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CRASHING THE CHINESE MYTH

"Through the Chinese Looking Glass"
by Dennis Bloodworth. Farrer, Strauss, and Giroux,
N.Y. 1967. Now available at Ivy's.

Reviewed by C. M. Rowe

The modern Western world centres the greatest of its fears on China. Half-conscious of the immense potential power and expansionist forces of the largest nation of the world, the West is uncomfortably aware of a deep ignorance of China as a civilization and as a political force — and has, as yet, discovered no way to live happily with its ignorance.

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There is not, in this situation, anything new. The European ignorance of China, and the fascination, are almost as old as The Great Wall of China itself. The great division between East and West since the Second World War has supposedly been the Iron Curtain and the Brandenburg Gate — but historians of another age are likely to regard that line of demarcation as a temporary aberration compared with the gulf that lies between what is European and what is Asian.

The beginnings of the relationship between China and the modern Western world lie in the Fourteenth century; in the visits of Marco Polo and those earnest priestly diplomats, William of Rubruck and John Plano de Carpini to the court of Kublai Khan. Because it was the legendary and long-disappeared empire of Kublai Khan which helped to draw Columbus and Cabot and the indefatigable Portuguese across the oceans from Europe as the Fifteenth century expansion of Europe got fully under way. Almost ever since, Europe has suffered from the same problems as it did then — looking to China through misconceptions and out-of-date information, seeking secrets that are not there to find.

And finally, of course, there is the application to China of the Western neurosis about Marxism-Leninism and its practitioner in China, "the inscrutable, potato-faced Mao-Tse-tung, with his boiler suit and his well-known but curious ambition to enslave his countrymen and make them wish they were dead." Above all things China is now the home of the Communist bogeyman. Small wonder that Mr. Bloodworth should pronounce that the "Western conception of the Chinese is like a dog-eared poker hand of unrelated cards, most of them left over from the last century."

Given the current Western complex and the overriding significance of China in world affairs we need all the rational thought about China that we can. An accessible, English-language interpretation of China and the Chinese fills an enormous need, not least in North America. Mr. Bloodworth writes a charmingly disarming introduction, in which he claims "I transmit, but do not originate" and that he is a journalist writing for "the ordinary reader who has never been east of Suez."

This should not mislead us. Modesty apart, the author has attempted a major interpretation of Chinese civilization and all the cosiness and frivolity of his style should not disguise the fact. His book pivots about the current political struggle in China and places that struggle tellingly in a massive context of three thousand years of Chinese history and a mass of cautious, fair-minded, anecdotal guesses at the central elements of the Chinese individual and corporate personality.

All books of this type carry the great danger that they will replace out-of-date, wrong-headed, sweeping generalizations with brand spanking new, wrong-headed, sweeping generalizations. But it will not be Mr. Bloodworth's fault if his book is wrongly received. Its greatest virtue is that it neither ducks its responsibilities, nor oversteps them. From the first page, the author is committed to both the general and the particular — to the mass of seven hundred millions and to the pig-tailed child of six.

(continued on page two)



(continued from page one)

The first and longest section of the book is headed, "From the Outside Looking In? The author, modest as always, proclaims himself as much on the outside as anyone. No John Gunther he, no posture of being "the man in the know." Here is a complex, crowded description of the whole sweep of Chinese history, of one Westerner's reaction to the kaleidoscope of Chinese people, Chinese art, Chinese philosophy, Chinese everything. It is as well that the writing is as cheerful and engaging as it is, because the subject-matter is huge and frequently defies the valiant attempts of the author to keep it absolutely controlled. The reader who does not like to be made to think had better keep clear.

