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On and Beyond the Mississippi: Essays honoring Thomas Tredway

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**ON AND BEYOND
THE MISSISSIPPI**

Essays Honoring Thomas Tredway

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ON AND BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI

Essays Honoring Thomas Tredway





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Essays Honoring Thomas Tredway

EDITED BY

Dag Blanck and Michael Nolan

The Augustana Historical Society

Rock Island, Illinois

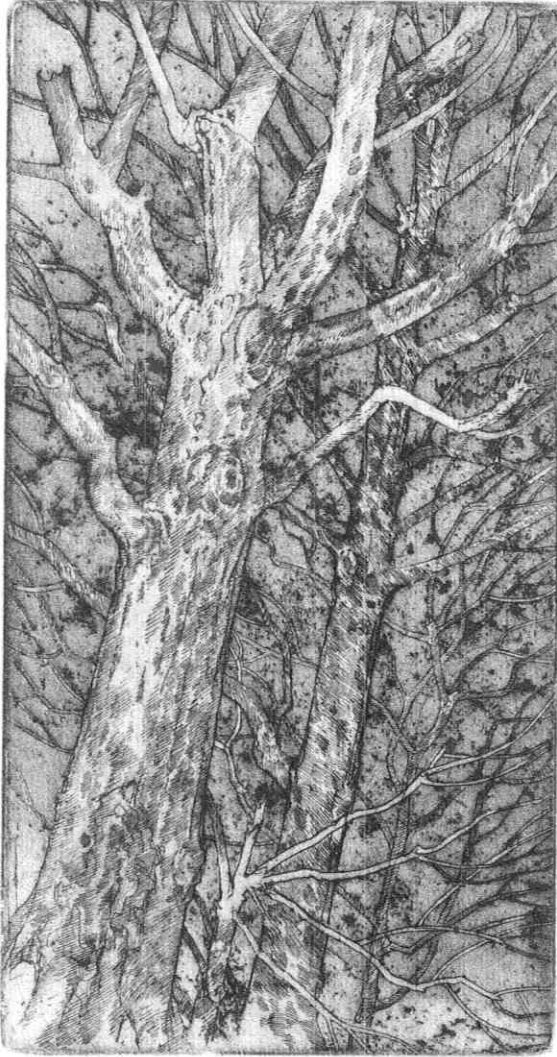
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Oak Grove

1850

R. O. Allen

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Introduction

This collection of essays honors Thomas Tredway on his retirement as President of Augustana College in the summer of 2003. The contributors include Augustana graduates from different generations, colleagues at the college, and friends from both on and off campus. The essays focus on themes and subjects that have been important both in the history of Augustana College and in Tom's own life.

Augustana College originated in a trans-Atlantic experience and was a part of the immigration and adaptation of ideas from Europe to America. Several articles in this volume address this past or reflect on the larger issue of European-American interrelations, an academic area that has long interested Tredway. In 1968, as a young Augustana history professor, he and Iverne Dowie published a collection of essays, *The Immigration of Ideas: Studies in the North Atlantic Community*, that explore the transatlantic connection and honored Tom's mentor, O. Fritiof Ander. As dean in the 1970s, Tredway started the three-month foreign-study term to give Augustana students first-hand experience as well as academic study on the European continent. In the present volume, Roald Tweet and Maria Erling provide historical perspectives, both shorter and longer term, on Augustana and her sister schools in the Augustana Synod. Erling explores the creation of a Scandinavian identity as it developed in a tension between European origin and new American context, Tweet the nature of Augustana and its relation to the community and the world around it. Nils Hasselmo's point of departure in the linguistic experience of Swedish Americans provides the background for a discussion of bilingualism and minority languages in the U.S. and Europe today. Larry Scott traces trans-Atlantic influences between Woody Allen (one of Tredway's favorite filmmakers) and Ingmar Bergman, while Dag Blanck discusses the influences of the United States in Sweden, particularly on Swedish secondary education.

Though trained as historian, one of Tredway's passions is literature and poetry. English majors in the 1970s and 1980s will recall his debates with Roald Tweet about whether William Wordsworth's "I Wander'd Lonely as a Cloud" was a good poem or not, or whether Henry James's "implied mind of the author" was a sufficient explanation for why readers sought out great imaginative literature. Kenneth Johnston's meditation on Wordsworth's powerful and evocative "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" that explores the relation of place, self, and memory and Dorothy Parkander's essay on Milton's evolving vision of the Christian poet are therefore fitting inclusions in a volume honoring Tredway. Likewise, poems by friends Richard Swanson and Art Mampel have a place.

The nature and future of liberal education and the liberal-arts college have been central to Tom's tenure as professor, dean, and president at Augustana. In an era when liberal-arts education has come under increased scrutiny

and discussion, Tredway's firm commitment to the liberal arts contributed significantly to the current strength of the institution. As Tweet suggests in his essay, Augustana, whatever its excellences, was not always best described as a liberal-arts college. Though Tredway's 1975 presidential inaugural address is fondly recalled for its brevity (particularly by the faculty sitting in the sun in full academic regalia), in retrospect it can be seen as an announcement for centrality of the liberal arts at Augustana. Casting the college in a long tradition of free inquiry and study going back to the Greeks, Tredway reminded his listeners that the Swedish immigrants who came to the Midwest and founded Augustana believed that liberal learning could bloom in the prairies.

Tredway's inaugural address announced clearly that Augustana was a liberal-arts college, at a time when students were more openly seeking career training, and other colleges were already beginning to shift their focus. Comparing schools in the Quad-City area is instructive. Across the river from Augustana in Davenport, St. Ambrose University grew and prospered by recreating itself, adding adult education and graduate programs in areas that the marketplace valued. Marycrest University after years of struggle closed its doors in 2002.

In such times, Augustana managed something difficult. Despite having to keep enrollment steady so as not to overtax campus resources, Augustana maintained a liberal-arts curriculum for traditional college-age students and expanded both facilities and the college endowment. Though practical minded students wanted to study business and preprofessional programs, Augustana resisted the temptation to eliminate departments central to the liberal arts, despite times when they endured low enrollments. New buildings were added to the campus, including a beautifully designed library that is very popular with students; a \$23-million, 100,000 square-foot building that provided an up-to-date home for biology, chemistry, and physics; a \$7.5-million center for computer science, mathematics, and computer services, as well as extensive renovations to existing buildings for geology and geography, foreign languages, and the arts. The college endowment grew from \$4 to \$72 million.

But Tredway frequently remarked that good facilities are nothing if the college does not have a strong faculty and curriculum. In his years as president, the percentage of faculty with the highest degree in their fields grew from 63 percent to 91 percent, and the faculty grew from 113 in 1975 to 141 in 2003. As president, Tredway saw two major revisions of Augustana's general-education curriculum in 1991 and 2002, both of which called for faculty and administration to think carefully about what was central to the college and what was peripheral. In this volume, William Bondeson's discussion of differing visions of a liberal education and the long foreground in philosophical thought for such discussions provides a timely and level-headed reflection on what constitutes an educated citizen, and by implication the contribution that Augustana and schools like it make to that process.

Religion has played a central role for Augustana College through all of its life. Augustana was founded as a seminary in 1860, primarily to train pastors for the Lutheran ministry and teachers for proposed parish schools. By 1870, Augustana had enrolled enough students studying at the higher levels to be renamed Augustana College and Theological Seminary, the institution's name until 1948 when the Seminary and the College became two separate entities. Following the creation of the Lutheran Church in America in 1962, the Seminary moved to Chicago and became part of the Lutheran School of Theology. Almost from the start, Augustana's religious background co-existed with a commitment to a broad academic curriculum, with, for example, a strong program of study

in the natural sciences, including geology. Openness to free inquiry and an ecumenical view of religion were important to Tredway as president. During his tenure, Tredway characterized Augustana as a “church-related” school, not a “Christian” college, in accord with the Lutheran doctrine of the “two kingdoms.” Academic inquiry, part of the kingdom of this world, was free to follow disciplinary rules of evidence in its work. But religious ideas, which can help usher in the kingdom to come, were central as well, a coequal part of the search for knowledge. In some sense this is a harder institutional path, likely disappointing to those who seek a simpler standard piety and conventional religious assurances, as well as to those who would see religion as irrelevant to a search for meaning and truth in an academic setting. But in Tredway’s vision from the creative tension between the two realms of human knowing comes a dialog that leads to enrichment and truth. This Lutheran vision of dialog means that religion never controls humans’ free inquiry, but also that secular ideas are tested by the Christian gospel, which Tredway characterized as vital: a free, gracious gift from God, not a dead set of static principles. Ronald Goetz’s reflective essay on the sinlessness of Christ, in which he explores a seemingly dead theological topic and shows its relevance for the contemporary world, is true to the Augustana vision. And Goetz’s article with its attention to both kingdoms also fits well within that dialectic.

Two contributors who did not write for the volume are important to note, for their work lends beauty to the volume, a quality that Tredway would personally appreciate. Anyone who compares the Augustana campus in 1975, the year Tredway became president, to the campus that he retired from in 2003 will understand why George Olson’s art finds a place in the volume. Though Tredway’s impact on the campus touched all areas, a visitor from the 1970s and before would note not only the many new buildings, but the groups of trees that adorn the central campus area. This part of campus, which once looked more like a golf course with large, open expanses of lawn, is now a tree-lined grove. Olson’s art, which serves for the cover and for chapter dividers, faithfully details plants from throughout the Midwest. Some of them, such as Bur Oak (page 101) and Tulip Poplar (page 115) are native to the Augustana campus and Rock Island area. Barbara Bradac, who as Director of Publications worked with Tredway for years on president’s reports, brochures, programs, and dozens of projects, has lent her considerable talent to the book design. Tom has affectionately noted that Bradac is the kind of careful designer who will spend time moving text 1/64th of an inch until the design matches what she has in her mind and information and image work together harmoniously for the reader. Bradac’s care, precision, and love of beauty in service of the written word are evident in this book’s design.

As a retired professor of religion has pointed out, Augustana has had a tradition of long presidencies, only seven from 1860 to 2003. The long tenure of each president has meant that each person has been able to put a personal stamp on Augustana. Most of the people who contributed to this volume feel gratified that they have been a part of Augustana. They felt particularly grateful for their long association with the college during the Tredway years—a time period of more than a quarter of a century that has been of fundamental significance for the life and character of Augustana College, its faculty, students, and staff. Their contributions here are one small way of saying thank you.

DAG BLANCK
MICHAEL NOLAN
March 2004

Contributors

Dag Blanck is Director of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College, and a university lecturer at the Centre for Multiethnic Research at Uppsala University. He was educated at Augustana—originally coming to Rock Island as a Mauritzson exchange student—at Stockholm University and at Uppsala University, where he received his Ph.D. in history. He has worked on Swedish-American history and on Swedish-American cultural and political relations, and has edited and written several books and articles in the fields.

William Bondeson, who graduated from Augustana College in 1958, is Curators' Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy and Family and Community Medicine and Assistant to the Chancellor at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is the author of numerous books and articles on ancient philosophy, higher education, and medical ethics, including *New Knowledge in the Biomedical Sciences* (1982), *Rights to Health Care* (1990), and *Ethical Issues in Managed Care: Professional Integrity and Patients' Rights* (2002). He is the recipient of a many awards, has been an American Council of Learned Societies fellow, and is actively involved in many public service activities.

Maria Erling, who graduated from Augustana College in 1978, is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity in North America and Global Mission at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Her research has focused on congregational life and immigration in New England, and on the history of the Augustana Synod. She serves on the board of the Augustana Heritage Association, and has recently been commissioned to be the co-author of a history of the Augustana Synod.

Ronald Goetz is professor emeritus of Theology and Religion at Elmhurst College. He was the Staley Distinguished Scholar at Goshen College and holds the Niebuhr Distinguished Chair of Theology and Ethnics. The Editor at Large of *The Christian Century*, Goetz has published more than 180 articles and reviews. He has known Tredway since they met as graduate students at Northwestern University in the 1960s.

Nils Hasselmo, who graduated from Augustana College in 1957, is President of the Association of American Universities. He has been a professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Minnesota, and has served as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Arizona in Tucson and as President at the University of Minnesota. His research has focused on Swedish and Swedish-American linguistics, and his many publications include the standard study of the Swedish language in America, *Amerikasvenska* (1974). Hasselmo has received the King of Sweden's Royal Order of the North Star.

