

activity within that society. Others, not so fooled, may pack up their bags in disgust and leave the Church. Either way, something is clearly amiss, for which the Church's highest authorities, its bishops, are at least partly responsible.

The point is that there really is no place for publications of this sort within the Church, or at least by Church authorities. If bishops or priests have private dreams of being "little Lenins," they would do well

to keep their dialectical confessions to the psychiatrist's couch. *Struggling With the System, The Witness, Integrity*, and their counterparts in other churches—pick your own house of worship—only make a mockery of religious activity.

Naturally, there is a place for the religiously-motivated criticism of modern society. Religion, after all, does have something to do with human involvement in the world, and American life—its

politics, its economy, its culture—is hardly above criticism. Yet when publications like these choose to court muddled thinking and puerile crusading, as has become their wont, religious activity becomes distorted; social criticism, irresponsible and perverse. However amusing we may find these publications at times, they nevertheless tend to wreak havoc upon the traditions, religious and otherwise, which have shaped our world. □

John Nollson

Author's Reply

While I know it is bad form to respond to a review of one's work, Thatcher Grubell, in his review of my new collection of short pieces (*The Cultural Milieux in the Space-Time Continuum: Essays on the Emerging Aesthetic of the Nth Dimension*, Oral Roberts University Press, xvii + 679 pp., \$18.98), makes so many errors of fact that I have to wonder whether he bothered to read the book.

Indeed, so numerous are his blunders, his misinterpretations, his misconstruals, his misconstructions that a complete listing of them would take me more time than I have available.

Just consider his bigoted blast at the genre. Grubell writes: "Nollson's work is proof-positive: short pieces got no reason to live." Is this not the tip-off that the book will get no fair hearing from such a low-grade wiseacre? And why does he claim that my essay "Who Buys Those Little Pewter Statues From the Franklin Mint Anyway?" skirts the real issue? If he had read the footnotes, he would have seen my reference to the presence of the Franklin Mint in *Philadelphia*. Not *Topeka*, as he claims.

But these are petty details. I maintain throughout that the aesthetic of the Nth Dimension will almost certainly be characterized by what I choose to call *truberance*. This is a wholly new and original concept, not just a seventh kind of irony. Grubell should know better. If I believed that the aesthetic of the various dimensions, beginning with the first and running right on through infinity to the Nth, could be comprehended by kinds of irony—or at least dissonance—I would have so numbered the ironies, so that in the Nth Dimension, there would be N kinds of irony. Surely not seven. And that is precisely why I had to invent the notion of *truberance*, the means whereby the plastic arts, the literary arts,

the cinematic arts, and the purely technological arts like laser-light shows will surely become mirror images of themselves when seen from the *other side* of a black hole.

Anti-sculpture will not appear, accordingly, until it can be fabricated from antimatter, not pewter. Hence the essay on the output of the Franklin Mint. But Grubell is so dense that he cannot make the simplest distinction between an argument and its own refutation.

I argue, further, that one of the central benefits of *truberance*, both as a real fact and as an analytic convention, is its prediction that the aesthetic world of the Nth Dimension will be characterized not merely by a unity of the arts, but by a new companionability among artists themselves. Fistfights, backbiting, lovers' quarrels, and the like will disappear. The basic antagonism will vanish. Why?

As I write on p. 419: "Our life in the world of three dimensions allows us to imagine the existence of, at the most, three sexes: homosexuality, bisexuality, and unisexuality. Trisexuality is a logical possibility. In the fourth dimension, tetrasexuality appears, followed by penta-, hexa-, septa-, octo-, nona-, and decasexuality as we move on out the old space warp. It is therefore inevitable that the Nth Dimension will be characterized by Nsexuality, or anti-sexuality, precisely the opposite of the way things are now. True, advanced computers will be required to keep track of the N sexes, their permutations, combinations, and possibilities, but we are well enough prepared for that. In fact, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology already has an artificial intelligence laboratory."

It is a reflection on Grubell's lack of intellectual potency that he can, by his own admission, comprehend the existence of no more than five sexes. Beyond that, he

starts to have trouble with his roommates. But I do not see why he cannot cope with this problem without venting his spleen on decent and diligent scholars who are just trying to earn an honest living.

But let us suppose, just for a moment, that I am wrong and that Grubell is right. Even this charitable assumption cannot explain his perverse insistence that my work ought to be grouped with an earlier school of rhetoricians whose theories took hold in suburban Milwaukee in the late 1930s.

