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The Publisher and Editor of the Cresset welcome the contributions to this issue of Provost Longin, Dean Broker, Provost Bennett and Vice President Berberet, from the Associated New American Colleges, with particular thanks to Provost Longin for his work in editing these essays. Readers who wish to make copies for further distribution and discussion are encouraged to request permission from the Editor.

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Better Out Here?

This summer, during a trip through the western part of the country, I picked up one of those cards that sit on restaurant tables and stuck it in my purse to think about later. It has remained there until today, and so have the questions that prompted me to carry it off. Asserting that its food is not only flavorful but wholesome, the management assures me that the food "stands for the same values as the new West: Hearty. Substantial. Authentic. Honest. Wholesome."

Then, as if that hadn't given you enough to think about, the clincher: "It really is better out here." (Italics theirs.)

I was never taught how to document a table top flyer in an approved MLA style, though I am certain that Ms. Turabian would come through if requested. Nevertheless, I assure you that I am not making this up. The flyer is before me as I write, though some of the other things have not yet made it out of my purse. One might, of course, use the opportunity to comment on advertising, and the way corporations attempt to put an image of themselves in front of the public that does not correspond very exactly to the actuality of the corporate environment. One doubts, for example, that Michael Eisner welcomes pint-sized visitors to his office with the bouncy out-stretched white-gloved hand that we are asked to believe really represents Disney Inc.

So, given the fact that the roast beef chain probably does not serve vittles rustled up on the open range by Old Cookie out of the back of his battered chuckwagon, what could it mean that, noshing on our sandwich on the windswept interstate environs of Madison, Wisconsin, we are asked to believe that we are sinking our teeth into evidence that "it really is better out here"? Meaning, no doubt, west of the Pecos—if not the Buffalo, the Fox or the Little Calumet. It appears that we have entered Metaphor Land.

The tourist attraction movie set known as Old Tucson burned to the ground last winter, but there's God's own plenty of false-fronted flim-flam about the West to take up any slack. We hardly need it pointed out to us any more that the myth of the cowboy is a myth—powerful, evocative, meaningful, attractive and ambiguous, just the way a myth ought to be. What's surprising is the extent to which the myth, and all its accompanying flummery, seems to be making an impact on real affairs in our nation. Even in the West, they seem to believe that the adjectives Hearty, Substantial, Authentic, Honest, and Wholesome identify something more than a roast beef sandwich.

Noble and pure-hearted, the solitary citizen hitches up his jeans getting ready to defend what's his against all comers. Line em up; any number can play. The bad guys can be them savages, or hired gunslingers, ruthless cattlemen, Eastern bankers, Japanese investors, bureaucracy, terrorists, religious fanatics, federal government, eco-nuts, femi-nazis—anybody I can cast in the role of opponent.

We've all read about the militia types, the groups of survivalists, the supremacists of one sort or another coalescing in the West. In some ways this is not surprising, for where the West encourages a fantasy belief about itself, groups that thrive on fantasy will no doubt be attracted. It remains to be seen just how great a percentage of these crazies the body politic can tolerate before the infection begins to corrupt healthy life. So far, though, the purists are a manageable minority.

More sinister than these few lone souls playing out the dream of rugged self-sufficiency in the high plains of the real West is the currency given to the myth for actual decision making in what one is still courageous enough to call the real world. Living in an imaginary West, today's ordinary citizen is encouraged to see himself living in the myth itself. Riding the range in Hoffman Estates, stringing fence in Shaker Heights. Alone and proud. We could smile if it were not that one of the components of this tendency is not only to believe in the malevolence of the bad guys, but to believe even more fervently in one's own righteousness. Hearty, Substantial, Authentic, Honest and Wholesome. The ring of wagons drawn into a circle gets smaller and smaller, as we embattled few experience the onslaught. More and more of "them," fewer and fewer we can call "us."

Calls for self-sufficiency, de-regulation, going it alone, getting off the grid, emptying the wagon of those who should be pushing—all these reach us with a distinctly western twang. Like John Wayne's signature vest, they show up everywhere. A lot of Westerners do genuinely believe that they are self-sufficient. Their clear-eyed gazes are sincere when they look at you and say, "A man's gotta do whadda man's gotta do." They really mean it when they demand that the government should get off their property, and let them do with it what seems best to them.

Speaking as a person born and bred out in the wide open spaces, I can testify to the true Westerner's sincerity, and to what often amounts to a lot of grit in living under difficult circumstances. But I don't know one of them who isn't glad to have the advantages of the federal system when the chips are down. Show me a rancher whose child is desperately ill, and I'll show you a father as eager as any of us would be to charge out onto the interstate to the nearest airport, where the FAA promises a clear pathway to a medical
center where the specialists (educated with federal loan programs) are using drugs and equipment whose standards are guaranteed to be safe by a federal bureaucracy regulating away like crazy.

Our trouble comes when the imaginary cowboy in all of us is invoked by some snakeoil pitchman from, say, Georgia, urging us to believe that each of us can and should squint off into the sunset, grit our teeth and make it on our own. Even if our part of the range happens to be in northern Minnesota, or central Missouri, or upper New York State, this hustler plays on our yearning to be part of the myth. All of us imaginary cowboys want to believe—at some level—that we could make it alone.

Such a belief is mistaken. And given its wide currency, dangerous for all of us. The sandwich company (whose headquarters are, by the way, in Atlanta) can mess around with the slogans and it really doesn’t matter much. We allow for a little exaggeration in the fast food game. We’d all pretty much know how much to believe when, in order to sell us a sandwich, somebody tells us that the new West is Hearty, Substantial, Authentic, Honest and Wholesome. Uh-huh. Let’s apply a little of that same skepticism the next time we hear that poor people will be just fine once they’re encouraged out of the wagon. Or that national parks will be much better when landowners have put them to productive use. Or that public education will improve when it competes for funding with private enterprise.

I guess you couldn’t deny that the pitch might possibly rate a Hearty and Substantial. But I wouldn’t mistake it for Authentic, Honest or Wholesome. Nope.

About this issue

With this issue, we begin to demonstrate some of the changes for The Cresset. You may have noticed a different arrival date, which, we would hasten to assure you, is intentional. Our publication schedule has been shifted to about every six weeks, and, to indicate some continuity with and awareness of the ancient connection between academic year and liturgical calendar, we have titled our seven issues Michaelmas, Reformation, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Trinity, or, approximately September 15, November 1, December 15, February 1, March 15, May 1, June 15. We should save some money on postage with fewer issues, though this projection will depend somewhat on decisions out of our hands.

One thing that will not change is our belief that there is some space in the world of magazines for one that expects its readers to read. We have not instructed our writers to write shorter, and you will find, when you open these pages, that we will still be publishing pieces that are long, especially by current journalistic standards. An example is the three-part article beginning on page 6, dealing with the thorny issues of changes in contemporary higher education and its demands on faculty. This is not bumper sticker material. It is complex, it takes some ground-clearing, some foundation-laying, some patience and attention. When the members of the Association of New American Colleges considered how to make their thinking on these issues more widely available to a public that is specific enough to care about them, but not so specialized as to be the equivalent of preaching to the choir, they were delighted to find The Cresset on their doorstep. And we were delighted to oblige. Your responses will no doubt be welcomed, addressed to the Editor, to be forwarded to authors Longin, Broker, Bennett and Berberet.

We have also determined to be more intentionally involved with issues in the arts. William Wisner’s article on three artists of the Texas border reflects not only his interests, but a natural fit for The Cresset. Wisner discerns the religious dimensions in these artists’ work and delineates these in a way particularly appropriate here. What is also appropriate, and very difficult to achieve, is the high quality of attention and writing undertaken by the general writer for the general audience. But if it is rare, that quality is also called on, and to some extent, becomes the subject of David Yamada’s piece on study abroad. The question is, how do we live, and think, and perceive, and experience—as persons, not as experts or technicians? A question harder and harder to answer, but worth the attention it gets here. And, as usual, poetry may address it better than any other form, which the examples herein serve to illustrate.

Our columnists are a noble band, working for peanuts and faithful anyway. The Editor is always gratified to hear from readers who have favorites, and tell us that they always turn first to read Combs, or Barton, or Vandersee, or Jais-Mick (and you others, too, of course). They are joined this month, and for many months to come, we hope, by Robert Benne, who will contribute to the column called The Nation. A distinguished teacher and writer, Professor Benne’s insight and good sense adds immeasurably to The Cresset’s excellences, and we are pleased to welcome his presence among us in this form. Our colleague Jim Bachman’s Reformation homily further strengthens our Lutheran outlook.

Looking ahead, the issue for December will include notices of special books, but one ought to be mentioned early, so that you can order it up. It is called There Is A Season, by Joan Chittister, with artwork by John August Swanson. So that you know I’m serious about this recommendation, the publisher is Orbis, and the ISBN is 1-57075-022X. More later.

"Some names we will never know or speak; some lives we will never live," Diane Scholl asserts. And Jack Ledbetter responds, "I had nothing to do. . .but remember." Awareness of absence and distance makes me the more grateful for these pages, in which names and lives are shared, even remembered, by those who will never actually be in each other’s presence.

Peace, GME
Family History

These parish records are a sea of words, the sailing screen
a sacred script.
Their coded message in microfilm is indecipherable;
Like the tree of life in the Norse fable,
Mosaic of lives lived and lost.
They delight me with their palpable proof;
They are remote from me in their calm austerity, their old
world scorn.
The past they close off at the end of each Christian year is
irretrievable, a lost ark.
Some names will never be found in their absolute boundaries.
Another blind alley, the end of the reel.
Another day lost.

Some names we will never know or speak; some lives we will
never live.
The past is over with its room for speculation, sealed,
And the lives we live are not the ones we fashioned for
ourselves.
The sheer surprise, the thrill of it, sharpened by
disappointment!
Outside in the shadowy summer afternoon advancing into
autumn,
The air is spectral, vague with memories,
Solid in its grief and terror, honor and grace.

Diane Scholl
Editor's Foreword

The last five years have seen a growing awareness in the higher education community of the need to rethink, or at least describe anew, the elements of faculty work, as well as the need to re-prioritize the traditional components of the workload paradigm—teaching, scholarship and service—if not to replace it altogether. Indeed, much of the public debate around accountability has focused on the question: what is it that faculty do?...or, more pointedly, why don't senior faculty teach undergraduates any longer? At the same time, major studies of faculty attitudes demonstrate a growing sense of unease, even dissatisfaction, among faculty members over the loss of a sense of community and the declining stature of higher education among the general public. All this, even as the same studies show that most faculty members prefer teaching over research among their work priorities, and that the greater share of faculty believe their workload has increased significantly in the past twenty-five years.

In the three essays which follow, the authors will not debate the "faculty workload" issue—much as they would like. Rather, they will suggest several ways in which the comprehensive college—"the New American College" as it is referred to by Ernest Boyer—appears to be both a fruitful laboratory for analyzing the faculty workload issue and an equally productive environment for clarifying, nurturing and enhancing the critical work that faculty members in all colleges and universities are performing or need to perform as higher education approaches a new century. Emphasizing the latter theme, the authors strive to give substance to general observations on the role and status of faculty in comprehensive colleges by providing specific examples of practices and programs drawn from their own institutional experiences. Although such brief and limited observations would not lead one to make conclusive claims, they certainly portray the professoriate and the academy in more dynamic, promising and hopeful terms than do most contemporary commentators on higher education. Such optimism may not be pervasive in the academy today, but these authors—and their New American College colleagues—are increasingly convinced that the seeds of a highly productive educational future have been and are being sown in comprehensive colleges across America, and that this is "the rest of the story" that students and parents alike need to recognize and understand.

—Thomas C. Longin, Guest Editor

I. Faculty Development in the New American College: Sustaining Excellence in the Learning Community

The New American College

Only in the middle 70s did close observers of higher education begin to recognize that the attributes of a collegiate environment which seemed most supportive of student development (the "new" student of the post-Vietnam era), most conducive to integrating traditional academic learning with the imperatives of professional or occupational preparation, best suited to preparing students for full participation in a complex, often overwhelming social order, and most likely to remain accessible to large numbers of students from diverse backgrounds and with varied levels of school preparation and personal motivation were those most fully manifested by the rapidly growing comprehensive colleges, colleges fast becoming, as Ernest Boyer later titled them—NEW AMERICAN COLLEGES.

As interesting as this emerging observation was, a haunting question remained: were these comprehensive...
colleges mere educational "catch-alls," the fortunate beneficiaries of a burgeoning (briefly, as we now recognize) student population whose numbers, needs and desires could not be fully met by the traditional universities and liberal arts colleges, or were they truly a more substantive, more contemporary American response to the educational needs of a rapidly changing society, economy and world? Given the responsiveness of most comprehensives to local and regional needs for a better educated, better trained workforce, and the degree of security they seemed to offer many parents and students in response to the double-edged question of preparation for life in a changing world and preparation for work in a highly competitive marketplace, the latter response seemed more accurate, though the former has never been fully discarded.

By the early 90s a clearer understanding of the identity and status of comprehensive colleges nationally (at least the "independents"), and of their growing significance in the galaxy of American colleges and universities emerged for me from two unrelated personal activities. Ithaca College's 1992 celebration of 100 years of history gave a freshness and vitality to the meaning of the conservatory heritage upon which it was built, a heritage of blending theory, practice and performance to achieve pedagogical excellence. Similarly, in July of that year, I immersed myself in the knowledge and experience of nine "comprehensive college" colleagues who shared a sense of frustration with our Carnegie-imposed classification but also found inspiration in our accomplishments and in the challenge which lay before us: the need to clarify identity, to specify our marks of excellence, and to apply both to our teaching and learning... whether of students or faculty. Who or what, then, are these "New American Colleges"?

- **Comprehensive colleges** are primarily undergraduate, teaching institutions with an emphasis on skillful, sensitive teaching, active learning, and a personalized pedagogy. Characteristically, faculty in these New American Colleges exhibit growing pride in their status as teacher-scholars and manifest an emerging appreciation for the distinctive and productive nature of the comprehensive college experience.

- **Comprehensive college education** is grounded in the liberal arts tradition but is rich in its range of programs (majors, minors, multi- and inter-disciplinary opportunities, experiential learning, and co- and extra-curricular activities).

- **Comprehensive colleges** consciously and proudly strive to blend liberal and professional studies, undergraduate and graduate professional education (mostly at the master's level) and academic and experiential learning.

- **Comprehensive colleges** are dedicated to a more holistic approach to education, attending to the development of the whole person.

- **Comprehensive colleges** generally manifest a greater recognition of the need for and a growing commitment to the value of shared governance.

- **Comprehensive college education** focuses directly on social values, and on interaction with and service to the community, both local and global.

When challenged to identify the "marks of distinction" from among the above list of attributes, the following seem most appropriate:

- **Excellent teaching** active, engaging pedagogy...integration of theory, practice and performance...small classes, low student-faculty ratio, and greater opportunity for faculty-student interaction.

- **Blended learning experience** blend of liberal and professional studies...blend of traditional academic, experiential, extra-curricular experiences...student as a more active learner, better prepared for the world of work, and more conscious of and practiced at citizenship.

- **Collegiate model** emphasis on integration of courses, curricular and living experiences rather than on specialization...more focus on student-faculty collaboration, on faculty colleagueship across disciplines and schools, and on a mode of governance which emphasizes sharing, cooperation and community.