Kenneth R. Johnston, who graduated from Augustana College in 1959, is Ruth N. Halls Professor of English at Indiana University. His research interests focus on English and American Romanticism; Wordsworth, Coleridge and their circles; the 1790s; the literature, history, and politics in the revolutionary period; and republicanism. Included among his books and many articles are *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (1998, 2001), the winner of the Jean Carafelli award of the American Conference on romanticism for 1999; *Romantic Revolutions: Theory and Criticism* (1989); and *Wordsworth and "The Recluse"* (1984). He is the recipient of Guggenheim, NEH, Fulbright, and Lilly fellowships.

Arthur G. Mampel graduated from Knox College in 1957 and received a Master of Divinity from North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1962. He has had eight books of poetry published by Motecurb Press and has published in several other periodicals and magazines. Three of his poems were used by the composer Libby Larsen and three by the composer Carol Sams for songs and anthems.

George Olson, who graduated from Augustana College in 1958, is an artist and was Professor of Art at the College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio until his retirement in 2000. His artwork has for several years focused almost exclusively on the grasses and wildflowers of the North American prairie, and his plant studies have been shown widely in the United States and England. He has had more than 30 one-person exhibitions, including at the British Museum (Natural History) and the Royal Horticultural Society in London. In 2000 he moved to Woodhull, Illinois, and in 2001 he was invited to contribute a large etching to "A Prairie Suite," a portfolio of twelve original prints sponsored by the Grinnell Center for Prairie Studies in Grinnell, Iowa.

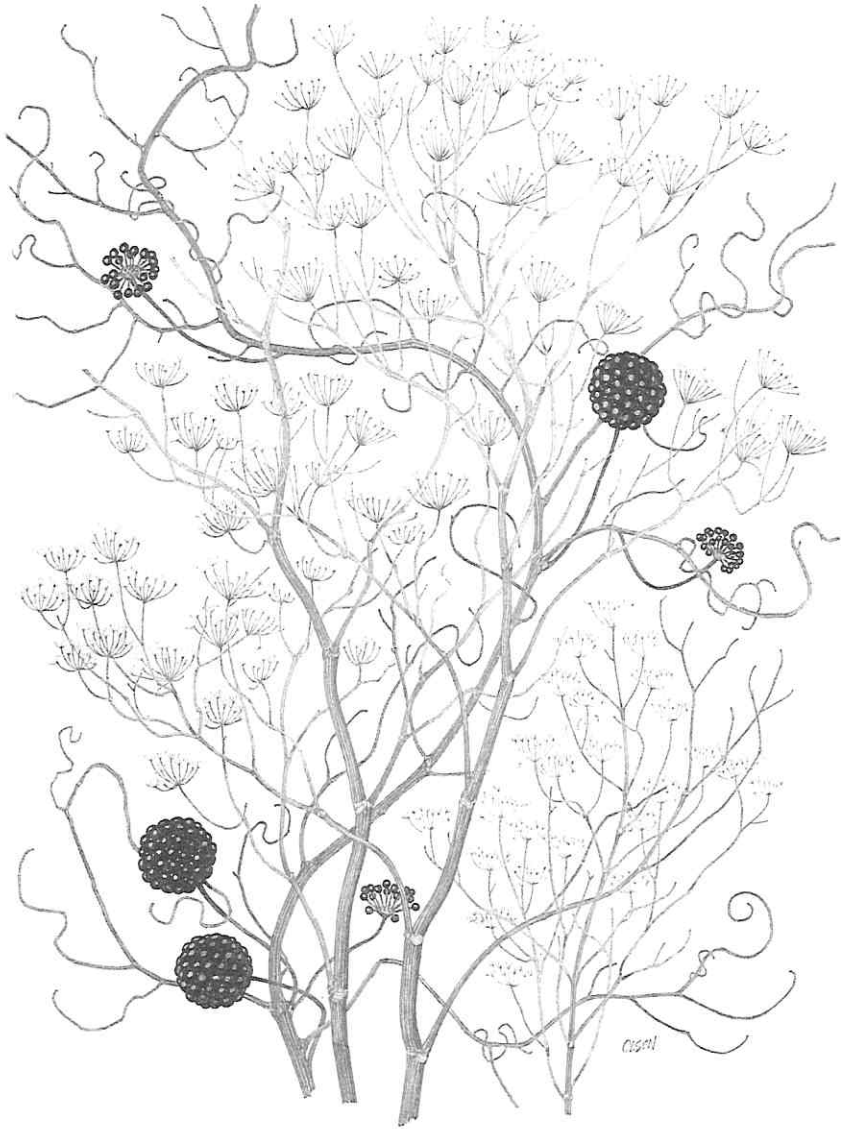
Dorothy J. Parkander is Conrad Bergendoff Professor Emerita in the Humanities at Augustana College, Rock Island, from which she graduated in 1946. Her doctorate from the University of Chicago explored rhetorical theory and practice in Puritan sermons of the seventeenth century. A member of the English department at Augustana for nearly fifty years, Parkander taught rhetoric, drama, poetry (especially that of Chaucer and Milton), and fiction (especially the development of the English novel). Her many honors include selection as 1992 Illinois Professor of the Year by the Washington, D.C.-based Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. In 2001, five years after her retirement, Augustana College established the Dorothy J. Parkander Chair in Literature—the first academic chair in the school's history to honor a woman scholar.

Larry E. Scott is Professor of Scandinavian Studies at Augustana College. His scholarly interests are in Swedish literature, Swedish film, and Swedish-American history. He has published a number of articles in these fields as well as the only book length study of Swedish immigration to Texas, *The Swedish Texans* (1991). He also serves as the President of the Augustana Historical Society. He is the recipient of the King of Sweden's Royal Order of the North Star.

Richard Swanson is Emeritus Chaplain of Augustana College. A 1954 graduate of Augustana College and 1958 graduate of Augustana Theological Seminary, Swanson served as founding pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Itasca, Illinois, from 1958 to 1966. He served as founding and only pastor of the Augustana Campus Church from 1966 to 1983. He retired as chaplain of

Augustana College in 1999. When not out walking the byways of the Quad Cities he lives with his college classmate and wife, Lorian Sundelius, in Rock Island. Swanson and Tredway have been friends since paddling a canoe together on the Maquoketa River in 1970. Over the years they have found themselves up a number of cricks, but never without a paddle. Retirement finds them still pondering together life's persistent questions.

Roald Tweet is Professor Emeritus of English at Augustana College, where he served as the Conrad Bergendoff Professor in the Humanities. He has written and lectured widely on the history and culture of the Upper Mississippi Valley, for example *A History of the Rock Island District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1866-1983*, as well as on the history of Augustana College. Professor Tweet is also the author and reader of *Rock Island Lines*, an ongoing series of award-winning stories about the region's traditions, institutions, and people, past and present, which are broadcast on WVIK-FM.



ROALD TWEET

Five Reflections on Living with a Hyphen

1

In the fall of 1958, when my wife Margaret and I returned to the University of Chicago to complete my graduate work, we joined Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park. These were hard times for the small, elderly Swedish congregation whose decaying neighborhood was caught in a swirl of urban renewal.

It was at Augustana Lutheran that Margaret and I first heard of Augustana College. For the Bensons and the rest, trying to find a path between a desire to keep their Swedish roots alive and a need to reach out to Hyde Park's changing population, Augustana College to the west, almost a hundred years old, stood as a symbol of tradition and stability. In their casual conversation at coffee after church, they made the college sound like a combination of Eden and Valhalla. Or Camelot. Even its location was mythical: "by the Mighty Mississippi, on a rocky shore."

As St. Olaf graduates, Margaret and I took this reverence with some reservation. Nevertheless, two years later, in August of 1960, as we headed west toward this Eden on the Mississippi where I would be a new assistant professor of English, we carried great expectations fueled by the Hyde Park Swedes.

Alas, it was not so.

While there were several gods walking the halls and sidewalks of Augustana College amid blond Adams and Eves, it was clear that the Serpent had preceded us. Two busy streets cut the campus into pieces, and the view of the Mississippi was blocked by the blank walls of the huge Farmall Works and its ten thousand employees.

The outside world was just as intrusive in the classroom. Half of my students were townies, many of them working their way through Augustana in local factories. A few were older than I was. Most were neither Swedish nor Lutheran. One of my first assignments was to teach in the night school set up primarily for local elementary teachers in their fifties forced by changing Illinois requirements to complete their college degrees or quit teaching. They were neither sweet nor happy.

There were courses in surveying, drafting, typewriting, and bookkeeping, and a large business department. One-fourth of all freshman English courses were remedial—four hours a week instead of three. There were philosophy majors alongside pre-med, pre-engineering, and pre-law programs.

If Augustana had ever been the Eden-Valhalla it was in the imaginations of the Hyde Park Swedes, it was no longer so in 1960—its hundredth year. From our perspective of St. Olaf College, high on Manitou Heights, Augustana seemed more like a community college appended to a religion requirement.

2

These reflections on my first encounter with Augustana came to me one April as I sat with several colleagues in St. Olaf College's new \$26-million Buntrock Commons, at a conference on the future of Lutheran colleges in the new millennium. Several times during the weekend's presentations, I listened to St. Olaf students and faculty use a metaphor I had never heard: "the St. Olaf Bubble."

My Augustana colleagues were puzzled by this and other examples of St. Olaf dialect, but I knew exactly what the bubble was all about. In the fall of 1951 I moved into a dorm room in Ytterboe Hall (within feet of where I was now sitting in Buntrock Commons) and was soon immersed in the world that was St. Olaf. For four years, aside from trips home with the laundry, and several sneaks into Northfield a mile away for a forbidden sloe gin fizz, I lived and breathed Manitou Heights. Even my summer jobs were all with other Oles. I knew there was a Korean War off-campus (most of my classmates turned pre-sem to avoid the draft), but it did not affect my life in either class or dorm.

It was interesting to discover that the bubble was still there, now visibly represented by the cavernous Buntrock Commons, and that contemporary students were as safe and comfy inside as I had been.

Sitting in the back seat of the van on the seven-hour ride back to Rock Island, I was free to reflect on how and why St. Olaf and Augustana were so different from each other in both manner and philosophy. It was clear from the presentations at the conference that no two Lutheran colleges had the same goals, the same fears, or the same needs. Each had its own culture created by both nature and nurture. But there were family groups, at least. Luther and Concordia might be cousins of St. Olaf (these three agreed that a faculty at least two-thirds Lutheran was essential for a Lutheran college to remain Lutheran), while Gustavus and Augustana were part of another branch of the family, neither so ethnic nor so Lutheran.

One thing seemed clear. It would never have occurred to me to use the image of the "Augustana bubble," even though I had expected one from all the talk at Augustana Lutheran Church in 1958.

If not the bubble—so appropriate for St. Olaf—then what comparable image defined Augustana?

Somewhere between Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, it came to me. The hyphen. Augustana defines itself when necessary as "church-related." Not so St. Olaf, Luther, and Concordia. Concordia defines itself as "a Lutheran college," while St. Olaf and Luther are officially "colleges of the church." All three colleges see themselves as educational *and evangelical* wings of the ELCA. Not so Wagner College, which is "formerly Lutheran."

In between, caught by an ambiguous and nervous hyphen, is Augustana College. Does church-related imply that Augustana had an evangelical mission, so clear at St. Olaf? No. On the other hand, is Augustana, like a Lutheran Hospital or Lutheran Social Services, a gift by Lutherans to the secular world? That's not quite it, either.

"Church-related" is even more ambiguous than that. Does the phrase imply that Augustana is trying to distance itself from close ties to the church, or does it imply that the college is trying to hold on to that relationship? Grammar texts are no help. One says the hyphen implies separation, another that it unites. One calls the hyphen a punctuation mark; another puts it in the chapter on spelling. Are the elements on each side of the hyphen equal participants, or does the

hyphen subordinate one to the other? Which of the compound words qualifies or limits the other? Periods, commas, and colons clarify; hyphens confuse.

