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Cover: Georges Laugee, French b. 1853, Woman with a Sheaf of Wheat, undated, oil on canvas, 21¼ x 17¼ inches. University Collection, Valparaiso University Museum of Art. Estate of Janette G. Wesemann.

The conservation of both of the above paintings and their frames was funded by Ruth Dilloway, member of the VU FRIENDS OF ART. The paintings were then placed on exhibit for the first time on campus in January.
Ronald Reagan and the Miracle of Vaccination

The first time I met Ronald Reagan I was standing outside one of those sprawling double structures—male students living in the left half, female students in the right, a long linoleum hallway connecting the two—which disfigure college campuses all over the United States. This particular example, "Aberdeen-Inverness Residence Hall," was situated at the University of California’s Riverside branch. Reagan walked briskly past, accompanied by a few aides. (I like to think that Ed Meese was among them.) His hair was perfect. He stopped to speak with a random clump of students. There were no demonstrators in sight, just me, three or four other equally nondescript freshman males, a couple of frizzy-looking females, and a tall guy in Bermuda shorts, with a slide rule. At that time, late 1966 or early 1967, Reagan was advocating what had been presented as a uniform 10% slash in California state budgets—including, of course, the budget of the University system. One of the students challenged him on the intelligence of uniform, mandated budget cuts; Reagan went off into a spiel about purchasing a new car and giving up sidewall tires. I got a word in edgewise. Funding a university was like buying a car? (Laugh from a few of the others.) The governor looked at us all blankly, then backed away—backed away—about ten paces. He was sorrowful. "That's not what I meant." (A look for me, a hurt look of deep pity.) "That's not what I meant at all." A failure in communication had just occurred.

Or had it? Mr. Bermuda shorts was already recycling the conversation to a newcomer. "He tried to explain. But they just wouldn't listen." At this moment I began to appreciate the beauty of Ronald Reagan, his ability to live in a dimension of his own and convince others to live there with him. Subsequent occasions confirmed on a larger scale the lesson of this miniscule conversation. Reagan was always visiting campuses (mostly to attend meetings of the Board of Regents); he never lost a chance to commit some memorable Reaganism. Perhaps two years after my initial encounter, the subject of student newspapers came up at a Regents' meeting. Reagan observed casually that all such papers should be shut down as they served no positive function and could clearly contribute to the subversion of the government. There was a brief silence, then the meeting went on . . . much as though the governor had never spoken. The Regents—most of them hard-bitten old millionaires, few of them sympathetic to "liberals"—understood that there was no possible response. Reagan was playing to the cameras and the guys in Bermuda shorts; he would neither know nor care what actually happened regarding student papers. Another time a group of students staged a sit-in in the path of the governor's progress (a protest against his pronouncements on Vietnam) and were duly hauled off by police; Reagan immediately referred to the demonstrators as "cowardly little fascists," one of the most striking interpretations of passive resistance ever articulated. Here was a man who could say anything without blushing.

People seem to like this sort of stunt; I don't much admire it myself but to each his own. We are left with the problem of Reagan's public career: of whether his undeniable popularity has any lasting significance. Everyone who was going to write a Reagan's Last Roundup piece has done so by now, of course. This journal alone has featured three essays in the genre—by Jim Nuechterlein, Dick Lee, and (present issue) Paul Brietzke. Each of them sums up cannily a position on the Presidency just concluded; if their arguments share any perception at all, it is the notion that Reagan . . . gave us hope, restored the authority of the Presidency, or (Brietzke's negative twist) exercised a malignly charismatic influence on the electorate. There seems to be a common idea here, despite certain divergences. It is not so much Reagan's actions that count but the tone he set. To put the point another way, arguing with Ronald Reagan gets us nowhere; if his accomplishment is to be seen for what it is, it must be located within that misty and emotion-laden land where Reagan lives, and will live, forever. (Strike up a chorus of "Puff the Magic Dragon": that hippie ditty could well be this leader's theme song.)

I propose a hypothesis about the recently-concluded Presidency which will take into account Reagan's peculiar strengths. His government-by-mood—his imposition of a "vision" on his fellow citi-
Jews. We might have elected Conan the Barbarian sense a vaccine against fascism. All the danger signs of national impotence resulting from events in Vietnam, Iran, &c., a growing fascination with sexualized military icons, increased hostility towards blacks and Jews. We might have elected Conan the Barbarian president. Instead we got a leader who could push most of this nation's proto-fascist tendencies towards culminating moments of absurdity, who could (quite without meaning to) vaccinate the country against its own worst impulses.

This hypothesis applies most directly to foreign relations (Reagan's domestic policy, I hasten to admit, might require a different kind of treatment). Oliver North is perhaps the crucial figure here. North was a dangerous type. Think of the French experience with frustrated military officers left over from the Algerian debacle: long after the Algerian conflict ended, these officers threatened French democracy, such as it was, with the possibility of a coup. On the other hand, North in particular (as opposed to North the type) was so incompetent as almost to defy belief. The country was swept with admiration for his jut-jawed yet tremulous performance on television. Could anything have been more humiliating than to catch oneself idolizing such a man? An "attenuated microorganism"—or to use Reagan's own phrase, a "cowardly" and "little" fascist—North brought out the ugly side of American nationalism, but lacked the plausibility or the competence to keep it alive for long. He made all too visible the comic-opera aspect. The cheers for him were punctuated by laughter and embarrassment. Rambo, it is worth noting, got much the same kind of reception: hard to avoid giggling when dreams of military heroism are so ludicrously represented.

Certain other personalities in the Reagan Presidency deserve the same sort of tribute. However, it is Reagan's own contribution that most needs emphasis. He did much to sweeten our bitter memories of Vietnam, as if that war could somehow be won in retrospect. One of his typical strategies was to institute anti-communist guerilla movements. The emotional force of this policy strikes me as impeccable. If your conventional army is whipped by guerillas, why not use guerillas in subsequent conflicts—especially if the guerillas in question don't have voting relatives to mourn their deaths? We were presented with several chances to re-fight the Vietnam War from the triumphant side and without significant casualties. None of these efforts got a thoroughly satisfactory popular response, for reasons I won't dally over here; at the same time, a related policy worked beautifully. It was Grenada, the effortless invasion, that put us over the top. No one—outside of its hapless citizens—cares who runs Grenada. On the other hand, symbolic wars have their value. Only a few people get killed; afterwards, the victors feel a lot better without having committed any major crimes against humanity. Literalists like Alexander Haig, who advocated blockading Cuba, failed to understand the effortless charm of Reagan's Grenadian strategy, in which the inimitable techniques of blitzkrieg yielded a photo opportunity.

The connection between Reagan's foreign policy and a parodied, nipped-in-the-bud American fascism deserves, I think, further investigation. A collection of essays edited by Geoffrey Hartman (Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective, Indiana University Press, 1986) suggests one line of inquiry: see especially page 75 of that volume for the extraordinary remarks of Richard Viguerie on the moral context of Reagan's Bitburg visit. Also worthy of study is the extremely fine line in some circles between "anti-communists" and "old fascists in disguise": here Pat Buchanan's vigorous work for the Reagan administration would have to be considered, as would the peculiar discovery of Nazi aides within the Bush campaign. I prefer to conclude, however, by meditating a weakness of my thesis. It is possible that I have overrated the fascist tendencies of the early eighties and that therefore Reagan's implication with those tendencies—his ability to act out a kind of proto-fascism even while unconsciously reducing it to absurdity—has no real import. Perhaps. Remember, though, that Jimmy Carter (unlike Reagan, a committed conservative and an eternal spoilsport) put the country in a very bad mood indeed. Frustrated by Carter's seeming helplessness, people wanted blood. Mass murder would have been acceptable, I think; "nuking" Iran seemed like a fine idea. Reagan did us a service by making us realize that no such act was necessary. Reagan "did" symbolically what we wanted to do in fact, thus enabling the country to get through its proto-fascist phase quickly, without (one hopes) consequences of lasting harm. No wonder he has been so popular. He has allowed us to satisfy our most destructive urges without thereby destroying the world. And at the end of it all, a little shamedfaced, we find ourselves getting together with the Russians to work out a few calming and restorative agreements.

The Cresset
EXPERIENCE AND APPEARANCE IN AMERICA’S MORAL WILDERNESS

Edwards’ Humiliation, Franklin’s Rationalization, and Huck Finn’s Damnation

Returning to Philadelphia from Boston by sea, Benjamin Franklin found himself confronted by a moral dilemma. It had, he tells us in his Autobiography, long been his desire to attain perfection in all things. It was because, so he said, that he “wished to live without committing any fault at any time” that he “conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection.” It was his explicit determination to “conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other.”

In pursuit of this admirable goal he had even developed a chart with his list of virtues running vertically down the page and the days of the week marked across the top of the page. On this chart, he kept a careful record of his success in attaining perfection, and by so watching his habits and behavior he was able to note where he needed improvement.

As a part of this lifelong goal, Franklin when a young man had concluded that a vegetarian diet was morally superior to the eating of the flesh of animals or fish. He was persuaded to believe, he tells us, “the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had, or ever could do us, any injury that might justify the slaughter. All this seemed very reasonable.” But on this particular sea voyage, Franklin watched some cod being taken for the evening meal and his commitment to his vegetarian principles was sorely tested. I can do no better than to quote his own words exactly: “But I had formerly been a great lover of fish, and, when this came hot out of the frying-pan, it smelled admirably well. I balanced some time between principle and inclination, till I recollected that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then, thought I, ‘if you eat one another, I don’t see why we mayn’t eat you.’ So I dined upon cod very heartily, and continued to eat with other people, returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet. So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do. Modern psychologists refer to this ability as “rationalizing.” The mind, as Calvin said, is a factory of idols. Franklin had a clear, rational understanding of the difference between right and wrong in this instance. His rational mind had chosen vegetarianism in principle. But his appetite salivated at the sight of the fresh cod. The deeper organic impulses of his being won out, not by overcoming the mind with force or logic but by tricking the mind into suggesting arguments which the mind could use against itself. To Sidney’s muse, which instructed him to look into his heart and write, T.S. Eliot once responded, “But that is not looking deep enough; Racine or Donne looked into a good deal more than the heart. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts.” T.S. Eliot knew his enemy.

Such rationalization is by itself not remarkable. We do it everyday in a thousand ways. It is as human as pride. What is remarkable about Franklin’s account is his recognition of the process and his happy submis-
sion to it. He knew he was rationalizing, but rather than look deeper, as Eliot would have him, he patted himself on the tummy for his ability to rationalize and then sat down to dinner.

Franklin's willingness to embrace a rationalization and to rest satisfied with a merely rational approach to morality highlights one of the important differences between the secular culture of Franklin and the culture of the religious New Englanders from whom he fled. Jonathan Edwards, born within two years of Franklin in the same small British colony on the North American coast, had the same insight. Human reason, he said, does not, as it seems to, control behavior but is itself subject to the control of what he called "inclination." This inclination of the heart, he said, is the basis of the mind's choosing. One does not make choices in a moral vacuum; one decides on the basis of what one feels is right or wrong. Such feeling is produced by the inclination of the heart, and those inclinations are part of the foundations of each human personality, embedded deep in the self and determining our choices. He never denied that people have liberty, "Liberty," he wrote, "is the power, opportunity, or advantage that anyone has to do as he pleases, or conducting in any respect according to his pleasure; without considering how his pleasure comes to be as it is. . . . Is not choosing, choosing as he pleases, conducting in some respect according to his pleasure, and still without determining how he came by that pleasure?" In his search for answers, Edwards thus was led away from the rationalizations of the head into the deeper inclinations of the heart, into introspection so deep and so profound that they led below conscious reasoning into what today would be called the subconscious. Like Franklin, he knew his thoughts were but rationalizations, yet he differed from Franklin in refusing to accept such superficial rationalizing as ultimate. He looked into the lusts that controlled his behavior and looking he only saw deeper and deeper layers of rationalization: "I go about very often for this many years, with these expressions in my mind and in my mouth, 'Infinite upon infinite. Infinite upon infinite!' When I look into my heart and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell."

