THE CRESSET

September, 1978  Vol. XLI, No. 9  ISSN 0011-1198

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Robert E. Potter III is an art major at Valparaiso University and divides his studies between photography and theatre set design. He graduated in photography from the Interlochen Arts Academy and will mount his next photography exhibit, "Ideal in Dreamers," in the Valparaiso University Union in October. The front and back cover subject is the Brandt Campanile flanking the University's Chapel. Mr. Potter's vision of the Campanile dramatically exaggerates its towering stature on the horizon and explores its thrusting surfaces in positive and negative space. Shot through a 50 mm. lens with a wide-angle adaptor to attain a muted "fish-eye" view, the photograph is then developed in the Kodalith process. Further exercises in this process are shown on pages 14 and 18 of this issue. On page 6 the photograph of the Cathedral in Taxco is developed with a texture screen to achieve a silvery grain and thus more nearly capture the ambiance of the Cathedral set in the rich silver mining center of Mexico. On page 23 a Mexican crucifix is studied by means of photographic solarization. This light and chemical reaction "etches" the subject and separates it from its background for meditation.
...Videmus Lucem

IN LUCE TUA traditionally on this page is taken from the Latin motto of Valparaiso University, In luce tua videmus lucem. The University motto in turn is taken from the ninth verse of the thirty-sixth Psalm, “For with thee is the fountain of life and in thy light do we see light.”

The motto reminds those who study at the University that the light wrought in the world by the working of human reason in ages past is itself marvelously illumined by faith in the Creator of all ages. The motto further recalls students to the divine invitation to creation in their own age—to think sharply, feel deeply, and imagine boldly—and to trust that their lights will also be enlightened by the greater light of the greater Creator.

The motto, then, is a quiet statement of confidence in the partial lights of men in the full light of God. IN LUCE TUA on this page signals a column where the graduates of Valparaiso University offer their lights on the public affairs of the day, trusting that In luce tua videmus lucem.

Our September columnist is Charles Vandersee who was graduated with honors in English in the vintage class of 1960. He took his Ph.D. at the University of California-Los Angeles on Danforth and Woodrow Wilson Fellowships and since 1964 has taught American literature at the University of Virginia, where he is also dean for the undergraduate Echols Scholars Program.

Mr. Vandersee has published numerous essays and reviews on the American historian Henry Adams, and with two other Adams scholars, Ernest Samuels and J. C. Levenson, is editing six volumes of Adams’ letters for Harvard University Press.

His scholarship aside, Mr. Vandersee’s abiding interest is in reviving teaching and educational institutions, concerns which prompt this month’s column in the Cresset. He was on the national advisory committee for the recently-concluded Project on Institutional Renewal Through the Improvement of Teaching, a project of the Society for Values in Higher Education, of which he is an active member.

In the last few years he has published poems in such magazines as Sewanee Review, Ironwood, boundary 2, Texas Quarterly, Poetry Northwest, New York Quarterly, and Dacotah Territory. He confesses to the editor that he was raised in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod but “left it the same time God did” and now worships at St. Mark’s (LCA) in Charlottesville. He further believes he is not a model Christian.

The Cresset welcomes alumnus Vandersee to IN LUCE TUA.

The Editor

IN LUCE TUA

Harvard’s Megaproblem and Everybody Else’s

Charles Vandersee

One of the most widely scrutinized periodicals of social affairs recently asked readers for their empirical findings on the behavior of circumstances and phenomena, in the spirit of Parkinson’s Law. Among the more provocative replies to Playboy’s invitation was Hoare’s Law:

“Inside every large problem there is a small problem struggling to get out.”

I thought of this when reflecting on the heroic effort at Harvard last spring to revamp the undergraduate curriculum. The solution was quite complex. Harvard now has five new “core” areas of courses, and starting in fall 1979 students must take ten courses in these areas. It took several dozen of the nation’s most able and well-paid intellectuals three years to conceive and adopt the new scheme—a sort of Manhattan Project without the hush-hush—and my suspicion arose that there must be some other, smaller, problem lurking here. No faculty, if it can possibly avoid it, undertakes massive curriculum reform; nothing is more axiomatic in higher education. Was curriculum revision therefore merely the Harvard faculty scratching an itch, looking for a way to express itself? Maybe that was the smaller problem. The civil rights movement had long disappeared; after Vietnam no interesting war had come along; and Watergate was closed.

But further investigation led to a different conclusion. It was not a smaller problem trying to get out; it was exactly the opposite. A much larger problem had generated the curriculum project, the way smog sieges in Los Angeles have evoked the nation’s strictest pollution controls. Hoare’s Law was not applicable at all. Instead, a wholly different law was functioning, which we might call Rosovsky’s Law, after the Harvard dean who felt the need for a revised curriculum and pushed it through:

“Inside every problem is the solution to some other problem, which, when seized upon, terminates action on the original problem.”
For the Harvard faculty the original problem some three years ago was to conceive an improved education for the very able young people who come to the banks of the Charles and thereafter manage the country. President Derek Bok has pointed out that the present General Education system of broad area requirements at Harvard (and most places) "lacks a clear sense of purpose and permits students to sample from too large and varied an assortment of courses." Sounding like a supertanker captain off the Brittany coast, one of Bok's deans complained that the General Education committee was "drifting aimlessly in a strong sea with neither a map nor a compass to guide it." The solution, as noted above, was to specify five new areas of intellectual endeavor that each undergraduate must sample.

Now, cynically speaking, this maneuver has little to do with education. France cannot suck in her coastline at just the moment a lurching tanker makes a pass, and students at Harvard are not likely to treat the new ten-course buffet with much greater respect than their old requirements. The new curriculum passed 182 to 65, not exactly a consensus inspiring faith that the faculty know what they're doing. After various compromises, one out of every four people who came to the meeting and voted, still voted No. No matter how carefully or with what unanimity you revise a curriculum—unless you follow St. John's College and require sequence, specific texts, and absolute uniformity (so that students out-of-class will have common topics of talk)—you still have a mere collection of courses that pretty certainly will not confer on a student whatever it is that an education consists of.

Glut is the Name of the Megaproblem

Since the original problem therefore still remains, at Harvard and practically everywhere else, we might as well try to state it as plainly as possible:

Besides the usual challenging curriculum (conservative yet forward-looking, prescriptive yet flexible, broad yet deep, historically grounded yet moving on the cutting edge, loyal to words and ideas yet bravely experiential), designed during a period of calm deliberation, in a commitment to cooperative vision rather than disciplinary rivalry—besides this achieved good, what contribution, if any, ought an enlightened faculty make to its students?

The conventional answer, in a word, is themselves. Not only in a professional capacity as lecturers, seminar leaders, scholarly mentors, but as persons, in whatever style suits one's talents: role model, confidant, friend, philosopher, lay therapist, guru, parent figure, sounding board, standby. Conventional wisdom lauds the small college for its success in this personal realm and faults the multiversity. My own university began last year to see to it that every entering student in the College of Arts and Sciences (some 2,000) had a personal conference with one faculty member. And the faculty member was strongly urged to keep up a relationship all year with the students belonging to a particular corridor or suite. The faculty were told they represented Wisdom and Experience (I admit to having helped write the role description), rather than detailed knowledge of how to fabricate a course list or to screw the computer.

A serious objection to all this comes from Derek Bok: "Faculty members have no special competence to help individual students define their values, their convictions, their personal commitments. Not all professors have resolved these questions to their own satisfaction, and fewer still can communicate their feelings in ways that will be helpful to others. In the end, therefore, it may be more realistic to look to the faculty for the things they do best and place our highest priority on promoting a more active exchange between professors and students through more traditional means such as tutorials, seminars, and more small courses.

I believe Bok speaks the deep conviction of most university faculty, who often barely manage to get back to campus within the first week of class and need four-day weekends to accomplish professional and pecuniary growth. Whether in the small colleges there is still a Mark Hopkins on every log, dawn to dead of night, Labor Day to Memorial Day, I cannot say. Yet (and this is my last nod to Harvard), Bok willingly grants that for students "it is natural to look to faculty members for guidance, for they must surely have committed themselves to something—searching for new knowledge, writing, teaching, mastering their chosen fields."*

What is not natural for most human beings of age 17 to 22, at least in America, is to talk about books and ideas of clarifying and fulfilling personal needs. Tennis and jogging are natural—this year—and it is natural to eat several times a day, and to feed and care for a stereo, and to stay up till three. But not to feel muscles of books and ideas. To be more specific:

It is not natural to converse calmly and sequentially, trailing a proposition until it exposes its implications. It is not natural to probe (i.e., use follow-up questions) with an elder the reasons he thinks he has chosen (or been called by) his profession or job. It is not natural to recognize as important any matter that hasn't been sanctioned by prime time network TV or the wire services. It isn't natural, even, for a young person to inquire of his official mentors (teachers, professors, counselors) where their strength comes from, what is keeping them going right now, and what they see in their own field that is valuable enough for the rest of the world to notice.

That last point the rest of this essay proposes to play with. The premise being adopted is that glut is real. We do have too many signs in our faces, too many saviors, too many pop psych measurements, too many bestsellers, too much Public Broadcasting even, too many classics unread, too many first-rate musicians to listen to. We have the best of all the ages awaiting our eyes and ears on film and tape, and even if we forswear the meretricious, the McDonaldizing of our lives, the name for too much of even the best is still Glut. Our colleges, it seems to me, do a perfectly awful job of recognizing this plain fact, even though most teachers do cope with it conscientiously in their personal lives. Glut is the name of the megaproblem Dean Rosovsky is trying to solve.

The paracurriculum we are all looking for is titled Glut Management, and it begins by conceiving our "higher sorters." Glut Management, and it begins by conceiving our expertise, and chooses a text that is at once accessible to undergraduates.

**(The Higher Sorters Gaze into the Glut)**

Recently I asked one of my colleagues, a Jesuit who teaches in the religious studies department, to name a book important to him right now. He chose Martin Marty's Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America—provocative, he said, because it deals with the question of how a particular movement in Christianity became the source of the values and goals of a young nation, and thereby shaped the very thoughts and feelings that virtually all of us have grown up with.

A sociologist friend, asked the same question, urged Liv Ullmann's short book Changing, for three succinct reasons: It deals with an old-new problem for American society, the unattached woman trying to make a life for herself. It gives a European perspective on modern America. It gives thoughtful insight into celebrity life, "both the victory and the isolation."

These people, Gerald Fogarty and Jeanne Biggar, exemplify the "higher sorters" that all academic communities possess in profusion. The higher sorter is the person who stands ready to advise the rest of us, ignoramuses or at best novices in 77 of the 78 branches of knowledge, just what books, essays, ideas, and trends are the ones to take hold of if we want to get value as assigned by experts. The function of the higher sorter is to urge us to trade in some of our old images, images of education as a cafeteria or a lottery, where randomness or eye-appeal governs. The higher sorter gazes into the glut of his own discipline, reaches in with the hand of expertise, and chooses a text that is at once accessible to us and respectable to the cognoscenti. If, every year, twenty men and women on the faculty of every college were designated "higher sorters," it seems to me that education might step forward. Regardless of where the curriculum happens to be sitting or sleeping.