**Faculty Responsibilities: A Changing Landscape**

Characterization of the comprehensive college and identification of several marks of excellence lead almost naturally in faculty circles to questions about the faculty responsibilities and day-to-day workload which are distinctive of comprehensive colleges. For clarity's sake, I would urge a reorientation of the workload question away from instructional "load" itself and toward the changing nature of faculty responsibilities in comprehensive colleges and universities. I would strongly suggest that we begin the "unbundling" of faculty work from its traditional paradigm—teaching, scholarship, service—so that we might unfold a fresh perspective on what faculty, as professionals, do in comprehensive colleges. I would argue not that the load has increased significantly but that the range of duties and the priority given several of those duties have changed perceptibly in recent years. Simply put, expectations are clearer, not necessarily greater, especially in the comprehensive college, and probably in all of higher education.
Today, we expect faculty to manifest teaching excellence, a kind of teaching which can no longer be limited to the transmission of knowledge and cultural values to an exclusive, elite group of college-bound 18- to 22-year-olds. Excellent teaching now encompasses both knowing and loving your "discipline" and understanding human nature and learning theory so that you can develop stimulating and attractive courses and create an active learning environment. At the same time, it means loving, or at least liking, students enough so that you see their total development as persons and emerging professionals as no less important than mastery of the academic content one offers. In addition, excellent teaching means not only teaching well, but also advising sensitively and nurturing personal development in diverse ways. When considering these changes, we must not forget that the number and range of students has increased, the social moorings of these students are less dependable and less well-defined, and societal expectations of higher education institutions have changed substantially. Add to all of this the effects of "professionalizing" teaching on one hand (i.e., the emergence of formal standards; emphasis on precisely articulated goals, methods and outcomes; greater use of technology and less reliance—unhappily—on traditional communication skills; and formal evaluation or assessment at every turn), and the effects of "consumerism" on the other (i.e., marketing an ever-growing product line or catalog of majors; a mentality which says "the consumer—whether parent or student—is always right," an emphasis on ever-expanding services combined with a perceived inability to demand intellectual rigor; and the perception of a rising "importance" for student evaluations in personnel decisions). In the final analysis, the "changing" face of teaching can be overwhelming.

Change, as it relates to faculty responsibility, has not been so dramatic in the area of scholarship, but it has been significant nonetheless, especially for comprehensive college faculty. Twenty years ago, one thought of scholarship as published research, either books or articles, or world class performance. And, very few colleges outside the realm of major research universities expected much in the way of such "productivity"—certainly not the teachers' colleges, none but the most selective (and highly endowed) liberal arts colleges, and surely not the technical institutes or junior colleges. Today, the meaning of scholarship, especially in comprehensive and liberal arts colleges, has expanded to include the publication of textbooks; creative literary production—either prose or poetry; productive pedagogical activity which is shared with peers in workshop formats as well as in written form; synthetic and interpretive monographs which make cutting-edge knowledge more accessible to the public; creative applications of computer technology to both teaching and research; artistic performances, productions or exhibitions; and the development/enhancement of clinical techniques which may be shared with students, peers or the profession through the printed word or workshops. And beyond teaching and scholarship lies that ill-defined third leg of the workload paradigm: service. No longer satisfied with automatically counting consulting or voluntary "service" on corporate or civic boards as the primary manifestations of service, comprehensive colleges have increasingly gathered such diverse functions as advising, student recruitment, internship supervision, and governance under this heading. At this stage, few are satisfied with this convenient but unsystematic resolution, but no conclusive characterization has yet emerged.

In short, the responsibilities of faculty members—especially those in comprehensive colleges—are different today than they were 25 years ago, both in nature and emphasis. To focus our discussion about "faculty workload" only or primarily on instructional load is, therefore, confining and mistaken. But such an emphasis is not surprising given the increased public attention teaching, advising and mentoring have received in the last ten years. And, with this increased emphasis on teaching has come a significant, though certainly not equal, interest in and support of faculty development programs, especially ones which focus more on supporting the instructional role of faculty.

A Faculty Development Program

An outstanding faculty development program can be a powerful instrument for achievement of the strategic goals most crucial to the academic mission of a college or university. A mission-sensitive faculty development program should help to orient faculty, to bring them together in discourse about goals and methods directed toward excellence in teaching and learning, and to provide support for integrative/collaborative curricular, pedagogical, scholarly and governance activities. Ithaca College has long been blessed with a multi-faceted faculty development program, backed by strong financial and organizational support. Using some of Ithaca's thinking, practices and programs, I will strive to outline what could be a purposeful model for faculty development programs at colleges or universities generally, but particularly at comprehensive colleges/universities.

A distinctive underlying feature of the Ithaca College faculty development program is the College's pervasive commitment to independent yet cooperative student research, artistic performance, and experiential learning. The performance tradition pervades all that students and faculty engage in at Ithaca because the College was founded over a century ago as a conservatory of music. Today, it continues to foster outstanding musical performance, and that tradition has significantly influenced an ever-broadening range of academic programs: a nationally-
noted theater program with some 300 performance students; the Park School of Communications, with both performance and production emphases in radio, television, film, photography and journalism; and the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance, with model clinical programs in several areas of health science and human fitness. Even in the liberal arts, the sciences in particular are research-intensive for undergraduates, and the humanities and social sciences have become increasingly committed to social service and other community-based experiential learning. Indicative of this performance focus, Ithaca rated seventeenth overall in a recent CUR ranking of “research intensive” undergraduate institutions, including the so-called “Oberlin Fifty.”

Just as performance takes many forms at Ithaca, faculty must demonstrate all of the styles of scholarship recently described by Boyer: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The faculty must be able to innovate in the development of courses and curriculum; teach superbly in the classroom and in a wide range of less traditional settings; conduct personal study, research, or performance in order to sustain personal skills; and maintain mastery of the “cutting edge” in their disciplines in order to oversee student research, artistic productions, and clinical practice. In sum, the culture and structure of a comprehensive college is arguably a favorable setting for the fulfillment of all facets of a teacher-scholar’s professional life. Success, however, must be continually energized and nurtured by a conscious and purposeful faculty development program.

How to focus this effort has been a chronic but constructive issue at Ithaca, as at most colleges. Most recently, however, the College’s strategic planning process identified three guiding principles for the institution: pursuit of excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning; the primacy of teaching among all duties and responsibilities; and the need to enhance the institution’s sense of community. In the College’s faculty development programs, we found it useful to group the several components to reflect the strategic goals. A number of existing faculty development activities fell comfortably into the first category—faculty development efforts in support of career-long excellence: new faculty orientation, new faculty workshops, the internal grants program, a reassigned time program, a Faculty Resource Guide, annual grants writing workshop, a sabbatical program, and the Dana Fellows program. In all of these activities, a holistic view of excellence was reinforced by providing balanced support for and recognition of both teaching and scholarship.

Focusing next on the second strategic priority, several existing activities were seen to contribute directly to the improvement of teaching. Most of the program components listed above fell into this category as well because they are used flexibly to support curricular innovation, guidance of students, and improved classroom teaching. For example, reassigned time awards allow faculty members to spend one-eighth of yearly assigned instructional time on curriculum development, enhancement of pedagogy, or individual scholarly projects. At least half of these projects are typically directed toward improvement of courses, development of new curricular areas, or pedagogical change or adaptation.

Among the more specialized programs available for direct support of classroom teaching, the most remarkable for a comprehensive college campus is the Teaching Improvement Program. For 25 years the College has employed a director of instructional development and assessment, half of whose time each year is committed to doing formative classroom evaluation of teaching. These services have been used by both new faculty members who feel they need assistance in developing effective classroom strategies to ensure active student learning, and by senior faculty who seek to assess their teaching for purposes of continuous improvement or to assess courses in which they have made significant changes. Other examples of support for the primacy of teaching include a luncheon discussion series called “Let’s Talk Teaching”; a Teaching Resource Library; “Tips on Teaching,” a newsletter published several times a year to highlight teaching improvement efforts; and periodic workshops featuring major national consultants on such topics as cooperative learning, assessment, writing across the curriculum, and uses of new technology in all curricular areas.

Because the College’s third strategic priority focuses on the enhancement of community, the Faculty Development Committee chose to focus its current energies on the enhancement of teaching, colleagueship and communal life. In a college setting, learning is itself a communal activity, and experience shows that almost any shared discussion about pedagogy or interdisciplinary curriculum has an invigorating effect upon faculty. In its attempt to enhance community, the Committee has sponsored a variety of such activities: the bi-monthly Faculty Colloquium Series, where both ongoing research and current pedagogy are presented; support for participation in off-campus faculty workshops with later feedback to the campus; and the increasingly popular Spring Faculty Conference. This latter gathering has taken various forms: three years ago, 120 faculty volunteered to spend two days exploring “Multiculturalism in the Curriculum” led by Dr. Judith Renyi, director of national curriculum projects for the Rockefeller Foundation. More typically, the Conference is a day of seminar presentations featuring the outcomes of faculty research and pedagogical innovation (all supported by internal grants), followed by a reception to honor all recipients of teaching or research awards throughout the year.

More recent community-oriented initiatives have included: a minority student mentoring program; a coop-
erative learning support group; and a technology innovation group. In the mentoring program, experienced faculty are paired with students of color to provide support and encouragement both inside and outside the classroom. The program expands the network of "significant others" for the student and provides a vehicle for educating faculty members about the campus climate as minority students experience it. The cooperative learning initiative is a "support group" composed of faculty from several schools of the College who are interested in cooperative learning as a pedagogical style. Led by a professor from the School of Business, who also chairs the Faculty Development Committee, the group has sponsored workshops by national experts on collaborative learning. This group has been of particular importance at Ithaca because the new general education requirements in the School of Humanities & Sciences include freshman seminars that integrate academic and transition-to-college materials, stress collaborative problem solving and emphasize themes related to the individual in various "community" settings.

The final initiative focuses on innovative instructional uses of technology. This group now has 60 members from all of the five schools of the College, who share software and pedagogical expertise in computer applications in order to expand the use of computer-assisted instruction across campus. The members of the group are themselves an electronic community (using the Internet and local networks), and have collaborated in the development of software for use in the classroom. For instance, a physicist, a perceptual psychologist, and a speech pathologist have developed instructional software for the analysis and diagnosis of speech which speech pathology students use in their clinical studies.

In the final analysis, then, whether one views faculty development from the perspective of the theme for the January 1995 AAHE conference—from "my work to our work"—or from the perspective of a New American College, a faculty development program must both undergird and nurture the quest for both professional excellence and a vital spirit of community among the teacher-scholars who form the core of the college or university. Just as a well-designed faculty development program is an essential instrument in the pursuit of strategic goals, a clearly focused faculty development program is essential to transforming my work to our work...and assuring the faculty member's transition from discipline-focused individualist to student-focused professional in an active, engaging learning community.  

Thomas C. Longin

II. Service as Knowledge Applied: A New American College Model

There is much evidence today of faculty dissatisfaction. At issue may be more the overall character of the calling, rather than the specific circumstances of pay, work load or size of the office. Directing a special national project on faculty work and rewards, Clara Lovett reported of the many campuses she visited several years ago that "at every type of institution, faculty express a longing for an older and spiritually richer academic culture, one that placed greater value on the education of students and on the public responsibility of scholars, one that nurtured community and collegiality instead of promoting competition for resources and prestige."

In the larger context, there are many indications that the future will bring lessened, not increased, independence of institutions from society. The battle for resources alone almost guarantees that competition between and among individuals and institutions will likely grow. Accordingly, we need to see ways in which the professoriate can find fulfillment in a work setting that does not emphasize or often permit the traditional distancing of the campus from society that many faculty in the traditional liberal arts institutions may still enjoy. And there is indication that those in research institutions are already sufficiently distant from their institutional colleagues that the rewards of the close-knit collegium are simply not available to them—a situation not likely to change. By contrast, faculty in the New American College should enjoy the structural benefits potentially available through its middle way.

In addition to organizational considerations, the New American College model may well provide a more congenial concept of the "product" of the professoriate—not the production of knowledge typical of the research institution, nor the concept of learning simply for itself, as typical of many in the traditional liberal arts college. Rather, the New American College model suggests that service to society is the extension of the notion that learning and knowledge are to be used. That is, part of the enjoyment connected with the cultivation and acquisition of knowledge rests in its application. As an institution that meets at least some of the marks of the New American College model, Quinnipiac College offers promise in these respects. At the undergraduate level, Quinnipiac College is organized into three schools (liberal arts, business, and health sciences). Each school contains a mix of "pure" and "applied" disciplines and departments. Since much work between and among faculty is done at the school level, the concept of the application of knowledge rather than its pursuit for its own sake is built directly into the organizational arrangement.

Assessment of faculty is traditionally based on the three pillars of scholarship, teaching, and service. Of the three, the third is often the most difficult to measure and
yet, it is also important in setting the New American College apart from other institutions. The concept of service has been defined by Boyer as the "scholarship of application." This approach joins faculty and students in common endeavors and stresses "connections between faculty and students; connections between the classroom and campus life and connections between the campus and the larger world." Jerry Berberet and Frank Wong articulated a further view of the importance of service in a recent issue of Liberal Education—"the essence of the New American College model of liberal learning is a blending of knowledge and experience in ways particularly suited to society's needs in the 1990s." The promise of the New American College is the development of faculty self-understandings that extend beyond the traditional academic roles and beyond an exclusive focus on disciplinary expertise.

The concept of service may be found at many different levels within a New American College. It exists within curricula, is manifested in departmental and individual faculty activities, is a key component of student-life initiatives, and is usually inherent in the governance structure or mission of the institution. While many of the New American Colleges are centered on a core of the traditional arts and sciences, the service mission has led them to programs with a professional orientation. The curricula of these programs seek to blend traditional disciplines and the professional components with actual application of concepts. Key to the academic offerings of the New American Colleges is the need (indeed requirement in many programs) for faculty to maintain competency in the field, to integrate theory and application, and to serve as role models for students. The faculty in the professional fields must present both professional and academic credentials, which results in the melding of practice and theory.

Using Quinnipiac as but one example of a New American College, one can easily point to many ways in which service has been incorporated into the academic offerings. The vast majority of degree programs either offer or require an internship or clinical affiliation as a means of integrating theory and practice. In addition, the College offers an honors program for lower division undergraduates that connects them directly with community activities together with the opportunity to provide service contributions.

Likewise, many departmental activities relate directly to this application of learning and knowledge. For instance, at Quinnipiac conferences are sponsored and organized by allied health programs which provide in-service opportunities to local and regional practitioners; faculty conduct numerous on-site workshops at internship locations; elder-law conferences have been hosted that address the topical issue of health care reform in the context of the U.S.'s aging population; accounting tax clinics are provided for professionals and income tax seminars for the public; the institutional satellite facility is used for area business conferences, which include faculty and students as participants; and there is in addition a wide array of forums on topical issues involving faculty, students and the general public. Recently, an economics professor and his students undertook a study of the economic impact of the local airport for the chamber of commerce.

Individual faculty seem to be attracted to an institution like Quinnipiac because of the opportunities that it provides for finding the kind of nourishment that Lovett indicates is in such rare supply today. Indeed, there are a number of individuals at Quinnipiac who in their teaching, scholarship, and service model the integration and application of knowledge. Faculty in the arts and sciences have for a number of years obtained state and federal funding for workshops for public school teachers in Connecticut. These workshops have included instruction in software for math and science and the creation of a library for this software. Other faculty have developed summer research programs, some designed for high school students and others for Quinnipiac students. In a number of instances the research projects have been interdisciplinary. Faculty-led organizations like Sigma Xi have assumed a major role in promoting and then recognizing undergraduate research. In other areas faculty have been very visible in the community. Examples include a respiratory therapist working with asthmatic children, the director of the gerontology program serving on state-level committees which deal with problems of the elderly, and an occupational therapist lending her expertise on matters associated with learning disabilities. The faculty service component has even taken the unique step of using diagnostic imaging equipment to examine a mummy for a library in Casenovia, N.Y., an activity in which students were full participants.

In addition to encouraging the personal and professional rewards to be found in the variety of activities we have designated as service, New American Colleges are looking for ways to measure and assess faculty performance in this area. Quinnipiac College is unusual since its faculty is unionized, but the faculty collective bargaining contract does permit, and in some sense even encourages, this crossover. In his recent article in The Department Chair, Jerry Berberet, in speaking of the New American College model, cites the need to develop "a reward system that acknowledges most generously 'make a difference' faculty contributions which benefit both the department and the institution as a whole."

Clark Kerr in many of his recent writings has lamented the decline of faculty service and citizenship. Other authors have even identified senior faculty as likely to be resident aliens as much as active participating citizens. The New American College concept does seem to offer hope as a model for a future in which the isolation so typical of faculty today as well as the increasing specialization of faculty
intellectual interests often associated with this isolation can be mitigated.