Nevertheless, the hyphen seems to be an important part of the life of Augustana College. Its roots are Swedish-American, its original curriculum Swedish-Yale, its original purpose a struggle between maintaining the old culture and preparing its students for jobs in America. As a Christian-liberal-arts college, it shares the Western dilemma—what Mills called “having one foot in Athens and the other in Jerusalem.” Even its liberal-arts intent has always been caught between being pure or practical. In which of those categories does operating a conservatory of music in order to train organists for churches fit?

The hyphen has made life at Augustana more restless than at St. Olaf—difficult to decide on a clear mission statement, difficult to decide on a school calendar, difficult to work out a uniform set of general-education requirements, difficult to decide how many, if any, religion courses should be required, and what these should be. Wherever it turns, Augustana can never quite make up its mind. Pronouncements and programs are always tentative.

But I want to argue in my last reflection that this same hyphen is not a liability or a shortcoming, but a strength. For me, at least, living with the hyphen has made my forty years of teaching richer and more interesting in Rock Island than I can imagine it having been had I disappeared inside a bubble at Luther or St. Olaf or Concordia.

3

I confess that the idea of an Augustana hyphen is not mine. While browsing old issues of the *Rock Island Argus* last year, I came across an entire address on the subject by President Gustav Andreen, the keynote speech of a midsummer fest in Moline’s Prospect Park on June 24, 1916. Thousands of Swedes from Moline, Rock Island, and many surrounding communities had gathered on this traditional day to raise the maypole, hold folk dances, thrill to the music of the Svea Chorus and the Swedish National Chorus, and to listen to President Andreen, E.W. Olson, and other Augustana College dignitaries recall past glories.

This particular midsummer, however, was a nervous one. The sinking of the *Lusitania* the year before was drawing the United States closer toward the war in Europe. At home the United States seemed only days away from war with Mexico. Politicians in Congress and elsewhere were calling for patriots to be suspicious of “hyphenated Americans,” those naturalized citizens who retained the names of both countries: Swedish-American, Mexican-American. To which country were they really loyal?

For Augustana and the other local Swedish-Americans, the nervousness was intensified by a gathering that same Saturday in Exposition Park in the west end of Rock Island, where the Tri-Cities were completing a week-long patriotic celebration of the 100th anniversary of Fort Armstrong. As the Swedes in Prospect Park danced around the maypole, the non-hyphenated citizens of Rock Island were thrilling to a recreation of General Winfield Scott’s capture of Chapultepec in 1847 during the Mexican War, complete with fireworks and cannon—a reminder of the current conflict with Mexico. It was understood that all genuinely patriotic Americans should be there.

No wonder, then, that the Swedes were nervous. In the end, the midsummer fest itself was hyphenated. Prospect Park was decorated with both Swedish and American colors. President Andreen gave what the *Argus* called “a stirring patriotic address,” calling for the addition of a munitions plant to the

Rock Island Arsenal—but he gave the address in Swedish. The Swedish National Chorus brought the crowd to its feet with a rousing performance of “Vårt Land,” “Björneborg March,” and “Hälsning,” but they also performed the “Star-Spangled Banner” and “God Bless Our Land.” The Swedish folk games were supplemented by foot races and other American sports.

President Andreen took note of the “political demagogues” who “flaunt the hyphen in [our] faces as a sign of divided allegiance.” He reminded the crowd that “the traditions of the native land can always be preserved in tender and sacred memory without impairing ideals of citizenship.” Yet, in the end, he reminded the crowd that it was probably time for the hyphen to fade. Immigrants have come from all over the world to form an even greater nation than those from which they came. The hyphen has ceased to have any real meaning.

Except, ironically, at the very college President Andreen served. Here, it seems to me, through three more presidencies, the hyphen still defines and determines many of Augustana’s thoughts and activities.

4

Shortly after he became president of Augustana College and Seminary in 1934, Dr. Conrad Bergendoff was asked by P.O. Bersell, the new president of the Augustana Synod, to explain what he had in mind by admitting so many non-Lutherans and non-Swedes to the college. Augustana’s basketball team that year had not a single Swede on the starting five, and the graduating class included a future rabbi. Was not Augustana a Lutheran institution supported by the Augustana Lutheran Synod in order to train Lutheran students?

Dr. Bergendoff’s response was uncharacteristically nervous. Yes, Augustana was a Lutheran College whose mission was to train Lutheran students. What about the “outsiders,” the townies of all religious persuasions? They were there, Dr. Bergendoff explained, to help train Lutheran students to get along in the pluralistic society they would face after graduation. In return for helping out the Lutheran students adjust to the real world, the townies received an excellent liberal-arts education, so there was no need for apologies to them. They were first-rate second-class citizens. It was a difficult question, and Dr. Bergendoff may be forgiven for not rising to Solomon’s level on this occasion.

Dr. Bergendoff was neither the first nor the last president to struggle with the dilemma of what percentage of allegiance Augustana owed to town and what percentage to gown. The college has been hyphenated from its very beginnings. It moved to Rock Island in 1875 to be at the center of a growing Swedish immigrant community, not to isolate itself in an ivory tower. In fact, the advance agent sent from Paxton to scout the new location, English professor Hans Reck, reported a good response from the local Swedes, but an even more impressive response from the “Americans.” Finding a balance between serving its Swedish constituency and serving the community—the Americans—was an Augustana problem from the beginning. Until 1925, for instance, there was a separate business department with its own graduation ceremonies. The Conservatory of Music trained organists and choir directors for local churches. Augustana faculty served as founding pastors for almost half the Lutheran Churches in the Quad Cities. The college offered secretarial training to those wishing to enter the workforce.

The Great Depression, followed almost immediately by World War II, brought an even greater involvement in the community with new practical courses and a larger percentage of non-Lutheran, non-Swedish students.

World War II brought the Navy and math courses for pilots. During the War, Dr. Bergendoff was instrumental in helping found Moline Community College (now Black Hawk College) partly so that Augustana would not feel obligated to offer community classes, but when Augustana agreed to accept students under the G.I. Bill in 1946, he realized that it would never be an ivory tower.

The 1950s saw Augustana introduce programs in nursing and a night school for area teachers needing to complete their degrees.

There were new courses in drafting and surveying. In 1960, Centennial Hall was completed with pledges from local citizens with the understanding that it would be used not only for college but also for community events such as concerts and graduations.

Augustana's academic offerings for the community peaked in 1969 with master's degrees in science and liberal studies, specifically serving local teachers and Rock Island Arsenal employees.

Under Dr. Tredway's vision of Augustana as a national liberal-arts college in danger of spreading itself too thin, Augustana dropped most of its academic community programs. The master's degrees are gone, as is nursing and the degree in music education. Nevertheless, through extra-curricular activities, the college and the community are so entangled that, even should they want to, neither seems likely to extricate itself from the other. Hyphenated Augustana was, and hyphenated it remains.

5

For the past two decades, Augustana has shifted away from community-oriented programs on one side of the hyphen in order to concentrate on becoming a respected national liberal-arts college with but a single degree. Among undergraduates, the percentage of local students has dropped lower and lower. During this same time, the other Quad-City colleges have moved in exactly the opposite direction. St. Ambrose University and Marycrest (until it closed in 2002) vastly multiplied their community-based programs with master's and Ph.D. degrees, weekend colleges, accelerated courses in business, travel, and nursing. At least half of their energy and resources is now spent serving the community.

Why, then, is Augustana, more than ever in the Quad Cities, the little college everyone loves (except for those who live near student housing)? "Oh, my, you're from Augustana."

I don't think I'm exaggerating. I speak frequently on the chicken-salad circuit, at Kiwanis, at P.E.O., at libraries and clubs. As soon as I'm introduced as being from Augustana, I can see and hear my stock rise among the audience, and I know they're going to pay attention. "You're from Augustana" is almost always said with enough awe and reverence to make me uneasy. I have given up trying to explain that Augustana is not quite the combination of Eden and Valhalla it was for the Hyde Park Swedes.

Why should this be so? There are several possibilities.

One of the reasons is merely fortuitous. The Quad Cities is just the right size for Augustana. Communities like St. Olaf's Northfield and Luther's Decorah, neither one much larger than their colleges, often feel overwhelmed and even dominated by those colleges. Relations between town and gown are often edgy. Imagine living in Decorah, with the lowest per-capita income in Iowa, alongside relatively wealthy faculty and students. On the other hand, colleges in large communities such as Naperville, Elmhurst, and Chicago find it hard to make

enough of an impression on the public, no matter how many community classes they might offer in order to survive. They may be known, and even respected, in those communities, but they are never known as “our college.”

Another reason one often hears to account for Augustana’s reputation is the large number of graduates in important positions in the Quad Cities. There are mayors, lawyers, doctors, corporate executives, and a congressman or two. These graduates tend to be both prominent and loyal.

A third reason for Augustana’s star status is certainly the campus itself. With a few aberrations during hard times (the old Student Union and the Fine Arts Building), Augustana’s decision to go first class in its buildings and programs has impressed even those who have little other contact with the college. The Thomas Tredway Library, Wallenberg Hall, the Science Building, and the Franklin W. Olin Center for Educational Technology are only the most recent examples of a trend that goes back to Old Main and Denkmann Library. This reputation for excellence, integrity, and tradition is the same thing that makes Quad-Citians proud of John Deere, even among those who don’t farm. Augustana and John Deere both stand for something beyond their products.

I’d like to suggest that there is a fourth and even more important reason for Augustana’s reputation in the Quad Cities. As a result of Augustana’s nervous, long-standing hyphenated relationship between town and gown, the college has never developed a single, stable relationship with the community. Instead, there are a series of relationships always in flux, like waves moving out from dis-turbed water. No other college with which I am familiar has so many levels of community involvement as Augustana.

In the inner circle sits the college itself: its faculty, students, and curriculum—what President Tredway referred to as “the national liberal-arts college.” Here the activities and energies are almost exclusively directed toward educating students. “Almost,” because even in its heart, there is some contamination by members of the community taking a course or two, non-traditional students beginning new careers.

Conversely, in the extreme outer wave are those Augustana programs almost exclusively for the community (although there might be minimal student involvement). The most visible of these community-oriented programs are WVIK public radio, the Augustana Research Foundation, and the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center. Few students use or work in these facilities. They are gifts to the community.

Between the inner circle and the outer wave lie an incredible number of college-community programs. Just beyond the inner circle are a number of events and activities designed specifically for college more than community, but involving many community members. These would include the plays, concerts, recitals, sports, summer schools in Ecuador, and other extra-curricular activities. Just inside the outer wave are those programs more for community than college. Here one finds the *Messiah*, the Planetarium, the Rock Island Fine Arts Exhibits, with somewhat more student participation than WVIK or the Swenson Center.

In the middle wave, with almost equal participation by the college and the community are the Sankta Lucia Fest, the Super-Author series, the choir, band, and orchestra concerts, the Fryxell Museum, the many endowed lectures in Judaism, psychology, and the sciences.

Even the design of many Augustana facilities has taken into account both community and college needs. Centennial Hall hosts many non-college events. The size of the College Center dining room was determined, in part, by the need

to host community events such as United Way banquets. The track around the football field is used by community activities such as high school athletics and Special Olympics, and as the starting place for a variety of runs.

In this way, with literally dozens of programs, Augustana has blurred the crisp separation between town and gown typical of most other small colleges. The Augustana hyphen has produced a buffer zone, if you will, that allows both college and community to venture toward each other to whatever level each faculty member, student, or community member is comfortable. The Augustana faculty, for instance, are spread out across every level from isolation in the library and laboratory to community activism. The college itself has been free to move back and forth from relative isolation toward community involvement as changing times and educational philosophies demand.

And so Margaret and I have been part of this hyphenated college for forty years—much of it spent in the snack bar over coffee with faculty and students, alumni, children, Dr. Alex Stone, *Argus* reporters, and other pilgrims on their way through this world. The idea of a “work break” has always seemed to me more civilized than a “coffee break.” Our original intention was to move after three years and seek more interesting fortunes, but we have not had to move. We have stayed put right at the hyphen, while the best of two worlds has come to visit.