To be methodologically precise, it would be a useful step if someone asked twenty faculty members each to choose a book:

1. in paperback,
2. in or near their field,
3. about which they're currently enthusiastic,
4. which they think is written at a level accessible to undergraduates.

And to suggest in a couple of spontaneous sentences their reasons for the choice. I say this with some conviction, having made an effort, along this line for the last four years. Each summer I've mailed to gifted students entering the university in a special program a list of annotated faculty book suggestions. This year's list of nineteen includes:

- John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*  
- The Nacirema: Readings in American Culture  
- Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*  
- Anthony Burgess, *Shakespeare*  
- Colin Fletcher, *The Man Who Walked Through Time*  
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Words*  
- George Polya, *Mathematical Models in Science*

Past years have included:

- Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*  
- Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Presentation*  
- Henri Poincaré, *Science and Hypothesis*  
- Nigel Calder, *The Mind of Man*  
- James Monaco, *How to Read a Film*  
- W. B. Yeats, *Selected Poems*  
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*  
- Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color*  
- Statistics: A Guide to the Unknown*  
- Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*  
- Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*  
- Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Three different members of the biology and chemistry faculties have told me, independently, that students should read *The Double Helix*—because it depicts realistically the human, competitive element in basic research.

I have to admit being in love with lists. Most of us Nacirema are, judging by a recent bestseller. But a list is only an enticing start, like a block of storefronts along a renovated Main Street. We have to go inside and feel the goods. I suspect therefore that if I were the local Rosovsky, a large part of my year would go toward efforts that storeowners call "promotion." (Academic persons have no name for these activities since they're too vulgar for campus, which leaves us with the paradox of the intellectual glut: the paucity of occasions to make choices, to display choices, and to affirm choices.)

I would like to take my list of twenty books, and also get hold of a bag of carrots. I would find a carrot that would persuade a couple of department chairmen to release one course each from a couple of bright young assistant professors, so they could conduct freshman
seminars for credit on any six or eight books on the list. I would see if I had a carrot crisp and fresh enough to persuade one senior faculty member to construct a similar seminar open to fourth-year students from a variety of majors. I would select an appropriately desiccated carrot and take it to the librarian, hoping to get a lobby display of the twenty books, the faculty comments, and photos of the twenty higher sorters. I would take a handful of raw, mudcaked carrots to the editor of the student paper and negotiate for a series of articles on the twenty-book paracurriculum, intimating that for controversy’s sake the editor ought to cajole a few faculty into contradicting choices on the list and proposing their own.

I would cut a carrot into provocative shapes and go to the art department to see about posters and a logo. I would go to the bookstore and see about a 10% discount on purchases of five titles or more. I would use a couple of carrots as antennae to discover which two or three books or the year were going to be most appealing, and schedule public forums on campus on each of them, using faculty of different departments and maybe a local citizen or two. I would schedule a visiting lecturer for spring semester on one of the books (the China expert at my university told me, as he recommended John King Fairbank, that Fairbank himself would be coming in spring of 1979 to lecture). I’d try to tie in films when possible, maybe an essay contest, and—although I wouldn’t touch it with a ten-foot carrot myself—I imagine some zany on campus could be subtly coerced to organize a costume ball. I would make sure the college publicity office had the list, and the local public library.

It would be impossible, in other words, for anyone on campus during the year to escape notice of a large handful of important books in various fields. A student might buy none of them, might open none of them, might even steal one from the bookstore and burn it in sheer outrage. But five years later, standing in a bookstore a thousand miles away, he might suddenly be ready. The paracurriculum might even—should tennis and jogging begin to falter—edge its way into conversation at faculty gatherings.

The main things I’d hope for, though, is that students would recognize the merit of this supplement to the curriculum and would take the initiative of bringing over to the dormitory of fraternity or sorority or apartment one of the higher sorters every few weeks or so, to use the book as a convenient means for accomplishing the unnatural acts mentioned earlier. Eventually I’d want students themselves to take over the whole process—stopping faculty on the street for their book choice, publicizing, arranging speakers, organizing forums. It would enlarge considerably the student’s sense of the intellectual life to take on this stimulating responsibility, and it would give me time for other pressing tasks. For one thing, I’ve been making notes toward a new core curriculum.

Ishtar, The Monastery Dog

When the nun worked tenderly in the sun pit, sorting the pale leaves of lettuce, thinning radish and cress, smiling at daily miracles of lacy spine or carrot, overlapping cabbage leaves, Ishtar, the dog was with her.

When she walked through a fallow field—sweet vernal grass, cocksfoot, broomcorn and timothy clinging to her denim apron and the moving psaltery of Benedictine robes, Ishtar, the dog walked with her.

When she opened the monastery gate to the gift of sheep, the new and solid plain-song of the ram, the ewe; processional of herding, gathering, lambing, dipping, worming, shearing, Ishtar, the dog guarded the sheep.

Older and older and slower and slower the dog moved faithful to the deep seasons’ mystery, and the nun whose tall compassion farmed the monastery land. So it was. When Ishtar the dog died of old age—

—for days and days the thigh of the nun was numb—strangely sore—like the spot on the lip of the mouth where a trumpet hung.

Ishtar, the dog.

Sister Maura
The concern of this essay is to relate religion and literature studies to psychotherapy. This is because psychotherapy is so concrete as to give promise of rescuing religion and literature studies from too much abstraction. Psychotherapy is concrete because it deals with the world of the body, the feelings, and the emotions as well as with the will or the mind. Of course, literature is more concrete than either religion or psychotherapy. But literary criticism is not. Perhaps the best way to express the purpose of this essay is to say that it is concerned to show that literature, religion, and psychotherapy are all good therapy and in the best sense. But it is equally clear that they are good therapy in radically different senses or ways. The method of this essay is Aristotelian in the sense that it starts with the separate identities of literature, religion, and psychotherapy and then moves on to the possible interconnections. Plato might do it the other way around because he heard a different drum. Finally, the thesis of this essay is that literature gives us expression, that religion gives us love, and that psychotherapy gives us understanding—especially self-understanding—especially self-understanding when it is closely related to both literature and religion.

**Literature**

Literature is a mirror. It reflects life vividly and fully. But literature is not just a mirror reflecting life. It is also a lamp. It illuminates life. It is a great light shining in the darkness. Finally, literature is good therapy. It is a stay against chaos and confusion. It helps keep us sane. It gives us more self-consciousness, more integrity or wholeness, more urbanity, more relatedness, and more maturity. It helps us to clarify our problems so that we can cope with them better.

These are the three most famous theories of literature in both the ancient and the modern world. All three can be found in Aristotle and Plato in one way or another. All three are also present in most great modern writers—especially in Hemingway. Hemingway said again and again that great literature shows us the way things are (the mirror theory) and throws a great light on them (the lamp theory). Hemingway also said that literature tells us how to live in the context of the way things are (the good therapy theory). By the way things are Hemingway probably meant modern life, modern existence, modern experience, and the modern story—something violent and very rough.

Genre theory is still dead. But the most commonly accepted literary forms are lyric poetry, serious drama (comedy and tragedy), short stories, novels, epics, and romances. More interesting than genre theory is what might be called modes of aesthetic representation. The most universal are allegory, realism, symbolism, and fantasy. These modes cut across the literary forms and help determine the religious character of the work if there is a religious meaning in it. It is possible to argue that there are correlations between these models and the kind of religious meaning involved. Allegory is Greek, realism is Hebraic, symbolism is Christian, and fantasy is Modern Skeptical. In allegory ideas are richer than events. In realism events are richer than ideas. In symbolism events and meanings come together and are held in balance and tension. In fantasy the events and meanings of this life are compared and contrasted with those characteristic of some other possible or impossible world. Of course, most works of literature combine two or more of these modes. It should also be said that these correlations between the aesthetic modes and religious meaning are not always clear. One purpose of Christian criticism and of theological criticism generally is to make them more clear.

Of still greater interest are the elements for literary analysis and theological interpretation. These elements are definite qualities or properties of the work. Those usually cited are story, character, plot, theme, diction, imagery, rime, rhythm, scale, pace, setting, atmosphere, tone, focus of narration, and point of view. Movements and schools of modern criticism pick very different elements as the locus of meaning in the work. This is true whether the meaning is religious or not. The New Critics stressed imagery. The Neo-Aristotelians emphasized plot. The Archetypal critics have pushed theme or *motif*. But the important thing is that it is in these elements that the religious meaning and power of the work is to be found. We may infer the intention of the author or the effect on the audience. But we have to infer these things from the literary elements, properties, or qualities of the work. We have no direct or mystical access to the author or the audience.

We lack space to define and illustrate all of these elements. But let us take pace—a relatively minor element. Pace has reference to the speed of the action—slow or fast as the case may be. *Macbeth* is a good example. The
Literature does not just remind us of life. That is obvious. What is more important is that our lives keep reminding us of literature.

pace is very slow at the beginning of the play because Macbeth is being tempted. But once he succumbs to this temptation the action picks up and moves with incredible speed as the play approaches its end. The reason for this is Shakespeare's underlying insight in this play—the insight that evil is self-defeating so that good does not have to rise up to destroy evil. Evil destroys itself.

It is possible to illustrate the differences between these movements or schools of modern criticism in many ways. But let us take Hamlet. In the council scene very early in the play where Hamlet is conversing with Claudius and Gertrude, Hamlet says: "I am too much in the sun." An Aristotelian critic would take this statement literally. Hamlet is in mourning and is wearing dark clothes. He means exactly what he says. The glitter of the court is too much for him and disgraceful to anyone who remembers his father's murder. But a New Critic and especially an Archetypal critic would look for a wider and deeper meaning. For example, they would say that Hamlet means more than what he says. In other words, what Hamlet really meant to say was that he was too much in the son as well as too much in the sun. This converts Hamlet's statement into a pun and that is supposed to be the lowest form of humor. But Hamlet is not playing word games with his uncle and his mother. He is dead serious. A Neo-Aristotelian critic would say that this involves overreading. A New Critic might object, but that is not likely. An Archetypal critic would stress the great richness of Shakespeare's text. In addition to the literal and the obvious meaning, there is the wider and deeper meaning.

To turn to other literary matters, there is a curious inversion in great literature. Whitehead came close to expressing it in his little book called Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect. James Joyce came close to it in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man where Stephen Dedalus is walking through the streets of Dublin or thereabouts. Instead of having words remind him of things, things remind him of words. A good way to express this profound aesthetic insight is to say that literature does not just remind us of life. That is obvious. What is more important is that our lives keep reminding us of literature. That is what is so wonderful and strange. Hamlet reminds us of our own life. But our own life keeps reminding us of Hamlet, too.