In this refusal to accept the shallow rationalizations of the head and, as Franklin did, reject principle in favor of a gluttonous supper of cod, Edwards spoke for one of the most persistent traditions in American letters. From his Puritan ancestors to his literary descendants runs a peculiarly American insistence that we distrust the idolatrous rationalizations of the mind, submit to humiliation, and search in the internal wilderness of the soul for whatever grounding there might be.

In his Magnalia Christi Americana, that great New England hagiographer, Cotton Mather, of witchcraft fame, tells of one of the eminent saints of the Bay Colony, the Reverend Jonathan Mitchell. Here was a man who had such a tender conscience that he doubted even his own righteousness and sound character. This remarkable Puritan, painfully aware of his own sinful inclinations, anticipated an important strain in the American character, that of the conscientious man or woman who does not presume to know right from wrong, who sees the gulf between man and God, and who prefers the wilderness to the illusion of being at ease in Zion. Listen to his cry: "God hath put this fear in my heart. . . . that I shall never know God for mine in truth, but live and die in an unsound and self-deceiving way: that I should have many fears and prayers, and good affections, and duties, and hopes, and ordinances, and seeming's, but never a heart soundly humbled, and soundly comforted into my dying day: but be a son of perdition to the last, and never have God's special love revealed and assured to me! Lord, keep this fear alive in my heart!"

Seemings, and the acceptance of seemings, instead of true morality, true courage, true character: that is a most painful demand. If even the highest imaginings and aspirations of man can be counterfeit, how can we be certain we know the good? How do we know which impulses come from below and which from above? The mind is indeed a factory of idols and Satan a foe to be taken seriously. We know what we ought to believe, what our minds and education and culture teaches is the right thing to believe and do. We know these and they seem to be right. But are seemings enough?

Benjamin Franklin exemplifies the other tradition, that of the man of the world who is satisfied with seemings, who merely dabbles here and there in the deep, fishing for what might be of advantage to him in his worldly pursuits. Even his desire for perfection was at bottom not a spiritual hunger but a utilitarian calculation. After a Quaker friend punctured Franklin's balloon by telling him that he was generally thought proud, Franklin added humility to his list of virtues. But he found pride to be a particularly stubborn vice. "I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the reality of this virtue," he explained, "but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it." He did this by changing his method of argumentation, by forebearing any direct confrontation and instead forcing himself to say always "I conceive," "I apprehend," or "I imagine." This mode, Franklin later admitted, "I first put on with some violence to natural inclination"; but it eventually became habitual and was, so he be-
lieved, one of the chief reasons for his success in politics.

Franklin's autobiography thus stands, along with his celebrated Way to Wealth, as a lesson in the material benefits of hypocrisy, of the worldly superiority of seemings over the anguished search for some real thing. And his bold and brassy trumpeting of hypocrisy has many admirers and even more followers. In many respects, America is the land of hype. A recent report on American economic leadership noted sadly that advertising is the one field in which Americans are still unchallenged. The Confidence Man, as Herman Melville made clear in his novel of that name, is an American. P.T. Barnum made a joyous career out of fooling a public which in turn seemed to enjoy being made fools of. The Isuzu salesman who looks directly into the camera and with an insincere smile lies to us is one of the hits of the recent television season.

**We forget that the inclinations that control behavior are of the heart. We can teach students to articulate what a truly moral person might think or do; since we cannot touch the heart, the results are only seemings.**

But a personality built on such seemings and a culture built of such personalities are castles built on sand. Franklin is a good example of what to avoid. His sense of character is based on the attainment of material success. His way to wealth with its Protestant work ethic certainly seems moral, but in reality it is radically amoral for it encourages dishonesty and evasion of the truth. The development of character and values, as opposed to the mere putting on of what seems to be moral, must begin with the realization that such rational, speculative, purely academic means are worse than not enough. They lead only to the appearance of morality even as they lead away from the real thing. Students must be taught to reach beyond what they are taught, to reject mere seemings in any form, and to find their own foundations. But the attainment of such self-knowledge is by no means easy; nor are the means of attainment at all evident.

The problem is that though we may know what we believe in our heads, we do not know what is in our hearts. It is crucial that we not ignore the principal contribution of modern psychology to the understanding of man: that there is a subconscious and that by definition it is that in our hearts of which we are not conscious. Hence the battle so much a part of American literature between the head and the heart. Hence St. Paul: "For the good that I would that I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." It is an old truism but too often we in academia neglect it, too often we forget what Edwards and even Franklin knew, that the inclinations that control behavior are of the heart. We can teach the head to distinguish various levels of moral reasoning; we can teach students to articulate what a truly moral person might think or do; but since we cannot touch the heart, the results are only seemings.

The peculiarly American answer to this dilemma, embedded in our literature, is that one needs to unlearn before one can learn; one must expose the rationalizations of the mind as rationalizations and instead experience the deeper origins of human behavior, the inclinations of the heart that must be hunted through the heart of darkness. One must somehow come to see oneself as a lustful behaving mechanism subject to the control of selfish and demanding passions and be astounded, ashamed, humiliated, destroyed, before the old corruption can be replaced by a new and better being. Surely what we have here is a shadow of the central image of Christianity, that of Christ on the cross experiencing his moment in hell before being resurrected. But the cross is too explicitly dogmatic for the broader culture. Thus, the most enduring symbol of this process is not the cross but the wilderness and the descent into the wilderness.

The first Puritan settlers of America interpreted their own experience within the context of their typological reading of the Old Testament. To them, the Children of Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt, their crossing of the Red Sea, their forty years of trials and tribulations in the wilderness, and their final crossing of the Jordan into the promised land of Canaan was a type, a literal foreshadowing, of the passion and crucifixion of Christ, which in turn established the pattern that they themselves felt compelled to follow. Why did God lead the Children of Israel into the wilderness, they asked? And in answer they continually quoted Deuteronomy 8:2: "the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart."

Passage through the wilderness thus became a typological symbol of the means of grace. To pass from the state of natural sin to a state of godliness required a crucifying journey through the wilderness of the human heart. The call to enter into this wilderness was a call to forgo the security and sanity of the rational mind in favor of the true sight of sin experienced in the chaotic depths of the soul. Just as the desert
sojourn of the Children of Israel was both literal history and typological metaphor to the Puritans, so their own sojourn in the literal wilderness of New England had to be interpreted on two levels, the type and the anti-type, the symbol and that which the symbol pointed to. The true wilderness was the spiritual wilderness of the human heart, but the literal woods were an important external symbol of that internal realm. Thomas Hooker, one of the greatest of the first generation ministers, made the explicit comparison: “There must be contrition and humiliation before the Lord comes to take possession... This was typified in the passage of the Children of Israel towards the promised land: they must come into, and go through a vast and roaring wilderness, where they must be bruised with many pressures, humbled under many over-bearing difficulties, they were to meet withal before they could possess that good land which abounded with all prosperity, flowed with milk and honey.” Thus, the first settlers, keeping in mind the duality of type and anti-type, symbol and substance, saw the literal New England forests as a symbol of the subconscious, and they believed that they had to plunge into that internal wilderness if they were ever to know their own hearts and begin the process of regeneration.

Jonathan Edwards, greatest of the Puritan theologians and a leader of the Great Awakening of the 1740s, continued in this tradition. His Religious Affections, an attempt to distinguish true religious affections from false, seemings from the real thing, remains a masterpiece of religious psychology. He too distrusted Arminian teaching of morality preferring that sinners be forced to experience the terror of sin in consciousness. “As long as corrupt nature is not mortified,” he wrote, “but the principle left whole in a man, 'tis vain to think to expect that it should not govern.” His attempts to drive sinners into the humiliation of the darkest fears of their souls are still read today, but very few freshmen comprehend what he was trying to do in “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” And yet, his own explanation is clear enough: “It is God's manner of dealing with men, to lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them, and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness, and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them.” That this painful revelation of the truth of the soul must necessarily be terrifying did not stop him. He saw his preaching of hellfire in therapeutic terms. He was like a doctor cutting a cancer out of a patient, a doctor who must continue cutting no matter how painful to the patient or how loud the patient's screams.

After Edwards, the call to self-revelation in the wilderness again became blurred and the distinction between spiritual and literal wilderness again confused. But that some form of painful self-revelation was necessary, and that the wilderness was a symbol of this became a standard part of American rhetoric.

The first settlers saw the literal New England forests as a symbol of the subconscious, and they believed that they had to plunge into that internal wilderness if they were ever to know their own hearts and begin the process of regeneration.

In the Revolution, Calvinist ministers applied this theme to the national experience effectively. In 1777, Nichols Street preached a sermon titled, “The American States acting over the part of Israel in the Wilderness, And thereby Impeding their Entrance into Canaan's Rest; Or, the human heart discovering itself under trials.” Almost by itself, the title tells the whole story. The Revolutionary War, said Street, was brought on by God for the same reason that God led Israel through the wilderness, that “Americans might see what corruption there still remains in their hearts unmortified and unsubdued.”

Even in today's popular culture, these themes endure. In the second of George Lucas's “Star Wars” trilogy, “The Empire Strikes Back,” Luke Skywalker, the young, inexperienced would-be hero, must undergo training in order to become a Jedi knight. His teacher, Yoda, sends him into a murky swamp and tells him to descend into a hole in the surface of the swamp unarmed. But Luke disobeys and brings his light saber with him. In that deep, in the half-light below the ground, he sees the form of Darth-Vader, the personification of the Dark Side, a true type of Satan, and in the battle that follows he kills Vader. But when Luke opens the visor of his fallen enemy, the face he sees is not that of the dark Lord but is his own face. He has symbolically descended into the wilderness and there in battle defeated the dark side of his own personality. Then and only then is there any hope that he might become a Jedi knight. One must descend into the darkness of one's own self and confront the evil there before one can emerge a hero.

The recurrent theme of these works is the rejection of intellectual formulations in favor of the experience.
of the depths of self-consciousness, a rejection of Franklin's rationalization in favor of Edwards' sojourn through humiliation, a rejection of the academic head in favor of the romantic heart in all its latent darkness. If the mind is a factory of idols, then even formulations of morality become suspect. Truth is to be taught elsewhere, not in the classroom by what Faulkner called "hired pedagogues," but in the wilderness. Hence we get such famous formulations as Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Truth is greater than the affection of love," even, he affirmed, if that truth were from the devil. That is why he could write in his journal, "I hate goodies, I hate goodness that preaches.... Goodies make us very bad.... We will almost sin to spite them. Better indulge yourself, feed fat, drink liquors, than go straightlaced for such cattle as these." Such anti-moral outbreaks in American letters can be traced back to their origins in the Reformation's abhorrence of a covenant of works, the Arminian belief that good works and moral behavior can lead to grace. Harriet Beecher Stowe's father, Lyman Beecher, the grand old Puritan, liked to boast in his old age that the first sermon he ever preached was against morality. It is not enough to appear to be good, to seem to be moral, is the message, but first seek the truth of the self be it good or ill.

Lyman Beecher, the grand old Puritan, like to boast that the first sermon he ever preached was against morality. Appearing good is not enough.

Which leads us to the most famous moral conflict in American literature, that of the adolescent Huckleberry Finn as he tried to decide what he should do about the runaway slave, his friend, Miss Watson's Jim.

Jim and Huck, you recall, had escaped from the restraints and petty corruptions of their Missouri village, from the widow Douglas who wanted to civilize Huck, from Pap who wanted to exploit him, from Judge Thatcher who wanted to rob him. Theirs is an escape from civilization into an Edenic nature, a wilderness sojourn which does not at first show its teeth. Their life together on the raft is idyllic, but Huck is bothered by the knowledge that in helping Jim to escape he has done a truly wicked thing. And when Jim is stolen from him by the phoney Duke, the issue comes to a head. Huck weighs the pros and cons carefully, trying to decide if he should write a letter telling Miss Wat-son where her slave was so she could come and get him before he was sold away.