MARIA ERLING

Nordic and Protestant: Swedish-American Identity in America

Swedish immigrants who came to America in the second half of the nineteenth century followed several well-worn paths to a new land. Many followed earlier rural migrants from Norway and came to farmland in the Midwest. Later, immigrants responded to the growing industrialization of their own country when they chose to come to the growing Northern cities and factory towns in the United States. All along, cultural and political leaders in these cities were themselves interested in the choices immigrants made. They sought ways to influence the types of immigrants who would settle in their towns, hoping to advance their own political, religious, and cultural ideals. Protestant church bodies invested money in home mission efforts directed at immigrant communities, while city councils enacted laws to restrict tavern keeping. In their interactions with immigrant workers, American employers began to selectively recruit new employees to fashion a workforce more amenable to their particular needs.

Even modest efforts to induce immigrants to settle in a particular region, through recruiting strategies or job offers, could have significant effects on the pattern of migration, for the chain of events following successful migration by a group of individuals was that others followed and created a settlement. Another effect of active recruitment by interested Americans did not leave obvious immediate traces, but may have had a more lasting effect on the people who were subjected to it. I will argue in this paper that Americans who worked to entice people of Nordic descent into coming to their businesses or communities were motivated to do so by their interest in promoting the settlement of immigrants with desirable “racial” and religious qualities. This explicit motivation was not well hidden; Swedes and other Scandinavian immigrants were well aware that they were seen as desirable settlers, and this favorable context affected the way that they themselves assessed the contribution they would make to the newly evolving population of the United States. In being perceived as desirable because of their Nordic features and more acceptable than other immigrants because of their Protestant faith, Scandinavian immigrants, and particularly their leaders, emphasized these aspects of their heritage in the construction of their own ethnic identity.

Church groups were particularly active agents in leading the process of assimilation into American society. Though Swedish Americans formed many ethnic associations that were not connected to religious purposes, the larger work of creating a Swedish-American identity was fostered by church bodies

through their congregations, colleges, and other institutions, where the many anniversaries, building dedications, and graduation ceremonies provided occasions for immigrants to gather and express their developing sense of identity in America, where they more and more came to feel their welcome.

The American Welcome

William Widgery Thomas represented the United States government in Sweden during the Civil War, and as a diplomat spent his time observing and appreciating the culture of these northern people. When he returned to his native Maine, Thomas convinced state legislators to make him commissioner of immigration, for, having witnessed the beginning of Swedish migration to farmland in the Midwest, he was convinced that Maine also could offer an attractive place for Swedish settlement. French-Canadian Catholics, whose Catholicism was worrisome to traditional Mainers, had begun to settle the state's northern frontier. Even though the state of Maine had offered native New Englanders repeated inducements to settle the far-off, forested tracts, few of the hoped-for Yankees from other states in New England had responded. They were instead headed for western farmland. Maine needed new recruits.

Thomas felt that he could stem the growing tide of French-Canadian Catholic settlement in Maine by looking to Sweden as a source for new farmers. After becoming the state of Maine's commissioner of immigration, he went to Sweden and, in the port city of Göteborg, he set up interviews in a Baptist mission chapel. Commissioner Thomas hand picked fifty-one prospective colonists. He described these settlers for a commemorative history written in 1926: "All were tall and strong, with blue eyes, blond hair, and honest faces, with no signs of any physical defect."¹ His remarking on the physical features of these immigrants, in the context of his conscious effort to affect the religious profile of Maine's population, demonstrates how closely related were the racial and religious assumptions of Protestants in New England.

After the Swedes arrived in the northernmost territory of Maine, Thomas followed, supported, and promoted the settlement for a full generation. His close association with them coincided with an ongoing cultural discussion in the United States on the effects of immigration on the American population. Thomas participated in this discussion indirectly, but his position as an agent of immigration permitted him to directly affect the composition of Maine's population. It is clear that Thomas operated on his conviction that Swedes were well suited not only to New England's geographical climate, but also to its cultural milieu. In the many tributes he penned to promote the New Sweden colony, the Swedes were applauded for their "skill, frugality, honesty, sobriety, and deep religiosity,"² all qualities that replicated, he felt, the original characteristic features of New England's first settlers.

To ensure a proper religious life for the colonists, Thomas had recruited a Swedish Baptist lay preacher to attend to their religious needs. He did not negotiate with the Lutheran Church of Sweden for this assistance. Only a handful of Swedish Lutheran priests had come to America; these few in the Midwest were themselves somewhat disaffected with the Church of Sweden and had difficulty convincing others to join them in America. Church of Sweden priests had far more comfortable prospects for a career in the Lutheran parishes in Sweden and very few emigrated. Thomas may also have assumed that a Baptist faith was more suitable for future Americans.³ In Maine, American Baptists did not represent a separatist impulse of the magnitude that they did in Sweden. Thomas considered Swedish Baptists to be a congenial, Protestant persuasion

that would easily find a home in America. Even more than that, Thomas believed that Swedish settlers would make a contribution to the American population. Believing that a Swede brought with him “the fear of God, the reverence for the Bible, the respect for sacred things, and the strict observance of the Sabbath,” it was easy for Thomas to draw a predictable comparison: “No immigrants of today, in both faith and works, so closely resemble the sturdy Pilgrim fathers of New England as the Swedes.”⁴

Thomas’s efforts to entice Swedish settlers to come to Maine were motivated by a mixture of racial and religious concerns typical of Protestants in New England, who were nervous about their cultural dominance in the region. Increasing immigration to New England’s factory towns from more Catholic areas of Europe threatened to change the religious complexion of the region. The anxiety of New England Protestants also had an effect on the cultural development of the immigrant community, and particularly on immigrant religious life. Swedish immigrants who came to America entered a political and cultural context in America that was actively engaged in a prolonged struggle over assimilation, religious and cultural, of large numbers of immigrants. Whether they were consciously aware of this or not, Swedish and Scandinavian immigrants crafted their identity as Americans within a racially charged religious framework. Thus, the emergence of a Nordic immigrant identity in America cannot be studied within the limited confines of an institutional or social history of the immigrant group itself, but must also be seen within the wider context of the American religious and cultural context.

Thomas had evidently envisioned a Swedish Baptist colony, but the arrival of other settlers who were not Baptist soon resulted in the formation of a Swedish-Lutheran congregation in the settlement. Left to themselves, Swedish immigrants would presumably have formed a Lutheran congregation first, and those who held contrary religious principles, like the Baptists, would assume the role of separatists. In the Maine colony these roles were reversed, at least for a time. The prior founding of a Baptist gathering followed by the subsequent emergence of a traditional Lutheran congregation, constituted a unique pattern of religious formation for Swedish immigrants, one that would be repeated in several instances in New England. Swedish immigrants obviously considered their congregations to be their own institutions and shaped them to help maintain traditional cultural practices, language, and social customs. American Protestants like Thomas, however, who combined economic support with a missionary impulse, assailed the insularity of immigrant congregational life and encouraged a development for Swedish-American religious culture that would be more deliberately engaged with American Protestant institutions.

The dimension of Swedish religious life that was especially conducive to a dynamic relationship with American Protestants was the separatist wing of Sweden’s nineteenth-century revival. This revival in Sweden had a long history inside and outside of the established Lutheran Church of Sweden, but during the period of immigration to New England, advocates for a “free church”—those who encouraged separation from the Lutheran Church—had gained a considerable following in Sweden. In New England, separatist revivalists responded eagerly to formal affiliation with American Protestant mission boards. The institutional connections they formed shaped immigrant identity for Swedish New Englanders. Pietist immigrants called for a radical separation from a “dead and formal” Church of Sweden, and American Protestants in turn saw these newcomers engaged in a task similar to one they had labeled as distinctly American: to “break through the plaster of outworn forms.” By joining

together, Americans and Swedes could enliven American ecclesiastical work.⁵

In spite of the fact that Protestantism was not a monolithic establishment—congregationalism tended to prohibit concerted action—Protestant leaders, through their independent denominational missionary societies, and by dint of enthusiastic boosters like Thomas, did achieve something akin to a common approach toward growing ethnic diversity in their cities. The several Protestant Home Missionary Societies—Congregational, Methodist, and American Baptist—successfully recruited and trained foreign-born preachers to work the immigrant population. Their assumption, of course, was that Protestant mission efforts would shape not only the religious, but also the cultural identities of newly arrived Americans.

Reports to the American Home Missionary Society from other missionary workers reveal frustration with the prospects among Catholic and Jewish immigrants who were reluctant to join Protestant churches. These immigrants seemed to be in the control of the Catholic priests and the rabbis. Immigrant workers from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, however, were much more receptive. They gave mission workers reason to feel that their efforts to advance Protestantism could be successful. At the same time, American Protestants reading these same reports were encouraged to feel that they had not only a spiritual kinship with Scandinavian immigrants but also a cultural resemblance.⁶

Franklin Carter served as Secretary for the Massachusetts Congregational Home Missionary Society. When categorizing the “foreign work,” Mr. Carter described two kinds of mission activity: a struggling one among Roman Catholics, where it was difficult to not antagonize the priests or to free the adherents from their “State Ceremonial Church,” and a second and flourishing type among the Scandinavians. He wrote that among the Swedes, “the work is like that in our American Churches. Our aid is given on the same grounds. The Swedish immigrant churches did not expect handouts, and also seemed to have a healthy, Protestant work ethic.” He observed that Scandinavians “think that life implies, means, demands growth.” The chief sign of this was that immigrant pastors, as they report, “feel called upon to give some explanation or make excuses if there have not been conversions, additions or professions of faith.”⁷ All of these similarities in style and substance that Scandinavian immigrants seemed to share with the native Protestant population signaled to Protestant leaders that Nordic settlers, for reasons of culture and attitude, already fit in well in New England.

Carter observed a striking consonance between Americans and Swedes and argued for increased funding for ministries among them even during a time of financial shortfalls. Assuming that their earnest reporting constituted a proper business-like mentality—rather than its more obvious revival orientation—Carter detailed the cost effectiveness of spending on Scandinavians.⁸ The American Home Missionary Society was persuaded that spending on immigrant Scandinavians would in effect grow their own numbers, as these newcomers were virtual American Protestants.

What emerged from the encounter between New England’s Protestants and Scandinavian immigrants had a much more profound impact on New England’s Swedish-American community than it did among American Protestants who remained oblivious to the nature of church life within Swedish-American congregations. The evangelistic work that American Protestants sponsored did not demand of them any real interaction with immigrants. Simply by identifying and supporting what seemed like an abundant supply of Swedish preachers, American Protestants established lively mission stations in the several Swedish

settlements in New England. The effect within the Swedish community was more consequential: American interest and financial support changed traditional patterns of religious affiliation within the community as it drew immigrants into their new identities as Protestant, Nordic Americans.

The contact between American missionary prospectors and Scandinavian immigrants came about within and because of the network immigrants had formed through the nineteenth-century Swedish revival. Cells of pious Swedish immigrants within Swedish-American settlements were in frequent contact with each other, and with interested Americans willing to support and fund their mission revival meetings. Through this religious network, Americans became acquainted with a particular segment of the Swedish immigrant community, one that, with its overtly religious demeanor, seemed to them to closely accord with their own Protestant values. Franklin Carter and W.W. Thomas articulated a common assumption among American observers that Swedish immigrants should be understood chiefly through their religious commitments. By emphasizing immigrant religiosity they could generate sympathy and charity for Swedish immigrants. Though the Americans broadcast a sympathetic misperception, they created in the telling a new reality.

Swedish immigrants formed congregations in their ethnic communities in the context of sustained internal religious conflict over a familiar Lutheranism versus a more rigorous, American-styled religious experience. They also played out this conflict in the vicinity of an ongoing Protestant-American discussion about immigration and culture. Swedish Americans were not naive about, nor were they unaffected by, the anxieties and goals of their American benefactors.

For many reasons—to build community, to hold on to cherished traditions, to raise their children, to present a united front to Americans—Swedish immigrant leaders hoped that they could count on religion to unite them. When they realized that religion instead had become a divisive influence in their community, indeed a centrifugal force, they did not succumb to infighting, or attempt to enforce a kind of religious uniformity within the immigrant community. Instead they recognized the religious diversity of their American surroundings, and began to realize that they could take advantage of the welcoming context provided by these interested Americans.