The Milwaukee Modalists, as they have come to be called, were nothing but a splinter group, intellectually irrelevant and analytically trivial. If it were otherwise, they would have moved to New York, or at least Chicago, where they would have become a school and not a forgotten sect. It is the worst form of libel to link me with a group of dull Protestants who have failed to produce a single literary autobiography of any merit. In fact, I have a letter from the titular head of the Modalists—his thoroughly conventional name escapes me—wherein he asserts that I have nothing to do with them, nor they with me. How much longer will it take before intellectual life in this country is finally rid of the McCarthyist tactic of guilt by association?

Perhaps we are on to something. Grubell's review of my book is laced with spite, envy, jealousy, resentment, bile, venom, gall, phlegm, vulgarity, gelatin, rancor, obduracy, stinginess, and escarole. He is neither sure-witted nor sure-handed nor sure-footed but, like a lumbering podiatrist, he tramples on every canon of intellectual decency. He slaps his tail against the tide of learning, like a baleen whale protesting the inevitability of his own extinction. He is, in sum, a typically unrepentant Dreyfusard—or so he would have us think.

What else does he have to hide? □

BOOK REVIEW

Winston S. Churchill, Volume V, 1922-1939
Martin Gilbert / Houghton-Mifflin / \$30.00

Steven Maaranen

In recent years Sir Winston Churchill has suffered that debunking criticism almost universally accorded great men by what Churchill himself called "a peculiar type of brainy people." Most such criticism stems from the numerous political controversies which marked Churchill's long career, especially in the years 1922-1939. In Volume V of the official biography, Martin Gilbert continues the task of his earlier volumes—confronting the accumulated criticisms of Churchill's deeds and policies. Gilbert decisively corrects the distortions and false accusations levelled by Churchill's contemporaries, and allows us to assess Churchill anew as a statesman.

In 1924 Churchill returned to public office as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Stanley Baldwin's second government. The following year he rejoined the Conservative Party. By crossing the floor twice, and achieving high office in both cases, Churchill provoked charges of opportunism and unsteadiness. In 1925 he played a major role in breaking the General Strike, further convincing the British left of his rashness and bellicosity. Later in his term as Chancellor, Churchill superintended Britain's return to the gold standard, and extracted heavy cuts in defense spending in order to stimulate the economy. When the economy collapsed under

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the pressure of the world depression, Churchill's economic judgment was assailed; when he later attacked the government for inadequate defense preparations in the face of German rearmament, both his consistency and motives were widely questioned. From 1929 through 1935 Churchill led the "diehard" opposition to the government's bill to move India towards Dominion status. The supporters of the India Bill from all parties supposed that he was attempting to return to public office by advocating an irresponsible and demagogic cause. For six years Churchill relentlessly opposed every step of the bill's passage, despite such aspersions on his motives and a visible weakening of his political power—the result of his obdurate support of a lost cause.

Churchill fared little better in other policy battles in the thirties. He was branded an enemy of European conciliation when he questioned the wisdom of the World Disarmament Conference in 1932. In 1933 he commenced a prolonged campaign to increase British defense spending. When his alarm at the rise of Hitler proved justified, he only earned the enmity of many who had ignored his warnings. In 1936 his support of Edward VIII and Mrs. Simpson was widely viewed as an attempt to form a "King's Party" to supplant Baldwin's government. As late as the winter of 1938, while Neville Chamberlain was appeasing Hitler, Churchill's political fortunes were so low that a serious attempt was mounted to unseat him from his own constituency.

Churchill was often called opportunistic or quixotic, yet he himself had warned about the misunderstanding of consistency in public affairs. "A distinction should be made," he argued, "between two kinds of political consistency." The motives of a leader who jumps from one policy to a contrary one in accordance with the tides of public opinion "must be examined more studiously than if he swims against it." But a "statesman in contact with the moving current of events and anxious to keep the ship on an even keel and steer a steady course may lean all his weight now on one side and now on the other. His arguments in each case when contrasted can be shown to be not only very different in character, but contrary in spirit and opposite in direction: yet his object will throughout have remained the same." In short, "the only way a man can remain consistent amid changing circumstances is to change with them while preserving the same dominating purpose."

Did Churchill's career, despite the seeming contradictions, display such a guiding purpose? The evidence of Volume V suggests that it did. As shown by Gilbert, Churchill's strategic view had two prime components. The first was geopolitical, and was fully elaborated in his *Marlborough* and later in his *History of the English Speaking Peoples*. Both of these works noted a remarkable continuity in British foreign policy which Churchill described in March 1936: "For four

There is opportunity in America!



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