Poetry does at least two great things for us. It suggests more than it literally states. It also embodies what it indicates in some way. Nicknames are very poetic. They suggest more about you than your Christian name does. They also embody what they indicate. Pip is the nickname for Dickens' hero in Great Expectations. It suggest a lot of things about him that his Christian name does not. It is also an embodiment of these things. It is short. It is crisp.

A useful concept for any theory of literature should be what might be called "structural lines." Everything in a text leads up to or away from these lines. A Christian critic should be especially attentive to these lines because the religious meaning is often expressed in them. "Ripeness is all" is a structural line in Lear and "readiness is all" is a structural line in Hamlet.

Another thing that Christian critics should do is work out alternate readings of great literary texts. This avoids dogmatism and makes the text seem richer and fuller. For example, in Lear there is a powerfully Greek motif about Lear's being more sinned against than sinning. There is a deeply Christian motif about Lear's redemption—redemption that comes into the play from the forgiving and understanding love of his daughter Cordelia. Finally, there is the Modern Skeptical motif that stresses the bitterness and despair of Lear.

Is grace capable of direct and full literary representation? This is a key issue in the religion and literature area. If you feel that grace is not even present in nature, life, and history, you are not likely to find it in literature. But the converse is equally true. It is possible to argue this question in the abstract all day and all night. But sooner or later you have to get down to cases. The two cases to be dealt with briefly here are Lear and Billy Budd.

When Lear is standing at the very center of the stage in the final scene with his daughter Cordelia dead in his arms, there is some very real question as to whether Cordelia's forgiveness does not transport him into a state of grace as he dies. There certainly is no other great text in Western literature where the ending is more radiant. Many critics feel that the radiance is not real. It is senility. It is unearned euphoria. Lear persuades himself that Cordelia is not really dead before he dies. As A. C. Bradley said, Lear dies with a peculiar kind of happiness. But it seems to many other critics that Lear makes it very clear again and again that Cordelia is in fact dead and for good. But that is not Lear's point. His point is that she did not die in vain. He rescued a sense of the preciousness of his own life from her and has it as he goes.²

As for Billy Budd, Billy Budd dies crying or even shouting "God bless Captain Vere!" The man who was most

¹ For a much fuller discussion of Hamlet, see my article called "Hamlet's Moment of Truth." This essay was reprinted in an anthology edited by Giles B. Gunn. It is called Literature and Religion. This is a Harper Forum Book. Harper and Row, 1971.

² For a fuller and richer discussion of the way Lear ends, see my article called "The Redemption of King Lear," Renascence, Summer 1974.

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responsible for his death is forgiven by Billy as he dies. Does this transport him into a state of grace? Some critics say yes. Others say no. F. O. Matthiessen said that grace could be rendered in literature and that it is rendered successfully in *Billy Budd*. W. H. Auden said the opposite. He felt that grace could not be rendered and that it isn’t in *Billy Budd*. R. W. B. Lewis says that it can be expressed but that it is not done at all successfully here.

Can there be such a thing as a Christian tragedy? Are comedies more Christian than tragedies? What is the exact religious import of modern literature? Is a more doctrinal approach to Christian criticism possible if we limit ourselves to the simplest and most universal doctrines like creation, fall, and redemption? Or do we need the trinity, the incarnation, and the atonement as well? All of these issues have been talked about for twenty-five years now. But they are not settled.

**Religion**

Religion is not an intellectual discipline. It is an experience. It is a reality. It is a subject matter. The intellectual discipline involved in religion is, of course, theology. Its task is to interpret our religious experiences to us in a careful and systematic way. In Western life and culture there have been at least three great religious traditions. The first is classical Greek humanism as we find it in Aristotle; Plato, Socrates, the ancient Greek and Roman Stoics, and Greek tragedy itself. The second is the Hebraic-Christian tradition. It is by far the most universal and powerful tradition. The third tradition is Modern Skepticism. This tradition has flourished in the modern world. But it can be found as far back as the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament, Euripides, and certain Greek and Roman philosophers. The six big movements or schools in modern theology have been Enlightenment theology, Evangelical or Romantic theology, theological liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, Neo-Naturalism or process theology, and God is dead, radical or secular theology.

A Christian literary critic cannot escape from theology. And the only alternative to bad theology is good theology rather than no theology at all. But a Christian critic should try to stay clear of dogma if dogma threatens to stand in the way of a full appreciation and understanding of the work. Concretely, this means that properties of the work rather than doctrinal allusions carry the religious meaning. The locus of religious meaning is in things like story, character, plot, and theme. At the same time, it must be said that a Christian critic can and should bring in the most exciting and useful doctrines like the essential goodness of creation, the universality of the fall, and the high cost of redemption. But this has to be done indirectly and deftly. This is especially true of traditional dogma like the trinity, the incarnation, and the atonement.

Three profound theological doctrines that are not known or used as widely as they should be must be cited. The first idea is that we suffer for our charisma rather than from guilt or sin. That is to say, we get into deep trouble not because we did something wrong but because we did something right or good. This idea is very Greek and is the heart of Greek tragedy. But Christian mystics and heretics through the ages have loved it and expressed it. The second idea is not used very often either. It is what can be called a theology of the second chance. Adam fouled up our first chance, or course. But in Christ there is a second Adam who gives all of us a second chance. The whole Christian doctrine of redemption implies this idea, of course. It is particularly relevant to American life and history. That is to say, man in America is being given a second chance. That is what America means. But Americans may be fouling up their second chance just as badly as Adam did the first. Reinhold Niebuhr was full of this idea. So was Conrad And Faulkner. Finally, there is the idea of a suffering God. The point here is that God has limited his power by giving us more freedom and therefore has to do as best he can with what he has left. He suffers with us and is even more up against it than we are. The idea of a suffering God solves so many theological problems. But it creates a few new ones, too. And that is the problem. If you limit God’s power, you can come up with a weak God who cannot and does not help. On the other hand, if you don’t limit God’s power, God himself becomes evil or at least responsible for evil. The greatest wrestler with these problems in our time has been Charles Hartshorne.

One of the most exciting things in modern theology has been the development of typologies—Kierkegaard’s distinction between the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious; Tillich’s scheme of life attitudes—autonomy, heteronomy, and theonomy; Nygren’s classification of kinds of love—agape, eros, philia, and nomos; Whitehead’s distinction between God the void, God the enemy, and God the friend. This writer’s own typology of kinds of tragedy as well as of kinds of story generally has been used quite widely. We distinguish between the Hellenic-Greek, the Hebraic-Christian, and the Modern Skeptical. These typologies are especially helpful for Christian critics because they provide such a precise and powerful instrument for dealing with great literary texts.

What will happen next in theology? Nobody knows. But a very real possibility is that younger theologians (especially those working in dialogical areas like religion
The idea of a suffering God solves so many theological problems. But it creates a few new ones, too.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is at once an intellectual discipline with a theoretical dimension and a medical procedure concerned with the practical implications of psychotherapy for healing. What is to be said in this essay will be primarily concerned with psychotherapy as an intellectual discipline because this writer has had no formal training in psychotherapy as a medical procedure. There are at least three possible terms for what is about to be said here. Psychotherapy is just one. The other two are psychiatry or psychoanalysis and depth psychology. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis are not exactly the same thing because psychoanalysis is only one possible kind of psychiatry. But they are close. Psychoanalysis takes so long and is so expensive that it is not a real option for most of us. Depth psychology suggests that this discussion is about an intellectual almost exclusively. But it does not suggest healing the way psychotherapy does. Paul Tillich had a lot to say about this general area of thought. His favorite term was psychotherapy.

One of the fallacies in popular culture is the idea that you have to be very sick to see a therapist. The fact of the matter is that almost everyone should see a therapist on one or more occasions in his life. The reason for this is that he cannot get enough perspective on his problems from his wife, his family, or his friends. So much unnecessary suffering would be overcome if psychotherapy did not still have some stigma attached to it in our culture. In other words, it takes a lot of courage to see a therapist. But it should not.

The first, the most obvious, and the most important thing about psychotherapy is that the client must need and want help. He must have come to the end of his tether, as the saying goes. He must have exhausted his unaided resources. This concept is analogous to the problem of motivation in education. Very little can be done for a student unless he has a little bit of "fire in his belly." He has to want to learn and be taught.

Psychotherapy is like an epic or a romance (the literary form rather than a love affair). The client and his therapist are searching for his true identity or his real self in the midst of a lot of distractions and debris. It is a journey, a voyage, and a quest. Self-consciousness, integrity or wholeness, involvement, and maturity are the golden fleece or the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. In fact, it is the venture of faith.

A session between a therapist and his client should be unprogrammed like a Quaker Meeting. The client should not come with too many set speeches. Nor should he come with an advanced determination to keep silent and let the therapist do the talking. There should be a lot of give and take on the part of both client and therapist. The whole thing should be what has just been called a venture of faith.

The problems a client may or may not have are infinite. But they are also of different kinds and fall quite naturally and readily into three types of anxiety. First, some of the problems arise out of the fact of human finitude or what is called natural or metaphysical rather than personal or moral evil. We are thinking of things like death, disease, war, and poverty. Very little can be done about this kind of anxiety. It has to be recognized and accepted as part of the bargain of life and as the price we have to pay for being human. In fact, this profound distinction between the two kinds of evil expressed above is one of the most liberating distinctions in the whole of modern thought. It is not simply significant for literature, religion, and psychotherapy. It is decisive. It means that something can be done about some things but not all. Second, other problems may have to do with a sense of guilt or even sin. This is where the client—with the therapist—can sometimes overcome or at least mitigate this kind of anxiety by acts of forgiving understanding and a more active and participating kind of love. Third, still other problems may be due to a modern kind of anxiety that may express itself in very negative and extremely painful feelings like anxiety itself, fear, dread, emptiness, meaninglessness, homesickness, panic, insecurity, exile, estrangement, and loneliness. In a sense very little can be done about these emotions since they are so prevalent and deep in the modern world—in what philosophers and theologians call modern experience and what poets and critics call the modern story. However,

1 A book and an essay of mine on Christian Stoicism are to appear shortly. The book is called Hemingway's Religious Legacy and the essay is called "Hemingway and Christian Stoicism."

2 All we have had is a lot of experience as a patient and a client. We have lived under psychiatric supervision for twelve years, including two years of hospitalization.
it can and must be said that this third kind of anxiety is the kind that is so characteristic of and so universal in the modern world as to constitute the greatest kind of challenge to both the client and the therapist. As Paul Tillich put it and very famously so, you have already moved beyond your despair if you can express it.

It is interesting that the three kinds of anxiety a client is likely to have correspond to the three great stories in our Western literary tradition and, more specifically, with the three kinds of tragedy—Hellenic-Greek (finitude), Hebraic-Christian (guilt and sin), and Modern Skeptical (doubt and despair). This means that both the therapist and the client can have three different images of their dialogue. Just as in literature, the client may be suffering from one or more of the following kinds of anxiety—finitude, guilt, or despair.