Above all its virtues the book is influenced by the fact that the author likes the Chinese. He is able to look at Confucius and Mao with humour and understanding, as well as with the humility of the man who does not know all there is to know. And, within the framework of his humane, open-minded attitudes, the author has some fascinating things to say: about the effects of the long-lived prospect of famine which has been and still is a basic fact of Chinese life — about what he calls the Chinese "reverence for the holy mission of the outlaw," which he feels deeply effects the Communist creed of revolution, — about what he claims is a deep-rooted aversion to ideology and "isms." Nothing rings truer than Mr. Bloodworth's explanation of the Chinese rejection of Christianity. Nothing is more comforting than his claim that "Opium is going out, TV is coming in" — or that "China found her own way to Communism and will doubtless find her own way to revisionism."

Inevitably some things are superficial, some are trite and some simply do not convince. But others, like his decimation of the standard U.S. explanations of the Chinese role in the Korean War, are trenchant. And when Mr. Bloodworth comes to his final check list of Chinese paradoxes he has convinced you that they mean something.

The second, much shorter section of the book is "From the Inside, Looking Out;" and represents an attempt to analyze the "barbarians" from the Chinese viewpoint. There is nothing better in the book than the understanding that both sides of the Great Divide are handicapped by a superiority complex with regard to the other side. In 1793 Viscount McCartney's embassy to China was dismissed on the advice of the Emperor's Grand

Secretary, who said, "These are ignorant foreign devils and it is not worth treating them with too much courtesy," and attitudes have been little changed in the intervening century and a half. The superiority complex has been made worse not better by a century of colonial humiliation and by a generation of disillusion with the Western powers and with Western democracy. It is also clear that if the Chinese have chosen Communism they have not chosen Russia — the gulf between Mao and Moscow will get wider before it gets narrower. Chinese Communism seems destined to become more Chinese and perhaps less Communist; and communism will remain much less a creed than an instrument by which the Holy Chinese empire may be re-established, safe from interference from Russian or American barbarians.

Mr. Bloodworth also sees the great truth that the arteries of Chinese policy harden as Mao ages — that China suffers from ignorance and out-of-date ideas about the West and that the notion of the inscrutable, all-knowing, Machiavellian Chinese is utterly inappropriate. Equally inappropriate is the idea of the Chinese millions waiting to throw off the Communist yoke. The current struggle is between pragmatists and ideologists but whoever wins, the Communism will remain. Whether Mao wins his battle for the soul of China or not, the West will still have to live with a Communist giant.

There is no claim to be made for this book "that is indispensable for all those who wish to know about China" — for no book can explain China to the uncomprehending West. But for those who read and think, for those who wish to find something true, something worth knowing and which they do not already know, then this is a book for them.

In the end we come back to the ignorance and the fascination and Mr. Bloodworth's typical way of stating the problem: — "I always thought people were fabulous monsters," said the Unicorn, "Are you alive?" "Do you know," said Alice "I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters too! I never saw one alive before." "Well, now that we have seen each other," said the Unicorn, "if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?" ●

Christopher Rowe is a lecturer in the History Department at the University of Victoria.

Echoes of A

Let us, in true 20th century style, begin with a negative proposition: the inelectable unviability and absurdity of our present way of life.

How can anyone — apart from an occasional with-it cleric and Hungarian economist—seriously believe that by projecting present trends into the future, we arrive at enduring human felicity?

Producing more and more and consuming more and more year by year under the impetus of the ever more frenzied persuasion of mass communication media, at the same time watching the rest of mankind get hungrier and hungrier in ever greater want; growing ever stronger, with the means at our disposal to blow ourselves and our earth itself to smithereens many times over, at the same time becoming ever more neurotic about the imminence of global nuclear war; moving ever faster and further afield, and pursuing happiness, American style, grinding out our appetities — to use a Shakespearean phrase — ever more desperately with physical and even moral impunity, and spiritual desolation.

It is a state of affairs at once so bizarre and so tragic that I alternate between laughing hilariously at it and looking forward eagerly to my departure — quite soon now in at most a decade or so (This year, at 65, I move into the NTBR, or Not To Be Resuscitated) — from so crazy a world. Take, for instance, the situation in this ancient university with which through the accident of election I find myself briefly associated.