The goal of creating active, participating citizens is also a key focus of student life at New American Colleges. Jeanne Neff and Barbara Hetrick identified the significance of what they termed “service learning” and its importance in promoting the integration of curricular and co-curricular experiences and in fostering the connections among teaching, scholarship and service. At Quinnipiac the mission of student affairs is to create learning experiences designed to foster independent thinking, to develop communication skills and to experience decision-making. These goals are met through programs of specialized training for leaders and emerging leaders, through full student participation in a wide array of clubs and organizations, through community service activities both on- and off-campus, and through programs addressing issues of diversity. Students have the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts within their academic programs and also to develop critical skills and attributes through their student life experiences.

Finally, at New American Colleges the importance of service is reflected in the governance structures. Again, using the example of Quinnipiac College, the Board of Trustees has full voting members from the faculty and student body. In addition, students are an active, voting component of the College Senate. In matters pertaining to student government, Quinnipiac has a long tradition of significant autonomy. This latter approach is seen as bolstering the lessons for the classroom, furthering the co-curricular goals and establishing patterns of service which will persist beyond Quinnipiac.

As Derek Bok observes, higher education in earlier parts of this century has served our nation both in the enormous expansion of access to higher education and in the extraordinary fruitfulness of research conducted at higher educational institutions. In these respects it has been a prime instrument of national purpose. The challenge now before higher education, as Bok sees it, is to provide contributions of learning to today’s societal needs. The rehabilitation of cities, the reduction of teenage pregnancy and of drug use, confronting and arresting environmental degradation—these are several of the enormous challenges facing not only the quality of our life, but in many senses the future survival of humanity. Higher education has opportunities to contribute to the resolution of some of these issues. To do so, however, it needs to pay better attention to how it organizes itself. The New American College model can be not only a resource, but a provocative point of departure for an integrated yet expanding sense of service in the academic community.

Linda K. Broker
John B Bennett

III. The Renewal of a Tradition: A Faculty Culture

Adversarial faculty administration relationships cause angst which corrodes campus morale and limits the potential of American higher education at a time of growing public scrutiny. Like ships passing in the night, faculty and administrators have difficulty in communicating and cooperating effectively; often in dismay neither feel the academy is being well served. Although faculty-administrative differences occur regularly and seemingly as naturally as the tide on the sea of higher education, such differences can have devastating impacts when the winds of faculty-administration controversy reach hurricane force. This essay, of course, is not a call to control the storms of nature, but the institutional effects of administrative-faculty tensions conjure images of a sea of lost opportunities that higher education may no longer have the luxury to afford!

Indeed, a greater angst in the 90s than faculty-administrative tensions may be the academy’s deteriorating relationship with society. Alleviation of a variety of tensions could enable colleges and universities to respond more effectively to the challenges of our times, while making work more satisfying for those who toil in the halls of academia. By-products of global information-age developments affecting other sectors of society as well, these pressures are forcing higher education to adjust to an increasingly competitive era. The 90s show signs of being a less forgiving period regarding academic inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and self-centeredness than past decades may have been. On the one hand, the public’s current impatience with higher education’s perceived lack of accountability raises serious prospects for punitive measures history may judge not to have been in the long term best interest of either education or society, e.g., declines in federal and state funding, resistance to tuition increases, an end to the tenure system, reform of regional accreditation, and calls for greater governmental regulation (at least at the state level). On the other hand, other sectors—business, government, health care, the military—also feel the pinch of tightening resources and growing local to international competition whose central axioms are to cut overhead, increase quality, and customize products and services. Often at great pain, “becoming leaner” in other organizations has been achieved by eliminating middle management and reducing supervision through steps to make employees more “self managing.” As a consequence of these pressures, the 90s require some restructuring in higher education and a guiding vision or paradigm which incorporates new realities (See my article, “The New American College,” Perspectives, 1994).

Restructuring as a response to 90s pressures has at least three major implications for the issues raised in this essay. First, the learning process students experience is moving away from linear and top down transfer of informa-
tion from professor as authority figure to student as passive receiver toward a circular "learning by doing" process, consisting of theory, practice, performance, and reflection, in order to enhance learning outcomes. Moreover, learning is becoming more collaborative and problem-based with faculty serving as resources and co-learners. Second, the gatekeeping role of disciplines and departments as "knowledge bureaucracies" is experiencing deconstruction and reconstruction as theory becomes more systemically and pragmatically conceptualized and interdisciplinary programs, often with applied dimensions, are experiencing a revival. Indeed, our times pose challenges to all professions as we have known them, whether doctor, lawyer, educator, or politician. This is due to several factors, especially the electronic information revolution which has eroded the gatekeeping function of those who profess by widening access to expert knowledge. Survival during the 1990's and beyond will require intense focus on the needs and wishes of clients—client students in the case of the academy.

The pressure is on faculty to be professional practitioners—as well as theorists—of their expertise, thereby demonstrating that what they know has utility and increases the value of student learning. Finally, the shift from a more or less static content to processing and using knowledge in more synthetic and problem-solving ways finds analogy in the "learning organization" concept which Peter Senge proposed in his 1990 book, *The Fifth Discipline*, as a strategy to transform the workforce in a business corporation. The corporate challenge, Senge argues, is to engage employees in an ongoing "generative learning" process—in effect the collaborative liberation of human creativity and analytical potential in service of both personal advancement and the corporate bottom line. Applied to the academy, the learning organization becomes a learning community in which faculty and staff learning mirrors student learning and the spirit of learning pushes the development of a more collaborative organizational culture in the management of the institution.

Debilitating faculty-administrative conflict seems to be an inevitable outcome of differing perceptions of higher education's organizational culture. As William Bergquist argues in *The Four Cultures of the Academy* (1992), the college campus is not a single culture. Tensions inevitably arise with frustrating and demoralizing consequences when the collegial culture of faculty encounters the managerial culture of administrators. Unless these sub-cultural differences within the larger organizational culture are recognized, faculty and administration will continue to pass like ships in the night—a condition that may exact too high a price on the dangerous high seas of a restructuring 90s. What seems needed is a rethinking of top down administrative practices and the inward-looking preoccupations of the collegial culture.

The so-called New American College gives expression to Ernest Boyer's call for connected or well-integrated institutions in his 1987 book, *College*, and, in *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), for a pluralistic faculty scholarship responsive to teaching, learning, and community service as well as to research. Neither residential liberal arts colleges nor research universities—rather a hybrid of strengths of each—New American Colleges have frequently evolved from liberal arts college origins in economically and demographically dynamic suburban areas, fitting the older Carnegie classification as comprehensive institutions. Responsive to market circumstances and needs and wishes of student "customers," this emerging model of higher education is attuned to 90s rethinking and paradigm shifts, including implications of the learning organization metaphor and the necessity to develop a participatory faculty culture.

The foregoing developments frame the changing economic, communications, and consumer realities in the globally competitive environment of the 90s which place great pressure on traditional ways of governing, managing, teaching, and learning on college campuses. These pressures exacerbate the costs of a dysfunctional campus organizational culture, making reconciliation of Bergquist's managerial and collegial cultures seem essential. In this effort recognition, even reinforcement, of hallowed elements of the academic tradition seems crucial. The traditions of collegial community—academic freedom, unfettered scholarly inquiry, peer review, shared governance, and academic due process—represent a necessary foundation for intellectual integrity, participatory management, and fundamental fairness in campus processes. Farsighted administrators will resist temptations to join in faculty bashing, such as calling for the abolition of tenure, recognizing that tenure is a cornerstone in protecting such collegial traditions as part of an integrated organizational culture in the academy.

The problematic side of the collegial culture relates, perhaps, to its tendency toward an inward-looking, faculty-centered preoccupation with faculty rights and concerns at a time when reform elements within the academy are calling for student-centeredness and the "customer first" slogan reigns supreme in the business and service sectors. Such narrowness may be politically hazardous both for faculty and their institutions in the face of widespread questioning of faculty effectiveness and productivity. Moving to counter charges that tenure's primary effect is to protect job security, AAUP General Secretary, Mary Burgin, felt compelled to admit, "Tenure is the equivalent of welfare in the public mind." (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 23, 1995). Priorities of students, general education, their college, and society are important to faculty, of course, but tend to be filtered through a "faculty and discipline/department first" lens. Where indifference to responsibilities and loyalties beyond discipline and self do exist, they are often fostered by omission in graduate school and tend to be reinforced due to the isolation from...
colleagues and the larger institution that is imposed by the rigors of teaching and scholarship on the tenure track, a critical faculty socialization period with career-long implications.

The individualistic ideologies of academic freedom and professional privilege, augmented, perhaps, by the traditional American love affair with individualistic values, may condition a professorial self-righteousness ill-prepared for the challenges of institutional life and the managerial culture’s emphasis on students first, college-wide goals, canons of efficiency and productivity, performance assessment, and multiple demands for college and regional community service. Typically educated in settings which fostered individualism and competition, then made the near-absolute masters of their own classrooms and careers as teachers and professionals, it’s no wonder that faculty often feel ill-prepared for and frustrated with institutional processes and decision making that emphasize community values over individual power and control. Disillusionment with the realities of organizational life and the managerial culture’s seeming diminution of individual faculty significance—perhaps a reflection of both unrealistic expectations for participatory management and difficulties administrators have in adequately expressing appreciation for faculty contributions—cause feelings of such alienation and estrangement in some faculty that one author describes faculty culture as “a set of shared ways and views designed to make their [faculty] ills bearable and to contain their anxieties and uncertainties.” (Wm. G. Tierney and Robert A. Rhodes, Enhancing Promotion, Tenure and Beyond, 1995.)

A healthier faculty paradigm might borrow a page from the ecological world view which posits an interdependent “individual-in-community” relationship between person and society, rather than the separated, independent observer status fostered by ideologies of objective scholarship and scientific reductionism. David Orr suggests in Ecological Literacy (1992) that the organization of the campus itself—separated from the larger off-campus community and disconnected ecologically from the campus physical and biological environment which sustain it—encourages ivory tower attitudes. Consequently, faculty understanding and empathy for circumstances and interactions that cut across the collegial and managerial cultures, as well as those in the world off campus, may be both simplistic and lacking. Perhaps the impetus toward separation, if not retreat, from the world, allegedly to study it objectively and tidily—a hallmark, perhaps, of both the sanctuary ethos of the traditional liberal arts college and the model builders of the research university—contributes as well to adversarial faculty reactions when differences arise which run counter to either collegial or discipline cultures.

Rather than separation and division, the New American College organizational climate, because it promotes empowerment and collaboration at the intersections of college functions, appears to be promising ground for moving the collegial and managerial paradigms toward an integrated organizational culture. Writ large, the challenge is to take seriously the 90s “learning organization” imperative to learn how to function collaboratively as a “flat” organization. The jury is out, even for New American Colleges, for example, regarding how meaningfully administrations have engaged in rethinking shared governance or grappling with ingrained top down behavior. Unless faculty perceive a truly collaborative administrative style that they feel they can trust, they will be cautious regarding initiatives and risk taking on behalf of the institution.

Coupled with movement away from top down attitudes and structures, several other strategic actions seem essential in developing an integrated organizational culture. Streamlined faculty governance which balances decentralized departmental responsibilities and centralized decision making and provides communication and coordination throughout the institution will help to assure that faculty are well-informed and that campus-wide discussions of important issues occur in the ordinary course of things. In simplifying North Central’s faculty governance structure recently, for example, two levels of governance were eliminated and the “information item” was adopted as a mechanism for all but major program proposals going through the governance process. All items come to the meeting of the entire faculty as information and occasionally for debate and action. At any level an information item may be turned into an action item by majority vote, but this seldom happens because everyone has an opportunity to become informed and departments are obliged to circulate proposals widely for comment in their formative stages. The procedure is both efficient and empowering. A corollary to increasing faculty satisfaction with participation in institutional life is a performance evaluation system that encourages faculty to take charge of their careers as partners of the College. In redesigning North Central’s evaluation system, faculty self-evaluation was made the single most important piece of evidence and faculty are required to submit plans for short and long term teaching improvement, professional development, scholarship, and institutional citizenship. Student evaluations and colleague letters are also part of the evaluation, but the contribution of the faculty member being evaluated forms the basis for partnering with the College. This process also helps to assure that the faculty member becomes what Donald Schon (1987) calls a “reflective practitioner,” some­one who embodies the New American College learning model of theory, practice, performance, and reflection and is capable of ongoing professional development within the campus “learning organization.”

Mechanisms such as these go far toward achieving 90s imperatives to cut overhead, raise quality, and customize
products and services. They address a favorite strategy of the managerial literature which calls simultaneously for maintenance activities and continuous improvement. By successfully “eliminating middle management,” which I take to mean primarily bureaucratic procedures and unnecessary or low priority workload, such mechanisms allow for less supervision and more “self-managing” on the part of the faculty member. Almost as a footnote, institutions who take steps such as these to become better integrated should also be well positioned to make effective use of graphic user interface technology networks which connect the campus to the information superhighway and powerfully enhance the productive capacity of learning organizations. Another benefit should be an increased capacity for assessing what students have learned because the institution will have internalized performance standards as measures of quality and accountability.

When one considers the professorate in light of the common pressures of the nineties that other sectors and professions are also facing, the late Frank Wong’s metaphor of the “primary care professor” is compelling regarding what higher education most needs now (“Primary Care Education,” Perspectives, 1994). In a world of specialists unable to treat the whole patient or the whole student, we need the general practitioners and the faculty who can deal holistically with health care or academic planning, help gain access to specialists and specialized knowledge, and assist in analyzing the flood of divergent information patients and students encounter. One suspects that the self-managing, institutionally and globally connected, primary care professor will gain significant intrinsic rewards from this meaningful work, satisfying work being one of the greatest gifts an effective organizational culture can confer.

In summary, we have entered a brave new world which is rethinking, if not re-engineering, critical processes in many walks of life. Understanding what is truly worth hallowing about our academic traditions seems critical in order to assure that the baby stays and the bath water goes. New models are forming, notably the New American College institutional model and the collaborative, entrepreneurial, student-centered faculty model. The fate of these models, as well as efforts to develop well-integrated organizational cultures, deserves our closest attention.

William G. (Jerry) Berberet

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Tanka for the Platte River

When the moon rises
over the river etching
trees against the sky
Sand Hill Cranes stand in shallow
water small moons in their eyes.

J.T. Ledbetter
IN DEFENSE OF PURPOSEFUL SLACKERDOM: REFLECTIONS ON A SEMESTER ABROAD

David Yamada

It seems that every aspect of higher education is on the defensive these days, and foreign study programs are no exception. As federal, state, and university budget cuts threaten funding for such programs and students who want to attend them, some educators involved in the overseas study field have responded by writing about the need to toughen up academic standards, to offer more that caters to professional and career interests, and to better prepare students for tomorrow’s international economy.

One need not be a regular reader of educational periodicals to see these developments. A casual survey of the scope of foreign study programs and their promotional literature will convey the same message. A growing number of programs offer internship programs tied to a student’s career inclinations. Many brochures for foreign study programs emphasize that the coursework is academically challenging, an apparent recognition of the common criticism that overseas programs are too soft on their students. Foreign study, they add, will help students whose professional careers will be intertwined with the global nature of business and commerce.

Although I am an educator, I have never been professionally involved in study abroad programs. However, as someone who benefited tremendously from a college semester spent in England, I view this situation with sadness and concern. Don’t get me wrong: I’m all for quality learning experiences. Also, I understand that foreign study programs often have been treated like academic fifth wheels and that educators in the field are fighting for their legitimacy. It’s just that this particular call for rigor and accountability may badly undercut what overseas study programs do best, namely, giving bright, curious students a chance to explore the world and, in the process, discover something new about themselves, which, in the long term will enable them to make better use of their lives.

