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The Tower of Baal  
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I have often wondered if Oakwood, despite its claims to townhood, isn't really a town at all, but a twisted experiment in social dynamics. Sometimes it seems as if someone has found an irresistible role model to this extremely homogenous and insecure population, released him into the town, and is now grinning a weird unnatural grin as the citizens of Oakwood destroy themselves.

I shall call this false idol Baal. I have already determined some characteristics of the experimental Baal. Baal is an alcoholic in denial. Baal does not realize that he has this terrible disease. In fact, Baal does not even believe that such a disease exists. Furthermore, almost everyone in Oakwood is trying to be Baal. The fixation is so deeply seated, the Oakwoodians even seem to be trying to make everyone else seem to be less like Baal so that they feel more like Baal themselves. Whatever the method, Baal-hood is the thing to attain.

I have noticed this mainly while attending Oakwood High School, although this problem is not merely a contemporary one. My stepdad was also a victim of the Baalist mob movement when he lived in Oakwood. If this behavior was simply passed on from parents to children, then when, if ever, did Baal blunder into town and begin the cycle? I can't even begin to say what truly caused this syndrome, though the Baal scenario is compelling.

I do know why I formed the Baal theory, though. It fits the situation. At Oakwood High School I witnessed the most tragic of all societies: the society of conformists. Almost every one of them was trying to be Baal. Even those that detested everything about who Baal was still kept up appearances by living the Baal life. They were all cheating themselves in the worst way possible, simply to keep their niche in through the continual transitions in the pecking order.

In this way the Oakwood community is much like a large stone tower, in which the stone blocks are continually trying to reach the top of the same tower that they help to form. Instead of collapsing, the tower simply changes texture and height slightly without ever changing shape. The system is self-perpetuating. Similarly, the stones stand on top of each other in a complex

hierarchy. Each stone above the ground has had to step on a lower one to get where it is.

The analogy extends further in that once a block reaches the top of the tower, has stepped on the most blocks, and has come within touching distance of the banner of Baalism, the only place left to go is down. The state of Baalism can only be maintained for so long. Most Oakwoodians, therefore are pursuing false highs and empty accomplishments. Few direct their efforts to productive or creative tasks, analogous to moving around the circumference of the tower on an equal level with other blocks, instead of constantly stepping on them.

Whether or not Baal exists is still a mystery to me. Perhaps there are even several Baals combined into one by the years. I know for a fact, however, that the Tower of Baal does exist. I have felt it's weight upon my shoulders. I have even tried to climb the tower, but the weight changes very little and the vertigo makes life in the tower just as arduous high up as at the bottom. I can only hope for the sake of those still left in the tower that lightning strikes the flagpole and incinerates the evil banner of Baal, allowing the tower to fall to the ground and leaving the stone blocks to roam in freedom.