SPEARHEAD

The students here, as in other universities, are the ultimate beneficiaries under our welfare system. They are supposed to be the spearhead of progress, flattered and paid for by their admiring seniors, an elite who will happily and audaciously carry the torch of progress into a glorious future opening before them.

Speaking for myself, there is practically nothing they could do in a mood of rebelliousness, or refusal to accept the ways and values of our run-down, spiritually impoverished way of life, for which I should not feel some degree of sympathy, or at any rate understanding, up to and including blowing up this massive edifice in which we are now assembled.

Yet how infinitely sad, how — in a macabre sort of way — funny that the form their insubordination takes should be a demand for pot and pills, for the most tenth-rate sort of escapism and self-indulgence.

It's one of those situations a social historian with a sense of humor will find very much to his taste. All is prepared for a marvelous release of youthful creativity. We await the great works of art, the high-spirited venturing into new fields of perception and understanding.

And what do we get? — the resort of any old slobbering debauchee anywhere in the world at any time — dope and bed. The feeling aroused in me, I have to confess, is not so much disapproval as contempt.

NOT DRUGS, SEX

Whatever life is or is not about, it's not we may be sure, to be expressed in terms of drug stupefaction and casual sex.

However else we may venture into the unknown, it is not, I assure you, on the plastic wings of Playboy magazine or psychedelic fancies.

I've recently been making some films for television on the New Testament, and it involved, along with much else, standing on what purports to be the Hill of Beatitudes, where the most momentous of all sermons was preached 2,000 years ago.

One of the beatitudes that, for some reason, had never before impressed me particularly, this time stuck in my mind: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." May I commend it to you as having some bearing on our present controversies and discontents?

To see God is the highest aspiration of man and has preoccupied the rarest human spirits of all times. Seeing God means understanding, seeing into the mystery of things. It is, or should be, the essential quest of universities and their students and staff.

NOT BY DEEDS

Note that the realization of this quest is achieved not through great and good deeds, nor even through thought, however perceptive and enlightened, certainly not through sensations, however generated, or what is called success, however glittering.

The words are clear enough: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

To add to the macabre comedy of our situation, into the ribald scene of confusion and human

OUR RIGHT OF INQUIRY!

by
john
trujillo



FREE SPEECH



ME?... Encroach on the right of Free Speech ???



If you want to know something, ask me.



SHUT UP!!

Augustine and Aurelius

by Malcolm Muggeridge

These are excerpts taken from a sermon delivered by Malcolm Muggeridge in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. Mr. Muggeridge recently resigned as rector of the university — a post to which he had been elected by the Students' Representative Council. These excerpts are reprinted from *The Victoria Daily Times*, February 7, 1968.



inadequacy there break idiot voices prophesying a New Jerusalem just around the corner. One always, I find, underestimates the staying power of folly.

When poor H. G. Wells, breathed his last, having produced in a "mind at the end of its tether" a final hysterical repudiation of everything he'd ever said or thought, I fondly supposed that no more would be heard in my time of men-like gods. How wrong I was.

A quarter of a century later, a provost of King's College, Cambridge, was to carry the same notion to an even higher pitch of fantasy. No doubt long after I am gone someone will be saying on the BBC's indestructible "Any Questions" program that a touch more abortion, another year at school and birth pills given away with the free morning milk, and all will be well.

GADARENE SLIDE

What are we to do about it, this crazy Gadarene slide? I never met a man made happy by money or worldly success or sensual indulgence, still less by the stupefaction of drugs or alcohol. Yet we all, in one way or another, pursue these ends — as the advertiser well knows. He offers them in technicolor and stereo sound, and there are many takers. The politician likewise, often with a nondescript retinue of academic and clerical support, offers the same package in collective terms.

And underneath, we all know how increasingly hollow and unconvincing it is — the Great Society, mankind coming of age, men like gods, all the unspeakable cant of utopianism on the run.