During the spring of 1981, I spent my final semester of college as a participant in Valparaiso University’s overseas study program in Cambridge, England. (We were administratively dubbed “C-27,” i.e., the 27th group of VU students in Cambridge, and I will use that bureaucratic moniker here.) I have often said that the life I want to live started with my semester overseas. Perhaps my personal experiences offer a response to some of the current cries for “quality” in study abroad programs.

As a prelude, I should attempt to place the VU program in some educational perspective. Although study abroad has been a part of American higher education since colonial times, it was not until after World War II that it became a more popular offering outside its traditional base of elite Eastern liberal arts colleges. America’s newly preeminent role in the world community helped to infuse higher education with a greater sense of global awareness. One manifestation of this was a steady growth of foreign study programs at colleges and universities across the country. VU’s Cambridge program, founded in 1967, was part of that national expansion.

Study abroad programs vary greatly in structure. Some educators believe that the only “legitimate” study abroad experience is to place a student in an indigenous university for an academic year, away from any concentration of other Americans. This way, the individual can fully experience life as a student in another culture. One research study sponsored by The Institute for International Education (IIE) labels this the “total immersion” approach.

A less favored, yet very common practice is that of American universities setting up their own “enclave” study centers overseas. The IIE study chides this scheme as “staying by the pool,” remarking that such programs focus “upon the culture and artifacts of the region where they are located, perused from the stance of an appreciative observer.”

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Placed against this background, C-27 was not the most daring of study abroad programs. The 20 students, all from VU, were assigned to separate group homes for men and women. The 13 women lived in the larger house, located adjacent to the main classroom and a modest library. The seven men lived in a small, one-family house a few blocks away.

The VU program had no direct relationship with Cambridge University. We took a fixed menu of survey courses covering British history, British drama, European geography, and art appreciation designed to familiarize us with the culture and history of our new surroundings. The drama course was taught by Richard Pick, the VU professor who served as the resident program director, while the other offerings were taught by professors whom we “rented” from the local Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology.

Thus, the rather sheltered nature of the program made total immersion a bit beyond our ken. However, this was probably good, for total immersion would’ve drowned me. I was born and raised in northwest Indiana. My limited cross-cultural experience had come mostly from family visits to relatives in Hawaii. In the fall of 1980 I applied to the Cambridge program largely because I badly needed a change of scenery and several friends with whom I worked on The Torch [VU student newspaper] were intent on going. As a collegian, I was a political junkie without peer. I had spent many hours volunteering for various political campaigns and advocacy groups, a reflection of my career plans to enter politics. This heavy extracurricular load had left me feeling rather burned out. In addition, I was not handling well my political shift towards the left at a time when the campus atmosphere was growing increasingly conservative.

So, I saw C-27 as a form of “stopping out,” a temporary hiatus from the career path I had inexorably pursued since starting college. England, and Europe generally, were not particular interests of mine. In fact, the only thing I can recall on my pre-trip “must see” list was the mummy in the British Museum that, according to a popular budget guidebook, had inspired the Lon Chaney version of The Mummy. Although during my interview for admission to the Cambridge program I waxed eloquent about my desire to experience a different culture and to travel around Europe, in truth I simply was looking for a break.

Across the Pond

In any event, one January evening my parents drove me to O’Hare, where I joined the others for the overnight flight to London. We arrived at Heathrow the next morning, and a charter bus took us to Cambridge. It was cold and clammy, we were tired, and I wondered whether this trip was a very good idea.

Classes began a few days after our arrival. It would become a self-fulfilling prophecy that many grade point averages would suffer that semester, despite the fact that most of us were juniors and seniors aiming for graduate school of some sort. We were there to explore, not to study. If the light workload for our courses was any indication, it seemed that the University concurred with our priorities.

My academic nadir came in the Art Appreciation course. As I gazed numbly at the screen upon which slides of famous works of art were projected and then explained by the professor, I knew that I was experiencing a major culture block. Whatever he saw, I didn’t. In my first paper, I referred to Leonardo da Vinci as “one of the All-Time Greats in painting history,” thus supporting the theory that guys fall back on sports metaphors when they run out of things to say. As this was the stronger of my two required essays in that class, I now consider it an act of generosity that Paul Shakeshaft didn’t flunk me and thus deprive me of sufficient credits to graduate. Instead, he gave me a D+, my lowest grade in college. I’m sure that my work in his course set back the cause of international student exchange several decades.

Fortunately, the classroom aspect was not completely lost on me. Harry Browne, our history professor, introduced me to people and events in British history that interests me to this day. It was in his course that I learned about Britain’s misguided attempts at welfare reform during the 19th century. And it was there that I first gained some understanding about “the Troubles” in Northern Ireland.

Peter Speak taught the European Geography course. He went beyond mere maps and figures to help us understand some of the geopolitical dynamics of Europe. Thanks to his course, I was able to read newspaper articles about the European Economic Community with some understanding and appreciation.

Our British drama course opened up a new area of cultural appreciation to me. Professor Pick required that we attend and review four plays as part of our course requirements. In doing so, I found that I enjoyed the theatre. My first London show was Oklahoma! and it hooked me on musicals. (I concede the twist of discovering the Great American Musical in London’s West End.) Among the other plays I saw were a moving performance of The Elephant Man at the National Theatre and a hilarious West End political farce, The Accidental Death of an Anarchist.

Much of my learning occurred outside of the classroom. I joined the Cambridge Union Society, an elaborate, student-run public affairs and debate forum, and attended many of its events. After a Union Society debate featuring economist John Kenneth Galbraith, I bought and read some of his books, which in turn had a strong influ-
ence on my economic views. Another debate over the need for a third political party in the UK led me to follow with interest the launching of Britain’s Social Democratic Party and its effect on the fortunes of the Labour Party.

I spent hours at the many wonderful bookstores in Cambridge, delving mostly into my developing interests in politics, law, history, and public affairs. Cambridge was (and remains) a quintessential university town, so it offered plenty in that regard. By the end of the semester I had accumulated a box full of books and magazines to be shipped home.

There was a very human side to C-27 as well. By and large we found our UK hosts to be genuinely friendly and helpful. For example, hitchhiking remained a relatively safe way to travel and a good way to meet the locals. For my first trip to London, I hitchhiked. Armed with my “USA Student to London” sign, I stationed myself near the motorway and waited. Eventually a fellow named Nigel pulled over and offered me a lift. He explained that he was going only part of the way to London, but that I was welcome to hop in. Anxious to get moving in some way toward London, I accepted.

As we rode along, Nigel explained that his late father had been helped by American soldiers during World War II, and he remained grateful for that. So, as we got outside Cambridge, we stopped at the American Military Cemetery and walked around. Nigel then drove to the home he shared with his mother, and there I was treated to tea and biscuits. But instead of leading me back to the motorway so I could hitch another ride, he took me to the train station, paid for my ticket, and bid me farewell.

Closer to home in Cambridge, a wonderful couple named John and Margaret MacKay had been serving as “den parents” to generations of VU students, and we were the latest beneficiaries of their warmth and hospitality. One evening early in the semester, I bumped into John as I was making my way into town. I had not quite blended in with the group yet and at times felt a bit isolated. John invited me to have dinner with him and Margaret later in the week, and they made me feel special by making it just the three of us. No doubt this was one of their many small acts of kindness for homesick students over the years.

It did take me a while to feel a part of the group, a situation partially of my own making. Most students were members of Greek-letter organizations on the VU campus. As a non-Greek who was vocally critical of the fraternity/sorority system, I wasn’t particularly eager to fraternize (excuse the pun) with those who were a part of it. I figured they felt the same way about me.

But as the semester proceeded, the boundaries that divided some of us lowered and in many cases collapsed entirely. Later in the semester, I would find myself travelling with some of my new fraternity and sorority friends. I’m sure that many of our “old” friends back at Valpo would’ve reacted quizzically to some of the travelling groups that we formed while traipsing through Europe. C-27 may have been too much of an American enclave, but it did bring together students whose paths wouldn’t have crossed back at the VU campus.

A Reluctant Traveller

Our classes were scheduled to allow long weekends for travel, and most students spent that time journeying around the United Kingdom. However, I was not an intrepid sojourner. I liked Cambridge, and there I tended to stay. I enjoyed the ambience of a medieval university city, and I liked being able to hang out there.

When I did travel on weekends, it was usually to London. I was awestruck by London. It was my first exposure to a truly world-class city, and I found it both exciting and intimidating—no doubt a common reaction. Although London’s prices conspired with a horrendous exchange rate to eat holes into my limited funds, merely being able to walk around and soak it all in was a treat.

Despite my lack of weekend wanderlust, I managed to see a good chunk of the UK and Europe, thanks to several planned group trips and generous vacation periods. On three occasions our entire C-27 entourage loaded into an excursion bus for extended weekend tours, replete with narration by our professors. Warwick Castle, Stratford-upon-Avon, the Lake District, York, and Stonehenge were among the places we visited. And during Spring Break, I joined four of my classmates in renting a car and driving up to Scotland, where we visited Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Loch Lomond, and Loch Ness (but sadly, no Nessie sightings). After a week in Scotland, we then went our separate ways.

I spent the remaining time in Ireland and gained a more personal introduction to the political tensions there. In Belfast I managed to hitch a ride with a TV journalist who had just finished working on a BBC series on “the Troubles.” He drove me through some of the dicier parts of the city, pointing out sites where he had interviewed IRA leaders. Belfast was a particularly combustible place at the time due to hunger strikes being waged by Irish political prisoners, and the streets were full of British soldiers and armored troop carriers. My youthful ignorance permitted me to assume that if any bullets flew in my direction, they would simply miss.

When the semester ended, we had a month to travel. I went over to the European continent, travelling alternately with fellow students and on my own. I arrived in Paris the day François Mitterand was elected President. That evening I walked along the Seine as French college students waved big flags from their cars in celebration. During the next two days, I played tourist, visiting the Arc de Triomphe and the Eifel Tower, and strolling around...
the Champs Elysses and the Latin Quarter ("a sort of French Greenwich Village," I wrote in my C-27 personal journal, even though I'd never actually seen Greenwich Village).

By pre-arranged plan—and it still delights me to think that plans to "meet at Pont d'el Alma in Paris" on a certain day and time actually worked out—I met several C-27 friends. We then travelled through parts of Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. We hiked through the Alps, went on "The Sound of Music Tour" in Salzburg, and paid a sobering visit to the Dachau concentration camp. Our Dachau trip was probably typical: full of chatter on the bus ride from Munich to the camp, we were virtually silent on the ride back to the city.

I went on my own to Berlin, where I saw the Olympic Stadium in which Jesse Owens earned his gold medals in 1936 and the Berlin Wall eight years before its destruction. I crossed over to East Berlin via "Checkpoint Charlie" and walked up and down the lifeless streets of Unter den Linden, the boulevard that once was Germany's center of the universe. Berlin's many contrasts were fascinating, but the city also made me feel uneasy. Could it have been that my World War II-movie lens on history caused me to think of Berlin as the Axis capital? I think it was more than that, but to this day I wonder.

**A Haphazardly Vital Experience**

It must be clear by now that I had no grand design in mind when I went overseas. When travelling with others, I followed whoever had a better idea of what to see. (One exception: In an experiential counterpart to my academic work, I skipped the Louvre.) When travelling alone, my itinerary was made up as I went along. I considered it a triumph to discover and sample American fast-food restaurants in the cities I visited. All said, as a traveller I was more a tourist than a serious student, for surely I wasn't an expert on Europe by virtue of having seen Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, and the Alps.

In addition, I would be hardpressed to identify coherent learning themes that emerged from my academic and cultural experiences. The courses we took were survey treatments. My own reading was pretty much whatever struck my fancy. I attended many films, plays, and lectures, but they lacked any strong focus.

Thus, if one applied today's career-oriented, get-tough, pro-accountability standard to C-27, it would seem that my short travelogue above has served up plenty of ammunition for criticizing at least one study abroad experience: Too much "vacation" and playing the dilettante; not enough structured academic work and real cultural immersion. Furthermore, the overview nature of the C-27 curriculum did not offer opportunities for specializations within a student's major or practical field experiences in the way of internships, thereby depriving us of both disciplinary depth and potential resume enhancers.

I fear, however, that one can easily underestimate the educational value of spending an extended period of time in a different, stimulating environment, absent any pressure to relate that experience to career goals and academic specialization. Far from "staying by the pool," I instead liken my overseas experience to being able to roam through the open stacks of a great library. The opportunity to dip into the "stacks" of Europe produced many significant, lasting intellectual and personal benefits.

First, it was in Cambridge that I started forming my earliest ideas about the relationship between higher education and social change. I was ripe for exposure to these progressive ideas, and C-27 provided the setting I needed to nourish and inform my changing political outlook. For example, in researching a term paper for Harry Browne's history course, I was introduced to the work of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, the Victorian-era social reformers. The Webbs not only co-authored several seminal works on topics such as the labor movement and poverty, but also helped to found the London School of Economics. Their vision of LSE as a research and teaching center for social and economic issues made a strong impression on me.

Nine years after C-27, a continuing interest in British public affairs led to my first return visit to England. During the summer of 1990, I joined a two-week, graduate-level study tour covering comparative public policy, co-sponsored by the University of Bristol and New York's Empire State College. My own focus was on the labor movement, and I was able to meet with trade unionists, corporate managers, and government officials, and do research concerning British occupational safety and health law.

Second, C-27 played a pivotal role in nurturing my outside interests. Cities generally, the musical theatre, serious moviegoing, mystery and spy novels set in Europe, and a morbid fascination with Jack the Ripper—all of these current interests got their start during that time. (I take no offense if devotees of high culture are horrified at some of the items on this list.)

Largely because of these interests, England remains a part of me. In recent years I've spent several short vacations in London, enjoying its marvelous theatre, historical museums, guided walking tours, bookshops, and fish and chips. (At least when overseas, I've progressed beyond McDonald's.) I'm pleased that on two of these trips, I've been able to visit Cambridge for lunch or tea with Harry Browne.

C-27 enriched my worldview in a more general sense as well. Seeing something of the world made me a more globally-aware person. I doubt, for example, that I would've watched events surrounding the taking down of the Berlin Wall in 1989 with such rapt attention had I not crossed through Checkpoint Charlie and walked to the
Brandenburg Gate from the east side some eight years earlier.

Third, C-27 helped me to gain a sense of independence. This was my first extended stretch away from home, and I needed it. Even as a resident in an American group house, I found it a challenge to navigate life in a new country on a shoestring budget. Also, the time I spent travelling alone through parts of the UK and Europe made me more self-reliant. Simple matters like negotiating train schedules, sleeping accommodations, and currency exchanges were maturing experiences.

Finally, living in Cambridge and visiting some of Europe’s great cities created an appetite for the life I have been living since then. C-27’s flexibility allowed me to explore new places and ideas as my interests dictated. Even better, I could do it all on foot, or, in the case of visiting London, by public transportation. No car to worry about, no suburb to drive me stir crazy—I was discovering both city life and the life of the mind.

In fact, a year after returning from Cambridge, I packed my bags to attend law school at New York University, located in the Greenwich Village that I had so breezily mentioned, sight unseen, in my C-27 journal. “The Village” competed for time with my law school studies, as I spent many hours at favorite eateries, revival movie houses, and used bookstores.

After law school, I practiced law in the public interest field, first with the New York City Legal Aid Society, and later with the New York Attorney General’s Office. In 1991, I returned to NYU as an instructor in the first-year legal skills program. It turned out to be the beginning of an academic career.

I’m now in Boston, having moved here to join the law faculty of Suffolk University, a small, private, non-sectarian university located near the Massachusetts State House. While Boston lacks New York’s cosmopolitan atmosphere, its everpresent sense of history and dozens of colleges and universities packed into a very compact space are reminiscent of Cambridge.

In sum, C-27 constituted my most formative educational experience, under rather ironic conditions. It was the only semester in which I did not take a course in my political science major. My semester grade point average was the worst of my college career, thanks largely to my hard-earned D+. It also was the only time during my college career that I wasn’t spending many hours on volunteer political activities. Given this opportunity to obsess less about my planned future, during those five months I discovered much about myself that eventually would lead me back into the bloody world of academe instead of the bloody world of politics.

The Value of Purposeful Slackerdom

As a law professor, I preach the virtues of approaching education in a systematic and comprehensive manner, and I encourage my students to gain as much practical legal experience as possible prior to graduation. However, I am convinced that overseas study should serve a different kind of purpose, one that is independent of careers, resumes, and even—heaven forbid—concerns over academic rigor. It should provide a student with a chance to be bohemian, to kick back and reflect on “big-picture things,” to see a piece of the world before what people call the Real World beckons. The lasting benefits of such “purposeful slackerdom” will surely outweigh the immediate gains of more library time or an additional line on a resume.

In fact, overseas study may be the last, and best, opportunity for many of today’s students to take stock for a few months. I don’t buy into this line that the so-called Generation Xers are a bunch of laggards. Students today are under ever-increasing pressure to specialize in a field and to build their professional credentials; long-term goofing off isn’t an option. My students at Suffolk Law, most of whom come from middle-class and working-class backgrounds, impress me time and again with their hard work and sense of responsibility. Many of those who didn’t get a chance to study overseas as collegians undoubtedly would have benefited from the kind of experience that C-27 gave to me, and it wouldn’t have lessened their work ethic a bit.

As the budget cutters take aim at funds for foreign study, and as the accountability folks continue their calls for quality, it is important for us to remember what foreign study does best. Rigorous academic requirements, career development, and the like are vitally important in higher education, and we can do a better job in that regard. But our students will be personally richer if that stuff is set aside for a semester or two while they see the world, think about their lives, and maybe even build some lifelong memories along the way. □
THREE ARTISTS OF THE BORDERLANDS

William H. Wisner

The Texas-Mexican Border is fervent, the brush desert I live in spiritually fecund. The intolerable summer heat implies God, because everything suffers and everything is redeemed.

Artists who work here worship the Border's passionate, silvery absence. Heat and suffering, aridity and absence: aspects of these elements lie at the core of the art of Tracy, Glassford and Judd. Oddly, their work, visually different as it is, does not suffer of contradiction. But then neither does the Border. It is as it is, as resistant to change socially and politically as it is geologically, harmonizing all opposites. If, as I believe, the omissions, lapses and desiccations of the Border actually imply spiritual plenitude, then it is not surprising that Michael Tracy should have been drawn here from the worldly excesses of Mary Boone's gallery in Manhattan; nor that the early work of his young protege, Thomas Glassford, should have borrowed from the desert's imagery in its machine-like constructions; or that the late Donald Judd—the most famous of the three—should have recognized an aesthetic parity between Minimalism and West Texas space.

The hardest work to comprehend is Donald Judd's. The most misleading and misinterpreted is Glassford's. Only Tracy hammers us with the obvious, the personal. I have every reason to dislike Michael Tracy. In my experiences with him he has been a famously bad friend, arrogant, suspicious, and condescending in his insincere Anglo embrace of Mexico. He is also—undeniably—a genius. Since Judd's unexpected death from lymphoma in January 1994, there is not an artist in Texas who can touch Tracy for the raw, aching, heartbroken power of his internal conflicts, which his art mirrors. Donald Judd—certainly at the polar end of artistic intentions from Tracy—was famous for his annoyance with everything, a trait much in evidence when I met Judd, briefly, in the spring of 1993. Tracy, by contrast, is famous for his fury, and the only danger to his work lies in having to resuscitate this fury each passing year and inject it into new stylistic challenges as he ages.

Tracy—who lives and works at San Ygnacio, a small Tex-Mex Border town just south of Laredo—is both the central perpetrator of a myth about himself and his art and its chief beneficiary. In the bucolic version of the myth—to which those in his circle actively contribute—Tracy is the pure postmodern antagonist, undergoing an agon centered in the suffering of Mexico and its betrayal by the United States. His artwork is seen as an artifact of an inner suffering which is a complex brew of unselfish religious angst, righteous political outrage at the way the superior economy of the United States perverts its relations with Mexico and Latin America, and a symbolic aesthetic sado-masochism which is certainly made vivid in his artworks, if not in his life. In this version of the myth, Michael Tracy conceives himself pure and sincere, and because of this he styles himself a valid spokesman for the troubled Border region—the confluence of poisoned waters between First-world and Third-, poverty and wealth, intact theological integrity to the South, spiritual bereftness and vapid materialism to the North. "The Rio Grande, my Berlin Wall," Tracy himself recently put it in a poster promoting his work.

In actuality, the truth—about the Border and about Michael Tracy—turns out to be much more complex. It is certainly true, however, that Tracy's work has benefitted for over two decades from self-misperception. The sculptures, paintings and performances he has made are visually persuasive and defiant, and they are some of the finest—if most internally ambiguous and disturbing—religious art of our century.

Tracy was an altar boy as a child at St. Clements in

William Wisner's article on Michael Tracy's Sacrifice II appeared in the May 1990 issue of Elle magazine. He has also published essays in Audubon, Birder's World and New Observations. Mr. Wisner is currently collaborating on a screenplay about the border, entitled Radio Bravo, with independent filmmaker Rob Ziebell of Houston.

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Cleveland, Ohio (he was born, in 1943, in Bellevue). Religious themes were soldered into Tracy's mature oeuvre as early as 1964, when, at the age of twenty-one, he exhibited paintings and a sculpture of a wooden cross at St. Edward's University in San Antonio (where he matriculated in 1961 to study philosophy and literature). In 1968, Tracy began a series of huge "gold paintings" after studying Early Christian and Byzantine art. Karen Armstrong, in her recent History of God commented that all aesthetic experience in the Byzantine era aspired to a condition of silence—the silence and eternal contemplation of God found in the icon. Tracy's best gold paintings, like Painting No. 5 (1969) evoke this same sense of mute contemplation, but the image of the icon itself has been elided. Instead, three bare fields of rich gold surfaces confront the viewer. The Holy Mother and Child, or the form of the suffering saint, have been subsumed under an epiphanic radiance of pure, golden divinity. The Siena Litho Suite (1982-83), shows religious images from medieval Siena which have been likewise obliterated under the pressure of heaven's undying radiance: only the hand of the Virgin, or the residual shape of the Cross, peek out from under the victorious layers of gold. These works, like his moving, gold-leafed Retablo de la Paz Sagrada (1985, now installed in a chapel Tracy designed for the Cathedral of Corpus Christi), put forth one single, uplifting visual message: forget the individual dogmas of the world's great religions; the golden surge of divinity, from which religions draw their various individual forms and rituals, is the only concrete impulse of the cosmos worth venerating. Tracy appears to be extolling a religion without dogma, without the divisions of belief which are ruining the world. At the same moment, Tracy has restored art to its original, ancient conception as a ritual act. By wedding contemporary art to the weight of traditional religious symbolism—in itself the evidence of man's moving attempt to locate the sacred in himself—Tracy gives an urgency and power to these images and to the performance art he has made.

Tracy has enacted two major art performances in the past twenty years, one of which I witnessed: Sacrifice I, 9.13.74 (popularly known as the Sugar Sacrifice, 1974) and the River Pierce Sacrifice II, 13.4.90, (1990). The Sugar Sacrifice was a performance in a Galveston Imperial Sugar Company warehouse (Tracy somehow managed to get I.H. Kemper III—the President of Imperial Sugar—to agree to use the space). In the darkened cavern of the warehouse, Tracy made an enormous geometrical pyramid of pure white sugar. In front of this elemental form, he "sacrificed" what he thought was his finest painting to date by driving iron spikes through it, lifting the violated and suffering painting on poles (the kind of poles used to carry religious images through city streets since medieval times) and placing it on a crude altar made of rough-hewn wooden beams. The sugar was an elemental food—and the unequal distribution of food in our world and what this means politically was the chief meaning underlying Tracy's ritualistic performance.

The River Pierce Sacrifice ("Pierce" is a play on River "Piece"), performed on the banks of the Rio Grande—and in the Rio Grande—took place on Easter weekend, 1990. The performance was enormously complex and one wonders in retrospect how Tracy could possibly have persuaded the dozens of friends, cowboys, schoolchildren, cameramen, cooks, art critics and security guards to agree to make the performance a reality. More startling is how Tracy managed to burn up an enormous sculpture valued at $200,000 in the middle of the Rio Grande without interference from either Laredo or Texas state authorities. Actions like this have given Tracy such a legendary reputation in the region that sophisticated art types centered in San Ygnacio and Laredo (to say nothing of Houston and Dallas) all compete with one another to tell the most outrageous "Tracy story."

The River Pierce Sacrifice was so named in order to pierce the divisions between Mexico and the United States, but in fact the performance was a scandal to the sleepy town of San Ygnacio. The action consisted of three main parts: the towing of Tracy's large freestanding sculpture Cruz: la Pasion by garlanded mule through the mesquite-covered Texas countryside to the banks of the Rio Grande (the caravan stopped at each of the Fourteen Stations of the Cross set up along the way, and readings were given by a chorus robed in black); ritual actions at the edge of the Rio Grande, including an action coordinated by visiting Mexican artist Eugenia Vargas Daniels, involving nude men and women smeared with river mud; and the floating of the cross on pontoons, and its subsequent immolation in the center of the river. A crowd of perhaps a hundred paying guests from as far away as Germany and Australia witnessed the event. It sounds outrageous and it was, perhaps the single strangest event ever to occur along this border.

Minor glitches occurred: but no matter that the mules, covered in braided Texas wildflowers, started up so fast that the chorus of readers had to scramble to keep up; or that the three ritual fires on the banks of the Rio Grande in Daniels' action failed to light fully in the April drizzle; or that the Cross, perilously buoyant on the waters of the great Rio Grande, would not catch fire for several agonizing minutes. No, for sheer audacity Tracy's performance was persuasive to the audience that witnessed it, if not to those who came after. As the Cross floated, burning, downstream, towering and raging with vivid orange flames, the mute audience thought whatever individual thoughts they had; but I took away but one central, disturbing impression: the flames were neither redemptive nor purgative, nor the sign of a new era of understanding between north and south. They were, rather, a prophecy of the world to come. A prophecy of the dissolution of society at
the clamorous end of the planet, as natural environmental systems break down under the pressure of overpopulation and all the ruined economies of the Third world—cultures, races, religions, all at war. The cross burned on Good Friday. Easter, and the Resurrection, never came. The Border, like the world, is out of control.

A paradox remains in Tracy's art and life, however: he is rejected by the people of San Ygnacio, the "simple" people of Catholic faith from whom Tracy claims to draw his inspiration, as from the entire poverty-stricken nation to the south. Tracy's behavior in the town has left most of the town hostile to him and suspicious of his intentions. As their contempt for him and his works increases, so does Tracy's own bitterness and disturbing bigotry. No one believes any longer in Tracy's "love" of anything Hispanic; and although artworks must be judged without reference to the often troubled personalities who create them, yet Michael Tracy's legacy is likely to be a mixed one here for many years to come.

The art of thirty-something Thomas Glassford, by contrast—whose brilliant, still-developing career Tracy helped to invent—is like a chill wind blowing across this brown land of heat and snakes. The sense of withdrawal and recoil in Glassford's work is in direct opposition to Tracy's feverish up-front intensity, although they both share a sexual engagement in their works quite as compelling as a night in the Red Zone "across" in Nuevo Laredo. Sadomasochism and sexual anxiety permeate Glassford's most characteristic works, but it's remarkable how few of his viewers pick this up. Indeed, his work has been widely admired without being well understood.

Born in 1963 in Laredo, Glassford was garnering mentions in Art in America while still a student working on his B.F.A. at the University of Texas at Austin. Despite some periods in which neither would speak to the other, Glassford's friendship with Tracy—and Tracy's important art world connections—have been a boon to Glassford's professional development, which now has a gratifying momentum of its own. Glassford has shown widely in

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Texas—at galleries and museums in Houston, Corpus Christi, Dallas and San Antonio—and his work is represented in the famous Centro Cultural de Arte Contemporaneo in Mexico City, where he maintains his studio.

Many of Glassford's early pieces were machine-like constructions (like Derrick, 1985, and Watershed, 1989) which looked for all the world like banged up ranch machinery off the Galvan spread west of Laredo. All of these works from the "hydraulic" series contained references to water in some way—a fact whose significance is easily grasped here on the Tex-Mex Border, where the Rio Grande is synonymous with life itself. Some of the visually corroded surfaces of metal and leather from the "hydraulic" and "cincture" series can also be seen in Table, an early work completed in 1984. Table, like many of Tracy's works for similar reasons, is justly disturbing: the fetishistic leather harnesses hanging ominously at the sides of the metal table-form, imply a torture device, whose victims' blood is gathered into a central conduit and drips into a small container beneath the sculpture. Water, then, is not the only elemental fluid Glassford has fixed on. Another sculpture, called Milky Whites (1990), is nothing more than a row of brilliant white, shiny porcelain shower tiles arranged on a board a little over a foot long. Like Table, Milky Whites turns out to be a seminal work. The tiles—deceptively benign—connote cool, removed perfection, a clinical purity of surface. They could be washed free of any pollution and their perfection quickly restored. Two covert themes are at work in these two pieces, and together they spell out a third theme which Glassford is still exploring. The major work Honeydipper (1989), brings these together in a sculpture made of rubber, wood, steel and ceramic tile.

Honeydipper is a long wooden construction over ten feet wide, with an equally long wooden ladle attached to the corroded and patched-together armature. Below the ladle Glassford's tiles make their appearance again—ten feet of perfectly white, clinically pristine squares. But what does Honeydipper mean?

The ladle in Honeydipper is a found object: as Glassford confirmed with me in an interview in September 1991, it was originally a ladle used in cleaning muck out of a septic tank. The top portion of Honeydipper, including the attached ladle, then, is associated with the filth of human waste; the bottom portion connotes cleanliness, hygienic perfection, an unsoiled field. Honeydipper objectifies, but does not resolve, the tensions in Glassford's personality between pollution and purity, filth and disinfection, a strong Freudian substrate that turns on the question, ultimately, of sexual pollution and intactness, as we shall see.

In the past five years Thomas Glassford has made his reputation on a series of sculptures involving large, brown Mexican gourds found in the central valley area outside of Mexico City. Gourds in Mexico are both hallowed and utilitarian objects. They are used in witchcraft ceremonies (for holding potions), for musical instruments, like rattles, and for fermenting cactus juice into tequila. Their beautiful, tobacco-brown surfaces are rounded, suggestively feminine and latent with gestation—and before they are dried out they are plump with juice.

Recent works by Glassford show the Mexican gourds set against a field of the white tiles. Stainless steel pipes extend out from the tiled surface and the gourds are strapped and held in place by shiny stainless steel bands. Visually, these sculptures are extremely appealing. The beautiful white tiles form an apparently innocuous background to the splendid, large gourds, whose amber surface tones are richly discolored and mellowed by the accidents and scars of growth. Glassford's gourd works are deceptive—pretty, however. In fact it is the female principle in his works which is strapped, restrained and yoked rigidly into place by an icy, controlling medium. The chrome restraints and pristine tiles are an emphatic withdrawal from the messy, fluid-filled problem of female sexuality, made all the more unsettling by the cool, superior strength of the metallic, masculine, projecting armatures. The frisson between emotion and intellect in these pieces—as in Honeydipper—exemplifies something undeniable in Glassford's personality: a controlling, clinical ability to withdraw from and repudiate messy emotionalisms like friendship, love and sex. Quite a number of young Laredo women—who flock to the handsome Glassford's growing fame like moths to a candle—have run aground on precisely his comical ability to circumvent and defeat their yawning emotional demands on him. More than this: there is in the gourd series an almost hysterical withdrawal from the pollution of intercourse, the fear—common to all men at some level—of being drowned and consumed, and therefore annihilated, by the ooze and domination female sexuality actually implies.

Glassford's sculptures, taken together, form an impressive set of works for an artist who is only thirty-two years old; and his calendar includes a growing roster of exhibitions in Mexico, Latin America and Texas. Michael Tracy was said to be put out by Glassford's glowing critical reception at a well-known gallery in Houston recently—critical praise that eclipsed Tracy's own contribution to the two-man show. Glassford's work, like Tracy's, is the kind of harmony of opposites characteristic of the Tex-Mex Border region, where tensions of every type simmer and bubble in the silver heat haze.

You go Northwest out of Laredo on Highway 83, making your way to Del Rio, on the Texas-Mexican Border; and at Del Rio you head west on a two-lane highway, Interstate 90, which carries you past the small towns of
Comstock and Langtry in West Texas. Long about Dryden you begin to get a creeping feeling: the space here, now unrelieved by human settlements, starts to get to you. The cloudless bell of the sky crushes the flat land. The merid­ian sun sheds an oppressive heat, and the countryside turns brown, full of stubbled rocks, cactus and clay. The green mesquite brushland of South Texas has given way to the imperious emptiness of West Texas. It has been said of this region that “there is no law west of the Pecos—and no God.” During the nineteenth century it was possible for a judge east of the Mississippi to declare that a wanted criminal was out of the law’s reach—that he had “G.T.T.”-ed; “Gone to Texas.” Pursuit and capture were not recom­mended.

An almost lunar barrenness confronts the blinking, sun-tired visitor to Marfa, Texas—a small town half an hour north of the Big Bend National Park, which abuts the Rio Grande on its southern rim and which is the least visited national park in the contiguous United States. The trip from Laredo takes a good ten hours, even if you speed, as everyone does, to escape the emptiness that surrounds your vehicle on every side. The radical inexistence of West Texas—like the sleepy timelessness of South Texas—remains a boon to artists; or anyone else who, like the Old West criminals, seeks an absolute escape. If you have tired of yourself—if all your lapses and surrenders are brimming in you—West Texas is the ideal place of atonement. The sky here will quietly crush you into peacefulness the way it crushes the landscape.

“I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom Cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large and without mercy.” So begins Charles Olson’s *Call Me Ishmael*. The words might have been written by Donald Judd, the world-famous Minimalist artist who eschewed the New York art scene (after transforming it) and moved to Marfa, Texas in the early 70s. He was then in his forties. Judd died—unexpectedly—of lymphoma in February 1994, leaving major projects unfinished in Marfa, Winterthur, Switzerland and Basel. I met him on March 20, 1993, when I was a guest of his Chinati Foundation, established in 1979 to provide permanent, non-rotating installation space for works of seminally important contemporary artists. Judd’s fiefdom in Presidio County (much of which he owned) has gradually become the largest set of permanent installations in the world.

The drive to Marfa—it was hot, bright and tiring,
A view of the permanent installation of Judd’s aluminum boxes at Marfa. Judd preferred the term “Empiricism,” rather than “minimalism” to describe his aesthetic.

Photo © 1995 Estate of Donald Judd/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY
even in March—was a kind of pilgrimage for me. I had first learned about Judd’s work as an art history student—he was in all the textbooks. Despite commendable attempts on my behalf by his kind assistant, Jeff Kopie, my time with Judd lasted all of thirty seconds. I had been warned of Judd’s brusqueness and impatience—but in his defense, and at that time (a major show at the Pace Gallery in New York was being shipped that weekend), my broad smile and cheerfully outstretched hand were probably not high on Judd’s list of priorities that day. My indelible impression of him, however, was of a lean man of medium height with long-ish greying locks. I remember he wore a light olive sportscoat and had very large eyes and an open stare that seemed both distracted by and briefly curious about me. I had—I swear—the comical sense of being in the presence of a very large, grey bird with steady, unblinking eyes. Seated at a splendid desk of his own design, fashioned of Douglas fir, Judd did not get up from his seat, nor take my proffered hand, which I quickly withdrew. He mumbled a brief greeting (I assume it was a greeting) which I did not understand and then he continued staring at me wordlessly for several more seconds, again with the bewildered look of one who is trying unsuccessfully to focus his attention on an untoward (and minor) interruption.

For months afterward I kicked myself for my hubris and stupidity at attempting to meet such a man under such unfavorable circumstances. A year later, when I heard that he had died, I realized that I was lucky to have met him at all, and that our brief encounter was comical, characteristic and endearing—a fine memory. That I was permitted by him to stay and study at Chinati for three fruitful days in rooms normally reserved for Claes Oldenburg was—like Jeff Kopie’s gift to me of a rare copy of Judd’s recently published monograph Architektur—a high honor indeed.

If I cannot pretend to understand the kind of man Donald Judd was, I must confess at the outset that I do not adequately understand his art, although I have received the comments made by biographers and art critics with interest and some enlightenment. Art of this kind—in which everything is submitted to a guiding ratiocination of great insight and acuity—cannot be fathomed within the space of a long weekend. I can offer here only the beginning of an interpretation filtered through my own best hunches and intuitions.

What drew Judd to West Texas? It must have been the space—the kind of unrepentant space I drove through for ten hours to get to him. He has written, “There has been almost no discussion of space in art, nor in the present. The most important and developed aspect of present art is unknown. This concern, my main concern, has no history... There is only the visible work invisible.” Elsewhere he adds emphatically, “There is no discussion of space in art and architecture in the present.”

We have seen that Michael Tracy’s art is heavily invested in a personal passion play bounded by the extremes of myth and reality. Thomas Glassford’s work is equally personal: an almost hysterical refutation and withdrawal. Both artists naturally assume the artwork to be a metaphor for human society or personal predicaments. But what if an art could be made that has an autonomy of its own? A logic of appearance and form which begins and ends in itself, without any personal or social referent? What would such an art look like?

Judd became famous for being the first major exemplar of Minimalism—a term he hated—in the mid-60s. “Judd’s break had been so startling and abrupt,” sculptor Richard Serra has written, “that within three years Abstract Expressionism was out, Minimalism was in.” Judd’s best known work may be his famous “stacks,” which are, individually, a series of rectangular boxes of brushed aluminum and colored Plexiglas stacked on a wall, one on top of another, separated by carefully calibrated spaces. These works were manufactured to Judd’s precise specifications by a shop, and their “meaning” lies in the proportion, spacing and rhythm which the work establishes within the space it occupies. The art object—which is the product of intense abstract thought and design on paper—makes no reference to Judd’s state of mind nor does it attempt to “comment” on anything other that itself. Judd didn’t even craft it. Perhaps the highest compliment such a de-personalized object could be paid is that it generates a silence around itself. The object requires no hermeneutic; it is not sustained by nor encompassed by language. It exists, in space. It reposes, in time. Judd’s artworks at their best are the objective correlative of pure thought. To put it paradoxically, the artwork goes wherever it is.

Judd’s stacks, however, were only the beginning of a long and fruitful visual career. His finest work was done at Marfa and is on permanent display there. Probably his greatest life work are the one hundred large boxes of milled aluminum installed in two artillery sheds at Fort D.A. Russell on the Chinati grounds. These carefully placed, rectangular objects were manufactured to millimeter exactness—and their precise placing in the huge spaces of the restored artillery sheds constituted probably the most difficult formal challenge Judd ever undertook. The aluminum boxes have a discrete meaning in themselves, in their relation to the other boxes in the room and in their collective relation to the total space circumscribed by the buildings. What is magical about this ethereal work, however, is how the shimmering silver surfaces of the milled aluminum “disappear” or “shift” against the strong West Texas light flooding in from the glass walls of the artillery buildings. The final paradox of Judd’s art is that he never overcame his love of sensuous surfaces. To see Judd’s aluminum boxes set permanently in the spaces for which they were designed and to see them wink in and out of visual existence is to be a witness to something compelling and original in contemporary art. Judd called himself “an empiricist,” rejecting the Minimalist label in favor of a
more precise description of his role as creator. Thought become material—the closest approach to a Platonic ideal in art since the Greek canon of proportions was promulgated.

Donald Judd possessed a personal honesty and integrity that was hard and glittering. His writings read with unflinching sincerity and seriousness; and his commitment to the aesthetic integrity of his work was an example to others. Those closest to him spoke in eulogy of his generosity to his friends—and I would do well to remember that he was said to be a very shy man with strangers. Donald Judd, in short, possessed a moral greatness far superior to Tracy’s miasma of contradictions and false starts. Glassford—though enormously promising—would suffer unfairly in comparison to Judd’s startling, mature intelligence.

I have said that the art of Tracy, Glassford and Judd reflects something of the heat and suffering, aridity and absence of the Borderlands. I have also said that this strip of geography, where America ends, is strikingly vivid in its claim upon the people who live here. Genius is bred on the Border by the intemperate extremes encountered in the land and its people. The mesquite brushlands of the South, and the rocks and escarpments of the Big Bend, will outlast every single human construction created here. Tracy was right: this is where the world will end. Glassford was also right to flee the Border’s sexual intemperance, and the beckoning *zona rosa* of Nuevo Laredo, where every vice that can be thought up can be satisfied. And Judd too was right to answer the space surrounding Marfa with works commensurate to and empty as the sky itself.
For Bestemor

Here on a hill above the little harbor,
Houses from the last century draw close;
A summer night comes on. The sky's still pale
Behind the copper spire of Barbu Kirke
As the long day folds.

In my favorite snapshot you must be nearly eighty:
You and Bestefar at a table dressed with flowers,
A birthday, the whole room lit in festive celebration,
Your faces beaming from the unaccustomed wealth.
Outside the world holds its breath for war.
The snowy wastes of Norway lie in grand extravagance,
Too splendid for the eye.

Ninety years in exile from your mother's family farm,
Your mother's father's rage,
Three brown-eyed daughters gone to America,
Each night your knees wore spaces in the hardwood floor.
You knelt, and drew the map and charter of our being
In your clear prose. I woke up inside
Your creation story, tossing in deep abandonment and promise
Like the model ship suspended from wire in the aisle
Of the old green-spired church.

Ill-starred friends, we just missed each other;
My boat came in when yours had left the dock.
But here in the hanging image of your loss and hope,
The ship motionless, riding the motes of dust
In late shafts of sunlight, our words lift
In a common tongue, as the vessel to my lips today,
Our hands are cupped, and we begin to pray.

Diane Scholl
Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. They answered him, We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, You will be made free? Jesus answered them, Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:31-36 (NRSV)

Early in the Reformation, in April, 1521, Luther was brought before the assembled powers of the Holy Roman Empire to be examined for heresy. My picture of Luther at Worms is shaped in part by Gordon Rupp’s description of the Luther Memorial in the City of Worms: The Memorial “is what we might expect of a near contemporary of the Albert Memorial in London. Even the egregious Baedeker who, like charity in St. Paul, is always eager to believe the best, can only say about it that it looks well enough in the early morning (Morgenbeleuchtung günstig). In the centre, an enormous Luther (3.2 Metres high) gazes skyward with fixed intensity (heroic faith!) cuddling an enormous Bible.”

More recently I’ve had other pictures provided to me. Pastor David Kehret in a homily put Columbus’ discovery of America into a new light for me by saying: “When Columbus discovered himself in America . . .” And this in turn reminded me that Mel Pielh reports evidence indicating that Native Americans were in attendance at the famous Diet. They were brought to the old world to be part of the entourage of Emperor Charles V, the man who sought to judge Luther.

What must Native Americans have made of that crowded scene where Luther was called upon to repudiate his writings? I cannot imagine, but I do know that later Americans and Europeans keep getting the scene wrong.

The most famous line associated with Luther at Worms is “Hier stehe ich; ich kann nicht anders,” but Luther, according to scholars like Bainton and Rupp, may never have said “here I stand; I can do no other.” Nonetheless, these words can give us some insight into the foundations of his work. By examining two different ways of hearing these words, we can conveniently distinguish Luther from modern misreadings of his significance. Modern misreadings stress the I —Here I stand; I can do no other. Luther clearly would have stressed the Here—Here I stand; I can do no other.

In 1989, interpreting the collapse of the Berlin Wall, George Will linked Berlin with Wittenberg. “It is just 60
miles from Berlin to Wittenberg, where the 34-year-old Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door. Four years later at the Diet of Worms he spoke seven words that define the modern frame of mind: *Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders*. The primary idea of the Reformation was the primacy of individual conscience. It has been the high-octane fuel of all subsequent history" (*Newsweek* 20 Nov. 89).

Will and many others put the emphasis completely on the I: the primary ideal of the Reformation was the primacy of individual conscience. Methodist historian Gordon Rupp criticized an historian similar to Will. He argued that they admire Luther for all the wrong reasons: the moralism of a liberal historian who cared little for theology but admired human heroism and the premonition of [modern] liberty of thought (from *Luther’s Progress to the Diet of Worms*, 97).

If the focus is only on the I, we are reduced to individual posturing. In our Reformation text from John 8, Jesus admonishes us to dwell in his Word, because consciences are not free standing entities; they will be taken captive one way or another. The individual consciences so celebrated in the West are too often consciences taken captive to greed, self-aggrandizement, and celebration of empty foolishness. A corrupt individual conscience provides a basis neither for genuine community nor for an authentic humanity.

Luther’s emphasis was certainly not on himself and the primacy of his conscience. He who was so critical of the primacy of the pope knew also to be critical of the primacy of individual conscience. Here are Luther’s words at Worms as eyewitnesses recounted them: “Unless I am proved wrong by the testimony of Scriptures or by evident reason I am bound in conscience and held fast to the Word of God.”

Note the communal appeal to Scriptures and public reason rather than to the idiosyncratic. Note the language of a conscience that understands it needs a place to be held fast.

Only after that testimony to the primacy of God’s Word did Luther go on to say, “I cannot and will not retract anything, for it is neither safe nor salutary to act against one’s conscience. God help me. Amen.” If Luther did say “Here I stand. I can do no other,” his emphasis was unmistakably on the *Here* upon which he stood, i.e. the Word of God. Not upon the *I* who was doing the standing.

Once we recognize the need for a *here* upon which to stand, we have only the beginning of our own reformation. For then it becomes imperative to examine the competing grounds available. That’s what makes for the excitement of our University under the Cross: rigorous criticism of the testimony of competing traditions and competing public reasons, but founded upon the knowledge that we have found common ground in continuing in Christ’s Word.

Luther at Worms asked for an extra day to sift through his writings. He acknowledged that there was much that could be improved. But the improvement would come not in the unfettered posturing of a lone individual conscience, but in communal give and take about ground upon which to stand.

Luther’s ground was the witness to Christ and His Church. In the *Large Catechism* he put it this way in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles Creed: “I believe that there is on earth a little holy flock or community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, yet is united in love without sect or schism. Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and partner in all the blessings it possesses.”

The witness to Christ and His Church is also our common ground. It is in the Church that Christ challenges and invites us: “If you dwell in my Word, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

We whose consciences have been taken captive by Christ are truly freed to celebrate something much more than our own primacy. Standing *here* in the Word of Christ, we are free indeed. *Amen.*
A Populist Revolt?

Robert Benne

In his *The True and Only Heaven*, Christopher Lasch traces the main populist movements in American history. In his last posthumous book, *The Revolt of the Elites*, he describes and analyzes the flight of American elites from the localist habits of the American people. Populist values have fueled these movements while populist resentments have been exacerbated by the revolt.

Lasch argues that populist protests have been directed at metropolitan centers of politics, economics and culture that with increasing momentum have overrun the ways of life of ordinary Americans. He suggests that two living traditions have sparked the alternative politics, economics and culture. These are small-proprietor republicanism and radical Protestantism. Both are grounded and nurtured in the lower middle class, the *petit bourgeois*.

Though there are many problems with Lasch's account of both American history and these populist movements, he is onto something. He provides a prism for understanding a good deal of what is happening in our nation today.

One could argue, for example, that the Republican landslide of November, 1994, was a populist victory in a larger battle over the nation's direction. The expected "fall" of the Senate was followed in that momentous evening by the surprising, if not shocking, capture of the House by the Republicans. The immediate, dramatic effect was the change in leadership of the main committees of both the Senate and the House. The election results led to an enormous shift in the terms of debate on welfare, reform, illegitimacy, education, affirmative action, abortion, family values and especially devolution of authority and power to states and localities. What was once taboo as even the subject of discussion now became the object of legislation. Democrats, especially the President, found themselves counterpunching against the "extremes" of the Contract with America. The terms of debate were shifted strongly to the "right," if that is any longer a useful category to describe what is going on.

Three traumatic events—the shootings at Ruby Ridge, the conflagration at Waco, and the Oklahoma City bombing—are related symptoms of the populist resurgence, in these cases the more fevered fringes. The first two events fueled the anger that resulted in the bombing. Militias around the country generally believe that we are moving toward a centralized, totalitarian state. Ruby Ridge and Waco confirmed their paranoid suspicions that in order to continue in a tyrannical direction the government must disarm those who stand in its way. The loss of the freedom to bear arms will be followed by the loss of other freedoms. The social composition of the militias is lower middle class. Participants are often fundamentalist Christians who are also small farmers, ranchers, and businesspersons. They believe they must resist the oppressive expansion of the Leviathan.

In wider terms, there is a growing anger at the media in general, but particularly those parts that supply our addictive entertainment. The anger has been generated for years by organizations like the American Family Association, an organization based in Tupelo, Mississippi, whose membership is made up of small-town Christian conservatives. The swell created by popular sentiment for "traditional values" has encouraged political figures like Bob Dole to chastise Hollywood right in its own back yard. There is a growing suspicion that big business, in this case the entertainment business, is subversive of those values. It is beginning to dawn on social conservatives in the populist rebellion that capitalism is not exactly supportive of the values they hold dear.

The upshot of all this is a decline of trust in the *headquarters* of anything—church, government, business, education, voluntary associations. None of them seems to escape judgment. Indeed, the injunction of the 60s that one should never trust anyone over thirty has been replaced by the dictum that one should never trust anyone over thirty miles away. The headquarters of almost all churches, and their ecumenical agencies, are being starved of funds. Local parishes are keeping their money at home. Many lay folks believe that the head-
quarters are very much like the federal government: using money without a proper sense of priority or efficiency; attempting to regulate local and regional church life by administrative fiat; subverting the moral traditions of its members by revising its traditional teaching on sexual morality, etc. What better way to show disapproval than by keeping your money at the local level where there is more control over its disposition?

The large public research universities are under serious pressure by legislatures, often newly elected Republican ones, skeptical of the universities’ use of funds, their reluctance to teach, their tenure systems, their devotion to political correctness, and their permissive attitudes toward carousing students. Again, what better way to get their attention than by squeezing their budgets? The same legislatures are responding to public pressures to loosen the monopoly that the state, the educational establishment and the teachers’ unions have on elementary and secondary education. Initiatives for charter schools and voucher systems are sprouting all over the country. A goodly number of people no longer believe that the public schools can provide the intellectual and moral formation they want for their children. They believe the schools under direction of distant authorities actively undermine the values they are trying to impart in their homes.

The O.J. Simpson trial has served to raise doubts also about the justice system. Bracketing for a moment the effect on the trial of the racial politics, there is still enough to question. Big money, big lawyers, big celebrities, big cities, big media and big experts on every facet of the judicial process turned the trial into one great competitive game of scoring points rather than a genuine effort at truthful justice. Ordinary people know they won’t get that kind of treatment if they get in trouble.

It seems evident that populist pressures have already had important effects. The devolution of power to lower levels is a major theme of the “Republican Revolution.” The states will become lively laboratories of experimentation on issues of welfare, education and medical care. Indeed, the states may devise some of these concerns to local levels and to private agencies. Another distinct effect is the determination to slow the growth of government, make it more efficient, and cut down its regulatory reach. A third seems to be the reassertion of a normative culture of a traditional sort in the face of a liberalism that seems unable to say no to anything in the realm of personal conduct. (Except, perhaps, smoking.) Devolution may allow that normative culture to have more sway.

The organized agencies expressing this populist insurgency in the political sphere are groups like the National Rifle Association, the Christian Coalition, and now Ross Perot’s Reform Party. Republicans are eager to respond to them while the Democrats seem only capable of calling them “extremists.” There are serious tensions between elements of this populism that may in fact cause collisions in the months ahead. Economic conservatives are sometimes at loggerheads with cultural or social conservatives. The Republicans may get a gigantic headache.

What to make of all this? Lasch’s books have helped me appreciate the populist values of the lower-middle class, of the small-proprietor farmers and businesspersons who seem to be the backbone of the current movement. Lasch has given me an understanding of populist movements that I knew little about. Indeed, he helped me decipher the political culture of Nebraska, where I grew up. I always thought Nebraskans were conservative anarchists but all the time they were a certain kind of populist. I cherish the ways of life in rural and small town America, so anchored in grass-roots Protestantism and Catholicism. And I think those ways of life are being steam-rolled by big business, big government and elite culture.

So I have much sympathy with the current crop of populists. You could even call me a fellow-traveller. But I am also critical of populism, having grown up in the midst of it. Its distrust of large scale organization makes a good deal of it curiously unfit for the modern world. Lasch, for all his admiration, admits that populism has never come up with an adequate theory of political economy. It can be racist, xenophobic, narrow-minded, mired in nostalgia. The growth of federal power was partly in response to those vices.

It goes against Christian insight to put too much trust in any segment of the population—the elite, the middle class, the lower-middle or whatever. Sin infects them all and they all can turn their dreams into nightmares. “The people” can turn a mob and trample the rights of their “enemies.” They can also be lead by demagogues. So we need constitutional checks and balances. And we certainly should not look upon the government as incapable of constructive action. A larger justice is necessary than that of which states and localities are capable. Besides, realistically speaking, big government and big business are not going to disappear. Nor will the cultural elites and their instruments of influence.

We must grapple wisely with the challenges before us. The churches, I believe, have an enormously important role to play in this new set of challenges. In many ways they are closest to the people who make up the populist resurgence. They need to make sure that the dark side of populism does not prevail even while they affirm many of its values. That is, they need to help form a laity that is both committed and civil. We will sorely need both character traits in the rough times ahead.
The most memorable thing for me about the recently concluded O.J. Simpson murder trial is not my conviction that a rich man was able to manipulate our system of justice to get away with murder. It is not even my dismay that the Simpson defense team in general, and Johnnie Cochran in particular, quite consciously decided to interject the issue of race into a matter that in my mind had only to do with domestic violence, jealousy and rage. Rather, what I will longest remember about this long, sordid affair are the television shots of black Americans reacting to the jury’s not guilty verdict with spontaneous exclama-

tations of triumph. In the cafeterias on black college campuses, in black bars and barbershops, on the streets in black neighborhoods, African-American citizens burst into applause, slapped hands and whooped for joy as if they were cheering at an athletic contest and their team had just scored a winning goal.

As one of the nearly eighty percent of white Americans who were convinced beyond doubt that Simpson was guilty, as someone who could not imagine a conspiracy nearly so large (one that would have had to have involved the entire Los Angeles police department, its laboratory support units and the attorneys prosecuting the case) to have planted all the blood evidence that pointed to Simpson and Simpson alone as the murderer, I was absolutely shocked by the nature of the reaction of America’s black population. For over a year I had read the polls that said a substantial proportion of black Americans felt that Simpson was innocent. But frankly, I thought the polls reflected wishful thinking, an understandable desire that another black hero not be pulled down from his pedestal of achievement. Until I saw the exultation with which they responded to the verdict, however, I did not understand how deeply this country’s black people were invested in O.J. Simpson’s fate. I remain discouraged that a murderer has escaped justice, but, cognizant of the way black Americans reacted to Simpson’s freedom, I urge my fellow white Americans to join me in hearing the victorious shouts of our black neighbors as a wake-up call.

In that state of startled consciousness, I suggest a viewing of Spike Lee’s *Clockers*. *Clockers* doesn’t address the Simpson trial in any direct way. It is based on Richard Price’s 1992 novel which was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award and which was written long before the Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman murders, and it has to do with drug dealers, not wife batterers. The connections come with the considerable extent to which *Clockers* deals with America’s criminal justice system and the way in which that system handles the young black men who so often fall under its sway. *Clockers* provides an insight into why black Americans rooted for O.J. Simpson so intently.

I

For middle-class white viewers anyway, *Clockers* is like an excursion into a foreign country. And that country is located in the Balkans of the American soul. Behind the film’s opening credits, we see a series of corpses, sprawled and blood-spattered on the streets of our cities, a fallen army of wasted young lives slaughtered in a struggle for the instant cash of the drug trade. From these nightmare visions of hell, the picture moves to an urban park on a sunlit day where young black men in colorful garb lounge around in the open air and speak in a patois we don’t understand. Punctuated with a ritual clapping of hands, their conversation includes a style of body movements and miniature theatrical performances that is beyond our ken. So begins director Lee’s journey through the contemporary mean streets of Brooklyn, a journey that discovers a pattern of human intercourse that most of us are blessed not to know first hand. This is the world of the modern drug dealer, the clocker, so-called because he labors around the clock, a world where hip black youths grasp the greased rope of the narcotics trade in hopes of hoisting themselves out of poverty. We think we know this world from the crime reports in every daily newspaper and every evening’s news broadcast. But it’s the premise of this film that we know it only in the most stereotyped way. When we watch the police-orchestrated “walk-(by)’s” that are staged for the evening news, we see young men we presume are cut from the same uneducated, violent cloth. We see their defiant sneers and we deem them lost, or worse, less than human. And thus we turn blind eyes to

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The Cresset
the brutalities our police employ to bring them into line. But it is the provocative premise of this film that the people who walk the concrete paths of the modern urban jungle, the young men who so often end up in handcuffs, are richly varied, profoundly complex, and often surprisingly intelligent.

*Clockers* is the story of Ronnie "Strike," Dunham (Mekhi Phifer), a teenaged Brooklynite and rising officer in the local crack brigade. From his post at the entrance to a public housing complex, Strike commands a platoon of slightly younger black boys who actually handle the drugs, make the drops and collect the cash. When he's on the street, Strike himself is never in possession of either drugs or enough money to call attention to himself. The cops know he's a dealer and the boss of his particular district, but the operation is conducted in such a way that though they harass him on a daily basis, though they humiliate him whenever they have the pretext, they can't assemble the evidence to make charges against him stick.

Strike is the current protege of his boss, Rodney Little (Delroy Lindo). Rodney is forever warning Strike about the dangers of using and encouraging Strike to believe he's destined to rise in the organization. The first step for Strike might be to move to an inside job, a distribution center being conducted out of a nearby fast-food restaurant. In fact, Rodney is eager to replace Darryl Adams (Steve White), the man currently in that position, because Rodney believes Darryl is stealing from him. But if Strike wants Darryl's job, he's got to kill Darryl to get it. Later, when Darryl turns up with the back of his head blown away, Rodney assumes Strike did the hit. But to everyone's surprise, Strike's older brother Victor (Isaiah Washington) turns himself in and confesses to the shooting.

This development is shocking because Victor is everything Strike isn't. Victor is married with two children; he's a loyal husband and a devoted father. Determined to extricate his family from the incessant violence of the public housing project, Victor holds down two full-time jobs and carefully saves his money. He contributes to the support of his mother, and he regularly attends church. Not remarkably, homicide detective Rocco Klein (Harvey Keitel) is flummoxed by Victor's confession. Victor says he shot Darryl in a panic when he thought Darryl was about to rob him. But that account seems so far-fetched Rocco is determined to prove that...
Victor is lying for some reason. And fairly quickly Rocco’s suspicions fall on Strike.

Like the novel, the film version of Clockers is propelled by this murder mystery. Did Victor do it? If not, why is Victor lying? If Victor didn’t do it, who did? But also like the novel, the mystery aspect is probably the least of the film’s attractions. What holds us is the careful construction of an entire cast of complicated characters. Contrary to stereotype, Strike is not a punk. He’s not at all stupid. And he’s not a knee-jerk criminal automaton. He is certainly not a young man with “normal” moral moorings, but he is not natively violent. Some part of his circumstances, of course, are the direct result of conscious choices. Victor proves, after all, that you don’t have to choose a life in the drug trade. But to a still significant degree Strike is a pawn, moved about the board of his own life by forces largely beyond his control. He’s tried to make his stake in Rodney’s crime organization, but he’s an underclass analogue for the suburbanite career man. He’s reliable, punctual and hardworking. He’s careful, sober, earnest and thrifty (the book makes an extensive point of this last quality—while others may flash their money around, Strike saves relentlessly). Unlike the yuppies to whom Strike might be compared, he’s not into conspicuous consumption. His automobile is several years old and it’s a sensible Honda. And like the driven suburbanite, Strike’s work is eating him up. He’s desperately anxious about his future, and he’s got an ulcer.

The other characters here are comparably complex. Rodney makes his living selling drugs, but he’s as ardent a proponent of sobriety as any substance-abuse counselor. He may recruit the area’s teenagers as foot soldiers for his drug operation, but he tries to teach them business skills and encourages them to save rather than waste the money he pays them. Rocco is a version of Dennis Franz’s Andy Sipowicz character on NYPD Blue.

Rocco is crude of manner and vile of habit. He’s inherently racist and hardened in his prejudices from two decades of police work. He’s hardly above bending the rules of police procedure to achieve his own notions of justice. At the same time, though, he’s a dedicated cop and capable in his own way of showing mercy.

The film’s “good” characters are developed with layers as well. Iris Jeeter (Regina Taylor), a mother determined to keep her 12-year-old son from becoming one of Strike’s minions, always seems to express herself in anger and violence. Indeed, she can perhaps be heard in no other way, but her behavior doesn’t really serve to change the nature of the dialogue. Comparably, a black uniformed policeman the locals call Andre the Giant (Keith David) tries tenaciously to be a positive influence. He encourages the younger boys and scolds the older ones who are drifting toward the drug trade. He organizes athletic events and raises money for uniforms and equipment. However, Andre is burdened with a hot temper and a reliance on physical intimidation. Moreover, he’s surrendered to the idea that the drug dealers are a permanent condition of the urban environment. On one hand that may be realistic, but on the other it diminishes his effectiveness as an inspirational figure for those he would hope to lead another way. And, of course, Victor is complicated too. Put bluntly, he’s the figure all middle-class whites say project-dwelling blacks should become. He’s the ideally industrious ghetto dweller, unceasing in his endeavors to better himself. He believes he can make the system work. He believes that earthly salvation lies down the road of responsible labor. But whatever Victor believes, and however he acts on his beliefs, the odds are greatly stacked against him, and the demands placed upon him are so imposing, his struggle for self-improvement is almost literally exhausting. And, like everyone in the community, increasingly (like the citizens of the Balkans) like everyone else in our troubled country, Victor goes about armed. And where guns are, trouble is sure to follow.

Director Lee’s decision to style certain portions of this film is a perplexing departure from the book’s relentlessly gritty realism. His decision to stage certain key scenes in stagey back projection proves particularly disconcerting. And no doubt in an effort to underscore that drugs are not solely a problem of the black community, Lee surely errs by making it seem that whites are the vast majority of customers for Strike’s crack vials. In its focus on the violence of life in the drug trade, the film unfortunately neglects to detail the impact on those whose lives are destroyed by addiction. Nothing Lee depicts has the haunting quality of the novel’s opening description of a 14-year-old girl’s arrival to purchase her first rock: “Strike spotted her: Baby fat, baby face, Shanelle or Shanette, 14 years old maybe, standing there with that queasy smile, trying to work up the nerve. He looked away, seeing her two months from now, no more baby fat, stinky, just another pipehead.” In short, qualitative as it is, the film doesn’t measure up to the book from which it’s drawn. But, of course, if any novel’s good enough, which Clockers is, it’s impossible to do it justice in only two hours of cinema.

Whatever its small failings, though, the film version is well worth seeing, particularly as thought material in the aftermath of the Simpson affair. Fans of the novel may be puzzled as to Lee’s decision to relocate the story from New Jersey to Brooklyn, thereby robbing the tale of Strike’s ironic belief that in New York, things were really bad. And the novel’s fans will also surely observe a clearer note of hope in the film. But both works share strong messages about the devastating role of easy handgun ownership in our society (the film is the more forthrightly assertive on this point), and both underscore the inextricable connection between a culture of poverty and a climate of crime.
Sometime in the past Rodney recruited Strike; now Strike recruits a 12-year-old named Tyrone (Pee Wee Love) in the same manner. What's witheringly evident is that while Strike's motives in befriending Tyrone are in some considerable measure altruistic, his relationship with the boy is utterly insidious. Thus the vicious cycle spins on and will continue to spin on until we as an entire people finally find the compassion and joint will to make it stop.

II

Meanwhile we need to contemplate the implications of this film for our understanding of the criminal justice system. In Clockers, the young black men who fall under the gaze of policemen are treated as guilty until proven innocent. Passersby are swept up into dragnets and considered criminals until they can conclusively demonstrate otherwise. Deep concern with proper legal procedure is practically non-existent. If the young man in police custody is not actually guilty of the immediate crime with which he's charged, he's presumed guilty of some other crime. And so the policeman is not deeply troubled with lack of evidence in this particular case. When Victor confesses to shooting Daryl Adams, it doesn't matter to case officer Larry Mazilli (John Turturro) that the confession seems palpably odd. A confession means that he can close the case, and he can't at all understand why detective Klein isn't willing to do just that. Justice, in other words, is not high among his concerns.

An association of a black face with criminality has been the subject of other recent dramatic fictions as well. In the second episode of Steven Bochco's new TV series Murder One, a black school teacher is falsely accused of a violent act and once he's been identified, the police never consider the possibility of his innocence. He is outraged that his life-long record of good citizenship is not even considered as evidence that he might be innocent, and his expressions of anger are considered demonstrative of his guilt. Several years ago in an episode of L.A. Law, the high-powered young attorney played by Blair Underwood is arrested while jogging through a white neighborhood, his crime being solely the color of his skin. In Carl Franklin's current Devil in a Blue Dress (based on the Walter Mosley mystery), Denzel Washington's Easy Rawlins is brutalized by the police, not because they think him guilty of a crime, but because they think he may possess information they want. These are all fictions, but most any African American will tell you they are based on continuing, infuriating fact. And in grasping that fact we may move closer to understanding the investment black Americans developed in the fate of O.J. Simpson.

It is important to note that the African-American community is altogether capable of finding blacks guilty of murder. In my native New Orleans, twelve black jurors did just that twice in the last six weeks in a notorious triple murder case at a Vietnamese restaurant. Two of the victims, restaurant employees, were Asian. The third victim was a white policeman working a security detail. The murderers were both black, an off-duty female police officer and her nineteen-year-old male accomplice. The two killers were tried separately, and both claimed racial bias in their prosecution. But both were found guilty. In both cases the juries deliberated less than an hour, and in both the juries recommended death sentences. Critically perhaps, neither defendant alleged police misconduct.

Nothing in Clockers or the other works that I've cited diminishes my conviction in O.J. Simpson's guilt, nor am I shaken in my opinion that the twelve Simpson jurors erred grievously. But I am instructed by the testimony in these works that black Americans continue to suffer the outrage of discrimination in their dealings with the criminal justice system, a discrimination so widespread that its bitterness is tasted by the great majority of people of color in our country. One of the Simpson jurors has already confided that though she thought Simpson "probably guilty" she felt the attitudes and reputation of Mark Fuhrman were enough to give her "reasonable doubt." And that reasonable doubt was shared by millions of black people, genuinely shared by honorable people whose experience in our land is different from those of who are white. So late in our nation's history it is clear that even reasonable doubt comes in shades of black and white. My worst nightmare is that we shall fail finally to erase this division but rather, in our mutual distrust, march separately onward toward the Balkanization of our land. The lesson for those of us who were sickened by the Simpson verdict, who were shocked by the joyous reaction of the black community, is to insure that the Mark Fuhrmans of this world cease working in our nation's police forces and otherwise purge from our midst those who restrict their notion of justice by racial category. Only then can we reasonably expect those of our fellow citizens who are black to see justice in the same way we do. Only when we have truly guaranteed justice for all can we hope at last to become one nation, indivisible.
Remembering

We sat on the porch and waited
while heat lightning played over
Turley’s Woods and listened to owls
booming in the bottoms:

We knew she was dying upstairs,
lying on the hot sheets, listening
to the rain sluicing through
the rain gutters, watching the heavy
dotted-swiss curtains billow into
the room on the rising wind:

I remember wondering if the dead
ever dreamed they were still alive
and maybe walked through the kitchen
where my aunts cut the rabbits
and cleaned the pink skin at the cistern,
or could pick their way, by moon light,
to the barn and breathe the heavy smell
of hay and milk, listening to the cows
move against their stanchions, or stand
here on the porch, a hand on the doorknob,
to watch it rain:

I wanted to ask my father, but his face
was in shadow and the others sat in silence,
not looking at me, when a car turned
into our lane; its lights swept the house
and caught in puddles before it swung
out of the yard again and headed down
the white-rock road to the highway,
leaving us alone on the porch, the white
porcelain doorknob shining in the dark:
later, the men got up and went into the house or pulled on boots and went to the barn, and a light came on in the kitchen and voices rose and fell in the house, and I knew it was over. This is the way it happens, I thought. Everyone walks away and they talk in the kitchen and my father takes the team into the timber to cut sweet-gum and balsam; and from the parlor my aunt says they will let her wear the gray gloves she brought back from St. Louis, my uncles with their shovels to the upper garden. "Tomorrow will be fine," my aunt says behind me. "Wear your long pants." And the house withdrew into another kind of silence, with people going in and out of rooms, feet on the root cellar stairs where they counted the clean jars lined on shelves in the dark:

and I knew they would have to go upstairs to see about her and change the hot sheets and throw open the windows to the waking farm. There was no one to ask about it, about what it meant. And I had nothing to do that day or all the following days, but remember.

J.T. Ledbetter
Benne’s writing. It is clear, direct, crisp. And it has hard edges, free of cant and mush. Even those with time to do no more should read chapter 3 of this book, a chapter in which Benne offers what he terms a contemporary interpretation of the paradoxical vision (that is, his own interpretation of a two kingdoms Lutheran social ethic). Although I might wish to qualify his interpretation at a few places, it is an exceptionally clear discussion of the basic framework that has guided authentically Lutheran reflection on state and society. It is both accessible to general readers and sophisticated enough to engage readers who know some of the underlying issues that concern Benne. There is, of course, much else in the book, but this chapter is a small gem that ought not be overlooked.

What else is there? Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the concept of “public theology,” a now quite popular term, and set forth some of the current ways (mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, neoconservative) in which public theology is done in this country. After the discussion in chapter 3 of the basic outlines of the “paradoxical vision,” chapters 4 and 5 discuss the way that vision has been articulated in official statements of Lutheran church bodies in this country and three “individual expressions” of it (in the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, Glenn Tinder, and Richard Neuhaus). The last two chapters provide a very helpful typology of different ways in which churches seek to bring their theology to bear upon public life.

Benne characterizes the paradoxical vision in terms of four overlapping themes that might be summarized briefly as follows: (1) Politics is not redemptive. (2) We are God’s creatures, but corrupted creatures. As such, we are capable of acting justly in our dealings with each other, but our action will always also be marked by the disorder of sin. Our action is, to use Augustine’s notion, “splendid vice”—and both the noun and the adjective must be taken seriously. (3) The one God rules the world in two ways—through law and through gospel. These must be distinguished; neither should be turned into the other. But having distinguished them, we should not entirely separate them as if they marked out distinct realms; for God works in these two ways to achieve one saving purpose. (4) The cross is the sign that God’s kingdom has come into human history and that the kingdom is not yet fully realized in history. It energizes our activity in public while blocking all overly optimistic readings of human possibilities.

What these themes amount to, we might say, is a recognition that sanctification—of individuals and communities—always remains incomplete within human history. And having characterized the paradoxical vision in roughly these four ways, Benne then examines the public theology in the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, Glenn Tinder, and Richard Neuhaus. The last two chapters provide a very helpful typology of different ways in which churches seek to bring their theology to bear upon public life.
agreement over the strategy of divestment in South Africa warrants near excommunication. Serious confusion over the church’s sexual ethics is combined with utter clarity on policy in Central America.” If the churches are looking for a clear public policy stance that grows directly out of the paradoxical vision, Benne offers one principle that deserves to be taken seriously. Since the paradoxical vision holds that the political realm is not salvific, churches guided by that vision “ought to support religious freedom everywhere.”

The chapter in which Benne takes up “individual expressions” of the paradoxical vision is, in my judgment, the weakest in the book. He discusses the public theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Glenn Tinder, and Richard Neuhaus. Certainly each of them is worthy of such consideration, but, inevitably, Benne’s treatment of each is rather brief and a little too sketchy. Those who do not know their writings may not be told enough to be of much help. Those who do know their writings are unlikely to be given new insight. Nevertheless, the chapter makes an important point: the paradoxical vision, when taken seriously, need not lead to a single political outlook or program. Benne characterizes Niebuhr as a “liberal reformer,” Tinder as a “hesitant radical,” and Neuhaus as a “neoconservative activist.” No doubt any of these characterizations could be argued, but the point—that no single political stance is required by a Lutheran social ethic—is an important one.

In the book’s two final chapters Benne discusses how the church’s theology becomes public and how it ought to become public. He distinguishes between ways in which (intentionally and unintentionally) the church indirectly shapes the heart and mind of Christians on social issues without itself becoming a major actor in the public sphere. He is straightforward and persuasive in arguing that the paradoxical vision “leads its adherents to favor indirect modes of public theology.” But he does not rule out more direct connections in which the church may attempt to instruct the conscience of society, and he offers some guidelines for such instruction. (My favorite: “credibility increases as the frequency of church social statements decreases.”) When acting directly the church may also seek to move beyond such influence to the actual exercise of political power (as, for example, in political advocacy), but Benne offers good reasons for believing that the “general presumption” of the paradoxical vision should be against such forms of direct action.

Having done his best to display the power and the promise of a Lutheran vision for public theology, Benne nevertheless expresses at the end some doubt about its future prospects. To be sure, he presumes that individual Christians with various denominational affiliations will continue to be drawn to this vision. That keen Lutheran sense of the limits to sanctification within history will recommend itself to serious Christian thinkers.

But what about the church? The Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod continues to be seriously distracted by deadly struggles characteristic of divisive fundamentalist churches. The ELCA, heavily acculturated to other segments of the American culture, is buffeted by the strident feminism and multiculturalism of adversarial culture on the one hand, and by the religious individualism of mainstream culture on the other.

One would like to disagree, but his judgment may be just. Certainly the judgment does not properly characterize many congregations; yet, individual congregations alone cannot sustain and transmit the tradition of the paradoxical vision. Recognizing this, Benne is driven in his concluding paragraph to the language of faith and hope—not hope in Lutheranism but in the Spirit who sustains the church, and faith that wherever that church is the paradoxical vision will also be found.


If you are a professional philosopher with an interest in aesthetics, then obviously this book is a must. If you are a theologian with an interest in pneumatology it is equally essential. However, this is not a book to be left to people in those two categories, for it raises questions for all Christians. Although a solid and well-supported book (he is surprisingly well-informed about American writers for a mere Englishman!) it is not a difficult read. I commend it to anyone interested in the arts, in worship or even those just seeking to live a Christian life in this world. Sherry’s final sentence shows its importance to us all, “The important thing is that we look (or listen), rejoice, and give thanks” (182).

For those coming from a Protestant and especially a Lutheran background, his message that art is not a luxury is important. How can we say that God is beauty or beautiful and how does that relate to our experience of beauty in this world? Sherry explains beauty in Trinitarian terms and concentrates on the role of the Holy Spirit communicating God’s beauty to the world and of the eschatological significance of that beauty.

For this reader one of the most important contributions of this book was the way the author has managed to marry Orthodox and Protestant views and link them with the historical teaching of the early church. Those wanting guidance as to sources for

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reading will find this book a good place to begin. Although anyone could start a journey on a quest for theological aesthetics here, it is not just a beginner's book. The book is a development and addition to twentieth century aesthetics, since it considers seriously the role of theology. Sherry attributes the lack of a theology of beauty to fear of 'aestheticism' and 'elitism.' He also argues against the modern tendency to deny that there can be such a concept as beauty. He suggests we should 'loosen up' our approach to art in various ways, and should consider other characteristics besides beauty, and also bear in mind that the early Christian fathers had a wider conception of it than our current one (in any case, the Greek kalos has wider connotations than the English 'beautiful'); and we should look at other functions of art besides its ability to please us, for example its symbolic, representative, expressive, and emotionally moving capacities. (28)

In his second chapter, Sherry examines types of beauty and gives a good survey of opinions on the relationship between spiritual and aesthetic beauty. He argues that "the Holy Spirit may be regarded not only as inspiring artists or writers, but also as inspiring those who understand and appreciate their work" (54). While his exploration of beauty is valuable, I wish he had explored some of the ethnic and racial differences in the concept of beauty.

In the next chapter he explores the possibility of beauty being an attribute of God. Again he provides a very useful historical survey and, following Moltmann, concludes, "Western Christianity has given more attention to God's power than His beauty" (67) but he points to the exception of Jonathan Edwards. Sherry's exploration of the work of the Trinity here seems to be most seminal.

We have already noted his relating of Eastern and Western theologies and this is especially true in chapter four on The Holy Spirit in the Trinity. He sees the connection of the Holy Spirit with the truth and the doctrine of creation at the point where the Spirit breathes beauty into the world, and the weaving of Western and Eastern theologies here is very helpful.

As he examines inspiration in the following chapter (5) he warns, "nor should we look for a single essence of inspiration, whether in religious or secular contexts; nor should we assume that there is a single mode of operation" (115). Seeking to widen the concept, he relates it to imagination which he differentiates as an active power. Following Coleridge and George Eliot he sees it as a unifying power relating imagination to moral as well as to artistic activity. He writes

... it may require imagination to see that we should forgive and love our enemies, help people in the Third World as we do the poor at home, give a low priority to worldly success, and so on. In his Two Moralities A.D. Lindsay remarked that saints show imagination, spontaneity and creativity in their conduct; it is not so much that they do what ordinary people neglect, but they do what has not even occurred to the latter. (125)

The wonder and admiration evoked by artistic inspiration is seen "as part of our wonder at the manifoldness of creation and at the continued activity of the Holy Spirit in the world" (132).

As Sherry explores the relationship between divine and created beauty he offers his "minimal solution," "that God has created the world and is present in it, that its beauty is therefore His creation, and that this beauty is like divine beauty" (151). He then shows that we often make such cross-categorical comparisons, suggesting their usefulness here.

His final chapter, on "eschatological aesthetics," is perhaps the most satisfying and stimulating. He proposes that the Spirit perfects creation by both beautifying and sanctifying and that the creating of earthly beauty is an anticipation of what is to come. If you read any of this book, I would urge the importance of this chapter.

Sherry argues for a sacramental view of art against the "chastened" views of Calvin and his followers, though he neglects a distinction between sacred and non-sacred art in this connection. Does the music of the modern composer John Taverner owe more to the Holy Spirit than do the compositions of Stockhausen or Meat Loaf? Although Sherry refers to Eastern theology, he does not deal with its claim that there is a Christian art. He neither interacts with the icon painters who claim there is a Christian way of doing art nor with H.R. Rookmaaker who took a similar stance from a Reformed point of view. Although he hints that it is possible that art may not only depict hell but anticipate it (he refers to some of Francis Bacon's paintings) he does not explore the area of "negative" inspiration. What is the relationship between Cecil Collins and Bacon? I did not feel

The Window

The old lady in the nursing home loves the window, on rainy days makes an altar out of it... Rabbits and birds leave diamonds in her heart... she, the orphan of the darkness, finds the sun...

God sits in the window with her soul...

Marion Schoeberlein
he had given me the tools to be able to make an evaluation here.
This is a useful book on a neglected topic. If you are already pursuing these topics it will help you on your way and if you have not yet begun here is a good starting point for your path.

Terry Hemming

Notes on Poets—

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