Speaking of theologians for a moment, it is usual for them to say that mental health should not be confused with salvation. By mental health we should mean self-consciousness, integrity or wholeness, relatedness, and maturity. But many theologians still do insist on making a sharp distinction between mental health and salvation. Even Tillich did. So perhaps psychotherapy is closer to literature than it is to religion. In fact, a therapist should think of his client as being a sort of tragic hero. If the client is suffering terribly because of something good that he has done rather than something bad, he is reminiscent of a Greek tragic hero who suffered for his charisma. If he suffers because he did do something wrong but is full of repentance and contrition, he confronts the therapist as a Christian tragic hero. If the client is suffering from anxieties and fears that rob his life of its meaning and leave it empty, he is a kind of Modern Skeptical tragic hero. The by now classic text that deals with a tragic hero who is in need of therapy and finally gets it at the end or after the end of the story is J. D. Salinger’s The Catcher in the Rye.5

Ever since Hegel, critics of tragedy have stressed the conflict of some kind which is at the heart of tragedy. More specifically, they have observed and argued that the most deeply tragic conflict is between two goods rather than between good and evil. Freud and his followers have taken over this concept, and situations of conflicts are what a therapist is looking for because conflicts put his client into a bind, may make him “up tight” and can even cause him to “flip out.” These interesting expressions—“up tight” and “flip out”—come from the world of psychotherapy, especially from the world of mental hospitals. They are exciting and useful phrases if properly defined and used. The phrase “up tight” means that a patient is in a bind or suffering from the conflict between two different things. The phrase “flip out” means—in its most radical sense—that a patient has moved from neurosis to psychosis. But the phrase is usually used in a milder sense or way. It has reference to any withdrawal from reality or experience.

If we think of being an intellectual in a very broad and rich and non-academic sense, one of the purposes of psychotherapy is to make intellectuals out of us. The purpose is to help us live what Socrates called a more examined kind of life. Another aim is to make us more self-conscious about things. An intellectual takes nothing for granted and nothing is sacred to him by definition. He questions everything. This is why psychotherapy throws everything in our lives up to the light. In a sense and to a certain extent we have to live our lives over again. Or at least we have to start a new life. But this business of making an intellectual out of us, thanks to psychotherapy, should not be too intellectual or too cognitive. If it is, it is not good therapy. An intellectual is not an “egghead.” He is a man of feeling.

Psychotherapy has opened up many windows on the world instead of slamming a lot of doors the way much traditional theology did. It is obvious that its emphasis upon the importance of sexuality and sexual love has been the greatest single liberating force it has had. Sexual behavior that had been taboo or had been dealt with as perverted, distorted, and deviant has been talked about carefully and systematically. Above all, these things have been confronted in a non-judgmental way. Some of these things are masturbation, homosexuality, and bisexuality. The Freudian rediscovery of the unconscious has also confirmed a lot of myth, literature, and art and has given rise to the great modern movements in these areas. Faulkner’s use of scrambled chronology and shifting points of view in The Sound and the Fury was inspired, or at least made possible, by the work of Freud and his disciples or revisionists.

There are at least two key terms in psychotherapy. They are anxiety and acceptance. A distinction is often made between anxiety and fear. Fear has a definite object. Anxiety is more random. But acceptance is the term that enables us to relate psychotherapy to both literature and religion. In Greek tragedy, for example, a Greek tragic hero accepts his fate and destiny at the end. A Christian tragic hero does, too. But he does so in a different way and for different reasons. He forgives because he has been forgiven. Modern Skeptical tragic heroes accept their sickness, too. They come to realize that they have hit bottom so hard that there is only one way left for them to move or be moved and that is back up.

The basic assumptions of psychotherapy are secular rather than religious. One assumption is that this life is it.

In addition to the concept of acceptance, there are three theological terms that are equally crucial for literature, religion, and psychotherapy. They are creation, fall, and redemption. Creation means that life is essentially good, no matter how distorted it may become. The fall means that man becomes alienated from his true or real self. Redemption or salvation means that this loss of self can be healed, overcome, and restored. These insights are important insights because they point up what happens to a client, what happens to a tragic hero, and what happens to a believer.

One possible danger in psychotherapy is subjectivism or individualism. The therapist or the client or both dwell upon the problems and the life style of the client as if he were just a sick individual whereas his culture, his society, and his world are sick, too. This is where Marx was right and Freud was in a sense wrong.

Perhaps the most important bridge concept between literature, religion, and psychotherapy is love. Modern theologians have talked a great deal about kinds of love or aspects of love or dimensions of love. The most famous kinds are eros, agape, and philia. Eros is love of excellence or beauty, including sexual desire and passion. Agape is a more outgoing and self-sacrificial kind of love. Philia is affection or fondness. It is gentle.

The basic assumptions of psychotherapy are secular rather than religious. One assumption is that this life is it. There is nothing before, after, beneath, or above this life. The second is that life is a process. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. And the process is the reality. The third is that a lot of people need help emotionally and mentally—especially in the modern world. The fourth is that help for these people is available. The fifth is that such help is available only if the client really wants as well as needs it. All of these assumptions are quite worldly and secular. But some of the best thought of our time is religionless.

A key concept in psychotherapy is the concept of maturity. This is a process, too. It takes time and is not a static thing. It is interesting to wonder whether what this really means in the context of psychotherapy is what it also means in the context of literary studies. Maturity was a key concept for the New Critics and was closely related by them to the concepts of irony and tragedy. This was not maturity apart from tragedy. It was maturity in the face of tragedy. The New Critics in fact came very close to identifying the tragic, the ironic, and the mature.

Psychotherapy can be a long and expensive process. It can also be emotionally exacting and mentally demanding. But the great thing is that it can help. It works. As the weeks and months and even years go by, we do become more self-conscious about our problems and the best solutions to them. We do become more integrated or whole instead of in a bind or split right down the middle. We do become more urbane or sophisticated. We also develop a broader kind of human sympathy. Most important of all, we become more mature. We do not worry about things too much or too little. We take them more in stride and adjust to them—sometimes beautifully and powerfully. If we can combine psychotherapy with the vision of literature and the wisdom of religion, we may even be in the clear. In spite of our troubles, we can be brave soldiers and say in all honesty that the best rather than the worst is yet to come.

Interconnections

Let us not stop talking about the separate identities of literature, religion, and psychotherapy. But let us also turn more specifically to what might be called their relatedness by way of conclusion. It has been said that the two key terms in psychotherapy are anxiety and acceptance. This is true. But they have become almost technical terms. What is needed is a word from ordinary speech. This is no problem. The word is help. Literature, religion, and psychotherapy all help. They are all good therapy.

There are at least five major points of contact between and among literature, religion, and psychotherapy. They are self-consciousness or self-understanding, integrity or wholeness, urbanity or sophistication, community or relatedness or a broad human sympathy, and maturity. Maturity is the most important point of contact because maturity is equally far removed from a shallow kind of optimism and a disabling kind of pessimism or despair. Maturity is the joint result of the three stages on life's way—the heroic idealism of youth, the tragic visions of middle age, and the religious longing and religious peace of old age. As we said earlier, maturity was a key concept for the New Critics and was developed in close relation to their other two key concepts—irony and tragedy. Maturity was also a decisive idea for the Neo-Orthodox theologians and the Christian naturalists or process theologians. Psychotherapy has also deepened our concept of maturity by refashioning it in a developmental and dynamic way.

It is interesting that four of these five points of contact sound very much like Henry Nelson Wieman's empirical description of God. He was one of the great Christian naturalists or process theologians. He called God a creative event and talked at great length about the four sub-events in this creative event. They were the emergence of a new perspective, the integration of the new perspective with the old, the expansion of the appreciable world,
and the growth of community. So maybe Dr. Wieman really did know what he was talking about.

There are many more minor points of contact. Tension is a good example. This word or concept very well describes the relationships between and among literature, religion, and psychotherapy. These three things are in tension. This means that their differences and their similarities are equally important. If we push their relatedness too hard and too far, the tension between and among them is resolved. If we stress their differences too much, the tension is resolved, too.

Another thing that literature, religion, and psychotherapy have in common is resonance. All three evoke echoes in our minds that go far back into the childhood of our race as well as our own personal childhoods. But resonance does not necessarily occur only in relation to the past. It can carry us into the future, too. It triggers our dreams and fantasies. Another way of saying the same thing is to say that literature, religion, and psychotherapy all have a lot of clout. They hit us hard. We are never the same again.

Another important point of contact is the concept of tragedy itself. Literature, religion, and psychotherapy all insist that it is simply not possible for a human being to go below, or above, or around tragedy. He has to go in it and through it. There is no way of moving from innocence to maturity except in and through at least potentially tragic experiences.

Still another mediating concept has to do with what might be called cheating in literature and in life. A writer cheats whenever he takes his protagonist beyond pathos and tragedy without really earning this transcendence. So the usually high cost of redemption is not paid. An unearned kind of euphoria pervades the ending of the play or novel. This is not good. In fact, it is very bad. But the real point to keep in mind is that both religion and psychotherapy can cheat, too. So cheating is a negative and disabling point of contact between literature, religion, and psychotherapy.

A lot has been said about the problem of grace in literature. But what about grace in life? When we say that a handsome woman or a lovely boy has grace, is there any connection with what theologians call grace? When Hemingway said that the most important thing in this world is having "grace under pressure," is the religious meaning of this phrase very close by or still far away? If you say yes to both of these questions, you will probably be accused of pantheism. But a little pantheism is not such a bad thing. If God is love, is love God? It is the same old issue—the relation between natural and supernatural grace. The truth of the matter is that there are many times and places where natural and supernatural grace intersect and come together very closely. These are the golden moments in human life—moments of truth and moments of grace. They happen to tragic heroes. They happen to believers—simple and otherwise. And they happen to patients who are under psychiatric care and supervision. Of course, most modern theologians would question the use of the very old distinction between natural and supernatural grace. This is because many of them are empiricists and naturalists. But perhaps the term supernatural can still be used if we are very careful to divide the word into its two parts—super and natural. It is very much like the term gentleman. We say the word so quickly that we forget that the word refers to a gentle man. So the term supernatural need not refer to anything metaphysically transcendent. It should also be pointed out that the word at issue is supernatural and not supranatural. Literally supernatural means terrifically natural. There is nothing archaic about that.

A final point of contrast is openness. Openness is one of the greatest things in this world. Of course, openness is a form of love. So it is hard to say whether openness or love is the greater. It is more than likely that love is. But love has to be open if it is to be true love. And openness has to be a form of love to be real openness. So it may be impossible to have the one without the other. In a great tragedy, a protagonist is open or becomes so at the end or near the end. The Quakers speak of "opening" a passage of Scripture. And a therapist is open in the sense that there is nothing that he or her client cannot talk about.

As Hemingway and many other great modern writers have told us, we live in a very rough world and we do not have to be Stoics to fear that it is going to get worse before it gets any better. In this kind of world, we need help—all the help we can get. So we should not be too particular about where the help comes from—whether it be from literature, religion, or psychotherapy. When all has been said and done, we need all three of these things or at least two of them. One is not enough. All we can do is try them and try them hard for all that they are worth. The grass will seem greener if we do. We will have more time to stop and smell the roses along the way. Perhaps there is a pot of gold waiting for us at the end of the rainbow.