After much soul searching, Huck decided to go ahead and do what he knew was the right thing; he wrote a short letter to Miss Watson telling her where to find Jim. When he had finished it, he felt good and clean of sin.

But righteousness not from the heart never lasts. Huck began to think about Jim, not just as a runaway slave but as a person, a friend. He remembered how kind Jim had been to him and how Jim had called the loner Huck "the best friend old Jim ever had in the world." Huck believed that sending the letter was the right thing to do, but Jim was his friend. He had to decide between principle and inclination, between sending the letter and keeping his friend. The parallel to Franklin's dilemma is there: Inclination won out; the heart won and righteousness lost. "It was," said Huck, "a close place. I took it up and held it in my hand. I was trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knewed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: 'All right then, I'll go to hell'—and tore it up."

Like Franklin, Huck was torn between the inclinations of his heart and what he believed to be right; like Franklin he abandoned principle in favor of inclination; but unlike Franklin he did not rationalize and try to make the immoral act seem moral. He did not lie to himself but accepted the consequences of his evil deed.
The irony of course is that in rejecting what he and everyone knew to be the right thing to do and in choosing to cling to a personal friendship, he was also doing what we as readers believe to have been the correct moral choice. Thus, we can afford to indulge him. But from the context of Huck's culture, his choice was immoral. Huck's willingness to break the established morality of his culture was one of the reasons the book was so loudly condemned. Today, we are used to such questioning of social convention, but we prefer it wrapped in higher law doctrine. Huck's radicalism comes from his refusal to rationalize and his willingness to be damned. He was true to his own heart even though he knew it to be from the devil.

But of what importance is that? It is not the final outcome that is crucial but the process. From that perspective, Huck rates fairly low. His decision to stand by his friend is not justified by any higher principle at all, not even stage one moralizing. It is the same loyalty that is found in a gang of thieves. It is an extension of the self to include one's friends and thus ultimately a selfish act. There is no reference to the larger community or to principle. There is clearly no attempt at any categorical imperative. It is entirely from the inclination of his heart and not from any principle. We can see loyalty in his act, but he does not.

On the other hand, the possibility of returning Jim to his rightful owner is considered with what we might recognize as at least the rudimentary stages of moral reasoning. For once, Huck thinks of someone besides himself; Jim would be better off as a slave with his own family. But this is balanced by the possibility of Miss Watson selling him out of anger. The decision to clinch, though, by Huck's thinking of another innocent besides Jim, Miss Watson, who he says, had never done anything to him. The sense of reciprocity and fairness is at least at level two. And underlying his whole argument is his knowledge of the cost of violating what he knows to be the moral standards of his society, standards which he himself believes in. Hence his belief that in violating those standards he will go to hell. In this, he demonstrates his recognition of the importance of upholding the law, stage three if not stage four.

In the end, we have a situation like most that is really too complex for any simple categorization by rule. But this at least can be said, that the application of rationalization and moral reasoning led to the possibility of doing something which we as readers know to be morally repugnant. Rejecting all morality and simply following one's purely selfish desires, even while believing those desires to be wrong, led to an act which we today applaud. Clearly, what little moral training Huck had led him away from the purity of his intuition. Twain's point then is one of ridiculing rationalized morality in favor of the sentimental. How American!

We may not agree today with Mark Twain's underlying romantic assumption that the natural heart of a twelve-year-old uneducated boy is closer to God than all of the lofty religion of the schools and churches or all of the speculative rationalizations of the head, but his criticism of socially defined systems of morality stands tall. If, as Huck says, you cannot pray a lie, neither can you live one. A student can learn to say what we want him or her to say, but in the end it may all be seemings; and seemings never last.

What then can we do? Start a war? Hire muggers to confront our students in the dark? Send them down the Mississippi on rafts?

What we must do is find some way to confront them with themselves, to send them into the wilderness of their own souls, to convince them that there is more to what they believe than what they think. I do not have a program that would outline how this could be done. I can only say that somehow one must be found. We still need what William James called a moral equivalent of war. And I fear greatly that classroom playing is nowhere close to the real thing. Indeed, I fear that classroom instruction is more likely to create well-educated hypocrites who have learned how to rationalize at stage six levels what their stage one hearts lust to do.

My own interest has to do with my wilderness metaphor. Colleges after all have in their origins some indebtedness to the idea that true learning occurs not in the crowded city but in the solitude of the desert, one of the points of Williams' Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought. Universities have always been a kind of cloister where students are separated from their families and communities for a few years in order to gain new and different perspectives and to explore intellectual and emotional realms that the busy work-a-day world has little time for. Even within the university, we hold retreats, trying to get as far away as possible. Freshmen today, even at places like Harvard, begin their first college year with camping trips and expeditions designed to break through the merely rational and forge a more emotional communication.

There is within the history of the university in our culture an assumption that college is somehow a shadow of the sojourn in the wilderness, an experience out of the mainstream, a momentary stepping back from the noise of life. But what it lacks is that experience which would be a moral equivalent of war. The cliché is true that more is learned in the dorm than in the classroom. We must somehow build on that and
combine experiences that might confront our students with themselves with an opportunity to reflect in an academic way on the meaning of those experiences.

Confronted, we defend ourselves, or we tune out. Who has the time or the energy to plunge to the core of belief every time a new idea challenges our set assumptions? When, if ever? The job of peeling away the conditioned layers is a tedious one. But if character begins with knowing who we really are and the ability to act from that reality, then such an emotional trip is necessary at some point in life. Adolescence and the four college years are the period set aside for emotional and intellectual exploration. But we must not simply build on what is there as if our students arrived in a state of innocent nature, each a tabula rasa without a past or personality; we must drive our students to question themselves as radically as they dare. We must force them to confront themselves and discover how much or how little there is there. In literature classes, we can discuss other's dilemmas and sympathize, but that is no substitute for experience.

**My own prejudices are Protestant:**
*a sense that there must first be a tearing down before there can be a building up, that each person must experience alone the wilderness of the self.*

My worst fear is that college, like youth, is wasted on children. I heartily advocate the year off. Travel abroad is still for many the most revealing. It is hard to believe how American we are until we find ourselves in a totally alien culture with people who do not share our unarticulated assumptions. My favorite example is that of the black radical Eldridge Cleaver who in his first book, *Soul on Ice,* advocated the rape of white women as a tool of racial politics. In his less well known second book, *Soul on Fire,* Cleaver tells how he escaped from an American prison and fled the U.S. only to find that he wasn't Cuban or communist, that he wasn't even African, but, whether he wanted it or not, American. With this revelation, he returned home, with a vengeance, becoming a born-again Christian and a Reagan Republican. In theory, he thought he knew what he believed; in confrontation with reality, he discovered differently.

Besides travel, there is the army, there is missionary work, hospital work, drug clinic work, the Peace Corps; there is even McDonalds. If American colleges said to incoming freshmen, "We will accept you with a one-year delayed admission providing you do something with that year," perhaps our students would be more prepared to apply academic questions to real situations. But even within the four-year college curriculum, there could be more opportunities for years abroad, work study, for semesters devoted to hands-on experience. Let someone who thinks he wants to be a doctor work in a hospital for several months before wasting time and money on a career that is not for him.

These are not new suggestions, nor am I very happy with them. But my point is that if we are concerned with the moral growth of our students, it is to this area of their education that we must devote our attention and not to classes in moral development. Those do have a place, but not in developing morals or courage. We cannot teach morality, we can only teach about it.

The standard developmental model it seems to me is somewhat Catholic in conception. That is, it assumes the existence of some moral ability which must be added to and built upon, a common belief in a definition of the good that has the authority of tradition and can be learned. My own prejudices are Protestant: a sense that there must first be a tearing down before there can be a building up, that each person must return to his or her own center of being and there experience alone the wilderness of the self, that each individual must be allowed to rebuild the moral universe for him or her self. To do otherwise is to presume to direct the spirit.

Perry Miller, the dean of American Puritan Studies, was asked to address a conference in 1954 on "Values in the American Tradition." He thought it a peculiarly American occasion. Frenchmen, he said, do not question their Frenchness; the English take their Englishness for granted. Even to suggest that these needed discussion would be, he said, "bad form." But Americans have always had a peculiar self-consciousness, a self-questioning, a need to redefine the national purpose and national identity anew in each generation. Miller concluded by saying, "He who would fix the pattern of decision by confining the American choice to one and only one mode of response—whether this be in politics, diplomacy, economics, literary form, or morality itself—such a one, in the light of our history, is the truly 'Un-American.'" To Miller, this willingness to let history unfold is a wonderfully American value. Let us not assume that we know what morality is or what courage should look like. To be true to our traditions, let us begin, not by trying to build saints, but by pushing sinners into the wilderness and trusting the spirit to do its work. As Thoreau said, "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."
ART, RELIGION, AND THE LIBERAL SCIENCES

Caveats for Reformers

I

The claims made upon us by the liberal arts do not amount to a prescription for living. You cannot "take" the liberal arts, as you would penicillin, to ward off intellectual "viruses." Yet much criticism of American education presumes that something is "wrong" with our children. Make them take the right medicine (i.e., the right curriculum) and they will get "better." "Better" is defined in relation to Japanese or Russian children. Best of all, this model says that our children's intellectual "temperature" can be quantified and then displayed on graphs labeled "productivity," "competitiveness," or "cultural literacy."

Those of us who were in high school in the years after Sputnik can be forgiven a degree of cynicism about lamentations over America's educational shortcomings. A feature of the Sputnik spasm was the comparisons of scholastic "achievement" among children from different countries. Nothing so clearly marked the political nature of sudden spurts of interest in American education. The classrooms became vacant lots upon which nation-gangs could try the superiority of their systems.

A result of the Sputnik heebie-jeebies was a law, the National Defense Education Act, which poured hundreds of millions of dollars into education, especially math and science. Educators lobbied for this law and our political leaders gave us what we wanted. A few years after passing the act, the government began shipping some of the act's beneficiaries to the vacant lots of Viet Nam for a different kind of system testing. (The "Education" part of the act having been fulfilled, the leaders reckoned it time to implement the "Defense" part. War is education by other means.)

Do I suggest that the NDEA caused the Viet Nam War? No. Are the events related? Yes, in this sense: American politicians have little ability to discriminate between the aims of education and the aims of government. This is not surprising because we who educated them have an interest in hobbling their ability to distinguish between these aims. True, government should promote the general welfare and, as a society, we associate welfare and education. But the association does not permit the fallacy that similar goals can be achieved by identical means.

Let's remember that our leaders approach the problems of education like a Zamboni, the machine at hockey games that smooths the ice by laying down a layer of hot water. It makes the rough places plain. Then the game continues.

Now that the election is over, we should think about George Bush's wish to be an "education president" who may pour billions—well, millions anyway—into schools. Let's remember that our governmental leaders approach the problems of education like a Zamboni, the machine at hockey games that smooths the ice by laying down a layer of hot water. It makes the rough places plain. Superficial inequalities disappear. Then the game continues as before. The game is fast, exciting, and violent with plenty of money and glory for those able to participate. The politicians pay a lot of attention to the playing surface. They never wonder about the nature of the game itself.

