

their *culture* — their food, their John Deere caps, their pickups. But their trucks are made in Japan and those caps come from Taiwan.” Paul Hogan’s success in “*Crocodile*” *Dundee* was anomalous and perhaps portentous: the American public reached to the Antipodes for a retread of Gary Cooper, once so close to home.

I will surrender the books of Kirby (even Reed) in exchange for a parole to the reality one distorts and the other describes. I take with me the reassurance inspired by Reed’s quotation from a New York intellectual: “I can never encounter a white Southerner without feeling a murderousness pass between us. As though, whatever his personal instincts, his ethnic history predisposes him to regard castration and rape as his prerogatives.” This in turn will forever remind me of another quotation of Reed’s — from Junior Samples: “I don’t know nothin’, but I suspect a lot of things.”

Heroes Wanted

by Allan C. Carlson

***A World Without Heroes: The Modern Tragedy* by George Roche, Hillsdale, MI: Hillsdale College Press; \$12.95.**

In that bloated morass called American higher education, only a few institutions remain that are committed to the classical virtues and to learning as an induction into Western civilization. Hillsdale College is counted among that number.

Credit for holding that course goes to George Roche, who as the institution’s president has labored to defend the heritage of the Western world out of an unlikely corner of Michigan, in a deeply troubled time. While most of his college peers have been transformed into “chief executive officers” managing bureaucratic empires and buying off faculty favorites, Roche has held to an older model of academic leadership. Assuming the mantle of moral philosopher, Roche speaks to his community of scholars and his nation as learned analyst and wise prophet.

His new book, *A World Without Heroes*, is that rarest of late-20th-century phenomena: a moral essay. Where Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of*

the American Mind looks to the corruption of philosophy as the cause of our woes, Roche digs deeper and chronicles the disease of the modern soul. The result is not for the faint of heart. The author describes our time as a war of the withered and sick against all that is whole and beautiful. While the Soviet Union celebrates the mailed fist, Roche sees the United States worshipping the raised phallus. Moral relativity has swept over our civilization, he continues, leaving in its wake a desperate struggle between Christianity and secularity. Indeed, the latter seems to be winning. America’s mawkish “pursuit of happiness,” Roche concludes, has led to a search for cheap thrills, an egoistic materialism that combines corruption of our language, ruin of our art, and general failure of our educational structures. Roche even dismisses the “phantom” of relatively high church attendance, noting that many denominations are run by and for those who do not worship.

Above all, the author laments the modern loss of the heroic, the absence of individuals nurtured by a healthy community within an objective moral order, the disappearance of persons who at risk of pain or death commit selfless acts in the name of truth. Today, he says, America is dominated by the antiheroic and its great transmitters: the electronic media, the post-Christian churches, and the schools. While it is possible to quibble on the margins of his argument, Roche’s overall indictment is powerful and unnerving.

Into our veil of tears, though, Roche does deliver hope. In crafting his argument, for example, he utilizes the insights of a fairly impressive number of 20th-century thinkers — Orwell, Lewis, Chambers, Muggeridge, Weaver, Chesterton — suggesting that, at least in brilliant dissent, the Western Christian legacy survives. He takes heart from the growing recognition that true physical science is a creature born out of Christianity, not against it, and that religion and scientific truth claims show signs of again being one, through a rediscovery of the natural law. Roche also describes a great sea change happening in America, as new generations commit themselves to the revivification of a civilization.

The author labels this volume an “enchiridion,” a small “moral” dagger bequeathed to his own children to protect them “from the swarming night.” We are fortunate that he has chosen to share it beyond his family, for George Roche’s own example testifies that our land has not yet fully succumbed to the dismal forces of the antiheroic.

Allan C. Carlson is president of The Rockford Institute.

The First Ring of Hostility

by Michael Warder

***Moscow 2042* by Vladimir Voinovich, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; \$16.95.**

Cows sacred, evil, and venal are shot by Vladimir Voinovich in this satiric look at the Soviet Union that reads like a combination “Ivan in Wonderland” and Zamyatin’s *WE*. The hero of *Moscow 2042*, like Voinovich, is a Soviet émigré writer living in West Germany. Our protagonist, Vitaly Kartsev, takes a 30-day trip by airplane back to a Moscow 60 years in the future.

Upon landing at the airport he sees the familiar huge portraits of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, but a Jesus in a business suit has joined this pantheon of gods. We gradually learn that the Communist Reformed Church has taken a prominent role in the regime in return for switching to straightforward atheism — ceremonies, rituals, and religious garb are all retained.

Kartsev is given all the respect a literary “classic” deserves even though his books are not published, their titles are never mentioned, and passages are never quoted. Past and future, fiction and fact begin to blur as we learn of the intense interest the all-powerful Editorial Commission has in convincing the “living classic” Kartsev to revise one of his previous works, *Moscow 2042*.