Perhaps literature, religion, and psychotherapy cannot save us or even make us more religious because of the stresses and strains of modern existence. But they can certainly make us more human. And that is to ask for a great deal in our late and in many ways sad time. Indeed, we should be more than willing to settle for something as modest but as real as that—becoming and remaining more fully human in such a rough time.
Life, Not Career

Martin E. Marty

Picture me aged 72, charitably described as balding, either "wiry" or "paunchy," depending upon the point of view, looking back many years on someone I knew at a nearby school in the Class of 1978. To protect identity, I'll give her the fictional name Magna C. Laude, but we'll call her "Mag" for short.

From the name you can tell she was an honor graduate, but in absentia. Her firm needed her quickly and she got a head start by going to work at once. In her absence both of her friends back on campus sent greetings. Not having heard from her at Christmas both dropped her. But the alumni office never lost track of her, for she advanced very rapidly in her career.

Belonging to the Class of '78 had certain advantages in the literature of her day. Among other things, as an undergraduate she had already read Passages and thus was able to have her mid-career crisis 22 years early. She read Power! How to Get It, How to Use It; Success! How Every Man and Woman Can Achieve It; Winning Through Intimidation; Looking Out for No. 1; and the other academic best sellers of her vintage. Having read The Woman's Dress for Success Book, she wore the proper three piece skirted suit, bag by Gucci, suit by Pucci, shoes by Tucci. She began immediately as the assistant associate executive expediter before her classmates had even unpacked.

By 1983, the fifth anniversary reunion of her class, she was unable to get back, but she did read how the others were doing. She remembered from Kahlil Gibran about keeping space between herself and others, and from Fritz Perls to do it her own way.

Mag was having a little trouble, though, bereft of some of the therapies that got her started so well. Est and Scientology had failed her. She had forgotten her TM mantra, and never had time to meditate anyway. TA was long past, since it involved groups. She dropped getting her master's because it took twenty minutes a day. She read books on all the latest therapies, including the perfect orgasm, but had no chance to use it. By then she was associate executive expediter.

In 1988—only twelve years ago—she became executive expediter, and had her first breakdown. People were puzzled because they noted that her lip was always firm, her chin jutted as before. Her company helped out by giving her a trip to Norway to see the fjords. She came back ten days early with her report on expediting in Sweden. Her therapist prescribed leisure, so she compulsively bought season tickets to symphony, ballet, opera, and theatre, and then raffled them off at work because she got restless between the acts.

In 1990 she was aged thirty-three and her counselor advised her to marry so she could have a permanent relationship. She was told to prioritize her marriage and maximize her childbearing potential. In those days the norm was 1.8 children; so she aimed for one, and had none. Four years later the marriage broke up, even though she tried contact lenses and her husband switched brands of scotch to match hers.

In 1996 she was named "The Indispensable Employee" and was promoted to vice president in charge of expediting. Honored as "Alumna of the Year," she sent a representative with a letter she dictated. It was signed, "Sincerely, Magna C. Laude."

The Short, Unhappy Life of Magna C. Laude

Two years ago Mag started losing her battle with her career. "Old M.C.L.," as they called her, noticed heart trouble, ulcers, endocrine disturbance, alcoholism, and other—what my colleagues call—specifically Christian diseases. We lost her recently. Her former husband arranged for her cremation and, in lieu of flowers (Mag never did care much for flowers), gifts for the employees' recreation fund.

Looking back, I followed the path of her career through these twenty-two years, and I am going to say something now that sounds very cruel, but I hope you will understand. I, too, have read John Donne and I know that anyone's death diminishes all of us. But I have to confess:

I'm not sad because Mag died.

I'm sad because she never really lived.

What goes on here in this little biography?

Parents must think I'm being subversive. You are wondering why there is no pep talk about hurrying up
and getting a job and paying off a little bit. You might have noticed that this apparently irresponsible speech is not being delivered at a commencement at which any of my own offspring is graduating.

Others may think that you are hearing—ten years late—the last fossil from a counter culture, a leftover hippie handing out petals to flower children.

There must be employers, and executive employers, here who know—as I know—that work is an important part of life, and highly valued.

We are discussing here a problem that may not touch the lives of all of us. This is an age when many Americans are unemployed, underemployed, misemployed, and it would be insensitive to assume that careerism is the only problem before us.

Why choose Mag and her problem then? Why not concentrate on the majority of you who have life and career in proportion and in proper perspective? Most of the people I meet who graduate from schools like this do. The very fact that you have chosen a university where the sciences, arts, humanities, the liberal arts, chapel, graduate and professional schools all intermingle is in itself a commitment by you to life, and career, and education for career preparation. You do not want to follow lockstep, as W. H. Auden describes, where people “ply well-paid repetitive tasks in cozy crowds.” (“Dowdy they’ll die who have so dimly lived.”)

Is it a false alternative I’m posing here today, career vs. life? The historian in me answers by locating your years and what future historians will see as a central problem of observers and critics (and until a commencement speaker of academic living in these years. The mid-seventies, repetitive tasks in cozy crowds."

...
Ortega, Rosenstock-Huessy, the administrators and managers you are likely to remember in the firms of which you will be part, the concrete-individual-integral people who will not impose themselves as templates but will inspire because they do not try to, all of them will have something of an openness that violates the edges of career. I think of economist Peter Drucker, a man of fulfilling career who never found it necessary to wind down: “Here I am, 58 years old, and I still do not know what I want to be when I grow up.” These lives as I have described them might give the impression of fluttering, flittering, frittering distraction. Just the opposite. The people who lived them were on a trajectory that gave direction and shape. Each one implies competence, mastery, discipline, faithfulness, and the hardest kind of work. Happy the nation, university, or firm that could put them to work. The concrete life is precisely not the life of the chattering generalist, the dilettante. Ortega criticized idolatry of the schema, the diagrammed outline of a career, not the vocation.

**Grace Notes and Breathing Holes for the Human Spirit**

So we should have a word about vocation.

Let me speak out of the context of my own, not as a “partly faithful professor” of history or as an “impure thinker” among the historians, but from the sphere of theology. I should think that some of you must by now be urging, “Say something theological,” for in this sphere it is hard to be prophetic without grounding oneself in Being, God, Spirit, Christ. My colleague Saul Bellow jars my kind: “Being a prophet is nice work if you can get it, but sooner or later you must talk about God.” But this is not vespers or chapel, nor dare I presume to speak to or for all of you in this realm even on these premises. These cautions aside, it still seems to me that vocation takes shape best in the context of theology. If I were here to defend B-1 bombers, neutron bombs, the Republican party or a large corporation, your commencement address would have to do with those spheres. Try this one:

A vocation is calling, a gift, hard work tinged by great grace. One day it occurs to us, there is no “age of Aquarius” waiting out there, and if there were we would be bored to death with it the first rainy Sunday afternoon. Economist Kenneth Boulding reminds us that Aquarius trudging across the heavens with his water pots, is the only sign of the zodiac doing work, and embodies the Protestant ethic itself. But you do not trudge in true vocation, for each day is lived as a new one. Einar Billing in a great book on vocation sets it in context: In such a life “nothing is too small, too neutral, too heavy, too light, too routine, too transitory, but all have a place. . . . In these monotonous deeds of every day I am to put in from day to day not only my most eager interest, my strictest conscientiousness, but God’s power and God’s love. God is to continue to create, Christ to continue to redeem, through my daily work.” And the inner-life will grow.

If you are to have a concrete, individual, and integral life, we wish for you:

1) **Moonlight**—hobbies, voluntary activities, supplemental work, anything that keeps you from becoming a slave of your sunlight occupations.

2) **Wonder**—that quality you brought to life, and that we hope your better teachers kept your worse teachers from killing off. (Nietzsche: You must still have some chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star. If you have wonder, surprise will find its way, and you cannot become drones and drudges.)

3) **Space**—E.M. Forster has spoken of the need for “breathing holes for the human spirit,” which we have seen some people find in cramped lofts and garrets and assembly lines, but which is also available for us under the sky, where the wonder of the starry night impinges as always before.

4) **Other people**—we hope you will find yourself webbed with other people, who make demands upon your self.

5) **Creative schedule interruptions**—the fine art of knowing when to forget the calendar, the date book, and the clock because people have needs.

6) **Positions**—yes, we wish for you jobs, professions, vocations, callings, demanding enough that they provide attractive careers and thus challenges for lives.

7) **Grace**—a life of grace notes that reminds you that all is a gift, and not that pushy sense of the self-made person who worships, his creator, the self.

A story that cinches this all elaborates on something the late Pope John is said to have said about the social schema of his career. Let us assume that running a 500 million member international organization is a demanding task, and that rising to lead it offers every temptation to idolize the current rung on the ladder of achievement, since hierarchy is a nuanced and competitive pattern.

In this version John tells of his own “breathing holes”:

“When I was a little boy and had a problem, I could always ask my parish priest. When I became a priest and had a project, I could consult the nearby monsignor. As I rose in the ranks, there was always the bishop on whom to lean. Then they made me a bishop, but I was secure since I could talk to the archbishop. Being an archbishop brought new duties and terrors, but in grave situations I could always consult the cardinal. But being cardinal was even worse, so it was necessary to take comfort from knowing I could talk to the pope. Now in all the terrible work of being the pope, I sometimes forget myself. The other night I had a problem and tried to reassure myself: ‘Let me see, I must talk this over with the pope.’ Then I remembered: ‘My God, I am the pope. So I talked to the Holy Spirit, rolled over, and slept peacefully.’”

And the whole world saw him refreshed the next day, ready for his vocation and life.

To be free from career for career, to lose your life so that you find it—this is your goal, your gift.
From the Chapel

Hidden and Compassionate in the World

John Vannorsdall

John Vannorsdall is the Chaplain of Yale University and preached this homily on Ascension Day, 1978 in Valparaiso University's Chapel of the Resurrection.

A former Chaplain of Gettysburg College, Dr. Vannorsdall holds his A.B. from Harvard University, his M. Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, and was awarded the D. D. from Susquehanna University. Fortress Press is publisher of his Campus Prayers for the 70's.
“Men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven?”
Acts 1:11

“The monastery is a place in which I disappear from the world as an object of interest in order to be everywhere in it by hiddenness and compassion.”
Thomas Merton

And so we come to Ascension Day, when the terrible risk inherent in Christmas comes to resolution. The risks of Christmas were enormous, though we seldom take note of the buzzard sitting on the ridgepole of the stable. The Creator, hidden in the music of the spheres, becomes the song of the angels, a particular song to be sung on a particular night when shepherds kept watch. The Ancient of Days, whose name could not be named, became Jesus, child of Mary, manger-born, and a Nazarene. The Lord of Lords, whose face could not be seen without there following death by glory, became a human visage, however plain. The Creator hidden, the Ancient of Days unnamed, the Lord of Lords unviewed, became an object of interest in the world. And that was the risk inherent in Christmas.