The travail of Dan Quayle illustrates our inability to think clearly about education and values. People mock
Quayle as a standard product of our present educational-ethical system. But Dan Quayle didn’t build the atomic bomb and look the other way while six million Jews were asphyxiated; or send troops to Korea; or shrug at Joe McCarthy and give civil rights the silent treatment; or nearly precipitate World War III over some jalopy ballistic hardware in Cuba; or waste 55,000 lives in Viet Nam; or undermine the Constitution; or pardon the underminer; or fritter away our economic leadership; or slaughter 251 Marines in Beirut and ship missiles to their murderers’ godfather; or trash an election by evading important issues. These deeds belong to Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Michael Dukakis and George Bush. They were educated, respectively, at Harvard, in the Kansas City public schools, at West Point, Harvard, San Marcos State, Whittier and Duke, The University of Michigan, Annapolis, Eureka, Swarthmore, and Yale. They were educated during years when their “curricula” were more “coherent” than they are today and when “traditional values” were firmly in the saddle. The most important educational reformer of these leaders’ times was James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard, designer of chemical weapons in World War I, leader of the Manhattan project in World War II, who saw no differences among conventional, chemical, and atomic weapons.1

If we attribute our troubles to a failure of American education, we have to look farther back than the sixties and seventies. The people who taught Ronald Reagan’s generation have far more to answer for than those who taught in the sixties and seventies. Members of Reagan’s generation failed numerous tests of their values and they try to escape responsibility as they have frequently done—by blaming the victims. It’s easy to be hard on political leaders. Let’s also be tough on ourselves. By the time we liberal arts teachers enter our second decade in the classroom, most of us are inured to the blank stares and awkward rejoinders which greet our announcement that we are teachers. How can people who claim to value education, and who have perfected the art of public relations, be so inept at concealing their bafflement when one of their neighbors utters the dread words: “I teach English.” Here’s what most people say: “Oops!” (Silly grin.) “Better watch my language!” End of conversation.

Our neighbors ask, “What is the good of learning something that you’re never going to use?” To do so, as a student of mine said, “is a waste of brain cells.” (Would that we all so carefully conserved our scarce natural resources!)

Most of us know that our neighbors’ attitudes toward the liberal arts will not change. Why should they? Most Americans do each day can be accomplished with skills learned by the age of sixteen. Our neighbors ask, “What is the good of learning something that you’re never going to use?” To do so, as a student of mine said, “is a waste of brain cells.” (Would that we all so carefully conserved our scarce natural resources!) Worse, there is reliable testimony that something in the nature of school itself repels intelligent people.

How do you feel about this analysis of school: “I wonder if there are the same kind of dreadful, psychotic people around in schools today as there were back when I was a child. I hope not. I had the bad luck to have several indifferent and unfeeling teachers. But then I was a very difficult child. I hated school. Even when I was encouraged to do what they thought I wanted to do—write and paint pictures— I had no pleasure because I was doing it in a schoolroom. . . . The problem so far as I was concerned was to live until I was 17, so I could get out of school. It was just a matter of counting the years until then, when by law you could be free. The idea of college was anathema to me. The suggestion that you might choose to go on—total madness. So I didn’t.”

The writer is Maurice Sendak, award-winning author and illustrator of books for children.

1In The Making of the Atomic Bomb, Richard Rhodes writes as follows:

“[Conant] was born of a Massachusetts family that had resided in the state since 1923. After Roxbury Latin and Harvard College he had taken a double Ph.D. under his future father-in-law in organic and physical chemistry. He emerged from the Great War with the rank of major for his work in poison-gas research. . . . In his autobiography, written late in life, he justified his participation: ‘I did not see in 1917, and do not see in 1968, why tearing a man’s guts out by a high-explosive shell is to be preferred to maiming him by attacking his lungs or skin. All war is immoral. Logically, the 100 percent pacifist has the only impregnable position. Once that is abandoned, as it is when a nation becomes a belligerent, one can talk sensibly only in terms of the violation of agreements about the way war is conducted, or the consequences of a certain tactic or weapon.’” (p. 358)
In the face of testimony that our society cannot sustain an interest in the liberal arts; that the behavior of our leaders resists the influence of liberal learning; that the maintenance of liberal arts teachers requires the partnership of working spouses—and thereby imperils the traditional family—why bother? Last one out of the university, shut off the lights. Promote the service economy. Reduce the nation to four estates—laborers, clerks, managers, and politicians—and shuffle into the crematoria blissfully ignorant of capacities which cannot be exploited for cash and power.

II

Liberal arts teachers may turn from such gloomy political, economic, and social prospects and seek solace at the higher levels of their own professions. One of the hopes implicit in reform proposals is that the "traditional" liberal arts curriculum may be used as a foundation for a coherent education. However, a recent study of the history of the liberal arts, Orators and Philosophers by Bruce Kimball of Yale, reminds us that the liberal arts comprise a number of "traditions" which have pursued sometimes conflicting aims since the time of Socrates. Universities inherited these traditions in the thirteenth century and the struggle among them continues in our own time. Kimball discerns a continuum of values implicit in these traditions. For convenience he groups the traditions into two classes.

The liberal arts comprise a number of "traditions" which have pursued conflicting aims since the time of Socrates. The struggle still continues.

The first he names the "artes liberales ideal" and describes seven characteristics as follows: "(1) training citizen-orators to lead society (2) requires identifying true virtues, (3) the commitment to which (4) will elevate the student and (5) the source for which is great texts, whose authority lies in (6) the dogmatic premise that they relate the true virtues, (7) which are embraced for their own sake."

In tension with this ideal is the "liberal-free ideal" in which Kimball sees these traits: "(1) epistemological skepticism underlies (2) the free and (3) intellectual search for truth, which is forever elusive, and so all possible views must be (4) tolerated and given (5) equal hearing (6) with the final decision left to each individual, (7) who purchases truth for its own sake."

Reformers, especially those outside the academy, fail to understand the scale and significance of this intellectual fault line. More disturbing is the degree to which those inside the academy assume "reform" simply means privileging the "artes liberales ideal" above the "liberal-free ideal." Higher education in the West derives most of its energy from the intellectual movements along this fault line.

In a recent report of the Rackham Graduate School of the University of Michigan, Dean John H. D'Arms, a classics scholar, describes the research which won Michigan's prize for the best dissertation in the biological sciences in 1985. "Timothy Johns began, as good scholars always do, with a question: how do the Aymara—an Indian people of the Andes—manage to survive on a diet consisting largely of bitter, alkaloid potatoes grown for their high yields? His research led him to the discovery that the Aymara counteract the high alkaloid content of the potatoes by soil-eating (geophagy): adding clay to their potatoes, so producing a kind of soup, enables them to tolerate the alkaloids. Dr. Johns' results then, explain how genetic selection against alkaloids has led to the domestication of the potato in Aymara culture. In the words of the award committee, his findings 'have virtually defined..."
a new field,' "

Following this description, Dean D'Arms characterizes the interdisciplinary significance of the research. Johns had to "make imaginative connections" among biology, anthropology and chemistry. D'Arms describes it as the "very best doctoral work" because it achieves the ideal of "the active engagement between graduate faculty members and graduate students at the frontiers of traditional fields, where new discoveries . . . re-order the state of knowledge."

A liberal arts education seldom gives students a coherent and unified view of the world. It has quite the opposite effect. It confronts students with records of many experiences of the world and leads them to understand the world as an ambiguous, multi-valent temporal-spatial continuum. The effect of a liberal arts education is—and should be—to increase what Keats called "negative capability": the capacity of "being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." Keats thought this the quality that "went to form a man of achievement especially in literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously."

Paul Goodman, in an essay on the drama theorist Antonin Artaud, analyzed the power of theater to stimulate negative capability: "The moment of communication we are after is not that in which a structure of symbols passes from the system in one head to the system in another, when people 'understand one another' and 'learn something.' The semanticists, the language reformers, the mathematicians of feedback do not give us what we are after; the interesting moment is when one is physiologically touched and one's system is deranged and must reform to cope with the surprise."

If undergraduates have a "problem," it is that they come to university with a coherent and unified view—a tidy, safe, dualistic vision of religion, politics, art, morality. This fact has been amply confirmed by the work of William Perry. Undergraduates suspect their views are inadequate to explain reality and they are right. Nevertheless, as Perry shows, their response to ambiguity and multiple values will take the form of temporizing, retreat, or escape. The research of Mary Belenky and her colleagues adds silence to the repertoire of avoidance strategies adopted by students. These strategies prevail unless they find a community which supports and affirms them while they struggle to a position of commitment.

III

This brings me to another misconception which is likely to frustrate "reform" of education. In the "artes liberales ideal," great texts are the repository of the values we desire to transmit to our children. It is disturbing, therefore, to supporters of this ideal, to see not only particular texts, but the very notion of "text" brought into question.

Since World War II, the most significant feature of advanced literary study in the West has been the yearning for a theory of literature. Reformers will fail if they do not grasp the power of this theoretical project to attract bright scholars. It is interesting to view the recent history of literary criticism as it has adopted certain features of scientific theorizing without yet succeeding in constructing a theory. In science, one purpose of a theory is to minimize sources of error in experiment. In the years before and after World War II, the New Critics seized upon error-reduction as a hallmark of their approach. Another purpose of theory in science was stated in a recent book review by the Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould. He writes of the "salutary role of all good theorizing: it breaks the shackles of older views, and recasts familiar material in new roles. Its watchwords are plausibility, testability, and explanatory scope." (The book he reviewed is titled Archaeology and Language, itself a sign of the convergences occurring in intellectual life.)

The school of criticism commonly labeled Structuralism has raised this aspect of theory as its banner. Recently, I received a brochure promoting a journal titled Poetics Today. Its editors define their purpose, in part, as follows: "... to understand literary and cultural texts in their own right and in the context of other cultural systems; to develop advanced theories (and advanced methods of research) for literature, communication, and culture; and to integrate the study of literature within the evolving larger field of human sciences." (Emphasis added.)

Modern theory locates the source of literature's energy in the synapse between the sign and the referent. Having found in linguistics a model of explanation of language which removes the interpreter from the description of the rules of grammar, literary scholars now try to do the same for literature itself by removing the author from the description of the literary works. Most partisans of the modern theoretical project are uncomfortable in the presence of authors. The word "author" does not occur in the Poetics Today mis-
sion statement. Instead, we study "texts" which we interpret as "systems," "contexts," and "repertoires." The brochure describes a forthcoming issue titled "Literature and Art" and says that "though [the interart comparison] cannot organize the arts into a structured, coherent system...it delivers a copiousness to aesthetic speculation that has long been missed in the restrictive matrix of academic disciplines."

These ambitions owe so much to the scientific study of language that it is worthwhile to read Gould further on the differences between scientific and linguistic theory. After noting the frequent comparisons made between paleontology and linguistics, Gould writes: "All forms of cultural evolution, language included, are devilishly intricate networks, not orderly systems of dichotomous branching. The result is not quite chaotic...but its complexity can easily make you run amok...the tree of language does not represent the descent of stuff—material objects like genes, with traceable continuity in both information and physical substance—but the passage and branching of ideas. Ideas are fluid; ideas can jump. Archeology may tell one tale because craftsman B saw and copied some artifacts he liked made by people A. But linguistics tells a different story because B didn't pick up any of A's words—but A then conquered C, and C adopted A's language but not its artifacts. Meanwhile the biological relationships of A, B and C match neither archaeology nor language."

Unlike literary theories, scientific theories refer to a reality which human intentions cannot change. The elements of nature do not convey meaning. The laws which govern the relations of elements are not manipulable. These facts condition the methods and thinking of scientists. Nature keeps them honest and all their hypotheses must meet the test of refutability and their experiments the test of replicability.

What questions shall we ask of a literary work and how do we know whether the answers to our questions are both true and not trivial? Can the status of literature as a way of knowing our fellow humans be reconciled with the status of literature as the product of arbitrary and inhuman rules? Does nature at some level limit what a writer says and how a writer says it in the way nature limits the constitution, motion, and distribution of matter? Is a poem a particle, a wave, a field, a unit, a process, or a network?

The current literary project, at its most advanced and best rewarded levels, is raising questions like these. But it is raising them, as it always has, piecemeal by single scholars working on bits of the literary fabric. They lack two elements which assist the scientific project. First, science is done by groups. Scientists clump around a problem like white blood cells around a bac-

By Accident?

From pane to pain,
you sluiced
an artery on the glass.

The doctor stitched
off the flow,
sutured over
this weltering
with the cover of
an unbreakable scar.

So, please replace
the pain,
so I can forget the drops
of your life raining,
by accident,
outside the boundary
of your skin.

So, please replace
the pane,
so I can forget what was
outside the window
which has now,
by accident,
come in.

Yvonne B. Robery
Twain said history doesn't repeat itself but sometimes it rhymes. Modern literature refutes the idea of progress in almost every sentence. Nevertheless, the study of literature may well be subsumed under the human sciences.