Our very art and literature — such as they are — convey as much: the bad dreams of a materialistic society — Bacon and Pinter tapering off into the sheer incoherence of a Burroughs and a Beckett, with the Beatles dancing on our grave and Allen Ginsberg playing his hand harmonium, and that delectable old Hindu con man, the Maharishi throwing in his blessing.

Communitistic utopianism produced Stalin, the pursuit-of-happiness-American-brand Lyndon Johnson and our special welfare variety Horold Wilson. If that doesn't put paid to all three,

nothing ever will.

As for the scientific utopia looming ahead, we've caught a glimpse of that, too, in the broiler for patching up others, the factory farms and lately the transplant operations, with still warm bodies providing the spare parts.

I increasingly see us in our human condition as manacled and in a dark corner. The chains are our mortal hopes and desires; the dark cell of ego, in whose obscurity and tiny dimensions we are confined. Christ tells us how to escape, striking off the chains and putting a window in the dark cell through which we may joyously survey the wide vistas of eternity and the bright radiance of God's universal love.

OPPOSED VIEW

No view of life, as I am well aware, could be more diametrically opposed to the prevailing one today, especially as purveyed in our mass communication media, dedicated as they are to the counter-proposition that we can live by bread alone and the more the better.

Yet I am more convinced than I am in my own existence that the view of life Christ came into the world to preach, and died to sanctify, remains as true and as valid as ever, and that all who care to — young and old, healthy and infirm, wise and foolish — may live thereby, finding in our troubled, confused world, as in all other circumstances and at all other times, an enlightenment and a serenity not otherwise attainable.

Even though — as may well prove the case — our civilization, like others before it, soon finally flickers out, and institutional Christianity with it, the light Christ shed shines as brightly as ever for those who seek an escape from darkness.

The truths he spoke will answer their dilemmas and assuage their fears, bringing hope to the hopeless, zest to the despairing and love to the loveless, precisely as happened 2,000 years ago and through all the intervening centuries. ●

Mr. Muggeridge, former rector of Edinburgh University, is a well known British journalist and TV personality.

Last Post Echoes Over Empire

by Charles Bowman

The end of the British Empire is being proclaimed by members of parliament at Westminster, and in the mass circulation newspapers. It has been a gradual process since the beginning of this century — started by the Boer war and hastened by World Wars I and II.

Imperial conquest became an essential part of the expansion of British trade in markets abroad. Coal in the north country and in Wales made it possible to build up industry, but other raw materials had to be imported.

Sources of raw material were acquired by investment in African and other colonies. They were developed by cheap native labor.

Under Kaiser Wilhelm, German industry expanded to challenge the British colonial monopoly. So came the armament rivalry leading up to World War I. Before the war ended, the United States became involved.

By the end of World War II, the British nation had become hopelessly in debt to United States money power. This debt liability made it necessary for the United States to police world resources of wealth.

The United States people had no vision of empire, such as British statesmen propounded. They believed in the pursuit of happiness by less glamorous means. Thus the United States moved up, as the British moved out.

The British decision to cease maintaining armaments in the Orient, Africa and elsewhere is being spoken of as "the end of Emparr." But the British people will survive.

In the meanwhile, the involuntary American inheritors of imperial defence — the defence of investments in markets abroad — are being committed to more expenditure on armaments. The pursuit of happiness is taking United States forces into Vietnam and other Asian territory. American liabilities in money and manpower are increasing as the British, without regret, can contemplate "the end of Emparr". ●

Mr. Bowman is a noted Canadian newspaper editor and journalist.

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Unsolicited material can be left in the MAG box in The Martlet office in the SUB. MM's office is located in Office 12, J Hut.

Wheat, Tulips and A Graveyard

by D. Dedora

Green needles
Break through wet spring soil,
Growth—
In the summer heat
Of nature's adolescence,
Wind blown green waves
Blow golden,
Autumn maturity
Branches golden stalks
Into chaff coated seeds,
Harvest - time.
On burning leaf days
I hear sliding trowels
Uncovered black holes,
I hear the love pat
Of green hands
On black tulip bulb mounds,
Now dormant white mounds
Waiting for an eternal spring.



