

# Tangents

... by Thane

THE PROSPEROS - 2319 Market Street, San Francisco, California

VOLUME II, ISSUE 33

Copyright, 1963

Dear Friend,

From Lepanto to the Nuclear Space Age is no more than the flick of an eyelash in correct perspective of time. Conversely, from galley slaves released from their oars and the whiplash of the helmsman to man orbiting weightlessly in space is a very long haul. But the fact that man's hand still fits the sword of Lepanto, which is to say the use of the hand has not changed as far as killing instincts are concerned, is something else again.

Anyone with a slight grasp of international affairs and the nature of an atomic war knows that the instinct to settle anything by killing is more archaic than Don John's sword, or a dinosaur for that matter. Everyone should know that the Darwinian instinct of survival can be, and has been in many ways, changed from survival of the fittest, in the physical sense, to the physical fittest protecting those more fitting for survival. Still, man is plagued with either a death-fear from atomic warfare, or a death-wish ala Freud, because he thinks man is no damned good and shouldn't survive.

John Wharton recently points out (1) that three words "patriotism," "honor," and "nation" can still thrust man into war. Wharton wonders if biologically man is incapable of eliminating the instinct to kill when he is pressured by trite slogans delivered by men who know how to emotionally reach the unconscious of man, as Hitler did.

Wharton points out that people prefer to live by illusions, although he admits this is only true in the masses and not necessarily true in individuals. Nevertheless, he calls attention to the fact that it is man's values that makes him respond robot-like to slogans that are illusions and, possibly delusions.

We are all more than familiar with these illusions: "War is the crucible in which God tests the nations" ... "wars provide a glory in life," and any "deprivation caused by war can be repaired in a generation or so." Another meaningless threat in this modern world which is sure

TANGENTS II-33-1

to electrify some is the deluges of advice to avoid "internationalists."

Other slogans that have a direct appeal to the area of man's mind that Hitler exploited to the nth degree are "bury the capitalists" and "destroy communism". These may sound like progressive values but they are not pertinent in today's world.

There is a real need to counteract illusions such as "atomic war will be glorious," "it won't be too bad,"--"a new Messiah" will come, or we'll be saved by funny looking men from out of space, who are currently watching us. If they are, it must be like our going to a zoo to look in fascinated horror at snakes.

Men live by illusions until experience corrects their values, advises LeBon (2), and Wharton says the falsity of the illusion must be shown before its grip can be broken. He concludes that this must be through a personal experience, though he is not certain of this. I don't know either except that I know innumerable illusions have been proven to be false and this is the root of our drift into mediocrity and commonness. This, and fear is man's undoing.

It probably all totals to fear, and the onslaught of automation has added its weight. All scientific triumphs have lead to fear. Even though the cotton gin brought new industries and more work for men, it was greatly feared at the time. Of course the fear comes from the sense of values lost and the inertia that has to be stirred to accomplish new values. It sums up to the fact that man feels he cannot manage the world and at the same time, and for good reason in most instances, derides and deploras what appeared to be unshakable values of yesterday.

The playwrights, as is one of their responsibilities, in the avant-garde plays or the new Theatre of the Absurd, in dwelling on ambiguity and irrelevance, are aiding in the breakdown of values, or are progressing toward new values.

The latter is a matter of opinion, of viewpoint, but as a dynamic they are adding to the confusion relative to values. This theatre says "we have foolishly allowed ourselves to fall into our present state and need to be jolted out of it. We used words carelessly, or without awareness of their inherent imperfection, and have frustrated our efforts at communication. We have permitted out habits, and our conventional social responses, to form crusts about us. We have forgotten who we are, mislaid our identities. We had better look at these things--hard-- and try to correct them before the world breaks down.

"...we are just now waking up to the fact that nothing we can do...is capable of affecting the incoherent and immobile nature of the universe." (3)

Thus the avant-garde playwright seeks to be a light and yet it seems to me where they fail, and where their plays fail, is based on their judging appearances as evidence of the real universe. As I have said, this gives the view of discontinuity and leaves them without the factual assurance the holistic view provides, the Truth of Continuum.