Viewed from this perspective, the literary project of the post-war years does not inspire the confidence of reformers. Who is the audience for these theories? Other scholars. What is the relation of young people to the outcomes of this project? Unspecified. Literary theorists have ambitions so vast that questions about pedagogy occupy the smallest regions of the profession's most brilliant minds. It's all right to study how literature shapes values. You can get a grant to do that. But try to use literature to shape values and you risk relegating yourself to the minor leagues of literary scholarship. Yet education reformers expect the study of literature to carry its fair share of the burden in transmitting values to succeeding generations. If literature accomplishes that feat, it may do so in spite of the efforts of universities rather than because of them.

Once again, school may be a part of the problem, not a part of the solution.

IV

What must we conclude? First, our leaders have attention spans too short to sustain more than superficial reform. Second, the "traditional" liberal arts comprise a bifurcated domain fertilized and renewed by the flows of sometimes converging, sometimes parallel intellectual streams. Third, the most influential scholars regard The Great Books as objects of "scientific" inquiry rather than as instruments of instruction.

Where should colleges turn for models of education which will transmit the values needed to improve society? We may use the stones rejected by the builders of the technical-rational edifice: religion and the arts.

Higher education, historically, has been discomfited by the presence of either in its midst. The U.S. is peppered with "liberal arts" colleges founded by religious denominations in the nineteenth century. By the twentieth century, most of these colleges found it expedient to cut themselves free from their religious roots. For most of this century, "church-related college" has been a synonym for "third-rate."

The arts haven't fared much better in the U.S. They have been an embarrassment to the whole society, not just the campuses. About 1855, Horatio Greenough, America's first esteemed sculptor, wrote that "America has always acted toward her artists like a hen that has hatched ducklings. She cannot understand why they run to the water instead of thriving on the dung-hill which only asks to be scratched in order to feed them. She will learn better, but not yet."

Religion and the arts have much in common and those seeking to reform education would do well to consider the following similarities.

Both try to see the human experience as a whole. Both resist the forces in society which fragment the human personality. Both remind us that we are more than the sum of our social roles.

Where should colleges turn for models of education which will transmit the values needed to improve society? We may use the stones rejected by the builders of the technical-rational edifice: religion and the arts.

Both set up a relationship to the human body—to our sense of creature-ness and thing-ness. All the arts require material and assume that material will be shaped according to design. Religion expects that the needs of the body will be fulfilled and does not denigrate them.

Both set up a relationship to the emotions. The design of an art work is the expression of an emotion. Religion inspires emotion to carry its message.

Both set up a relationship to the intellect. All art supposes that the viewers will reflect on the experience with the work of art and integrate the meaning into their lives. Religion preaches a message, through words and sacraments.

The power of the arts to contribute to a sense of wholeness has been explored most thoroughly by Suzanne Langer. In Langer's view, the arts reveal knowledge of a person's inner life which is equal in importance to knowledge of the objective world: "The essence of all composition . . . is the semblance of organic movement, the illusion of an indivisible whole . . . . Through art we learn the character and range of subjective experience, as through discourse we learn in great detail the ways of the objective world."

Presumably we know more than we say and probably we know more than we can say. That which we know but cannot say remains in the shadows. A good liberal arts education brings to light that which is dark. It not only increases what we know but it improves our power to say what we know.

The act of saying may not be confined to words. Gestures, acts, performances are also means of saying
what we know. Religion and the arts offer us opportunities to "speak" of the world and our place within it. Liturgy, worship, prayer, prophecy, music, dance, sculpture, painting, photography, theater each possesses a morphology, lexicon, grammar, syntax, a rhetoric, an economy, a politics, an ethics. From religion and the arts we derive the power to constitute communities. Communities transmit values, not curricula, which are only partial expressions of a community. No tweaking of college curricula will decisively improve our students' values.

From religion and the arts we derive the power to constitute communities. Communities transmit values, not curricula, which are only partial expressions of a community. No tweaking of curricula will improve our students' values.

We can't advise public schools and universities to "get religion." The separation of church and state, an artifact of the Enlightenment's technical-rational project, is embedded deeply in our educational system. But the extent to which Americans yearn for an education grounded in religion is revealed in a recently reported statistic. According to US News and World Report, there are now "more than 15,000 private evangelical schools in the United States with an estimated enrollment of 2.5 million students." Nor is it realistic to expect non-sectarian private colleges to re-attach themselves to their founding denominations. "Church-related colleges," on the other hand, now find themselves more highly regarded because they address the needs of the whole student. They seem more effective in helping students to integrate intellectual, ethical, and spiritual growth and to commit their lives to ethical pursuits. Valparaiso University's Christ College, for example, has achieved a national reputation for just such achievements.

The Optimist

No sooner your voice on the wire
our connection is troubled. You're
gargling "Bring ..." what, darling?
Could Freiburg be drowning? Oh, now
you're submerging. A bubble.

While here in Chicago sun hangs in
the trees by her thumbs. Shinnies past
windows. Fills cracks in the doors.
Cartwheels down Halstead. Stops traffic.
Brings back my taxi, riding the hood.

I'm coming! I'm coming with—ah!
say it was yellow you're missing?

Lois Reiner
grave digger clowns, Kussrow chose Don Shirer, a professor of Physics, and me, a professor of English.

In the middle of Act V, scene 1, Hamlet says of the gravedigger, "How absolute the knave is." But Hamlet is the absolute one, looking for simple answers and not finding them, because he thinks the sexton simple. "How long hast thou been a gravemaker?" he asks. The sexton answers contextually: "Of all the days of the year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet overcame Fortinbras." This reply does not satisfy the young Prince. He asks for a traditional, quantified, machine-readable answer: "How long is that since?" And the gravedigger lets him know that questions in that form lead elsewhere than to understanding. "Cannot you tell that. Every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born, he that is mad, and sent into England."

The young prince and the old sexton amble around the edges of madness and death. The prince admires the gravedigger's ease with work he finds distasteful. He asks another technical question: "How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?"

But the gravedigger won't separate the technical from the moral: "I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die (as we have many pocky corse nowadays, that will scarce hold the laying in)."

It is not easy for actors to achieve the tone of melancholy humor which this scene requires. "Professor" and "student" disappear in the light of communal vision needed to achieve Shakespeare's purpose. First, person and person, then actor and actor, next character and character, finally person/actor/character and audience merge, sharing an experience the nature of which is hardly suggested by the pale word "aesthetic."

People trying to improve education should beware of models which presume that students are sick and that a curriculum is a cure. They ought to remember that the primary aim of education is a vital inner life and only secondarily the capacity to fill a socio-economic niche.

In their present states, the human sciences cannot reliably address students' deepest needs. Values, ideas, feelings, and actions coalesce in religion and art. In addition to a library, a coherent educational community should possess a chapel, an art gallery, and a performing arts center. It would be a radical reform to require college students to act satisfactorily in a Shakespeare play, and to become competent in painting, music, or dance. It is beyond me, though, why it should be any more radical than requiring them to learn languages, world history, or mathematics. Such a reform would have these virtues: it would increase their confidence that they are not alone in their loneliness; that they have an inner life and the power to develop it; and that their communities need and respect their creative contributions.

What Happens to Water

Today I'm longing for change,
For what happens to water
When fish pass through,
Their colors caught in the light.
I want that miracle,
The change in the elements
That happens unexpectedly . . .
Flowers in the winter, ridiculous
And true. The sky caving in
With shine. The earth
Forgetting itself and the season.

I want my books to hold signs,
Become something else:
An exotic plant,
A bird, a seam
Into another land.
I am hoping that my windows
Will take on other views.

Frivolous, you say,
As I pull on a stocking
And wave my leg in the air.
My makeup is dazzling.
You are amazed
At my orange blouse.

Listen. As a child
I wanted to transform myself
Into everything.
But, when I closed my eyes,
I would see myself isolated
And unchanged. I want
You to touch my face.
Slowly. Deliberately.
As if you don't know me.
As if you are looking
For the things I'm imagining:
Water full of glints, water
And what it becomes.

Kim Bridgford
The Values Gap
Paul Brietzke

During the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations, politicians bedevilled each other with a "missile gap." The Johnson and Nixon Administrations were plagued by a "credibility gap." The gap characteristic of the Reagan Administration, and probably of the Bush Administration as well, is one of values. Like many other politicians, Reagan has a severely limited understanding of and control over reality. He thus chose to manipulate values while leaving the underlying conditions more or less untouched.

Perhaps he could do little else; there was little consensus among Reagan's diverse and factious constituents about concrete programs for dealing with reality. The bulwarks of liberalism, that bane of Reaganites, could have been dismantled in many different ways but, apart from judicial appointments, no permanent political realignments resulted and no new course was set for the country. An experienced actor, Reagan certainly read his lines well. But the underlying plot developed in random and bizarre ways, and we were left with the "read-my-lips" cuteness of George Bush's disdain for the "L-word."

From the Legal Services Corporation to the Environmental Protection Agency, the agencies of a liberal interventionism remain in place, awaiting resuscitation by activist bureaucrats some time after 1992. It turns out that a few conservatives and some others really do care about the environment and even the legal rights of the poor. Reagan and the Congress proved reluctant to antagonize any of these groups too much. The consensus for change thus turned out to be much thinner than most of us imagined in 1980. It seemed to consist of more of the same: a solicitude, perhaps a pandering, for big business, and the closely-related acquisition of every (in)conceivable weapons system. U.S. Steel was allowed to do everything except learn how to produce steel efficiently, and huge subsidies flowed to agri-business and corporate farming while family farmers were driven to and over the edge of bankruptcy. The Rust Bowl and the Midwest were written off, perhaps because they did not figure in political strategies featuring the South and Southwest.

Like many other politicians, Reagan has a severely limited grasp of reality. He thus chose to manipulate values while leaving conditions untouched.

Manipulating the values of a rugged individualism, often while chopping wood at his posh "ranch," Reagan nevertheless gave corporate bureaucracies everything they asked for. Corporations responded with value manipulations of their own: "business confidence" was never higher, but stock markets gyrated, exports dropped, and percentages of productive investments reached thirty-year lows. Some new jobs were created during the Reagan years, but most of these involve lower pay for services which cannot be exported. The corporate values frequently taught on Wall Street and at elite business schools seemed to triumph: economic activity consists of fiddling paper profits and taking over each other's assets, rather than actually producing something useful. The deficit became a convenient excuse for each of many corporate failures of nerve.

Reagan cleverly used the size of the deficit to distract public attention from more important issues. Cuts in social service expenditures appeared necessary, but only because Reagan's huge increases in defense and other corporate welfare programs caused the deficit to burgeon. Had corporate welfare programs been forced to justify themselves alongside those benefitting individuals, the public would have insisted on more for individuals and less for the corporate welfare "queens," some of whom apparently escaped prosecution by the Defense Department. Reagan's advocacy of the "balanced budget amendment"—a recipe for disaster during recessionary times—came across like one of those "stop me before I kill again" notes; unable to control the spending habits of himself and his nominal subordinates, Reagan tried to shift the blame to Congress and the Constitution.

The solution is as obvious as it is politically unpalatable: if American taxpayers really want $200 toilet seats and the rubble bouncing seven or eight times during a nu-
clear war, they (not the poor) should pay for these baubles. American taxes are lower than in any other developed country, and a political acquiescence in higher taxes will have to be built quickly or fiscal disaster will ensue. But Reagan and then Bush found it easier to manipulate the feel-good values of "no new taxes" to pay for the Emperor's (Weinberger's or Tower's) New Clothes.

The values gap in American foreign policy, always wide, has been growing wider in recent years. An excellent book on the subject is David Newsome's Diplomacy and the American Democracy (1988). Newsome shows how, for example, America's much-touted generosity in foreign aid leaves us ranked thirteenth in the world (on a per capita basis) under Reagan. Newsome heard a Kurdish tribesman recite Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and then ask why these do not support self-determination for an independent Kurdish nation. The point is that many foreigners want to believe what we say about ourselves, and they are then chagrined when our well-advertised liberal democracy shows its mailed fist abroad.