Jesus fled the crowds that gathered, and he took his moments apart from them. He was receptive rather than aggressive, became obedient unto death, took the towel and washed his disciples' feet. He was the Lord who served, the Servant Lord. He who was the Lord of all mystery became a moment of time in a particular place, an object of interest. It was the only way it could be done. It comes with incarnation. If the Word was to become flesh and dwell among us, then that Word would inevitably become time-bound and attention-centered. And so the Magi came, and Herod sent his troops, and the doctors in the temple gathered around. His name was Jesus, an object of interest. It had to be.

The Word became a life and the life set off alarms. The Word healed, and they took off the roof tiles to get to him. The Word spoke, and 4,000 and 5,000 gathered to hear and taste his bread. The Word told them marvelous stories, and the bored-out-of-their-skulls climbed trees to see him pass. The Word was an object of interest, evoking Hosannas, pieces of silver, Barabbas, sour wine, spices, “Hail,” “Master,” and running.

It had to come to an end. If it did not end, the Word become an object of interest could not be everywhere hidden and compassionate in the world. And that's the meaning of Ascension.
The Images of Man in Social Theory

The Contribution of George Herbert Mead

Dorothea Nuechterlein holds her M.A. in sociology from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and is presently a doctoral student at the University of Chicago.

The main business of the social sciences, according to May Brodbeck, is the discovery of truths about the world and about man. Since man is the only creature who can have meaningful intentional actions, we observe man and his behavior in order to discover and explain that meaning. But it must be man, indeed, whom we observe; Brodbeck quotes Max Weber as saying that we "cannot talk about man by changing the subject."1

Many grand schemes in sociology, as well as the discipline's more limited theories, seem at first glance to be logical, consistent, and interesting. Eventually, however, the reader stops to compare them with his own observations of the human situation, and it is at this point that theories all too often come apart before one's eyes. Theorists do not always seem to be talking about real people, or else their formulations don't allow for the entire range of activity demonstrated in daily life. They do, it appears, "talk about man by changing the subject."

One who does not is George Herbert Mead. Mead, founder of the tradition now known as symbolic interactionism, was a philosopher and psychologist who taught sociology students at the University of Chicago in the early decades of this century. His deliberations are not always easy to follow, which may be true partly because he did not organize his own materials into a systematic presentation; those who produced his lectures from over the years had as their aim, as Bernard Meltzer puts it, "completeness rather than organization."2 One finds, nonetheless, that many of Mead's ideas correspond directly with the observable world. In contrast to those who concentrate on such abstractions as "structure" or "social system" or "institution," Mead's focus inevitably rests upon the individual man, his interaction with other humans, and the process of social behavior. Mead studied man himself.

It is impossible in a short article to do justice to even a few of his major contributions. Rather, we shall present a brief comparison between Mead and a number of other representative sociological perspectives on one essential issue: the image of man. The intention is to demonstrate the superiority of the Meadian approach for sociological thinking in this area.

In any social theory the view of man is of utmost importance; yet in some cases man is hardly mentioned, let alone clearly explicated. The earliest social scientists, such as Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, did not have much to say about individuals. In laying the foundations of sociology they were preoccupied with the view of the collectivity of society, with how it developed, and with the social bonds holding it together. Although it is self-evident that society is made up of separate entities called men, man as an individual, a person, was apparently more or less taken for granted.

It was society that was regarded as the organism, the "thing," to be studied.

More recent structural/functionalist theoreticians have also followed this path, until we have reached the stage where in all the abstraction, with all the models and the systems, one is at times hard put to recognize the place of the lone, definitive, specific, ordinary human being.

Talcott Parsons often reduces the social system to the level of the individual, but even then he doesn't talk about a "man." His conceptions revolve around "actor," "ego and alter," "personality," and "organism," but all of these terms are so intensely distilled that, again, it is difficult to relate them to flesh-and-blood creatures.

Primarily, in speaking of the basic unit of society, Parsons is less interested in that entity as such than he is in the roles it (he) plays in the social system, common core values, and so forth. Man does what he does, in a sense, because the social order in which he dwells needs people to do those things.

Taken all together, the patterns of these behaviors are called "action," and Parsons has worked out an elaborate, highly technical description of the Action System and how it operates. It is an intriguing way to organize thought about the interconnections between society and the individual; unfortunately, it requires much mental leap-frogging to relate this system to our own experience. The cardinal goal of this scheme emerges as a demonstration that everything contributes to the integration and adaptation of the system in which it operates; any given pattern fulfills the "system need." Thus, man is seen as a puppet, acting out the role which will keep the system going properly.

**Minds are Never "Givens"**

To bring the discussion out of the abstract into the empirical, we may consider a study by Greshem Sykes and Sheldon L. Messinger, who use the functional approach in analyzing the prison social system. In examining their description it seems evident that they see the individual as being almost totally manipulated and determined by the subculture in which he finds himself. They portray various roles which inmates play within the social system, all of which seem to be entirely prescribed. Some of these roles are played by those who adapt to the situation and others by those who deviate from it, but the authors make no allowances for individuals who do not readily conform to any of these depicted roles. Order and structure are the prime considerations, and it seems that the human being must simply fit himself into the system as best he can.

Because many conflict theorists have a view of society which is akin to functionalism, their image of man is similarly ill-defined. Lewis Coser points out that Karl Marx did not deal with individuals; he was not concerned with private drives, but with collective interests. It was the masses taking action collectively which mattered, for only in mastering private self-interest can class consciousness develop the power necessary to transform society. Once again man, the individual, is seen primarily as a cog in the wheel. In another discussion of conflict Stephen Mennell does briefly mention individuals and the cross-pressures they feel when they belong to two or more groups which pull their loyalties in contrary directions. Traditionally, though, the conflict theory ideal has a prescribed role for the individual as a part of the group.

The image of man put forward by the exchange theorists is singularly unattractive. Rather than an actor's actions being "caused" by the requirements of the social system, he is ostensibly motivated by some inner need always to maneuver himself into the most advantageous position possible. For example, the "rationality proposition" of George Homans puts it this way: "In choosing between alternative actions, a person will choose that one for which, as perceived by him at the time, the value, V, of the result, multiplied by the probability, p, of getting the result, is the greater."3

It is no doubt unfair to attempt a discussion of Homans' or Peter Blau's theories without carefully dealing with the question of power; nevertheless, even a superficial reading of their works seems to show an inherent determinism in the way men supposedly act toward one another. The clear implication is that under such-and-such conditions, such-and-such behavior is to be expected. This shows a great dependence on the tenets of Skinnerian behaviorism.

Behaviorism "operates on the principle that animals and humans are both reward-seeking organisms that pursue alternatives that will yield the most reward and least punishment."4 A variation of strict economics (Profit equals Benefits less Costs), this concept defines reward as behavior that meets the needs of the organism and punishment as that which inhibits meeting these needs, especially the need to avoid pain. The actor will display certain behavior patterns in certain situations, which are explained by his previous reinforcement. There is no free will at all in this perspective, for each of us is determined by our past history.

Critical theory has us return to "man as puppet." Georg Hegel once said that the autonomy of the individual is an illusion. There are historical forces at work, and men can discover the meaning of their actions only when they know the historical context. Herbert Marcuse takes this even further and says that through historical analysis and philosophical understanding it is possible to come to a realization of "those values which ought to prevail."5 His ideal is the image of the autonomous man, but it is a man dominated by correct ideology, whose strings pre-

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sumably are pulled by the right-thinking social scientist. (Jürgen Habermas quotes Marcuse: "there are two kinds of mastery: a repressive and a liberating one."

Max Horkheimer sees the domination of man as beginning in the family, and his view bears some similarity to that of the structural/functionalists: the family sees to it that the kind of human character emerges which social life requires, and makes the person adaptable to the authority of society. Horkheimer believes fervently in determinism: "Even man's wishes are shaped along determined lines by the social situation and the various educational forces active in it," particularly the family.

Habermas appears more willing to grant some autonomy to the individual. He uses the term symbolic interaction, but since the entire thrust of his presentation concerns ideology and political and economic behavior, it is probable that the phrase is meant rather differently than we will find in Mead.

Ethnomethodologists and phenomenologists begin to see man as a truly autonomous, self-directed being. According to George Psathas one of the fundamental positions of this perspective is that the social scientist attempts to discover "the way in which men in daily life interpret their own world," this is based on the fact that men are not only objects of the world to be observed by the scientist, but are creators of their own cultural world as well. The central importance of verbal language in assisting man to make sense of this world is explored by Aaron Cicourel; even the child can develop a level of meaning that serves him until he is able to understand more adult usages. It is somewhat disappointing, however, that ethnomethodologists, who stress the importance of exploring the "taken-for-granted" facts around us, do not themselves appear to study or explain what seems to be their own "taken-for-granted" view of man as a creative and interpretive being.

We come at last to symbolic interaction, as articulated by George Herbert Mead and his followers. This has at its very center an image of man substantially different from that found in most sociological perspectives. In contrast to much of what we have discussed above, Herbert Blumer emphasizes the fact that minds and consciousness are never "givens," and that man's behavior is not merely response to pre-existing objects or conditions. Instead of starting with individual minds as given and trying to fit them into both the physical and social worlds, Mead begins with the physical and social as given and shows how individual minds are formed within them.

The "I" and the "Me"

One fundamental contribution to sociological thinking by Mead is his characterization of the concept of "self." The self is a social emergent; it is the product of social interaction and not the logical or biological precondition of that interaction. An introductory textbook perhaps expresses the concept most simply:

Mead divided the self into two parts, the 'I' and the 'me.' The 'I' represents the spontaneous, unique, and natural characteristics of each individual, for example, the unfettered motivations and drives found in every normal child. The 'me' represents the specifically social components of the self—the internalized demands of society and the individual's awareness of these demands.

Mead describes the "I" and the "me" in detail, showing their relationship to one another and to what he calls the "generalized other" in the larger society. (The "generalized other" was Mead's term for the attitude of one's whole social group toward one's self.) Several points are particularly noteworthy in attempting to delineate Mead's image of man. Foremost among these is the nature of the "I" as previously stated. It is the "I," the spontaneous component, which counteracts any notion of determinism. Mead says:

[The] action of the 'I' is something the nature of which we cannot tell in advance. . . . The 'I' gives the sense of freedom, of initiative. The situation is there for us to act in a self-conscious fashion. We are aware of ourselves, and what the situation is, but exactly how we will act never gets into experience until after the action takes place.

This is what George F. Cronk calls the "liberating consequence" of Mead's concept of the self: since the character of the "I" is determinable only after that "I" has occurred, it is subject to predetermination, and what a person has been does not predetermine what he is going to become. Thus the world is not fully knowable, explainable, or predictable, but always emerges before us, developing in unexpected and surprising ways. This is a far cry from the view of functionalists, behaviorists, and so forth, but certainly most nearly coincides with our every-day perceptions of life.

The interaction between the "I" and the "me" is understood not only as the process by which the self takes shape and develops, but also as being representative of the interplay between the individual and society. Man is at once subject and object, actor and acted upon, maker of his history and made by it. Within himself he carries on interchange between the "I" and the "me," thinking

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reflectively, modifying responses. The ability to act toward himself is "the central mechanism with which the human being faces and deals with his worlds."\(^{11}\) Between himself and the other he carries on communication, also modifying responses. The self can improvise situations. He is able to "take the role of the other" in his own mind, so that he knows before he acts what the other's response might be. This allows opportunity to change that initial act, if an alternate act might result in a more desirable response, leading to further change.

Language is necessary for communication, both within the self and between the self and the other. Language is symbolic—it is the means by which we determine the shared meanings of our perceptions. "What language seems to carry," says Mead, "is a set of symbols answering to certain content which is measurably identical in the experience of the different individuals. If there is to be communication as such the symbol has to mean the same thing to all individuals involved."\(^{12}\)

Mead contends that without language, the symbolic naming of objects and experiences, we could not think. Society, therefore, predates mind, because language is transmitted to us from others in our childhood. Man internalizes the social processes of experience and behavior—Mead calls this the conversation of significant gestures—and in this way intelligence or mind arises. It is social interaction which puts content into the mind.

Cronk expresses the importance of time in Mead's conception this way: "The 'me' is that phase of the self which represents the past, the already established general other. The 'I' is a response to the 'me' and represents action in a present which implies a restructuring of the 'me' in a future."\(^{13}\) As Zeitlin writes, "Men thus have a unique capacity for intelligent action: the ability to solve present problems or cope with present adversity on the basis of past experience and in terms of possibly future consequences."\(^{14}\)

In summary, we find in George Herbert Mead and symbolic interactionism an image of man who is dynamic, unpredictable, thoughtful, able to learn and to change and to grow. This is man as we encounter him day by day. Rather than hypothesizing about society and inventing a being who could fit those preconceived notions, Mead takes his man where he finds him—in the real world—and tries to understand what he is all about. This is the man who seems worthy of our attention.

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\(^{12}\) Mead, p. 54.


From Social Consciousness To Theatricality: A Theory of Modern Drama

An anthropologist of dramatic literature faces a challenge. While it remains an easy task to select representative playscripts which reflect the past century of theatre, what may tie the scripts together? Are readers distant enough in time from both Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) and Ionesco's Rhinoceros (1958) to recognize any pattern in the development of drama? Do playwrights simply continue to reveal a consciousness of social issues, as Ibsen examines marriage as an institution in Ghosts and Hedda Gabler and Ionesco explains the potency of the Nazi movement in Rhinoceros or the weakness of open minds in The Lesson and The Chairs? Or has the theatre discovered, concurrently to considering social problems, an increasing awareness of itself as an art form and its dynamic potential? This column proposes a century-wide continuum for drama, originating with social consciousness and terminating, one hundred years later, with theatricality.

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What is theatricality? The term, synonymous with dramatic, theatrical, and theatricalness, offers an identifying label for dramas which call attention to themselves through their artificiality. A play may be both theatrical and realistic, but as realism lessens in favor of non-realistic elements—direct conversations with the audience or blatantly artificial lighting, for example—the play becomes more theatrical. The placement of theatricality at the present day end of the continuum should not deny Ibsen his theatricality. Ibsen was unquestionably theatrical, but much of his power lay in a revelation of character and the undercurrents of psychology and society. The theatricality or the social philosophy of an Ibsen work should not be measured against either the theatrical heights Ionesco achieved through exploiting the decay of language in The Bald Soprano or the philosophic richness of a Beckett monologue. The issue of theatricality, in short, poses a dualistic standard: one playwright may create art which imitates life, and another author may champion art for art's sake. Both playwrights may employ theatricality, but the latter dramatist incorporates greater theatricality. Thus, the degree of theatricality, as an indication of change in dramatic concepts, neither defines values nor demonstrates inequalities. An anthropologist, rather than form judgments or show favoritism, for example, toward realism, must become a theorist and encourage impartial comparisons. The theory below stresses the emergence of increasing theatricality in playscripts.

As noted, an important twofold dimension of social consciousness for late nineteenth century dramatists was the institution of marriage and the role of women. Scandinavian examples are not limited to the Ibsen plays already cited. Strindberg, in The Father, revealed his fear of dominating women, and he attacked marriage further with The Dance of Death. Social class and guilt comprise the agony of Miss Julie. Becket's The Vultures considers the surpressed role of a married woman and then unfolds the economic dangers of widowhood. The imbalance of wealth also becomes a central issue of Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard, and the same social inequalities inspired Gorki to write The Lower Depths. Hauptmann argued for the working class in The Weavers. Even Wilde, while emulating the classical comedy of manners, captured an awareness of the complexities of class structure and attitudes toward family life. Shaw, subscribing to the well-made plays formulation, designed his works for a public which he viewed as in need of further education. Social consciousness, in short, remained a universal concern in drama, and serious discussions, either purely realistic or completely didactic, emerged in both tragedies and comedies.

The power of theatricality, however, did not spring directly from an awareness of social problems. Instead it evolved out of significant departures and experiments from traditional playscripts. Jarry's King Ubu was clearly ahead of its time in 1896, and it kindled the flames of the "isms." Expressionism and surrealism owe an equally great debt to Strindberg for A Dream Play, The Ghost Sonata, and The Great Highway, all of which predate Apollinaire's The Breasts of Tiresias; even more time would pass before Breton's legendary Surrealist Manifesto. But as the "isms" matured, social consciousness entered the picture. Pirandello, in Henry IV and Six Characters In Search of an Author, suggests there is no difference between illusion, fantasy, and reality. The German expressionists, Kaiser, Toller, Wedekind, and others, crystalized the hopes and fears of a nation in abstract and occasionally brutal terms. Toller's The Machine Wreckers resembles a revised version of The Weavers with great emphasis on violence. And out of this German movement rose Brecht.

1 Büchner, of course, predated Strindberg by half a century. His Danton's Death received its first production in 1916, eighty years after its conception. Best known for Woyzeck, which inspired the opera Wozzeck (circa World War I), Büchner may be considered the true father of the "isms."
If one single playwright represents the synthesis of social issues and theatricality, it is Brecht. Always instructive, Brecht additionally strove to provide entertainment, and, as a prophetic poet, he consistently gave his audience something to take home and think about. Brecht's plays take full advantage of theatrical devices. Almost all Brecht works incorporate title projections for scene changes. The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui opens with a vaudeville line-up of characters. The Good Woman of Setzuan concludes with a blatant deus ex machina. The Elephant Calf, brief as it is, contains a play-within-a-play. Historical dramas like Galileo and Edward II—based on Marlowe's play—evoked realistic dialogue, but they avoid Ibsen's extensive exposition, Chekhov's subtle undercurrents, and Shaw's preachiness.

Brecht signalled the playwright's acceptance of theatricality concurrent to reflecting social consciousness.

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A digression on direction may be useful at this point. Brecht was both author and director, and his consistent incorporation of overt theatricality—many critics have fashionably called it "alienation," but a more accurate term, and one seen in print frequently today, is "distancing"—almost certainly reveals a directorial influence on playwriting. But Brecht's work as a director remains linked with his theories on direction. Any reader of Brecht's essays will realize he never put many of his own principles into practice, and Brecht's most significant commentary, A Short Organon for the Theatre, did not appear until 1947. Brecht wrote plays before he entered the field of direction, and his theories, contrary to setting precedents, owe much to Piscator. A similar argument in the cinema surrounds the close-up shot; Griffith did not invent it, but, using his instincts, he did more with it than previous filmmakers. The continuum suggested in this essay isolates playwriting from play direction and concentrates on the development of theatricality on a script level. Many of the most influential theorists and great directors—Artaud and Meyerhold immediately come to mind—wrote few if any original plays. While direction must ultimately be studied in conjunction with dramatic literature, other worthy areas of consideration, among many, include acting, electric lighting, and stagecraft, all of which underwent radical experimentation between the world wars.

Brecht remains a playwright in his own right and therefore becomes a vital turning point in any literary continuum.

During Brecht's early career in Germany, the "ism's" surfaced in American drama. Just as many German expressionist plays centered around business and commerce—Kaiser's Gas is a prime example—so did Rice's The Adding Machine and Kaufman and Connelly's Beggar on Horseback. The original title of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman was The Inside of His Head, a veritable definition of expressionism. Thornton Wilder broke through the proscenium arch when characters in Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth spoke to the audience and flippantly admitted they were performing plays. O'Neill began exploring the potential of theatricality with his expressionist works The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape. He later used other devices, including masks in The Great God Brown, classical Greek tragedy structure in Mourning Becomes Electra, and a nine act length for Strange Interlude. O'Neill undoubtedly remains the most daring and creative force in the history of American playwriting, and he signals another shift in the development of theatricality—the increasing casualness toward theatricality.

It may appear paradoxical to link a casual approach with the hard impact of theatricality, but this casualness also describes the playwright's attitude toward his audience. And, as will be shown, "casual" theatricality delivers a stronger punch than direct theatricality. Theatricality possesses, inherently, a certain novelty. By virtue of its existence, theatricality calls attention to itself, creating graphic illusions and shattering allusions to reality. The most immediate way of counterbalancing the overtness of theatricality, then, lies in a calm, casual acceptance of every dramatic action and situation. A playwright, by being casual, does not underscore the fact that something unique is unique.

Returning to O'Neill, the direct form of theatricality becomes visible in The Emperor Jones. When the formless fears appear to Jones—and the audience—while the constant drumming offstage increases in volume and frequency. The audience, simultaneously reminding itself it is inside a theatre, allows itself to become psychologically submerged in the event. Coleridge’s willing suspension of disbelief activates participation in the play. O'Neill's "casual" theatricality in The Great God Brown takes the form of masks for the central characters, who have more than one mask each to choose from, too. O'Neill presents mask-wearing as a social norm, and the action, instead of identifying itself as a highly theatrical device, comes across as a casual component of daily life. In this situation, however, the degree of theatricality actually increases, and the Coleridgean expression becomes inoperable; no matter how much an audience may identify with the characters and their plight, the audience will not lose sight of the distinctly artificial elements. Brecht, who even encouraged his audience to smoke inside the theatre, always exploited his theatricality for its own sake to invoke distancing. Mother Courage, in Brecht's drama of that title, drags her wagon across a bare stage while singing a summary of her travels and proceeds to cover several miles. The theatricality of the action stimulates a repudiation of realism. O'Neill's masks dictate The Great God Brown's own level of reality. The audience, instead of experiencing shock value through various theatrical devices—like wagon-pulling—must now accept a highly theatrical environ-
ment as completely real. Paradoxically, “casual” theatricality accounts for greater disorientation.