But they play their part when Ionesco explains that the "cliches, empty formulas, and slogans...must be relentlessly split apart in order to find the living sap beneath." It is not evident that Ionesco, Beckett, Ferect, Pinter, Albee and Simpson in the Theatre Absurd have gone further than that, but they point the way, they point the way.

To many people of the theatre this is not enough. I am not a qualified critic or authority on theatre, but I was pleased to have one conclusion of mine confirmed yesterday by two giants of today's theatre, Walter Starche, producer, and Gladys Cooper, one of our great actresses. We were discussing Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" From the standpoint of theatre they both felt it was not entertainment.

Miss Cooper said she would have walked out after the first act if she had not been a guest. Mr. Starche said he doubted if he would ever see it. Neither one could understand the praise that has been heaped upon the play, although Mr. Starche agreed that Albee's "Zoo Story" was a much better play.

We all agreed that "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" is not entertainment and if the theatre is solely for entertainment, the play is a misfit. But I contended that the fascination of the play lies in this being the age of psychoanalysis and the play has tremendous therapeutic value for most who see it.

I noticed at the performance of "Rhinoceros" that the audience laughed, but self-consciously, and I feel with Miss Cooper and Mr. Starche that the plays end ambiguously posing uncertainties.

We have all come to expect more than this from all our institutions including theatre. Still this new theatre is essentially a philosophers' theatre rather than the poet's. This is why most modern plays deal with the loss of identity and is summed up in Jack Gelber's "The Apple" with "You don't know who you are until you're dead."

In this world of dead and dying values this says something.

It is no further jump from Lepanto to Hiroshima than it is from the W. H. Auden's last two lines in his address delivered at Harvard in 1944--

"Read the New Yorker, trust in God;  
And take short views."

and Grünwald's advice in 1963 to learn how to make "value judgments."<sup>(4)</sup>

The playwrights, poets and scientists seem to know that we have been in a different atmosphere since Hiroshima, and I mean no pun. They believe we have gone through a basic change when the ground we have stood upon has shifted under our feet.

We have been, and are, in a revolution but not the stale revolution of the Beatniks and Kerouac. We are learning that man is not as simple as we used to think, that the universe is not made up of things but of abstractions. The playwrights, including Tennessee Williams, are rediscovering man for us in all his complexity, weakness and greatness. But they do not seem to know where that discovery is leading.

I am certain that only the spiritual physicists of the past few years have an inkling of this. It may be only an inkling but Lanyon, DeWaters, Goldsmith and The Prosperos to name some, can be trusted to the degree of inkling they have gained.

But the younger generation doesn't read these schools--so rather than rebel or conform, I feel they ignore or bypass. All the watchwords, solutions and half-solutions seem beside the point because they sense they are living in a vitally different age. So they seem a trifle withdrawn and alienated. Their's is an "inner emigration" that is not an exodus as rebellion should be.

I have called much attention to science but I have never intended to say that science has really helped us. Actually, science that used to give us glib answers to all mysteries has (and is) only deepened the mystery. Only the use of intuition and reason based on the Laws of Mind can open the mysteries. They will, and do for those who want to pursue the opportunities that are on every hand.

Physics has dissolved matter that once was as solid as Newton's apple. Cold, beautiful, terrestrial mathematics has gone off into infinity and only spiritual physics can properly interpret all this in holistic terms and the Divine Continuum.

Medicine has become psychosomatic and is reminiscent of medieval beliefs of possession by evil spirits, and certainly asserts mind over matter that spiritual physicists have already discarded. All of this has been stimulated by the art and poetry of psychoanalysis in spite of the fact that most psychiatrists and analysts do not know of the art and poetry, and behave more like witch doctors.