Like the foreign policies of most of his predecessors, Reagan's did not even attempt to implement liberal democratic values. The apparent policy goal was to restore our confidence in ourselves. The invasion of Grenada was a "war" we could win and quickly. The release of American hostages in Iran was imperative, even if it required sending weapons to the Ayotollah. Bold new initiatives in Lebanon and elsewhere would show that we cannot be pushed around, but these initiatives never seemed to be forthcoming. Despite his warm support for governments in Chile, South Africa, and Zaire, Reagan loved to contrast us with the "Evil Empire." He now seems genuinely surprised at how much that Empire learned in only eight short years, but then many real-world events seem to take Reagan by surprise.

As I mentioned before, all of this value manipulation created only a thin political consensus. Reagan also tried to thicken the consensus by, in effect, updating Nixon's treatment of the "silent majority." Values attributed to "ordinary Americans" were constantly reiterated by Reagan, to convey the impression of his Administration's democratic responsiveness. Reaganites discovered what was selling well in the values market by consulting public opinion polls, TV ratings, and marketing surveys. Any values which might antagonize any of Reagan's constituents were then stricken from the list. This left the Mom's Apple Pie values that offended only the feminists and those too poor to claim a slice of the Pie. These people were not going to support Reagan anyway.

The Reaganite diagnosis was that liberal politicians, and those who control universities and the media, were far too permissive toward divorce, adultery, premarital sex, abortion, homosexuality, and drugs. Reviewing John Kenneth White's New Politics of Old Values (1988), Christopher Lasch sees the emergence of a 'new mood' . . . exemplified, in White's view, not only by Reagan but by Lee Iacocca, with his Chrysler slogan, 'The pride is back,' 'Optimism is ... regnant.' Marriage is back in style. Authority no longer serves mainly as the butt of jokes. Swinging sex gives way to safe sex. The Cosby Show is at the top of the ratings.

Reagan tried to sell values the same way he sold light bulbs.

In other words, Reagan tried to sell "our" feel-good values in the same way he sold us light bulbs while hosting The General Electric Theater. His new commercials revolved around "family" and "neighborhood" values, cynically manipulated into a concern for people just like "us" rather than for "them." The needs of the hungry (the existence of whom was denied by the good Lutheran Meese), the homeless, and the poor were to be met through private charity (a "thousand points of light") rather

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February, 1989
than as a public responsibility. Indeed, private and semiprivate welfare jobs accounted for 25% of the growth in employment under Reagan, yet many of us are unable to afford the day care, nursing home, etc. services they produce. Right to life advocates seemed curiously unwilling to adopt the babies that are natural outcomes of their policies. Unfortunately, Representative Barney Frank's taunt—"the right to life begins at conception and ends at birth"—has yet to be rebutted.

Some of us assumed that Reaganite family values have a great deal to do with children. Yet Americans took their cue from Reagan and remained deeply indifferent to the needs of the young. How have we improved our children's basic needs, especially their schooling? How have we protected them from exposure to violence and drugs, even if this inconveniences television networks or Latin American despots like Noriega and Contra "freedom fighters?" How have we increased the safety and stability of children's neighborhoods? Reagan has cut budget allocations in all these areas, by 30% for schools. He has opposed busing, however, apparently because it weakens "our" neighborhood schools for the benefit of "them." Public investment in sewers and water dropped by 25% under Reagan, and public housing investments, the only apparent cure for a growing homelessness, dropped by 50%. Instead of such investments, we have many shiny new military structures and shopping centers.

Teenagers may "hang out" there for lack of a better place, but a shopping center does not a neighborhood make. When we place Reagan's ostensibly commitment to family and neighborhood alongside his very real solicitude for an unregulated big business, the gap gets filled by rubble from an accelerated collapse of America's sense of community. The hope thrown in the face of this collapse by Robert Bellah's Habits of the Heart (1985) may thus prove futile.

A society dominated by the Reaganite "make a bundle" ethos has little room or time for family values, and the community finds its best talents drained off by large corporations immune to localized interests or control. The chasm between rich and poor becomes, at least, a two-tier workforce, complete with hostility toward labor unions and with the grosser inequalities of political influence that belie our republican traditions. Urban redevelopment becomes the condemning that leaves the poor homeless, and transportation expenditures get diverted into filling those potholes which may damage a BMW's suspension. A polarization between Manhattan and the Bronx, described in Tom Wolfe's Bonfire of the Vanities, may be coming to your community soon.

A society dominated by the "make a bundle" ethos has little room or time for family values.

Some of us at Valparaiso University try to reflect a tradition of value inquiry, but our efforts may be less useful than we imagine. A values gap may have kept us occupied with symbols rather than with substance. There is, after all, no greater triumph of appearances over substance than Dan Quayle, a Bush Lite if ever there was one. (All of the jokes about Quayle pale before the joke of his November election.) Reagan convinced some of us that patriotism and social criticism are incompatible, that "prophets of doom" sinned by ignoring the fact that "America is back." We let Reagan get away with what J. William Fulbright once called the "arrogance of power"; a willing captive of special interests, Reagan made much political capital by accusing others (most notably Walter Mondale) of this besetting sin.

Some democratic theories suggest an even more disquieting truth: we Americans have gotten precisely what we wanted. Cranky but somewhat charming presidents sometimes made us feel good. But they could do us little real harm because we took the trouble to check and balance them with a Congress of an increasingly contrary disposition. We were thus left as free as possible to indulge as much hedonism as our incomes would support, Jimmy Carter's feel-bad warnings notwithstanding. We even reserved the option of reinstating a liberal activism, if altruism should return. If this comes to pass, Reagan's judicial appointees will try to rule us from his political grave by further eroding our hard-won rights. These young judges will prove the only legacy of the Reagan Revolution—that-wasn't, and Congress seems willing to apply a heightened scrutiny to Bush's judicial appointments.

Ask yourself: Is Reagan's America where we want to live for the next four years? If not, there is some hope. The skeletons in Bush's political closet, and his whining voice and wimpy demeanor, make him less able to tranquilize our community soon. The skeletons in Bush's political closet, and his whining voice and wimpy demeanor, make him less able to tranquilize our community soon.
Although a small group of contemporary directors has managed, in the manner of Alfred Hitchcock, to establish a critically acclaimed body of work over an extended period of time and to engender a popular following, the number of seats their followers fill is meagre when compared to the attendance figures celebrity actors (Robert Redford, Tom Cruise, Clint Eastwood) command. In addition, a number of actors whose accomplishments on screen in a wide range of roles have earned critical laurels are able to inspire a modest amount of public interest for the films in which they appear. Jack Nicholson, Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, and Robert DeNiro are a few who might be mentioned in this category.

Noticeably absent from these lists are the names of any women. That women are not included in the group of well-known directors should not come as a surprise to anyone who is attentive to film credits. In fact, an examination of the credits available at the time of this article's preparation for more than sixty films scheduled to be released at the end of 1988 and beginning of 1989 reveals that only one (Animal Behavior, directed by Jenny Bowen and released by Miramax) lists a woman director. Despite the efforts of independent pioneers such as Martha Coolidge, Claudia Weill, Joan Tewkesbury, and Joan Micklin Silver, film direction for major studios represents a beachhead still eluding the feminist wave. Nonetheless, ever since Florence Lawrence, "the Biograph Girl," overcame studio executives' attempts to keep their performers anonymous, overcome the public's low regard for actors and actresses—a carry-over from previous centuries' stereotypical associations of stage performers with the seedy side of society—and became the first recognized movie star in 1910, American film history has been filled with actresses who hold powerful, positive audience appeal. Therefore, one must wonder about the absence of actresses from today's roll of box-office draws, especially since it is certainly true that almost all films contain major roles for women.

Despite the long list of accomplished actresses now appearing with some regularity on the silver screen (Jane Fonda, Debra Winger, Kathleen Turner, Jessica Lange, Sally Field, Glenn Close, Rosanna Arquette, Anne Bancroft, Sissy Spacek, Dianne Keaton, Shirley MacLaine, Melanie Griffith, and even Cher might be presented in a partial register), none has the popularity once accorded Lilian Gish, Mary Pickford, Betty Davis, Norma Shearer, Greer Garson, Claudette Colbert, Carole Lombard or a number of other leading ladies from earlier eras, nor does any one of our contemporary actresses have the fanatical following which greeted with glee the premieres of movies marked (perhaps more often marred) by the predictability of the innocent Shirley Temple in the thirties, the less-innocent Betty Grable in the forties, or the not-so-innocent Marilyn Monroe in the fifties. At first, this inability of contemporary actresses to create impressive, recurrent, immortal images in the minds of the public may seem to be a form of setback for women in film. However, upon closer examination, one may discover that the causes for this lack of actresses who can guarantee blockbuster success for their films are, in fact, signals of progress and, oddly enough, reasons for celebration.

With the end of the Hollywood studio system in the 1950s, the studios were coerced into resigning from control over the roles major actresses could command, and the repetition of pictures with actresses stuck in fixed, stereotypical images
also came to a close. Coincidentally, American society experienced ferment in the emergence of the feminist movement and an unwritten, unsigned, but clearly redesigned declaration of independence by a growing number of women in the sixties, then witnessed the increasingly fervent exploration of independence by females in all walks of life in the seventies, including women in the film industry.

The finest American actresses are no longer confined to the stereotypical roles for females exhibited in many movies of the past; on the contrary, they have been forced to demonstrate the redefined position of women in contemporary society. Ironically, instead of celebrated actresses in the recurrent non-substantive roles of distant figures sought after as sex objects or displayed physical specimens used as expensive set decoration, actors such as Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Cruise, Richard Gere, Patrick Swayze, or Rob Lowe, although successful at the box office, find themselves battling or surrendering to just such typecasting. The overwhelming popularity of films which project these actors as masculine pin-ups is reminiscent of those films which once starred the female sex symbols of earlier decades. A loss of profits at the box office has been the price willingly paid by today's successful, independent American actresses seeking novel perspectives, broader performances, and more challenging characterizations to present to the American public.

One woman who has best exemplified the new range of roles now available to American actresses and who has continually set the standard against which all other actresses are to be measured in contemporary filmmaking stands as the lone female among those actors previously mentioned whose accomplishments have earned critical praise and aroused at least a modest amount of public interest in their films. In just over a decade of filmmaking, Meryl Streep has assumed center stage as one of the medium's foremost performers.

Ever since her first arresting appearances in supporting roles as an aristocratic acquaintance of Lillian Hellman (Jane Fonda) in *Julia* (1976), as a girlfriend to Nick (Christopher Walken) in *The Deer Hunter* (1978)—for which she received her first Academy Award nomination—and as the ex-wife of Isaac Davis (Woody Allen) in *Manhattan* (1979), Meryl Streep has managed to engage the attention of American movie audiences as well as to capture the most coveted roles offered by America's prominent film directors. Indeed, even though her other two roles of 1979, as the temptress of Alan Alda in *The Seduction of Joe Tynan* and opposite Dustin Hoffman as his estranged wife in *Kramer vs. Kramer*, might also be considered secondary roles due to the points of view offered in the plots, Meryl Streep was able to steal the spotlight from her male counterparts long enough to imprint indelible impressions in the minds of movie patrons, critics, and members of the Motion Pictures

### The Arrangement

The trees throw their starkness
Against a dull, white sky,
And somehow I am struck
Not by a sorriness or a crisp poignance
But by the simplicity
Of branches fixed by winter,
The last leaves rusty reminders of a season
Gone under—here and here—
To caves and rooted chambers,
All eyes and soft breath.

The blond shine of a late sun
Takes on the trees,
And I feel the rightness
Of the arrangement.
Everything else, it seems,
Should be as naturally tempered:
All weather, love unreturned,
An airplane stupified and falling,
And the death of my child
That left me as purposeless
As a torn page.

Let me hold the trees as a fixed center
For the numbness of the flesh.
Let their blackness sustain me,
Their stripped thoughts be a promise
Of every hidden greenness
Breaking gently into flower.

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Kim Bridgford

The Cresset
February, 1989

As a result, Meryl Streep was rewarded with an Oscar as Best Supporting Actress for Kramer vs. Kramer.

Beginning with The French Lieutenant's Woman in 1981, Streep appropriated the responsibility of the lead role in her films. Her ability to portray perfectly Sara Woodruff, a mysterious character who traverses two worlds, the Victorian and the Modern, and to speak in a convincing accent demonstrated Streep's capability to fulfill as a leading lady her desire to play personas whose various personae are as distant as possible—physically, temporally, emotionally, and spiritually—from her own personality. Confirmation of her masterful talent came in the form of an initial deluge of critical accolades and her first Academy Award nomination in the Best Actress category.

The following year, Meryl Streep again accepted the challenge of another difficult characterization as she presented the film depiction of the title character from William Styron's novel, Sophie's Choice. As Sophie Zawistowska, a Polish survivor of the Nazi concentration camps who emigrates to New York City after the war, Meryl Streep once more offered a woman who traversed two worlds and once again her vocal skills were persuasive as she offered a persona involved in an experience far removed from her own contemporary world. Streep received an Oscar for the precision of her performance as the physically tough, yet emotionally torn woman, and she firmly established herself as the medium's consummate actress.

In fact, prior to Meryl Streep, only Katharine Hepburn, perhaps the most versatile and independent Hollywood actress of her own era, might have exercised a rightful claim to such a title. Coincidentally, Katharine Hepburn had won the Academy Award for Best Actress a year earlier, in 1981, along with her co-star Henry Fonda, for their portrayal of the Thayers in On Golden Pond. Therefore, it was only fitting that with Streep's acceptance of the Academy Award in 1982 a symbolic pass of the baton seemed to take place. Since then, Meryl Streep has continued to affirm her position as our finest film actress.

Through a succession of demanding roles Streep has expanded the already stretched boundaries of her profession beyond territories explored by any of her contemporaries. Her list of cinema credits now includes Still of the Night (1982), Silkwood (1983), Falling in Love (1984), Plenty (1985), Out of Africa (1985), Heartburn (1986), Ironweed (1987), and the recently released A Cry in the Dark for which she is sure to receive another Academy Award nomination that would bring her to an unprecedented total of eight nominations in eleven years.

Nevertheless, as usually happens after public figures have been held aloft and adored in full view of their audience or constituency for a long period of time, Streep has been the victim of recent critical attacks. After a while, constant acclamation and admiration becomes boring, non-news; therefore, a media backlash often occurs. An admittedly small band of critics, perhaps led by the crankiness shown by Pauline Kael in her influential reviews of Streep in The New Yorker (most notably, her review of Out of Africa), has started the momentum for a movement of opinion against Streep's stature by insisting that she is too controlled in her performances, too distant from her own emotions, too serious in her choice of projects, and too depressing in her selection of subject matter and themes. In a couple of cases critics, again including Kael, have even ridiculously accused her of using too many foreign accents. That Meryl Streep needs no one to defend her status as today's supreme cinema actress should go without saying; one need only to re-view her anthology of film performances. Still, this syndrome through which she has been victimized by members of the media is disturbing.

In some minor ways this search by the media for contrary, controversial copy is mirrored in the subject matter of Streep's new movie, A Cry in the Dark (other, perhaps more expressive, working titles included Evil Angels and Guilt by Sus- picion), that re-creates a real event which occurred in Australia. In this film she plays Lindy Chamberlain, a mother who is accused, indicted, and convicted of killing her own infant daughter while on a camping trip. The newspapers and television networks downplay the probability of the mother's explanation that her daughter was snatched from an open tent by a dingo; instead, in a media feeding frenzy, they excessively emphasize the possibility that Mrs. Chamberlain is using the wild dog story as a cover for her own murder of the child. What interests and irritates the media and the masses the most is the mother's external toughness and her unwillingness to present the stereotypical image of a weak, helpless, and publicly grieving personality expected of a woman in her position. In many ways, the manner in which the mother conducts herself, ignoring advice to publicly play to the media, and the characteristics of toughness which she displays reflect those mannerisms and personality traits often associated with Streep and her performances in recent disparaging reviews: the mother's strength, self-control, and inner conviction are depicted by the media, as Streep has been, as cold, defiant, and stubborn. Eventually, after years of imprisonment
and public humiliation, Lindy Chamberlain is exonerated, but an exorbitant price has already been paid.

Likewise, Meryl Streep has reached the point in her career where she may be asked publicly to pay a high price in order to continue to create such compelling characters as she has in the past. As Richard Schickel has pointed out in the "Super Hero, Super Victim" chapter of his text, Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity, American critics and the American public are quick to declare individuals as heroes, but soon insist on making those heroes pay for their ascendancy in rank. Speaking of Marlon Brando, whose power as an actor in the fifties and sixties might easily be compared to Streep's impact as an actress in the seventies and eighties, Schickel reports: "Indeed from today's perspective, his career can be made to fit the classic pattern Joseph Campbell discerned in his classic study of The Hero with a Thousand Faces. In it the great scholar tells us that all godlike heroes, Western and Eastern, ancient and modern, are embodiments of what he calls a "monomyth." That is to say, each in his way, acts out a version of the same archetypal three-part story. In the first act there is the drama of separation and departure; in the next there comes a series of initiatory trials, leading to a victory of some sort; finally there is the triumphant return and reintegration with society."

Schickel convincingly argues this pattern in examining the film career of Marlon Brando, and it would seem that should Meryl Streep fit into this scenario, she is now experiencing the first tests of the second stage. However, having witnessed the effect of diminished productivity in the film life of Marlon Brando, who is currently filming his first movie in more than ten years, one hopes that Streep will continue to have greater strength and ignore this current critical backlash. Fortunately for all, if her current project is any indication, she will, as Meryl Streep is about to defy conventional wisdom once again and begin production on a film version of Evita.

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Annual Meeting

Over a sidewalk grate
a man attempts to collapse himself
into a cardboard box
like a hermit crab, back turned
to the cold, river winds
as the city breathes
through the grate, warm air
from tubercular lungs

It is just 7:30,
but these choice spots go early,
and the crowd parts before him, obedient
to Bernoulli's theorem,
increasing velocity to flow
past the man, and slow
in the lower pressure turbulence
beyond.

A block away, the Edwardian lobby
soars for miles above the hotel floor
and I ride a gilded elevator
to my box-sized room,
and turn down the air conditioner.

The next day on Michigan Avenue
my head is turned
by a woman in the next block,
my age, slim, with long dark hair,
just graying, and the athletic shoes
so correct in downtown Chicago.

She stands by a woven, wire basket,
not hailing a cab, as I supposed,
but foraging in the trash, the sort
my mother would say, "Don't stare,"

but I stare, across my shoulder,
like a disobedient child
dragged on by his hurrying mother
not to miss the 4:32
that will carry us home.

Michael Becker

The Cresset
Boredom, Murder, and Convention

Charles Vandersee

Dear Editor:

A classic text has come my way. In straightforward language it states an emotion that we associate with universities but which is far older. I date it back to Eden, when God said, during a sort of tutorial, "Don't eat of this one tree." Something about his style, his fervor, his knowledge of the material, instilled in his two students considerable interest.

Recall, therefore, my recent account of advice undergraduates give one another. One of their maxims: "Choose courses by teacher rather than subject matter." My newfound text, an opinion column in the student paper, amplifies:

"A dull professor can kill anyone's interest in a subject, causing him not to learn and enjoy an area in which he should do well. A fascinating professor can instill interest in a student where he previously had none." The person expressing this emotion, a first-year law student at the university here in Dogwood, was also an undergraduate here, a government major. I do not know him; let's call him O.

All of us in our college days wanted the lecture hour to move at least as fast as normal clock time. We wanted the physical sensation of cheeks stretching at wit and anecdote. We carved, in our incalculable mental universe, sudden connections—authors, concepts, and facts that seemed unrelated but which in the utterances of a master lecturer suddenly embraced. We wanted the four walls of the classroom to contain for a while both the sacred and the savage, the harshly holy and the blessed primeval.

So of course we asked our fellow students which professors were boring and which weren't. Perhaps we even used the language of force, worried about interest that could be "killed." But did we actually mean what we said, and does this recent text, the essay of O., mean "kill"?

O. claims to. He remembers taking an American history course "without knowing anything about the professor," with murderous result: "Even though I had a genuine interest in that subject, ultimately the professor's boring lecturing style bludgeoned that interest to death."

I too took history courses in college, after American history in high school taught by the football coach. "Taught" is not quite right; Coach had us open our textbooks, and then, down one row and up the other, each of us read aloud one paragraph. This was not as boring as it sounds. In this class and others, pupils often construed unpredictably; it was satisfying to hear words and names mangled. In algebra one of my classmates (this was Indiana farm country) once timidly inquired about the "combing" of terms.

In American history, Coach might stop every few minutes for a conspiratorial quip ("We're all suffering here together," so to speak). And, being a Southerner, he possessed a birthright of anecdotes and tales, usually irrelevant but livelier than the mangled textbook.

Please remember I am imagining all this; my own mind is not Southern, but rather Hoosier streets and cornfields. On some matters bland and vague, not gifted with the total recall of great narratists such as Faulkner and Peter Taylor. My purpose here is to sound right rather than reconstruct actuality. You can verify that Coach was indeed the football teacher in that pre-Sputnik era, and that he was Southern, and if you interview pupils of that era, to write its history, you may find confirmation of his pedagogical method, but I issue no guarantee.

At any rate, in those egalitarian, pre-tracking days, when nothing like an Advanced Placement history class had been invented (though the cotton gin had been, in fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades), American history was being battered if not bludgeoned. Why did my interest not die? Why, upon enrolling in college, did I take more history?

You know the answer. First, I expected that at college, finally, history would be well taught. College is the excitement of the state fair, so to speak, yearned for in the quiet of front porches and backyards.

Second, my impressions about history did not derive solely from Coach's genial travesty. As the urban M. de Bellegarde says, in Henry James's novel, when the raw American tycoon at his very first opera asks his opinion: "We all know what Mozart is; our impressions don't date from this evening."

For years I had been reading biographies and poking around in ir-

Charles Vandersee whose ghazal last spring won a prize in the Bayly Museum literary contest, is serving as a contest judge this spring.

February, 1989
resistible books like A Child's Story of the World and Its People.

So that when I took history courses in college there was within me, perhaps within my very soul, "a genuine interest in the subject." A teacher might have power to slow down time—to make an hour last twice as long as the actual clock hour—but I cannot imagine any teacher having power to "bludgeon to death" my interest in history.

Do I then dispute student O., or charge him with inflated rhetoric? Yes, to the latter; no to the former. Journalism generally inflates; in an influence of other people often turns subterranean, the very stuff of our bathtub, every time we pulled the plug, a "maelstrom." But on the other hand I'm credulous. Tell me anything about your own personal experience, and I will believe. Because the experience of other people often turns out to be so foreign, so unimaginable, so impossible for one's own soul to envision, that virtually anything could be happening inside anyone. Human emotion is, to me, a maelstrom of bludgeoning forces operating outside of clock time—truly unpredictable and fascinating, subterranean, the very stuff of history.

So, yes, O's interest was being murdered, violently, right here at the university in Dogwood. Probably in Cabell Hall.

Perhaps the murderer is unwitting: disorganized because of overwork, family crisis, publisher's deadline. Boring because of a lack of clear examples and clarifying data. Or too many facts, obscuring the "point," the sequence of events. Fails to emphasize, fails to subordinate. Tired blood. Clumsy because of virtues: respect for the complexity of reality, a personal integrity that fears "popularizing."

I submit, though, that all of the foregoing is injury, not murder. What actually kills is not boredom but convention. Students and professors are both caught in conventions of the academy that accept boredom, as if it were a force of nature. The superstar lecturer is the sun of the day, and the bore is long arctic night. The one presupposes the other. So that if, after the first week or so, your class turns out to be arctic, there is nothing you can do. Equatorial breezes do not caress the North Pole. You have to die; convention puts forth no alternative.

