steps, Jerzy Kosinski creates his own moral universe, which is embodied in the unidentified speaker whose voice the novel speaks. It is a universe whose driving force is brutal, often senseless violence and unlicensed sexuality. Man is seen as the beast par excellence of creation. His imagination interacts with the intellect to create novel forms of torture and revenge. Sex is alienated from its human qualities until it too becomes an extension of the viciousness which seems to be the dominating principle of all other human activities.

The picture may be repulsive, but it never rings false. Kosinski's novel succeeds because his vision, however distorted, has truth nevertheless. It is the same kind of cement that nourishes human inventiveness to develop new and sophisticated forms of cruelty against itself, and the brutality which is fundamental to all injustice — the denial of another's humanity. Kosinski's writing is important because it contributes vitally to our understanding of the human condition. In a particularly acute passage, Kosinski explains why concentration camps were seen as "hygienic" institutions, with the superstitious belief that they were "healthful" and "sanitary," and how this belief contributed vitally to the re-establishment of the worship of God. "Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, not omitting ceremonies of bravery, in the ignominy of his fallen gods." Man is movement. "One can stand still in a flowing stream, if you don't know what is a man? Man is alive, man is movement, Japanese proverb; but a man can be a man, how can you be a man if you don't know what is a man? Man is alive, man is movement. Japanese proverb "One can stand still in a flowing stream, but not in a world of men." Man is change, man is movement. Pascal said that most of the evils of life arose from man's being unable to sit still in a room. Man is movement. Man is striving upwards and fooling himself into thinking he's arrived. Man is pathetic in his pomposity. "Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal luster; not omitting ceremonies of bravery, in the ignominy of his fallen gods." (Thomas Browne in Hydrotaphia.) Man is carpeish, man is petty, man is coarse, man is insensate. "There are some men formed with feelings so blunt, that they can hardly be said to be awake during the whole course of their lives." —Edmund Burke. S. A. Allibone. Man is coarse, man is cruel, man is an animal. Darwin in the Descent of Man. "We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities . . . still bears in his bodily frame, the indelible stamp of his lowly origin." And yet, Gabriele d'Annunzio said that "My aim is the re-establishment of the worship of men." Worship what? An ape? Worship what? Man? How can you worship man if you don't know what he is? How can you worship God? How can you know God if you don't know what man is? Only man can know God.

To know, to know, to die, to live without knowing, to die without knowing, to die without believing, to live without believing, to believe without knowing. Such is man, such is man, such is What? What is...
Seance Showcase

By Jack Bieler

A reader of the stories that appear in J.B. Singer's The Seance, even if he happens to be very familiar with Singer's previous writings, will not find it difficult to understand why the author has received such consistent praise for his work, and why the appellation of master story-teller is so fitting in his case.

Each of the sixteen stories that comprise the most recent volume of his work is well worth reading for its own merits. However, The Seance manages to transcend being a mere showcase of one man's literary talents and becomes significant from the point of view of literature in general. What Singer has done in his major stories is demonstrated and effectively implemented two diverse approaches to the literary presentation of a particular theme by an author. In some of the stories, the reader finds himself making the intimate acquaintance of one or two characters via the exposure of the protagonist's memories, thoughts and dreams for the future. This occurs during a short span of time in which one or two significant events befall him. Such a story is the one giving the collection its name, "The Seance," in which all eyes are focused upon Dr. Zorach Kalisher, a man for whom, we are told, the real world has meant little more than profound hopelessness and frustration. His supreme loneliness and constant search for something in which to place his faith leads him to the illusory world of crystal balls and mediums. The story is brought to a climax when Kalisher's attempt to make contact with the world of the dead leads him to rediscover the world of the living. It is the Doctor upon whom the spotlight is thrown throughout and who is the focal point of the narrative.

Another example of this genre of story is "The Lecture," where despite a surrealistic twist involving a journey back in time by an individual considering himself the product of the twentieth century and twentieth century Poland, the story is told in the first person and it is the narrator with whom the reader empathizes and around whom the action swirls. And once again in "The Letter Writer," Herman Glimcher's mental imagery's, experiences and relationships are what makes the story meaningful.

But Singer does not confine himself to focusing upon one particular character, and there are included in The Seance stories which exemplify the placing of emphasis by the author upon events rather than upon people. The conflicts that the forces of fate and circumstance cause in the lives of individuals become the focal points of the stories while the individuals themselves remain basically two-dimensional sketches. In "The Plagiarist," the major theme is a description of the emotions experienced by Reb Kastiel Dan when his religiosity and ethical sense are put to the supreme test and how after seeing how close he has come to failing the trial, Reb Dan reaches the ultimate decision to forsake society entirely. Although one might think that such a subject would involve a highly personal treatment of the protagonist, this is not the case. Reb Dan serves as a shell for the conflicting forces that are raging within him.

Similarly, in "The Brooch," when a professional thief discovers that he is not the only member of his family whose dealings are on the "shady side," but that his wife, whom he had previously thought to be a veritable pillar of virtue, had also engaged in thievery, then it is the confrontation and the overlapping of the two worlds, that of the moral and pure with that of the immoral and tainted, that becomes the central theme of the story. And finally, in "The Slaughterer," one of the most powerful stories in the entire collection, the shattering collision that results when a man's sensitivity does not allow him to adapt to his surroundings moves the story along. Yoineh Meir, the man forced into becoming the town slaughterer, does not emerge as a distinct individual, but rather merely provides a framework for the major theme. In "The Plagiarist," "The Brooch" and "The Slaughterer," Singer is reiterating the Shakespearean theme that "all the world's a stage and all the people merely players" (as opposed to individuals).

Besides the skilful display by Singer of two varied approaches in his literary creations, these six stories also are indicative of the author's understanding of the effectiveness of these particular approach-
es. Singer in the past has been known almost exclusively to use the nineteenth-century Jewish scene as a backdrop for his writings. And indeed, in the second group of stories cited above, those in which the theme of conflict transcends the individual characters themselves, the setting is the ghetto or shetel. The reader does not find the alien on, at best, strange setting to be a hindrance to his comprehension of the author's theme, because the sources of fate and circumstances are not and never have been limited to a particular age of society. The theme of conflict, whether it be manifested in a clash between the powers of good and evil, life and death, heiror and disgrace, or holiness and apostasy, is not dependent upon the scenario that accompanies it. However, when an author attempts to construct a character to which the individual reader can relate, then the cultural as well as the temporal gap between the ghetto and contemporary life becomes a significant factor, which, if not dealt with properly could hinder the effect of the particular story. Perhaps this is why Singer in the first group of stories departs from his own established convention vis-a-vis setting and places the events in modern day Canada and the United States.

In all, whether you are interested in observing technical virtuosity or merely wish to sit back and immerse yourself in some fine literature, The Seance is to be recommended.

... but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awoke. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

Henry David Thoreau

By Abraham Knozlinger

Uncle's Coming

Uncle's coming.
You know Uncle.
Uncle of the fair skinned and rol ling plains
And the sea of waving wheat
Pregnant with the promise of plenty.
Uncle of the majestic mountains
And the bountiful oceans.
You know Uncle.
Uncle of the mammoth cities
That stretch the horizons of prosperity.
Uncle of glad tidings and secure babies
And star-spangled opportunities.
Uncle's coming with his lightning palette
To paint his fair-skinned nephews
Red with gore.

Mond a y, May 26, 1969
THE COMMENTATOR
“There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon and received with
wonder or
Pity or love or dread, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a
certain part of
The day . . . or for many years or stretching cycles of
years.”

Walt Whitman
Cleaver: Youth – Great American Hope

By Ivan Ettman

"Rape was an insurrectionary act. It delighted me that I was defiling and trampling upon the white man's law, upon his system of values, and that I was defiling his women." This promulgation of rationalized rape marks the nadir of Eldridge Cleaver's philosophy—it is a philosophy, though brutalized and dehumanized. In Soul On Ice, Cleaver begins with that hateful, destructive period in his life and traces his gradual development of an ameliorative philosophy.

When he was eighteen years old, Eldridge Cleaver was sent to prison for possession of marijuana: "I was in love with the weed and I did not for one minute think that anything was wrong with getting high. I was convinced that marijuana was superior to lush, yet the rulers of my mind during that period can best be summed up in some lines that he wrote:

TO A WHITE GIRL
I hate you
Because you're white,
Your white meat
Is nightmare food.
White is
The skin of Evil.
You're my Moby Dick,
White Witch.
Symbol of the rope and hanging tree,
Of the burning cross....
After being returned to prison, Cleaver took a "long look" at himself and for the first time in his life admitted that he was wrong: "I had gone astray—astray not so much from the white man's law as from being human, civilized—for I could not approve the act of rape." Cleaver continues, "I lost my self respect. My pride as a man dissolved and my whole fragile moral structure seemed to collapse." To save himself, Cleaver started to write. He had to seek out the truth and unravel the convolutions of his motivations.

"If we—and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, re-created from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, no more water, the fire next time."

James Balwin

By Ivan Ettman

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