A commonplace assumption about immigrant religion is that it functioned to shape communal identity for immigrants by helping groups establish boundaries in relation to a wider, sometimes hostile culture.⁹ By maintaining traditional practices in a new setting, the argument goes—performing baptisms, marriages, and funerals and conducting Swedish liturgies—immigrant churches replicated social patterns of the homeland and made the new world feel like home.¹⁰ The familiar, comforting, cohesive features of traditional religious practices and language provided, according to these interpretations, a necessary bridge between the old world and the new. Swedish immigrants in New England may have experienced the comforting aspects of traditional religious practice, but they also seemed quite willing to accept, or even to introduce, religious tensions into communal life. Religious practice was a source of conflict among them rather than convergence, primarily because the churches and religious societies that immigrants formed provided access to leaders and institutions within the surrounding American culture.

New England settlements inherited a diverse spectrum of Swedish piety, from separatist to traditional. Some religious leaders, especially lay members, were wary of clerical formalism; others, often pastors who sought a stronger

role within the immigrant community itself, pressed for an episcopal, rather than a local, congregational polity. Swedish immigrants to the Midwest had founded the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod in 1860, a church body that achieved an uneasy balance between a revivalist centered and a traditional, more liturgical style of church life. First by centering their program on a revival piety, Augustana leaders built their church by appealing to the fervent revivalists among the immigrants. Leadership needs within the immigrant church were filled through transatlantic networks connected to the ongoing Swedish revival, and more particularly to revival leaders like Paul Peter Waldenström, who had early on received a call to come as a teacher to Augustana's seminary in Rock Island.¹¹ Though Waldenström refused the "call" for personal reasons, the trajectory of his career in Sweden would soon make him an unsuitable candidate for Swedish Lutherans in America.

Waldenström saw his revival movement as broadly evangelical in its scope, rather than narrowly Lutheran. He was open to relationships with non-Lutherans, and entertained favorably the notion that American Protestants might work together with Swedish immigrants to foster a lively church life. Augustana leaders experienced Waldenström's influence in their congregations much more negatively, and they slowly became more ambivalent about the revival. When New England became a favored destination for Swedish immigration in the 1880s, Waldenström's disaffection with Augustana, which had stiffened its confessionalism, was complete. In New England, it would not be the Lutherans who wished to hear more from Waldenström. That time had passed. Instead the American Home Missionary Society, the missionary arm of the Congregational Church, decided that Waldenström, head of a very congenial "congregational movement" among Swedes, should be actively courted.

In 1889, Waldenström came to America on a tour. In addition to visits to the scattered Swedish settlements, he received an honorary doctorate from Yale University, certainly a signal that an American establishment recognized and honored the leading figure within the Swedish revival. For Worcester, Massachusetts' Swedish-Americans, Waldenström's visit to the city in 1889 provided the chance to experience the excitement of the Swedish revival, with its robust and sentimental hymnody, and to hear one of Sweden's most famous preachers. For the smaller group who were members of Worcester's Swedish "Congregational" mission church, Waldenström's visit boosted the status of their congregation and functioned to strengthen personal and spiritual ties with the revival at home. The local Swedish pastor hosted Waldenström during his three day stay in the city, and the experience gave him a much coveted introduction to a socially as well as religiously prominent Swede. The pastor's wife Agnes responded to the honored preacher's visit in a way that indicates how central the revival was to the shaping of her personal and spiritual identity, and reveals that the intimate ties and friendships created by the revival were an essential reason for its appeal for immigrants.

Agnes asked Waldenström to sign his name in her personal journal, a small book she had received from her cousin Alma on the day she had emigrated. Others had signed the book since she had come to America, but Agnes asked Waldenström to write at the beginning, underneath two verses of a hymn inscribed by her cousin Alma. It may also have been significant to Agnes that Waldenström had preached on the same sentiment that Alma put forward, *i.e.* that we have here no lasting city.

Sister, now that we must part
From each other yet again,
O, how good it is to know
That our waiting is not long!

If we never see each other
Here in this sad tearful vale,
Praise God that we may gather
Up in Heaven's joyful hall.

We have here no lasting city.
Forget not your loving Alma

Waldenström added this note:

They who trust our Lord Jesus
Shall safe and sure abide;
In life and death
They have a staff
That never breaks.

*Worcester 23 Juni 1889, P Waldenström*¹²

Agnes Ohlson's incorporation of the revival preacher into her anticipated heavenly circle of friends suggests that the mission festival's strong appeal to her, and to other Swedish attendees, was how it enhanced and deepened a sense of personal connection and intimacy. The revival, and the religious life it created within congregations and in the broader community, replaced the family systems the immigrants had left behind. Upon this feeling of intimacy, and heavenly as well as earthly kinship, Agnes developed her own Swedish-American religious identity. The revival fostered this sense of intimate connection among Swedish immigrants. Piety, religious feeling, common endeavor, and the trauma of migration itself contributed to a family feeling among revival proponents. Replacing blood ties, the awakening provided a religious basis for kinship.

The sense of intimacy that Agnes reveals in her journal should be construed as an important element in the construction of a sense of cultural affinity between Swedish settlers and their American neighbors. Even though separated by language, Americans interested in the revival hero became in a sense a part of the Swedish-American family. Swedish "congregationalists" trusted these Americans on a deep level, and the possibility of mutual influence was consequently enhanced. American observers may have had different expectations when Waldenström visited Worcester, and may merely have expected that their interest in the Swedish revival meetings was an occasion to recognize a prominent Swede on a high profile tour of America, as Waldenström had come to Worcester after receiving his honorary degree at Yale. Local ministers of the city's Congregational Churches expressed their high-profile hospitality when they came out to greet the Swedish leader at an afternoon reception. Here they made explicit comments on the nature of Swedish religious immigration to America. The Swedes in their community were, they commented, "modern day pilgrims." Yankee industrialist Philip Moen, who was a recruiter and employer of Swedish workers for the American Steel and Wire Company, acted as interpreter for the afternoon.¹³ When the Rev. Mr. Mears, Minister at the Piedmont Congregational Church, addressed the reception, he

compared the visit with the earlier tour of Jenny Lind. He assured the audience that American Congregationalists were “glad to sit at the feet of one so worthy. We of the Free Church of America extend the word of welcome to the Minister of the Free Church of Sweden.”¹⁴

Mears told the gathered American pastors that the text of the evening message would be “You are the light of the world. A city set on the hill cannot be hid.” The American ministers could not have missed the fact that the Swedes were following the right Protestant formula, even emulating the sermon John Winthrop had given to Puritans on their ship, the *Arbella*. The Swedish immigrants as interpreted by Waldenström and Congregational Ministers surely appeared to be new Pilgrims.

The immigrants and Americans did not experience the same event when they came to Waldenström’s afternoon service. Agnes Ohlson was reminded that there is no lasting city on earth, while American listeners hoped that the energies of the Swedish crowd would reinvigorate their Protestant churches. The public city on a hill that Mears announced to American supporters was not included in the text published by the Swedish weekly. There the title “Let your light shine for the world” and the message printed by the editor mentioned no visible city, but focused on personal trust and obedience.

The occasion of Waldenström’s reception in Worcester reveals that Swedish religious culture in New England was not isolated within an exclusive ethnic enclave—Americans were observant and involved—even though the main impetus within that culture involved the construction of separate spiritual realms within a wider immigrant social world. The religious dimensions of immigrant life, e.g. the participation of individuals in a revival, functioned as a signpost to a watchful and interested American public, for whom the mission festival heralded the possibilities of a new partnership with such pious and congenial immigrants. For the immigrant community, on the other hand, the revival provided an opportunity to display a Swedishness that was not broadly representative, but selectively interested in gaining support from Americans for a particular religious agenda within the immigrant community. What each community saw in the other was a reflection of the particular needs and anxieties, political, cultural, and religious, that worried and drove the leaders.

From “A City on a Hill” to “A People Wonderfully Made”

The very local history of Worcester’s Swedish Americans contained many such encounters between Swedes and Americans, as they together worked on promoting temperance, Sabbath keeping, and congregational life within the immigrant community. Swedes appeared again and again as the favored immigrant group in the city. What the collective presence of pious Swedish immigrants said to their American neighbors was that these immigrants, as opposed to their Catholic neighbors, stood for the traditional, Protestant values, and would as a community defend and advance these ideals.

The Worcester example may be only an isolated instance of a local assimilation into a largely favorable and hospitable Protestant culture. The anecdotes I cited have to do mostly with the experience of Swedish revivalists, who later formed the Mission Covenant denomination. It may be difficult to draw any conclusions about the construction of a Swedish-American identity and its racial dimensions by looking only at this isolated New England example.

There are other examples I would like to briefly point to, to show that the self-conscious exploration of cultural transition, of the relationship between Swedish religion and culture—even the physical or racial dimensions of culture—

and the American context in which this should be expressed, was also at work in other, Midwestern settings, particularly by Lutheran Swedes.

Occasions for extended, public reflection on Swedishness in America occurred when immigrant leaders felt it necessary to define and express a common understanding of being Swedish in America, as the second generation of Swedish-Americans came of age. Still largely Swedish speaking, these young Americans lived in a new bilingual and bicultural world. It was not necessary for Swedish-American leaders to teach Swedish youth how to be American, for the surrounding culture was doing that adequately enough. The pastors and teachers at Swedish-American colleges did feel, however, the necessity of teaching youth how to be Swedish. At jubilee celebrations marking significant historical moments, and through occasional as well as more permanent publications, the particular import of a Swedish, Nordic identity in America was communicated to a rising generation of these college-educated Swedes.

Swedish-American colleges were co-educational, and, until 1893 with the founding of Uppsala College in the metropolitan New York and New Jersey area, they were exclusively located in Midwestern states—Illinois, Kansas, and Minnesota—where most of the largely rural constituency of Swedish America lived. During 1893, which was a jubilee year commemorating the 300-year anniversary of the formal acceptance by the Church of Sweden of the Lutheran Augsburg confession, Swedish Lutherans in the United States invited the bishop of Visby, Knut Henning Gezelius von Scheele, to visit churches in America. Following Waldenström's visit only a few years previous, the bishop of Visby came to Swedish settlements across America, except that he attended specifically to the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod.

Von Scheele's visit was significant in Augustana's development because it established much warmer relationships between the synod and the established church in Sweden, a relationship that had been strained throughout Augustana's early development. The tour also provided an occasion for this Swedish visitor to observe the "coming of age" of Swedish-Americans, as he put it. In his travelogue published in Sweden upon his return, he commented on the promise and maturity of the rising generation of Swedish-American youth, as he witnessed their achievements.

At Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, newly founded as a four-year college in 1887, the commencement exercises conducted in both Swedish and English demonstrated to von Scheele that the Nordic spirit could still exert its influence on the coming generation:

How good and beautiful it is that our Nordic father's spirit can yet be preserved as their descendants use the Swedish language; but also how necessary it is for them to completely master the tongue of their new fatherland, so that through them this spirit may infuse itself into life in this country as well, and that this spirit may not be completely overrun and overpowered by other nationalities, which have no automatic reason to stand in front of the manly power and the womanly beauty of the Swedes.¹⁵

Von Scheele's interest in the spirit of the north, or what can also be translated as the Nordic spirit, surfaced in most of his many talks to Swedish Lutheran audiences across the United States, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, and at the main center of Swedish-American Lutheranism, Augustana College and Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. His interest was a constituent part of his ongoing reflection on the meaning and cultural force of Sweden as expressed in Swedish-American Lutheranism. In the address quoted

from above, which was entitled *A Swedish-American Declaration of Maturity*, von Scheele's notion of a cultural, Nordic spirit, or spirituality as we might today refer to it, was linked with a clear reference to the physical beauty and strength of the young Swedish-American women and men that assembled before him when he addressed college audiences. The assimilation of Swedish youth into their American culture was one that would happen, he seemed to think, on a linguistic, spiritual, and physical level. There was the danger that he alluded to: Swedish women with their beauty and Swedish men with their power, were threatened in America by the overwhelming presence of other nationalities, other languages, and other religious commitments.

The Swedish-American youth who graduated from Bethany College on that summer day in 1893 demonstrated a bilingual and bicultural competence that was truly impressive to their Swedish guest. The individual responsible for designing the curriculum and program at Bethany College, the Rev. Carl Aaron Swensson, was himself a second-generation Swedish-American, and he knew the value of mastering the language and spirit of America and of Sweden. He collected the impressions and the speeches that had been made during the jubilee year of 1893 and produced a volume for the youth of the whole Augustana Synod entitled *Forget Me Not*, a book of vignettes, exhortations, poems, and inspirational addresses focused on the importance and necessity of learning from the rich, spiritual heritage of Sweden how to live fully in America.

Swensson's opening greeting or preface addresses the imagined audience of Swedish youth in America with a personal, heartfelt invocation: "Every time I think about the large multitude of manly youth and blue-eyed maidens, who together constitute the Swedish-American youth, my heart beats faster than otherwise, while memory and hope with racing speed compete in each their separate direction to command my attention."¹⁶ Swensson's salute encouraged the youth of Augustana to see themselves as models and exemplars of their nationality. To the eyes of this church leader, the youth's particular physical, racial, or ethnic characteristics stand out, and the subsequent call that they be loyal to their Swedish heritage has now been framed in terms of their aspect, their appearance, their physical fortune.

Similarly, in the greeting from Sweden that followed Swensson's introductory greeting, von Scheele sketched out his vision of Swedish-American loyalty to Sweden's rich, spiritual heritage of confessional freedom. He closed with a reference to the "Forget me not" flower, with its blue blossom and yellow sun-filled center. This flower said the same thing as the Swedish flag, he noted, which, having a yellow cross on a blue field, combined the wisdom of time immemorial with the sunny warmth of youth. "Remain true to this banner, you blue-eyed, golden haired descendants!" He also reminded his readers that the Swedish flag bore the sign of the cross, and that this sign was the only power that was worthy of their allegiance.

Swedish Americans in New England and in Kansas as well as those sitting at home reading these flowery orations, participated in an elaborate sizing-up activity, as dignified Swedish visitors helped them explore aspects of their common and apparently much exalted heritage. In introducing a new generation to a sense of nationhood, Augustana's youth leaders invented a new and memorable catalogue of virtues and qualities that supposedly naturally defined a people. Augustana Synod leaders were intent on keeping a transatlantic relationship with a remembered Swedish image of piety and vigor alive in the coming generation. The process through which Swedish-Americans discovered, constructed, and expressed their identity involved active dialogue

and interaction with selected representatives of their Swedish homeland. In local settings and in widely disseminated accounts of these occasions in church publications, the language of heritage, youthful vigor, Swedish beauty, and faith was delivered in contexts of celebration. The young people who heard about the glorious Swedish past and who were saluted as inheritors of these great people also heard a call to service. Carefully crafted jubilee events, commemorating heroic sacrifice, were consciously connected to the new task at hand: preservation and advancement of a new kind of Swedishness in America. I have highlighted the aspects of this implicit message that indicate how Swedish-Americans may have assumed that their physical features were a prominent and favorable aspect of their heritage. As surely as Swedish settlers experienced a welcome from American Protestants that was not extended to other immigrant groups, they learned to congratulate themselves on those aspects of their heritage that had already been singled out by high-profile Americans.

Ethnic solidarity and pride were not the only features of Swedish Americanism celebrated at college assemblies. Suffused throughout von Scheele's message and in the publications circulated among Augustana youth were calls to a faith orientation and a church loyalty that more and more provided an antidote to racially derived theories of nationality. Thirty years after the 1893 von Scheele visit, another high profile Swedish Lutheran, the archbishop of the Church of Sweden, Nathan Söderblom, visited Augustana churches and schools. The kind of naïve nationalism highlighting racial characteristics and essential national ideals that flowed so easily from the lips of Carl Swensson and von Scheele had been put to the test by the World War. Now Söderblom visited a people in America who were very proud of their Swedish heritage, even though the themes of Swedish beauty and youthful vigor were not in the foreground of his message. For the most part the younger generation no longer spoke the language, and the archbishop realized that new aspects of their shared heritage needed to be emphasized. In 1923 Söderblom highlighted the common faith heritage, and in particular he noted the way Swedish Americans had shaped a church life that preserved in their new homeland what he deemed to be the essential features of Swedishness and of the Nordic or Scandinavian spirit. This spirit was exemplified in the particular regard and helpfulness that he had received from the people he met on his trip, generations who had grown up in America, and who showed that they regarded the foreign church leader as truly one of their own.

Speaking at Augustana College on the commemoration of the Swedish hero king Gustavus Adolphus on November 6, Söderblom particularly commented on the joy he felt in accepting the invitation to come to America and to become acquainted with the Christian students he met at the colleges of the Augustana Synod. He told them that it was time to go beyond nationalism, and to focus instead on the faith heritage that alone makes a nation worth celebrating. This faith he felt was shared among Swedish Lutherans in America and in Sweden.

In making the church connection the main point of commonality, Söderblom began to shift the focus of Augustana people beyond the immediate, surface commonality of language and ethnic identity. American generations of Swedes would need new reasons to maintain relationships with their homeland, and the work of their church became a primary means for them to negotiate a new, American Lutheran identity in the world. Söderblom's recognition that his audience of young collegians at Augustana College in Rock Island would need a new call to inspire them was in part recognition that these Swedes were no longer Swedes as such, but American students.

Swedish assimilation into American society was eased in part by the desirable racial and religious features of their culture, as these were perceived by Americans, and as this desirability was in turn incorporated into the self-understanding and self-promotion of Swedish immigrants themselves. The importance of racial categories in Western culture affected the construction of Swedish-American ethnicity in America. Immigrant culture reflected the pervasive racial anxieties of American and Western societies that unavoidably surfaced when immigrants thought about themselves and their transition from their homogenous homeland to their new cultural home in the diverse land of America. Swedish Americans were not isolated in an ethnic enclave with a cultural conversation focused only on their own interior development, but were very much participants in the ongoing American struggle with race. The cultural heritage that Swedish Americans remembered was not static, however, or determined only by the American context and the experience of immigrants within their new homeland. The religious dimension of that immigrant culture had a moral dimension that could be employed, and at times was employed, to shape a faith community with a wider purpose. Though immigrants did not always plumb the depths of their religious and cultural heritage, they at least were reminded now and then that they had one.

ENDNOTES

1 William Widgery Thomas, "Mainekolonien Nya Sveriges historia," *Svenskarna i Amerika*, Karl Hildebrand and Axel Fredenholm, eds. (Stockholm: 1926), 338.

2 Thomas, 338.

3 Very few priests answered the call to migrate. Of the first 50 ministers in the Swedish American Lutheran Augustana ministerial roster, only five had been ordained in Sweden. The rest were trained in America, according to Conrad Bergendoff, *The Augustana Ministerium* (Rock Island, Illinois, 1980). American Baptist mission work in Sweden and in Swedish immigrant communities is described by Norris A. Magnuson, "Along Kingdom Highways—American Baptist and Swedish Baptists in a Common Mission: An Introductory Essay," *American Baptist Quarterly* 6 (September, 1987), 130-34.

4 Thomas is quoted in M.M. Norberg, Johan Westin, and Olof P. Fogelin, eds. *The Story of New Sweden, as Told at the Quarter Centennial Celebration of the Founding of the Swedish Colony in the Woods of Maine*, June 25, 1895 (Portland, Maine, 1920), 27.

5 The Rev. Henry Stimson, "The Future of Congregationalism," an address to the National Union of Congregational Churches, October, 10, 1888.

6 A clear expression of Protestant anxiety is Josiah Strong's report to the American Home Missionary Society, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, 1885. During the 1880s, the American Home Missionary Society heard confident reports about work with Swedish settlers. Marcus Whitman Montgomery, *A Wind from the Holy Spirit in Sweden and North America* (New York, 1884) "discovered" the striking spiritual consonance between Swedes and Americans. American Baptists had two decades of experience in relation to Swedish Midwesterners and they were more cautionary about the consonances:

“The tendency is to colonize. This tendency is what concerns us.” *Minutes of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society*, 1882.

7 Report of the annual meeting of the American Home Missionary Society, Detroit, 1900, 22-3.

8 The “foreign work” of the Congregational Home Missionary Society had increasingly focused on Scandinavian missions during the 1880s. In 1886 thirty-seven out of 136 mission posts were Scandinavian; by 1889 the proportion was nearly half, and the growth almost entirely among Scandinavians. Eighty-eight out of 181 mission stations were Swedish or Norwegian. *Annual Reports of the American Home Missionary Society*, Congregational Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

9 Victor Greene, in *For God and Country: The Rise of Polish and Lithuanian Ethnic Consciousness in America 1860-1910* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1975) challenges this popular and scholarly assumption and argues that ethnic consciousness was not always a reaction to oppression. In his discussion of these communities, however, he sees church leadership functioning to form a consensus.

10 Historians of Swedish immigration tend to stress the conservative and cohesive function of immigrant religion; see Dag Blanck and Philip J. Anderson, “Introduction,” in *Swedish American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930* (Chicago, 1992), and Robert Ostergren, *A Community Transplanted: The Transatlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1988).

11 The call to Waldenström was issued in 1862 by Augustana’s earliest pioneer pastors. Waldenström refused because his father had just become a widower. G.E. Arden, *The School of the Prophets* (Rock Island, 1960), 126-8.

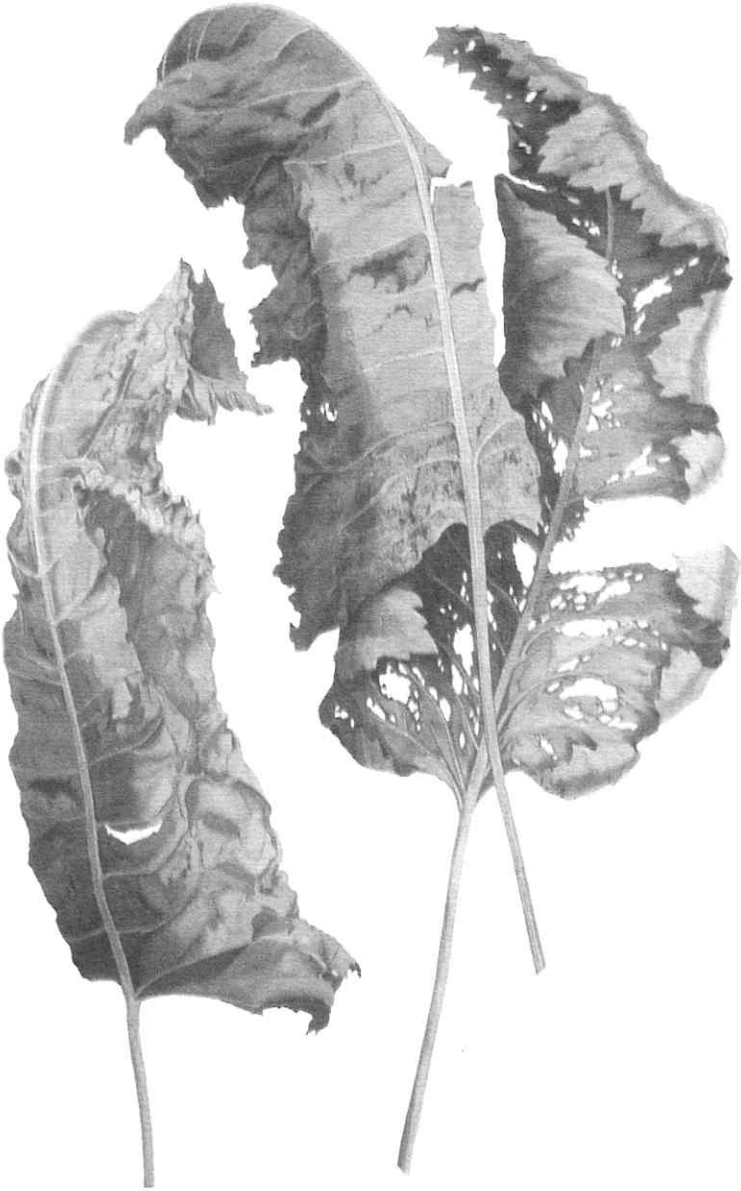
12 Swedish text: Syskon, då vi nu här skiljas Från hvarandra än en gång, O, hur godt det är att veta Wäntanstiden blir ej lång! Se vi ej hvarandra åter Här i denna jemmerdal Pris ske Gud, att vi få mötas Uti Himlens fröjdesal. The song was printed in the Mission Friend hymn book, *Sionsharpan*, #564, (Chicago, 1890). [My translation.] “Syskon,” literally “sibling,” has been translated as sister to better express the close relationship Alma intended to preserve. Waldenström’s text was “Den som på Herr Jesus tror Han trygg och säker bor; I lif och död Han har ett stöd, som aldrig sviker.” This may also be a hymn, though I have not been able to trace it to a particular collection.

13 As a student at the Swedish School of Mines, Moen made the contacts that enabled him to recruit skilled workers.

14 Worcester *Evening Gazette*, June 24, 1889.

15 Knut Henning Gezelius von Scheele, *Hemlandstoner* (Stockholm, 1895), 81.

16 Carl Aaron Swensson, *Förgät mig ej, Fosterländsk och luthersk ungdomskalender för Jubelåret 1893* (title page missing), 11.



NILS HASSELMO

In the Attic of Denkmann: Reflections on English as a world language, and on the Scandinavian languages which, well, had their fling, too!

It was in the attic of Denkmann Memorial Library at Augustana College that I first started thinking of Swedish as a minority language. I had just arrived from Sweden in August of 1956, and for the first time in my life I was a foreigner. I was slowly beginning to realize that being Swedish and speaking Swedish—desirable as those attributes may be—are not universal. Reeling under this shock, I had withdrawn to the attic of Denkmann to try to sort out my confused thoughts. Fritiof Ander, Augustana professor of history, had just completed his comprehensive bibliography, *The Cultural Heritage of the Swedish Immigrant*, and I had had some interesting conversations with him. It was now important to try to enlarge my knowledge of Augustana beyond the terse quotes I had read in *Nordisk Familjebok*, my Swedish encyclopedia, when given the opportunity to apply for a scholarship to that college. So, here I was in Denkmann, on a hot Rock Island day, surrounded by old metal cabinets with seemingly endless stacks of old newspapers, and by book cases with publications from the Augustana Book Concern and other publishers with addresses such as Chicago, Minneapolis, Rockford, Lindsborg, and other to me utterly exotic places.

I picked the October 5, 1897 issue of the *Svenska Tribunen*, a Chicago newspaper—in Swedish. An article by Johan Person, a Swedish-American journalist and essayist, fell open. It was an article about the Swedish language in America, about the struggle of an immigrant language, a minority language, to maintain itself under the pressures of a pervasive, economically totally dominant English-language culture. The metal cabinets and the bookshelves turned out to be full of debates about the future of the Swedish language in America, and of the literature in Swedish then being produced as a linguistic dike against the tide of the surrounding English-language ocean. I entered upon what was to become a lifelong scholarly journey of discovery of Swedish America, and of the meaning of Language as an expression of identity. I began to understand what Language, our language, means to us as individuals and members of a group. I also began to see that what happens to individual languages is determined by many economic, political, and cultural factors.

I would like to share a few thoughts about these topics. As far as Swedish America is concerned, the topics are now mainly of historical interest. The “linguistic avalanche” (*språkskred*) that Gustav Andreen, president of Augustana College, and others fought against did indeed take place right after World War I.¹ We are now only savoring the remnants of what was in the early years of the

twentieth century a Swedish-language enclave of as many as one and a half million people in this country. But the issues of linguistic and cultural identity, what language and culture mean to individuals and groups, have by no means disappeared. On the contrary, as we move towards increasing globalization, constructing enormous economic blocks including many cultures and languages, the issues of group identity, of linguistic and cultural identity, and of religious identity, are very much with us. In some parts of the world they are matters of life and death. On September 11, 2001, they became a matter of life and death on our own shores as terrorists struck. These terrorists seem to be motivated by what they perceive as threats to their religion, their culture, from economic and cultural globalization or, in their eyes, Westernization or Americanization. Distorting their own religion, they have launched a merciless attack on America, and at least indirectly on democracies around the world, in the name of religious and cultural identity.

Inside the United States, matters of linguistic and cultural identity have also continued to cause conflict, among individuals and groups. The revival of strong "English-only" sentiment in recent years, especially under the influence of the massive immigration from Spanish-speaking countries, is indeed a "revival" of sentiments that were very much in evidence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At that time, many Swedish-Americans participated vigorously in the debate.

English has, of course, not only maintained its practically undisputed dominance in this country since colonial days, but has established complete hegemony as the only world language. This is a remarkable development for a language that a thousand years ago, like the Scandinavian languages, was just one "barbarian" tongue among dozens in early medieval Europe. In this brief essay, I want to take a look both at the past, present, and possible future role of minority languages and at the past, present, and likely future role of English as the language of our global society.

This scene is not just a matter of arcane linguistic interest (although it is, delightfully, that, too), but a matter of considerable political, economic, and cultural importance. As happened as industrialization began to take hold—the national romanticism of Scandinavia of the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century being just one expression of the reaction to the perceived and real breakdown of cherished cultural values—we are a century later witnessing the worldwide emergence of a cultural, linguistic—and often very "political"—reaction against globalism. We see it in Muslim fundamentalism; we see it in the claims of linguistic and cultural minorities in the European Union; and I saw it in the streets of Washington, D.C. in the form of protests against the perceived and real abuses of "global capitalism" and "cultural imperialism" as represented by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Language as the primary expression of a "culture" is intertwined with these hot political issues.

But let me first give a glimpse of what I found in my study of Swedish America as I spent many hours in the dust-filled attic of Denkmann—now turned into beautiful and highly functional offices for new generations of scholars describing and explaining what Swedish America was all about, and is all about today, since, in spite of the loss of the Swedish language in later generations, Swedish-Americanism is by no means dead. I'm very pleased that Augustana College, and its seventh president, Tom Tredway, and his administration so magnificently advanced such scholarship through support for the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center. These efforts have been generously

supported by Birger and Lyal Swenson, wonderful friends of mine during my Augie days and later, and have flourished under the leadership of Glen Brolander, Dag Blanck, and others. Understanding this Swedish-American past and present can help us understand our global future, with the special poignancy of looking at our own past and our own lives today.

E.A. Zetterstrand, editor of *Ungdomsvännan*, The Friend of Youth, one of the Augustana Synod's publications, stated the meaning of the Swedish language for him very succinctly in 1904 (in Swedish):

This much ought to be clear to everyone that, when we lose the Swedish language, we will also lose our national character, in which there are traits that are truly worthy of preservation, qualities more precious than silver and gold, and which we ought therefore to protect and preserve as a precious inheritance for ourselves and our descendants.²

The “language question” was fought out between those who argued that “an American spirit should be embodied in America, not a Swedish one...an American spirit is not the same as a Swedish-American”³ and those who argued that “they [the Swedish Americans] need not change from Swedish to English; they can with advantage preserve the old while they acquire and even after they have acquired the new.”⁴

While the losing battle for the Swedish language was being fought, Swedish Americans produced an impressive array of newspapers, periodicals, and books in Swedish. During the peak period for its Swedish-language publications 1906-10, the Augustana Book Concern published about 150 titles in that language, with the total number of copies printed exceeding 700,000.⁵ Fritiof Ander's bibliography includes 130 Swedish-American periodicals for 1910, the peak year.⁶ For the peak period for literary works, 1911-15, he reports the appearance of 51 titles. They include novels, collections of short stories, essays, even an occasional play, and reams of poetry. Much of this literature deals with “*hemlängtan*,” the yearning for the homeland and its valleys and fields, lakes and forests, especially the poetry. But there are also works—such as the novel *Charli Johnson, svenskamerikan*, and the play *Härute* (Out Here) by Lindsborgian G.N. Malm—that take up the issues of the adaptation to the new land, sometimes in writings that use the “mixed language” of the new settlements.⁷

It all amounts to a classic example of the cultural and linguistic self-maintenance efforts of a minority, and it can be especially instructive for those of us who are of Swedish extraction, because, after all, it's “our” culture and “our” language that were in the minority.

While Swedish America has lost the Swedish language, and has become a set of interests and attitudes of varying nature and intensity, English has continued to establish itself as the undisputed world language. Fifteen hundred years ago, English was spoken by about as many people as speak Cherokee today. Even at the time of Shakespeare, the English speakers didn't total more than 5-7 million. A contemporary Elizabethan quote asserted that English was “of small reach, it stretcheth no further than this iland of ours, naie not there over all.”⁸ Exploration and colonization were to carry English to many parts of the world. In the 1970s, 35 percent of the world's economic output came from areas where English was the dominant language. At the time (before Japan's spectacular emergence as an economic world power), only the Russian-based area was in double digits (13.2 percent). German followed with 9.1 percent, Japanese with 8.2 percent, French with 6.7 percent, Spanish with 3.9 percent, Chinese with

3.7 percent.⁹ Obviously, these figures have changed significantly during the past quarter century, but the dominance of the English-speaking economies has hardly diminished. It is totally overwhelming. Furthermore, English has become the language of the global infrastructures that have emerged, from air travel to the Internet. Examples include the dispute a few years back over whether French pilots flying French airplanes would be allowed to speak French to air controllers at the Paris airport, or had to use English like everybody else, and the situation of my friend Baldur in Reykjavik, who heads the Icelandic effort to invent native terminology for modern phenomena, but uses a computer program—in English.

In the United States, Spanish has made some major inroads into the hegemony of English, and as long as the flow of immigrants back and forth between the U.S. and Spanish-speaking areas continues with current intensity, it is likely that Spanish will retain a stronger position than other immigrant languages. But a “threat” to English? It defies basic laws of economics—and the entire experience of this republic—to think that Spanish poses a realistic threat to the dominance of English. How we ensure that every American has a command of English is another matter. There is no doubt that that is important, but it does not have to come by forcing Spanish-speakers to forget their own language. The irritant of overhearing someone who masters a second language ought to be possible to overcome. After all, the five billion people in this world who are not native speakers of English have gone a long way towards accommodating the English-language monolinguals!

If one tribal Germanic language could have such worldwide success, what about the Scandinavian languages? Didn't they travel? Yes, they did. Apart from immigrant Swedish and the other immigrant Scandinavian languages in North America, the Scandinavian languages made landfall in many parts of the world.

The millennial anniversary of Leif Eriksson's first sighting of North America reminded us that Old Norse was the first European language to be spoken on these shores. At L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland is found the only archeologically verified Viking settlement on this continent.¹⁰ A small colony of Vikings was headed by Thorfinn Karlsefni who, according to the sagas, lived there for three years, presumably savoring the grapes of Vinland. Thorfinn's son Snorri was born there. If the Skräelings, the local natives, hadn't chased them away, we might all be speaking a modern variety of Old Norse—truly an enticing prospect, isn't it? That, of course, defies all laws of colonial critical mass, not to speak of a thousand years of economic history. But, in terms of “what if” games, this is one of my favorites!

Scandinavian languages did become firmly rooted on the Faroe Islands and on Iceland. Scandinavian languages were also spoken for extended periods in places such as Ireland, Scotland (in the Shetland islands “Norn” was alive until the eighteenth century), the “Danelaw” area of northern and eastern England, and northern France. After all, William the Conqueror was the grandson of a Danish Viking, and at Hastings in 1066 he fought against his own Scandinavian kin as well as Anglo Saxons.

In the east, apart from very early settlements on the west and south coasts of Finland and islands off the Estonian coast, Swedish was brought to trading posts such as Novgorod and Kiev in what was to become Russia, presumably under leadership of Vikings from “Rus,” the area north of Stockholm. And the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople, or “Miklagård,” as the Vikings called it, used Vikings in his guard—as protection against other barbarians of the same

background. Runic inscriptions in the churches of “Miklagård” bear witness to their presence, as well as to the fact that graffiti are not a new art form.

At the time that Swedish was brought to New Sweden with the ships *Kalmare Nyckel* and *Fogel Grip* in the late 1630s, both Swedish and Danish were also planted in other parts of the world with Scandinavian colonization efforts. The charter that was the basis for the establishment of New Sweden had a broader scope for a “General Commercial Company for Asia, Africa, America, and Magellanica.”

In New Sweden, Swedish did flourish for a time. It survived (with infusions of English and Dutch) at least well past the middle of the eighteenth century, as witnessed by Pehr Kalm, one of Linnæus’s disciples, who visited and reported from the former colony in the 1750s. When the last minister sent out from Sweden died in 1830, the impact of Swedish immigration was still to come. There seems to be no linguistic link between the Swedish colonial and the Swedish immigrant presence in this country.¹¹

Both the Danes and the Swedes established trading places, and even a fort, Karlsborg, on the African Gold Coast. The Danes maintained a foothold in the area until 1850. What the contemporary accounts refer to as “Mulattoes,” Danish-Africans, were even brought to Denmark for education, and one of them, Christian Protten, wrote the first grammar of the African languages Fanti and Accra in 1764.

The Danes also established a colony and a fort, Dansborg, on the west coast of India, in Tranquebar; it lasted until 1845. And in the 1670s the Danes acquired the islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John in the Virgin Islands and retained them until 1917.

The Swedes acquired the island of St. Barthélemy in 1785, but sold it back to the French in 1878. The only tangible remnants of the Swedish presence seem to be some street signs in Gustavia, the capital. But they were apparently put up as part of the tourist trade from Sweden in the last few decades, and most of them have allegedly been brought back to the homeland by souvenir-hungry Swedes!

The histories of all these Scandinavian colonization efforts show clearly the importance of colonial critical mass and economics. As the Danish newspaper *Fædrelandet* put it in the fierce debate about Danish colonialism in the 1840s: Effective colonization “called for a sufficient number of one’s nationals sharing one’s customs and values, and above all language.” In none of the Danish and Swedish colonies did Danish and Swedish language and culture really gain a firm foothold. In India, for example, the Danes even turned over the mission work to the Germans (the “Halle Mission”), and in the Virgin Islands, Dutch, and especially English, were quite dominant, although the administration of the islands was Danish, and Danish was used in official documents. Official Swedish in St. Barthélemy suffered the same marginal status. Danish and Swedish didn’t even gain the distinction of becoming the base for pidgins, and their development into creoles. In the Virgin Islands, for example, the pidgins were Dutch and English-based.

Danish and Swedish never became the carriers of new economic and political systems around the world the way English did. These languages, and embryonic colonial cultures, were submerged—like others—by an overwhelmingly powerful economic and political system emanating from Great Britain. As immigrant languages, Danish and Swedish were also brought to Australia and New Zealand, beginning with gold rushes at the middle of the nineteenth century. Scandinavian-speaking communities grew up in places

such as Melbourne and Sydney in Australia and in the Hawkes Bay area in New Zealand (the location of a nineteenth-century Danish settlement). As in the North-American immigrant communities, the cultural and linguistic self-maintenance efforts involved establishing churches, schools, and publications in the immigrant languages. There are some interesting examples of efforts at pan-Scandinavian activities, but they seem to have been hampered by internal Scandinavian linguistic diversity, minimal as it may appear to outside observers. Post-World War II immigration from Denmark did replenish the communities, and in the 1980s it is estimated that there were still two to three thousand Scandinavian speakers in Melbourne and Sydney, with a strong preponderance of Danish speakers.¹²

Danish and Swedish immigrants have also settled in South America. A Danish settlement was established in Tandil in the Buenos Aires district of Argentina in the 1850s. For a while it demonstrated significant cultural and linguistic self-maintenance efforts, including a Danish school based on the “folk school” model. About 3,000 Swedes from Norrland and Stockholm migrated to South America in 1890-91 and 1909-11 and ended up in Misiones in northern Argentina. This settlement is still to some extent Swedish-speaking, with interesting influences from Spanish and the native language Guaraní, but according to one recent study it is not going to survive another generation.¹³ Today, Scandinavian languages are, of course, spoken by Scandinavian emigrants and travelers across the globe, but there is no substantial Scandinavian-speaking community left outside of Scandinavia.

Questions are even being raised about the viability of the native language in the homeland. One fifth of Sweden’s current population is now foreign-born or the children of foreign-born parents; they represent at least fifty different languages. English is making deep inroads in fields such as business, science, entertainment, and all aspects of the global infrastructure. Analyses of the strength of Swedish and other smaller languages have been undertaken on the basis of such factors as the vitality of the language (number and concentration of speakers), the strength of the economy with which it is associated, historicity (its historical record), autonomy (the status as the recognized language of a clearly identified political entity), standardization (the firmness of its norms), and political engagement (the mobilization of a population in support of the language). Like many other small European languages, Swedish is still strong, but it is certainly under attack.¹⁴

Political engagement is an interesting factor. The mobilization of a population in support of a language has had spectacular results in some instances. In Scandinavia, the development of New Norwegian, the remarkable Ivar Aasen’s nineteenth-century creation of a new Norwegian written language on the basis of Norwegian dialects, is a most spectacular example.¹⁵ Aasen in effect recapitulated, single-handedly, what had taken several centuries to accomplish for Danish and Swedish—and for that matter, English—viz., the creation of a norm that would guide the linguistic behavior of the literate members of society. In Denmark and Sweden the development was based on sixteenth-century Bible translations. It was greatly facilitated by the fact that the entire populations were required to be able to read the sacred texts for themselves as tested in the “*husförhör*,” the scary visits by the local minister to test the proficiency of everybody on the farms. Aasen laid the linguistic foundation for a parallel, and greatly foreshortened, development of a written language in Norway, and Norwegian cultural mobilization against Danish, and later Swedish, influences

ensured the success of the effort. Today, Norwegians can actually choose their principal language, either Dano-Norwegian (“*Bokmål*”) or New Norwegian, two closely related (and increasingly overlapping) variants of Norwegian.

Similar, although not quite so spectacular, developments have taken place in other countries. Modern Hebrew in Israel represents the successful revival of a historical language, preserved through the centuries as the foundation of a religious tradition.

As the economic unification of Europe has progressed, cultural and linguistic questions have emerged with new force. Minority groups within the several nation states have sensed an opportunity to come out from under what they regard as cultural-linguistic oppression by dominant national cultural and linguistic traditions. In a report prepared for the Council of Europe in the early 1990s, called “Euromosaic,” 48 minority languages are identified within the European Union as it existed at the time.¹⁶ Some of them are languages that serve as the national languages in neighboring states (such as Danish in Germany and vice versa), but many of them are non-national languages such as Catalanian and Basque in Spain; Friulian in Italy; Breton, Occitan, Corsican, and Alsatian in France (banned since the French Revolution!); Frisian in Holland; and Welsh in Britain (Wales). In Sweden, Finnish is of the former, Sami (Lappish) of the latter type. The report claims that the speakers of these minority languages ought to be given the right of access to European Union documents in their native languages. A “Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages” has been established which finances such EU projects as Internet browsers in Welsh and cartoon books in Alsatian!

At the same time, English as the language of the world economy and the world’s infrastructure continues to make heavy inroads in the European Union as the language of administration. The tension between economic and political integration and cultural identity is strong, and is often a factor in disputes within the EU.

These developments are of course quite manageable in comparison with the situation in the former Yugoslavia, where unresolved cultural-linguistic-religious conflicts have had deadly results. Even more purely linguistic rivalries have also been deadly, for example, in India, where many have been killed in riots against efforts to favor Hindi as a national language over the many local languages. Somewhat ironically, the former colonial language, English, has come to provide neutral ground.

The cultural-linguistic history of the United States that I first glimpsed in the attic of Denkmann Library has at times involved a good deal of tension between immigrant languages and cultures and English and American mainstream culture—and still does—but the outcome has been gradual accommodation and integration. In the United States, it has been possible—not without trouble and travail, but nevertheless possible—to become part of a national political and economic system, even of a new culture, without giving up completely one’s ties to what might be called a “culture of origin.”

As we look at the world around us, we can note that the linguistic-cultural-religious tensions are strong, and that they can be—as we have just experienced in most horrifying fashion—deadly. They are certainly worthy of our attention, and an understanding of the underlying causes. One of the fundamental questions confronting us today is this: How can we respect and satisfy legitimate needs for cultural-linguistic-religious self-maintenance as we accept economic globalization and welcome the necessary maintenance of English as the common language, not only of the United States, but of the world? If we do not come up

with a solution, we will find ourselves embroiled, not in learned disputes about theories of language and culture, but in political controversy that can lead to deadly violence!

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LARRY SCOTT

The Lighter Side of Loneliness: Woody Allen and Ingmar Bergman

“Kierkegaard was right.”

Woody Allen
“The Allen Notebooks”
Without Feathers

Beginning in the summer of 1992 and continuing through the winter into the following year, a 54-year old Swedish filmmaker and journalist named Stig Björkman sat down for the first of a dozen or so extraordinary two-hour interviews with one of America’s leading practitioners of the art of moviemaking, Woody Allen. These interviews touched on every film Allen had ever made up to that time and ranged over virtually every aspect of the filmmaking enterprise itself. These interviews became especially noteworthy when, halfway through the project, Allen’s private life exploded into the media as he and his former partner Mia Farrow sued and countersued over custody of their children. Adding to the fury of the moment was Allen’s revelation that he intended to marry Mia Farrow’s adopted stepdaughter Soon-Yi Previn as soon as the custody battle was settled. Mia Farrow then announced that Allen had sexually molested their son. Despite the unparalleled feeding frenzy of the paparazzi outside, Woody Allen continued calmly to meet Björkman without interruptions. Why, one wonders, did this notoriously private artist, openly contemptuous of the press and famous for his reluctance to give interviews, grant such long and unrestricted access to a relatively obscure foreign journalist? Part of the answer may lie in the opening pages of Ingmar Bergman’s second volume of autobiography, *Bilder* (1990) (translated as *Images*, 1994).¹ In a generally unflattering dismissal of his own first extended interview, published in 1970 as *Bergman om Bergman* (and translated in 1973 as *Bergman on Bergman*), the Swedish director singles out the leader of the interview team for special praise:

...Stig Björkman is something of an exception. Since he was a talented movie director himself, we were able to speak in concrete terms on the basis of our respective professional backgrounds. Björkman was also responsible for all that is good in the book: the rich and varied, and exquisite montage, of pictures.²

The man who had once interviewed Ingmar Bergman had now, two decades later, arrived to interview Woody Allen. As we will see, it was obviously an offer Allen could not refuse.

Thirty years ago, no one would have suspected the director of *Take the Money and Run* of an obsession with death and unrelenting Scandinavian gloom. Indeed, reviewers would have been hard put to find *anything* serious in Woody Allen's early films. Yet one of the few memorable scenes in the otherwise painful *What's New, Pussycat?* is Victor's (played by Woody Allen) lonely meal by the Seine which culminates in his besotted attempts to help his psychiatrist Dr. Fritz Fassbender (played by Peter Sellers) immolate himself in a rowboat, Viking-style, while wrapped in a Norwegian flag. Few earlier comics (save Chaplin, perhaps) could have wrung so much hilarity from what was essentially a tragic situation. This was, of course, the essence of the Allen wit, which brought him to prominence during the late 1960s. Fear of death, sexual humiliation, alienation, and the question of God's existence were the staples of his television appearances, stand-up comic routines, and especially his writings, both before and after his career as a filmmaker had begun.

Woody Allen's fascination with Scandinavian themes in general and Ingmar Bergman in particular actually goes a bit deeper than Viking funerals and Norwegian flags. In his *New York Times* review of Bergman's autobiography *The Magic Lantern*, Allen relates his first experience of seeing a film by the then little-known Swedish director:

Less than ennobling was my motive for seeing my first Ingmar Bergman movie. The facts were these: I was a teenager living in Brooklyn, and word had gotten around that there was a Swedish film coming to our local foreign film house in which a young woman swam completely naked. Rarely have I slept overnight on the curb to be the first on line for a movie, but when "Summer with Monica" opened at the Jewel in Flatbush, a young boy with red hair and black-rimmed glasses could be seen clubbing senior citizens to the floor in a effort to insure the choicest, unobstructed seat.

I never knew who directed the film, nor did I care, nor was I sensitive at that age to the power of the work itself....I came away reliving only the moment Harriet Andersson disrobed....³

This may not have been an altogether promising beginning but Allen's was an honest and rather commonplace reaction, if even half the lugubrious stories surrounding the American release of *Sommar med Monika* are true.

Woody Allen's formal education was erratic, to say the least: he has described Midwood High School as a "school for emotionally disturbed teachers" and flunked out of both New York University and City College. But he read voraciously, initially to impress the better-educated, intellectual women he admired and wanted to meet, and ultimately because it satisfied some higher curiosity. Sometime during the sixties, he read Kierkegaard, Strindberg, and Ibsen to complement his study of Kafka, