
ARTS & LETTERS

sustain mass appeal. By contrast, Hollywood's heavy reliance in the 1970s on the big-budget, multicharacter action film presages "disaster for the art form and, in the long run, for the industry itself."

Relying on "bankable" stars, sophisticated marketing techniques, and ever-rising film budgets (up to \$15 or \$20 million), producers are looking for the safe "pre-sold product." With recent movies now a cornerstone of network TV programming, new films must possess some "unique"—and expensive—quality to lure customers away from their television sets. As a result, fewer movies are being made and distributed. (Universal opened *Jaws* in 500 theatres for a 12-week run; during this period it launched no other films.) This strategy has had some short-term success: The top 79 films in 1975 grossed \$700 million, but of these, 15 accounted for 57 percent of the total "take."

With fewer movies, however, opportunities for young filmmakers are reduced. Moreover, while a successful blockbuster may give some directors—Stanley Kubrick, Robert Altman—the financial security to pursue their own interests, just as often it will have the opposite effect. Faced with artistic independence or a percentage of the box office, how many top directors, asks Paul, will "give up the chance to tie into one of the \$50 million-plus grossers?"

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Nietzsche's Notion of Shame

"The Reddened Cheek': Nietzsche on Shame" by Carl D. Schneider, in *Philosophy Today* (Spring 1977), Carthage Station, Celina, Ohio 45822.

Blushing, wrote Darwin, "is the most peculiar and human of expressions." But the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), obsessed with the emergence of a new *type* of human being, proved ultimately more concerned with that mother of the blush—shame.

Nietzsche's interpretation of shame was dynamic and often contradictory, writes Schneider, professor of religion at Meadville-Lombard Theological School. He did not mean "shyness" or "guilt" and had no patience for those "shamed" by their instincts. True shame he associated with the mysterious, the masked, the *valuable*. It occurred when man perceived himself as merely a "tool of manifestations of will infinitely greater than he is permitted to consider himself"—as when creating and procreating, or in the presence of nature, art, or truth. In the end, what was of value was "like a woman. She should not be violated." The "noble" man or artist should embody the "pathos of distance," where keeping one's distance betokens respect.

By contrast, the ignoble and mediocre man craved the explicit and lacked a "delicate reverence." Thus, Nietzsche detested scientific

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

inquiry because it "cheapened" the spirit by its familiarity, says Schneider. In fact, he likened science to peeping under a woman's skin. In Christianity—which confuses shame with inhibition and the holy with the unnatural—Nietzsche confronted his values in reverse. In particular, he despised the positive value Christianity put on shamelessness, especially the shameless presumption of helping others. "Pity offends the sense of shame," he wrote in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Perhaps only in art was the proper balance struck, Nietzsche suggested, because the artist was alternately bolder and more reticent than the "common" man. As his stormy relationship with Wagner evolved, he became fascinated by the comparison of music and words. Urging artists to exploit their experiences "shamelessly" and to avoid the "dangers" of modesty, he nevertheless saw shame at the heart of art. On the one hand, he found writers and poets shamed by the intrinsic limits of their medium; on the other hand, shame kindles respect for "appearances"—forms, tones, folds—in music, painting, and sculpture. To stop at the surface, to preserve the veil, Nietzsche believed, was to acknowledge the "indecent" of uncovering everything.

'New Religions' of Japan

"The Response of Three New Religions to the Crisis in the Japanese Value System" by Ted J. Solomon, in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Mar. 1977), St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y. 11439.

In response to the disorientation occasioned by defeat in World War II, hundreds of religious denominations and sects have flourished in Japan since 1945. While most sects can be classified as Buddhist, Christian, or Shinto, much of the nation's religious vitality revolves around the "New Religions," a term reserved for some 125 movements that have emerged since the late Tokugawa and early Meiji (1800–1870) periods.

The New Religions emphasize a theological conservatism adapted to modern social organizations, writes Solomon, Iowa State professor of philosophy. They thus present the Japanese with an attractive middle course: "the blend of traditional with modern values in a creative manner."

These New Religions include Soka Gakkai, Rissho Kosei-kai, and PL (Perfect Liberty) Kyodan, which, among them, have more than 20 million members. They place reaffirmation of traditional values (loyalty, nationalism, aestheticism) at the center of their beliefs. However, the creative synthesis of traditional and modern is often expressed in unusual and striking ways. PL Kyodan's emphasis on individual illness as an indication of sin, for example, has prompted the organization to maintain a Bureau of Computerized Mission. The Bureau keeps track of the illnesses of its 1.5 million members and