The playwright’s casualness toward theatricality continues after World War II in the so-called absurdist dramas. Beckett presents his dramatic situations as facts of life which cannot be questioned. Waiting for Godot contains no exposition to explain the sparseness of the scene or the inability of the tramps to leave the area. Endgame, too, offers no background to pinpoint time or place, and Happy Days, which opens with a woman buried to her waist in sand, begins its second act with the mound up to neck height. Genet, expanding upon the Pirandellian belief that reality is an illusion, provides in The Balcony the setting of a brothel in which fantasies are acted out while a revolution takes place. Despite the abstract locales of these plays, however, they share the identical approaches to theatricality manifest in the more lifelike settings of plays by Ionesco. Ionesco makes the presence of a rhinoceros in a city as conventional as O’Neill made his masks. The Bald Soprano, set in a home, utilizes repetitive dialogue and simple word plays for theatricality. Amedee features a growing, expanding corpse. This generation of existentialist playwrights portrays the abnormal as casual normality.

Simultaneous to the development of absurdist plays, the Angry Young Man movement began in British drama. Initiated in 1956 by Osborne’s Look Back in Anger, the plays may seem deceptively traditional at first glance. But these dramas discover the theatricality of daily existence. Look Back in Anger, for example, not only includes music hall routines performed by the characters for their own enjoyment, but it brings to the stage the potential for unrestrained verbal violence. Pinter particularly increased the degree of menace by presenting the power of intrusive strangers over innocent individuals. The Room, The Birthday Party, and A Slight Ache all allow disruptive forces to attack peaceful settings. Later works by Pinter, such as The Homecoming and Old Times, portray the menace as generating from within a family unit. American parallels may be seen in Albee’s The Zoo Story—external attack—and A Delicate Balance and Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?—internal attack.

Many of these plays, especially Pinter’s, also incorporate pauses and silences as integral elements of theatricality. The pause may represent non-verbal communication, fear, under-scoring punctuation, or provide rhythm. The casualness of theatricality, linked above with the absurdist, also surfaces. N. F. Simpson, a master of sketching something commonplace as outlandish, has We’re Due in Eastbourne in Ten Minutes revolve around an antique indoor compost heap mounted on a living room coffee table. Other British playwrights attacked social problems. Wesker’s The Kitchen captures the hell of an overcrowded restaurant kitchen, and his trilogy of Chicken Soup with Barley, Roots, and I’m Talking About Jerusalem covers the problems of the working class. And dramas like these raise the question, are playwrights returning to expressions of social consciousness?

Paradoxically, “casual” theatricality accounts for greater disorientation.

It remains vital to note social consciousness was never far removed from theatricality. World War I troubled the expressionists just as World War II influenced the absurdist and existentialists. When Frisch described Biedermann and the Firebugs as “a learning play without a lesson” in 1952, he shared the same fears of political corruption Brecht encountered twenty-five years earlier with The Threepenny Opera; both authors sought fabricated comfort in comedy. Today’s playwrights, in many ways, devote as great a concern for society as their predecessors did, but they possess an equally great interest in the dynamics of theatricality.

The past fifteen years encompass a substantial number of seminal playwrights, and they have made eclecticism not simply a style but a serious craft. Weiss, with Marat/Sade, jumbled historical perspectives and crystalized the unrest of the sixties. Handke’s Kaspar transcends the arguments over the decay of language and reveals the failures of communication through even simple movement and sounds. The rise of environmental theatre, which incorporates the audience into the play, places the burden of improvisation on the actor and lessens the role of the playwright. Equus, by Peter Shaffer, requires audience members on the stage. Stoppard, combined metaphysics, murder, music, philosophy, comedy, acrobatics, and projections in Jumpers, and his The Real Inspector Hound unfolds a play-within-a-play-within-a-play. His last major work, Dirty Linen, interjects a second complete one-act, New-found-land, between acts. Shange’s For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf is a “choreopoem” which expresses the poetry of black voices while encompassing social problems and personal conflicts. Polish playwright Mrozek wrote Tango as a metaphor for government-imposed censorship. The difference between For Colored Girls and Maxwell Anderson’s poetic dramas of forty years ago, between Tango and Mayakovsky’s pro/anti-Soviet The Bedbug (1929), lies in the universal realization that theatricality need not only be theatrical—it may also be sociological, psychological, and even ontological. Perhaps the only rule in writing is that no rules exist.

This column began by asking if readers were distant enough in time from A Doll’s House and Rhinoceros to draw comparisons between the works. Time, obviously, dictates the importance of individual playscripts to an anthology of drama. Neil Simon, in addition to enjoying continued popular success, has already seen his work anthologized, but the day may come when, like dated nineteenth century melodramas, his plays are coldly viewed as period pieces. Artistic standards remain secondary to commercial success, but only those scripts which possess true literary merit will survive all levels of criticism.
Post-Christian America finds its new morality rejected by the neo-evangelical revival of born-again Christians and others turning inward who have learned the lesson of Vietnam, Watergate, and Nixon and who are now returning to their roots and seeking government as good and decent and filled with love as the American people themselves.

The sentence above is as ambiguous as this writer now knows how to make it. Here and there some clarity still intrudes, but with practice he might attain complete ambiguity.

The sentence bulges with some of the more prevalent catchwords of our time. Catchwords conveniently tag complex events, movements, and ideas and glue together whatever transient community of discourse we now enjoy. They make ambiguity speakable and conversation possible.

It is no exaggeration to say, as the sociologists Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger have said, that it is through our words spoken to one another that we create and maintain the structure of the world in which we live. Man's world is words, and more and more we create our world with catchwords.

Around the punchbowl all gravely nod when the lesson of Vietnam is invoked. The gentleman to my right thinks "No more wars without the will to win them." The man to my left thinks "No more wars against popular movements of national liberation." The man behind me thinks "No more wars for Gooks against Gooks" and pushes his punch cup roughly past mine. Each codes the catchword differently, yet all are agreed there was a lesson of Vietnam. Somewhere.

Watergate is intoned and all breathe a sigh of relief. We are all survivors and bear common wounds. One thinks it was the direst threat to constitutional government in modern times, a second thinks it was indeed bad for the Republican party, and a third thinks it was, of course, the inevitable collision of America's political unrealism with its self-righteous press. Yet all are agreed that Watergate must be put behind us. Somewhere.

Catchwords tend to fall into predictable patterns and finally someone blurs out Nixon. Everyone grimaces as if the punch had suddenly turned to vinegar. The name above every name that will name this decade has become a catchword too. Nixon alternately means martyr or moral leper, victim or villain, the tragic fall of all that is good in America or the pathetic self-destruction of a monstrous aberration. Yet all are agreed that Nixon now belongs to the ages. Somewhere.

As I turn from the punchbowl toward the chip dip, I enter a new conversation and a new social construction of reality. I hear:

The new vocationalism in American higher education is pushing colleges and universities back to the basics with a greater sense of accountability, while inflation and the tax revolt are prodding them toward a new concern for the bottom line in cost effectiveness.

But I am disinclined to talk shop and I move on. As I glide by the chip dip toward the cauliflower and mayonnaise, I am oddly inclined to give catchwords two cheers for the good they do us. They partially penetrate the boom and buzz of our time and at least temporarily focus our attention. They lubricate our conversation so we can talk to one another without immediately falling on each other in anger. They offer the necessary slippage in our social discourse which permits us to remain connected with one another while we are differing with one another. They are, in a sense, part of the language of diplomacy for ordinary men. One must not be too clear too soon.

Later, perhaps in private negotiations, we may move beyond catchwords toward precise and personal meanings. Your objection to sex and violence in the media refers to Pretty Baby and Blue Collar, films she admires, while her objection to the same sex and violence in the media refers to the Dallas Cowboys and their Cowgirls in spangled panties, a seasonal TV fix you cannot go without. She discovers your neo-conservatism means going back to the 1950s while you discover her neo-conservatism means going forward to freedoms from government which Americans have not enjoyed in this century. True, both of you are going back to nature, but you mean outings into the wilderness as an aesthetic object which, in fact, only civilization could bring into focus for such contemplation, while her going back to nature means taking off her make-up and bra. Moving beyond the catchwords, you may yet find you have some common ground—but it is likely narrower than you thought it would be. Yet, most would agree that catchwords provide the controlled ambiguity necessary before there can be clarity. We must, as it were, stand on something before we can understand anything. Catchwords are the "common places" where we can stand together.

I have reached the cauliflower and mayonnaise. There among the vegetables and salad dressings I hear that the new cold war and the old neo-colonialism of the multi-national corporations are pushing the Third World to the brink. But over by the steak tartare is blood. There several confessed moderates and triumphant conservatives are debating whether Old Missouri should learn the New Hermeneutic. Now there I might learn something, even if one must eat raw meat.

One takes his chances. Not every conversation moves beyond catchwords. They get two cheers, not three. Catchwords over-simplify, conceal more than they reveal, and rapidly degenerate into slogans. But they can be the beginning of understanding if they are not mistaken for the end of understanding.

September, 1978
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

Tennyson's words tell of an inevitability in life and institutions. They are applicable to the *Cresset* as well.

The publisher of this journal is the President of Valparaiso University. Having reached the mandatory retirement age for administrators in 1978, I shall conclude my ten-year presidency and my seventeen years of administrative responsibilities at this institution of learning on August 1. It has been a great privilege to serve the University and to help it grow and mature. When I step down as President, I also relinquish the role of publisher of the *Cresset*. That duty has been a most interesting and instructive avocation.

The new President of the University and new publisher of the *Cresset* is Dr. Robert V. Schnabel, former Vice President for Academic Affairs at Wartburg College, former President at Concordia College, Bronxville, New York, former Dean at what once was Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Dr. Schnabel is deeply committed to the liberal arts and the Lutheran tradition of higher education. His interests academic and intellectual are broad and diverse. He appreciates the power and purpose of the written word. He will make a good President and a good publisher.

Along with a new publisher the *Cresset* has a new editor. Dr. Kenneth Korby, who served as editor since 1972, has asked to be relieved of that duty. He provided good guidance and thoughtful comments to the various issues of the *Cresset*. The magazine has been interesting and informative. The numerous special reprints of articles under his editorship have made it even better known than in the past. We are grateful for his contributions to the development of the publication.

As one of my last presidential appointments, I have asked Dr. Richard Lee of the Christ College faculty at Valparaiso University to take up the editorial reins. Long time *Cresset* readers will remember that Dr. Lee served as editor from 1969 to 1972 and did exceedingly well at the job. The *Cresset* is fortunate to have him back. We may expect some provocative, insightful, and valuable editorials, as well as very readable articles.

I am confident *Cresset* readers will welcome and support the efforts of the new publisher and the new editor. The *Cresset* continues to fill a clear need in that realm of higher education which is marked by Christian commitment. It provides an opportunity for significant commentary on developments in literature, public affairs, and the arts, always seeking to interpret the passing scene by the standards of the eternal verities.

The old order must change. But the new I am sure will remain identified with what my predecessor, the late Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, called noble learning and high religion. For that venture we can all join in wishing the new publisher and the new editor much satisfaction and blessing as they make the *Cresset* serve Him who is the source of all wisdom in even richer measure.

A. G. Huegli