After reading his book, which he has not yet written, Vitaly Kartsev is asked to delete all references to Sim Simych Karnavalov. Sim — a devastating caricature of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn — desires to return to Moscow from the

West after prolonged absence in order to restore the office of the Tsar. Vitaly simply cannot understand why the very elderly leaders of the Editorial Commission are so concerned about "improving" a work of fiction.

It turns out that the State Editorial Commission censors no writers. They may write whatever they wish—only none of it can be printed. In fact, there are whole divisions of writers in the Paplesslit (Paperless Literature) department who are busy at the keyboards all day satisfying their personal need to write. The decision about what literature is more generally needed, however, is made by the Editorial Commission. The state has surpassed socialist realism for Communist realism, and all serious writing is done by the Generalissimo.

The Generalissimo, who looks very much like one of Vitaly's old friends who was a bit of a hustler, is venerated everywhere *ad nauseum*. He is judged superior to Jesus, Marx, Engels, and Lenin and circles the globe in a satellite which can never return to earth. In the meantime, several deputies actually run things on earth in accord with his wishes. He can't return because the deputies don't want him to return after seeing the impracticality of some of his ideas. All parties agree, including the Generalissimo, that the arrangement is for the best.

As the story continues, we learn that others in Vitaly's past life are still alive. Traces of the future can be seen 60 years earlier, but Vitaly is hardly prepared for their continued physical existence. It turns out that one of the hierarchy has developed an elixir of life—a very handy scientific breakthrough for a gerontocracy that just seems to go on and on.

There is much mordant logic throughout this book. For instance, Lenin spoke of worldwide Communism and Stalin of Socialism in one country. The Generalissimo introduced Communism in one city. Sick, dying, or ideologically suspect persons are kept outside the city in the First Ring of Hostility, which is composed of filial republics of the Soviet Union. After the Filial Ring of Hostility there is the Fraternal Ring of Hostility, composed of socialist countries. Finally, there is the Enemy Ring of Hostility composed of capitalist lands. In Mos-

cow itself, in the innermost of three rings within the city, all of which are inside the first Ring of Hostility, we have full and complete Communism.

From each according to his ability to each according to his needs. This is not as tough as it sounds once you realize that needs have to be determined scientifically. Everyone has general needs: food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond those general needs are the higher-level needs. Sure, some might like good-tasting, nutritious food rather than the foul-smelling but minimally nutritious vegetarian pork. The question is, do they need it? Members of the Editorial Commission, KPGb (a combination of Communist Party and state security), and the Supreme Pentagon, all have, as one might well understand, the highest level of needs.

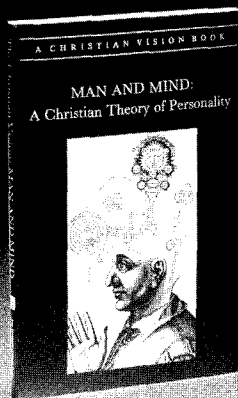
But all is not well in Moscow. The letters "SIM" appear with increasing frequency as graffiti. Vitaly learns these are written by Simites, who are beginning to penetrate the inner circle. Vitaly eventually learns that many of

the upper echelons of the hierarchy are closet Simites, who are also agents of the CIA. In fact, it turns out many of these same people are total cynics who really believe whatever they must to keep these higher-level needs satisfied.

And now we learn why there was so much effort to censor *Moscow 2042*. Sim Simych Karnavalov has been kept on ice for 60 years in a state of suspended animation, and rumor has it that he has just been thawed out. Fiction and fact are racing very quickly toward the end of this book as the Editorial Commission pressures Vitaly to change his manuscript lest the future be affected by his past account of a future fictional event.

The book is a wholesale assault on the Soviet system and to a lesser extent on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Perhaps Voinovich has earned the right for this two-pronged attack. He put his neck on the line for Solzhenitsyn in the Soviet literature wars of the early 1970's until his own forced exile in 1980. He clearly is distrustful of any

MAN AND MIND: A CHRISTIAN THEORY OF PERSONALITY



Why are so many psychologists hostile to religious explanations of human behavior? In what has been hailed as a path-breaking study, nine psychologists, theologians and philosophers offer the reason: Thomas J. Burke, Stephen R. Briggs, Mary Vander Goot, Paul C. Vitz, Charles Ransford, Merold Westphal, William Kirk Kilpatrick, John S. Reist, Jr., and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen.

Important intellectual issues in the field of psychology today

—Richard John Neuhaus
author, *The Naked Public Square*

\$5.00 PAPERBOUND (Michigan residents add 4% sales tax)
VISA AND MASTERCARD ORDERS 800-253-3200, EXT. 801

HILLSDALE COLLEGE PRESS
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

