moments pass, the alcoholic discovers that the gulf is wider and the isolation deeper than before. Yet he is trapped, since alcohol is the only way he knows to overcome his cut-offness even for a brief time.

A chemical pseudo religion for the alcoholic, alcohol is a Janus-faced god. Eventually it shows its hidden face—the face of the devil, so far as the alcoholic's trust in it is concerned. It may be that it is when alcohol loses its pseudo-religious power—its power to bring unity, meaning and transcendence—that the alcoholic "hits bottom." He can no longer overcome his neurotic or his existential anxieties by its use. His god has betrayed him and his ego is exposed to the full chill of ultimate anxiety.

It is pertinent to ask why the alcoholic turns to alcohol in the attempt to handle his existential anxiety. We live in a period of history when it is not easy to find genuinely religious answers. Contemporary religion in the West has lost much of the sense of the numinous and the transcendent. To use Ruth Benedict's two categories for describing religions, the Apollonian has taken over, the Dionysian has been squeezed out. In Jungian terms, the masculine (reason, ethics, logic, controls) has become dominant; the feminine (feeling, giving, mothering, accepting) has been repressed. Many contemporary religious expressions are pale and anemic, lacking in the ecstatic, the mystical, the numinous. When religion loses its spine-tingling quality, alcohol is substituted by many. The prayer of St. Augustine, "Oh! that Thou wouldst enter into my heart and inebriate it . . ." has wistful overtones for modern man.18

The contemporary crisis in values makes it difficult for many persons to find a philosophy of life that is so vital it bleeds when cut. Community consensus has been a casualty of rapid social change, urbanization and high population mobility. It is not an easy time for the individual to find what Fromm calls "a frame of orientation and an object of devotion." 19 The breakdown of a strong sense of community is another aspect of our times which makes it difficult to find relatedness. In his review of Peter Viereck's book, The Unadjusted Man: A New Hero for Americans, Geoffrey Brunn writes: "Ours is an orphan age, severed from its historic past by the transforming impact of dynamic technology. Today every individual in the 'lonely crowd' is haunted by a sense of desolation and incommunicable singularity." 20 Our much bewailed conformity is a symptom of the breakdown of community—the uprooting of those relationships of mutual trust within which existential anxiety can be handled constructively and self-esteem can flower.

19 Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion, p. 21.
20 Sat Rev Lit, 5 Jan 1957, p. 20.