A portion of consciousness goes numb. The student settles in to an unacknowledged certainty that outside this room this semester—outside in the library, or bookstore, or public TV, or periodicals room, or faculty office—no history can be learned. The textbook for the course suggests collateral readings—books and journal articles. But convention forbids a student looking for these. Convention forbids the idea of bookstore as bookstore; it is a place to get cough drops, bumper stickers, and T-shirts.

If you want History, you have to sit behind steel doors and concrete blocks, on the hour. If you're lucky, the lecturer turns before your eyes into a painter. If unlucky, you feel death in the room. Seeing and hearing and feeling the failure of mouth and arms to make a colorful picture (even if only Grant Wood), you feel there was no picture to be made! You had believed there was, but you were wrong. Yet of course you were right. In other rooms, and in other colleges, wonderful Gauguin colors and Pollock networks and square Rothko wombs are energizing with all their excited frenzy.

The most potent convention of all: the feeling that the student can do nothing about bad teaching. Either the effort is enormous (and the amount of time staggering), or else a teacher's habits and personality are too firmly fixed to hope for improvement. All good colleges now have teacher evaluations of some kind, but those don't affect the course this semester. That is the convention; a student assumes that long slow murder, for about the
next twelve weeks, is somehow foreordained. As if a dentist, having forgotten the novocaine, must be allowed to proceed, excruciatingly, anyway.

How much, though, I leave out, in this little history of my encounter with academic conventions—this little history of one man’s consciousness in conflict with one ephemeral essay in the student paper.

Only the merest allusion, for example, to the problem of time. How, that is, can one expect any student, or group of students, to go to the department chairman and painstakingly seek rescue from murder? It takes time first to realize the injustice—that injury is not foreordained. It takes time to make decisions—how much is the boring teacher to blame, and how much are we as passive students our own murderers? Still more time to devise a rhetorical strategy—what exactly do we say to the department chairman if we try to express the current state of carnage? Maybe we first need a course in argumentation and debate—but the problem is this semester’s problem. And what conventions will the chairman use to protect his colleague? How can we manage ingenuity along with tact, reason, conviction, persistence, and good will?

History in a way is the story of ingenuity that fails to get born, the story of efforts not undertaken. So one realizes, in reading the story that O. writes. History is the story of conventions, their origins often mysterious, lurking in realms that we need biopsychologists to help us explore—even theologians, perhaps.

History is even the story of conventions in conflict, but not perceived as such. A teacher can’t lecture his way out of a paper bag—we have here the metaphor of a man in fierce and unhappy struggle. Yet the America in which we all believe offers story after legendary story of the “helping hand,” whether Amish farmers building barns or citizens reaching out to the “underdog.” Why does this powerful convention not come into play among students whose interest in history is being murdered by a hapless pedagogue in an intractable bag? Why does the convention of angry patience overwhelm the convention of lending a hand to help him out of the bag?

I want to write O. a letter, inquiring more about the nature of murder, the murder of interest in history, in the American university. The fragmentary thoughts here are my own story, not his; he may have—will have, I’m sure—a story with different considerations, explanations, and revelations. I have actually written a long list of questions for him, including one from the recent Bradley Commission Report on History in Schools, issued by the Educational Excellence Network. Of World War I, teachers should ask (says the Commission), “What was the social and psychological impact of the scale of slaughter?”

Though charging O. with journalistic exaggeration, I am curious whether he is in fact talking about only murder. Maybe he is not exaggerating; maybe, a victim of teachers, conventions, classrooms, time, and fear, he is unwittingly talking about a massive assault, which we call war.

From Dogwood, yours faithfully,

C.V.

The Platitudes For Bees

I watch my daughter slap and run,
Slap and run, stuttering her fear
Across the yard like sentences
Beginning with explosive p’s,
And I open the door and call
The platitudes for bees, ending
With “Hurry, get inside,” seeing
How invasion will make me stone.
She cries, is safe, stung only twice
And not allergic to this luck.
I tell her that someone survived
Two thousand bee stings; I tell her
This swarm believes she is doomsday,
And she backs away with knowing
The mind can be gutted by fear,
The body turned to flail and flap
And foolish words. We trip headlong
Into the scald-shock of each day,
And I feed her the strange stories
From my reading another book
Of limits, the best or the worst
Of something, like fences, like doors
To close quickly, thick sliding glass
That frames this needlepoint of bees.

Gary Fincke
Review Essay

Speaking When Words Won't Do

Jill Baumgaertner

Twilight


Most literary critics and all book reviewers (their plebian comrades) must possess a certain amount of brash self-confidence in order to do what they do. With a few notable exceptions reviewers and/or critics do not themselves write novels or stories or poems. This is not always bad, of course. As Flannery O'Connor said, the world could do with fewer short story writers. And besides, writers always want intelligent, lively readers, which is just what most book reviewers think they are.

One feels occasionally, however, that sometimes silence would be a more appropriate response to a book than reviews—not the silence that accompanies sleep, but rather that which expresses respect and reverence. There is a time when words will not suffice, when one should turn instead to music to express what cannot otherwise be said. Unfortunately, the genre of the symphonic book review has not yet been invented, and I am faced with a dilemma. I have read a novel which cannot be captured in a book review; it is a work which deserves either music or silence. It is arrogant for me to think I (gentile, suburban, academic) have anything at all to add to the experience of reading this book. But, then, I cannot remain silent.

Twilight, by the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel, is a book which has awakened me out of a soporific stupor too common among academicians. I thought before now that I knew what the Holocaust was all about. I had read and taught Wiesel's earlier book, Night. I had seen and taught Resnais' film Night and Fog with the terrifying Nazi newsreel photos of mountains of hair and boots and eyeglasses, and bodies piled on top of bodies. I had read Styron's Sophie's Choice and Thomas' The White Hotel and I had grown up with Anne Frank's diaries. I had read Bruno Bettelheim's outraged response to Lina Wertmüller's film, Seven Beauties, about a man who survives the concentration camp experience by seducing a repulsive female camp commandant. I have known survivors of Auschwitz, and one of my good friends was the daughter of Dachau survivors. She told me of how after her birth in New York City, her parents pushed her carriage into the center of a circle of other survivors who then decorated her baby carriage with written prayers because she was the hope for the future—the only hope.

Yes, I thought I knew about what happened in Germany, but I really knew nothing at all until I read this book, and I must admit that now I am caught between a desire to discuss it, and a feeling that intellectualizing the experience of this book in the form of a book review whose tone implies, "I have known it all already, I have known it all," would be to desecrate it. The truth of this book cannot be "explained." But words are the only bridge between you and me.

Raphael Lipkin is a survivor of the war. His entire family disappeared into the camps, with the exception of his brother Yoel who eventually went mad after feigning madness to escape interrogation in Russia. Raphael had from an early age been interested in madmen, even though he greatly feared them, and as the novel opens, we find him acting as an observer and consultant at the Mountain Clinic, a psychiatric facility specializing in patients with delusions that they are biblical figures.

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Raphael's stated intentions are academic: "to explore the relationship between madness and prophecy, between the madmen of the Bible and today's madmen, their diverse responses to their common despair. He hopes to uncover hidden meanings, arrive at a synthesis, and develop it into an essay for one of the scholarly journals." He is lying, of course. He really wants to ask questions that have no answers, questions about life and death and sanity and madness—questions about doubt and faith.

Each one of the patients has a story: Adam, who tries to get God to admit His mistakes; Jeremiah, who does not want to speak; Abraham, who regrets that he...
taught his son only the Word; Aharon's son Nadav, who is dead; Joseph, who says his father really hated him; God, who can do nothing but cry; the Messiah of the wicked, to whom Raphael explains Jewish mysticism.

Interspersed are bits and pieces of Raphael's story and other stories from Scripture, from Hassidic tradition, from other Holocaust survivors. They become indistinguishable and mythic, as names are repeated—Aharon, Ezra, Esther, Rachel, Lidia—and situations are reenacted. One prison scene becomes another. One death becomes another. The connections between stories and characters and people begin to blur differences. Each story becomes the prophecy of the next story. Each life becomes the prophecy of death. In fact, life and death become so entwined that they become synonymous. Raphael, for example, survives the round-up of Jews by living in a grave—his brother survives a mass shooting by falling into the common grave and playing dead.

Who is alive and who is dead? "Imagine that you are dead and you will no longer be afraid," Raphael is advised by the madman who helped hide him in the grave. Later, his friend Pedro (who helps him to adjust once again to the world of the living) says about all of the dead: "We are their graves." These words bother Raphael for a long time. "I am a grave, he told himself over and over. He dreaded the moment when he would have to tell his brother Yoel that he too was a grave."

Who is mad and who is sane? Does the truth lie in psychiatric reports or in story? Is God a madman? Is the narrator mad? How does one survive? Should one survive? What are the responsibilities of the survivors? Is death the only answer?

Abraham tells Raphael about Noah who was ordered by God to build an ark—in Hebrew, teva, which means both ark and word. In other words, Abraham says, "It is by building words that you will survive the flood." And this is just what Wiesel is doing, but he does not miss the irony. One also needs physical, concrete shelter to survive. Abraham teaches his son the Word, but he does not build him an ark. The child dies after he and his father are discovered by the Germans. Raphael would like to console Abraham, to say to him, "Abraham, Abraham, come down from Mount Moriah; you will see your son again, he is waiting for you below. Your son has not spoken, and that is good. His silence is your Word." But Raphael is afraid and remains silent—"just as he is afraid to remain silent."

Wiesel's dilemma. There is hardly a way to respond. In Wiesel's earlier book, Night, the camp prisoners are forced to watch the execution of a child, who writhes on the end of the rope that was meant to hang him, his body too light to allow him to die. It takes a half hour for him to die and during that interminable time, someone behind Wiesel asks, "Where is God now?" He is answered by another who whispers that God is dying at the end of that rope—that is where God is.

Raphael wonders if he has dreamed his experience. He wonders if God is his enemy and whether faith makes doubt necessary.

Twilight is filled with questions—the last four pages contain over thirty of them—but they are not subject to discussion or analysis. Nor are they merely rhetorical. Raphael wonders if he has dreamed his experience, if it is all a figment of his imagination. He wonders if God is his enemy and whether faith makes doubt necessary. Wiesel is asking all of the questions of this century and earlier and, I think, much, much later. Raphael's story does not narrow but broadens Wiesel's vision. In the particular story is the story of millions of others—each unique and each universal. Wiesel's focus is on the linked experiences, the shared sufferings, and the silence of God.
THE LAST WORD

A Modern Miracle
Dot Nuechterlein

How fitting that it should happen just before Christmas, this 1988 "Miracle on Union Street." Let's face it: faith in miracles is rather out of fashion, but at least the language is appropriate during Yuletide.

My University's motto is Academic Excellence in a Christian Context, and in December we consider miracles in both spheres. The previous weekend we had held our traditional Advent-Christmas Vespers, celebrating the mystery and wonder of God made flesh. Now we were in finals week, and everyone knew that's prime time to pray for excellence in a

But suddenly someone talked about miracles in another realm; our team to stay in the game, tie at :01 on the clock, and win in overtime.

The celebration was as unbelievable as the outcome. The official scorer is supposed to have proper decorum and not cheer, but when it ended I joined the jumping and shouting, and personally hugged everyone within reach, even the sports writers and Notre Dame's scorekeeper. Then I rushed home and, like half the city, watched the tape replayed on TV, all the while thanking God for having let somebody invent the VCR. One thing is for sure: when I leave this mortal life, that tape will be among my final possessions.

And the future? We're talking '80s sports here, not O.T. warfare. This Goliath fell, but will rise and come at us next year full force, and once again our David will be the underdog. But, thanks to my friends, never again will the improbable seem quite so impossible.

So: do we in Valparaiso believe in miracles? In the classroom, some do, and in the Chapel, many do; but in the basketball arena on Union Street, we all do. You betcha.

The Cresset