MARTLET MAGAZINE ADMITS DEFEAT

an open letter by the editor:

The censorship of MM's Boise issue as it happened was unworthy of the attention it received. The downtown press relished, in fact revelled in almost orgasmic delight, that for once the students were being put down. Victoria's public was suddenly outraged at something which they had little genuine interest and obviously not the slightest understanding. THE MARTLET saw immediate infringement of "freedom of the press." The Students' Council predicted the imminence of last year's fiasco: administration stifling academic freedom. MM's only concern was that our reading audience which we assume to be reasonably open minded, intelligent, and mature, was prevented from experiencing some very beautiful, though exceptionally foreign, works of art.

It seems we won. We slapped the local press in the face by publishing the pictures in the form of a public showing. We spited the public outrage by exposing graphically to nearly 300 students the ignorance and inanity of the "downtown" position. We secured assurances from President Taylor that no disciplinary action would be taken by the university against those involved in the "illegal showing." Although sidestepping "freedom of the press" this issue has proved the reluctance of legal authorities to encroach on the right of students to disseminate and discuss information on topics of controversial and academic interest.

The fact is though, WE LOST. As far as the purpose and intention of this publication is concerned we must admit defeat. We were outmanoeuvred and soundly beaten by the forces, both student and public, which seem to have won—though in my mind, at the expense of Boise, art, and truth. The original intention has been frustrated; and from the point of view of the original article, irreparably destroyed. The slide lecture and discussion, had it been allowed to proceed in its original form, would have shown the sculptures in question to be one small, though comparatively modern, harmless, and beautiful, section of the modern art spectrum.

When President Taylor acted in accordance with the law and banned the showing of the slides on university property he and the law effectively prevented our final effort to demonstrate the truth of the entire controversy. The appalling conditions of the SUB slide show are unimportant compared to their unnecessary sensationalism forced by the fact that it was impossible to show them

where they belonged in the sequence of slides shown in Elliott 167. It also prevented of course any valid discussion of them as works of art. Perhaps the Reeve of Saanich, the public prosecutor, Mr. Watt, Mr. Mauger, and even Dr. Taylor himself should feel satisfied that once again the "establishment" or "authorities" have effectively perpetuated a distortion of truth. And how subtly and "beautifully" it was accomplished!

It is with little wonder that they should view the growing disrespect for authority on the part of youth. Disrespect is growing out of disbelief. Time and time again the case for disbelief from misrepresentation of the fact is proven justified. Politically one might register, if one so pleases, a victory. However on a wider and higher plane, as far as many students are concerned the case for Boise has been irrevocably lost — without ever being presented. And once again the sham of academic freedom in discussion, debate, experimentation and enquiry before the law, is perpetuated.

Does any one realize that our laws in their range and power potentiate another Greece 1967?

President Taylor had the opportunity to face the injustice of this type of law and support academic freedom. He could have had 3,500 students behind him, the majority of the faculty, and the support of every university and institute of higher learning in the province. His refusal registers his acquiescence to the neo-fascist authorities that be. For Boise it certainly wasn't worth it; and obviously, as values stand, the principal was not either.

But regardless of academic and political overtones the Martlet Magazine regrettably stands party to a misrepresentation of the truth. That is a lie. A lie, unwittingly initiated by this publication, but perpetuated by a bigoted public, spineless authorities, and regrettably, the law. A lie which we did everything within our power to rectify.

As editor of MM I would like to thank the Students' Council for their hesitant but daring support, and all those who offered encouragement and help including Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Grooms, and the members of Tuesday's panel.

Martin Segger,
Editor, Martlet Magazine.

The Itch

by D. Dedora

My soles itch,
So I bent to scratch,
Rasping finger nails no longer soothe,
The more I scratched
My feet became inflamed
Medicine Cabinet had no calamyn lotion,
Sore softened feet
Become calloused.