Through personal experience, or through communication media, we've had too much tampering with "environment," too much "conditioning," and too much "adjustment" to feel easy. Yet one of the problems, according to Wharton, is that only a relative few have experienced nuclear warfare, and that only to a limited extent. Anyway, it is a drift in too many directions without values. Toynbee may well be right when he says the Western civilization is now in its decline.

There are many that are trying to correct the drift into another holocaust of killing. Wharton calls them a coherent group and is referring to the proponents of world government. Still, he says, this group needs--are indeed clamouring for--"the aid of the best brains in existence to analyze...problems and find solutions, possibly unexpected solutions..."

I don't mean to be a purist but it seems to me there may be an error in values right here in Wharton's thinking. He says the best "brains" are needed. That's the trouble. Everyone is looking to brains to do the thinking and a brain, as such, never thought anything. As long as we keep looking to brains to think for us it's certain that the electronic computers will out-think us at that level. "Well over a half a

century ago before machines learned to 'think' Butler visualized, what would happen if they ever did. That they still lacked consciousness, he warned, meant little: a mollusc also lacked consciousness, but there were other species ahead. And as machines grow more human, man becomes more machine-like."

Aside from that, which may be a meaningless digression in the case of Wharton, he calls for men of values, or greater values than the mass of people. I have little doubt that the men and women who would measure to his call would be those having had personal experiences that have changed their sense of values.

"I believe that these are people who have had personal experiences that have so changed their sense of values that they are freed of the more primitive instincts, to a greater or lesser degree. They are freed, as Henry Anatole Grunwald suggests, for they have learned to harmonize with each other even when the chips are down. I am sure as we persistently keep at this matter of new values that "Freud's map of the psyche, with its division into id, ego, and superego, will a century hence seem quaint."

Machines, "think," but otherwise, like the mollusc, are not consciousness in themselves, nor are the id, ego and superego consciousness; they are just names for varying degrees of consciousness, and the great pressing need of mankind is to understand what consciousness is.

By consistent use of the techniques in Releasing the Hidden Splendour one comes gradually to know oneself as consciousness; that all is consciousness. This is not a frontal attack--the process is more like coming up on the blind side of the horse. It is a Sly Man approach and definitely the Fourth Way. The realization may come all at once, or it may come about gradually but through persistent practice it will come "like a thief in the night."

Self-observation is the clue. As one continues to observe, it becomes clear that all anything is to anyone is a matter of observation, or cognition. In the self-remembering technique of the past one comes to see that the past and present are nothing but present cognition; that present cognition is all there is to anything, past, present or future.<sup>(5)</sup>

In his biographic novel, Fred Chappel, comes to this realization when he writes,

"I am certain...that my past life would master me, would grasp me up and shake me, like a dog shaking a rag doll. My memory of former days is a wound which in a moment makes itself known by uncorking a rotten stink. Like Philoctetes, I must cherish my wound; like Actaeon, my bad memories tear me, first ripping away the beast's skin within which I have hidden myself. Yet he who snatches away my mask snatches me too, for I am bound to my mask with a bloody glue."

Here he states knowing that his past, his present mask, and his cognition are all one and the same thing. This is what eventually happens through RHS practices.

The five steps of Translation are another way of coming up on the blindside--a Sly Man technique--through a system of thought that causes us to relinquish a sensory, dimensional sense of

things and causes us to be aware of the consciousness that is the reality of the sensed world. Through this practice we not only learn how to think but we arrive at a sense of knowing that refutes the "I don't know what to think" of the human state.

Just as we need a new sense of values to free our galley-slave-selves, the trend of scientific achievements is forcing us all to think in terms of abstract principles. Thus our Jericho walls will fall down and we come to know ourselves as the evolutionary scheme that is nothing more or less than the flow of ascending consciousness. Consciousness knowing itself as consciousness and as nothing less.

This is the Law behind the Law.

Aloha blessings,

Thane

Indianapolis  
9/26/63

- (1) Is it Time for The Second Step?
- (2) La Psychologie des Foules
- (3) Making a cult of confusion. Walter Kerr.
- (4) to the class of 1963
- (5) It is Time, Lord.