

the reactor

By Paul Azavedo



No conscientious person will ever again write satire. Writers formerly used irony and satirical wit as a means to prick the consciences of their readers.

But satire depends on a base. It requires a commonly accepted conscience, a common moral and ethical standard, a uniform way of looking at life.

This used to exist. No longer. Today many people's lives can only be thought of as ongoing satires. There are no ways of living so absurd that someone isn't willing to try them out, sometimes in sequence.

MANY GO from Hare' Krishna to astrology, to zen, to Scientology, to est, as if they were at an all-you-can-eat smorgie.

The majority, more or less normal, has been persuaded that it should laugh at no way of life, no matter how absurd.

SATIRE CAN do no good in a world which so calmly accepts abortion, fornication, "success through intimidation," where ideas are continually disseminated which contradict every norm of personal conduct men have developed over the millennia.

Some people think that they can escape responsibility for their own actions and carelessness by telling others "Don't lay your trip on me."

HOW CAN anyone write satire in a country where a president is forced to resign in disgrace, only to have his still-loyal millions blame the press and not the president.

That master of satire, Jonathan Swift, once wrote "A Modest Proposal." In his essay, Swift "solved" two problems. Wealthy Englishmen would gain a new source of tender, tasty meat, and poor Irish families with too many babies to feed would solve their problems by fattening them for the tables of said wealthy English.

SWIFT'S GOAL was exposure of an evil, Poverty. If someone had followed through on his "suggestion," he would have been horrified.

I would not dare write a similar essay today. We

live in a world where Madelyn Murray O'Hare, Alice Cooper, and Charles Manson are idolized by many, and tolerated by many more.

I COULD not use irony, but would have to label the idea as a dreadful horror or risk being misunderstood.

Today Swift would be writing about the five or six hundred thousand aborted babies, hundreds right here in Pacifica, who are killed annually.

SOMEONE is sure to jump at the chance to profit from this wasted valuable resource.

I do not exaggerate. When someone recently tried to utilize the tissues of aborted babies in some medicinal product, there was widespread apathy and some approval. The butcher shop is only one step down the road.

FOR THE crime of murder, many persons argue against the death penalty. For the heinous "crime" of "inconvenience," hundreds of thousands of our little brothers and sisters are executed even before they leave the protection of their mother's womb.

Patriotism, Motherhood and Apple Pie used to be popular values. Today the flag is on the seat of the pants, abortion has replaced motherhood, and pie is full of artificial colors, flavors and chemical filler.

HAVE YOU tried "Pringles?" It is an ersatz potato chip. It's made like Masonite, with about the same flavor.

Instead of slicing honest-to-goodness potatoes, they're dried, powdered, molded and stacked.

They were never fresh. So, they never get stale. Pressed sawdust never gets stale, either. They stack, just like plastic wastebaskets. So they last forever and are compact to ship.

Potato chip makers used to sell a bulky, perishable product, so they couldn't ship it far. The makers of Pringles now will overwhelm their competition with nationwide TV, kill off the natural product, and it won't be long before no one will remember what good potato chips tasted like.

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8/11/76



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We will have no more satirical writing, because our lives are themselves satire. When we eat Pringles, we are eating our satire.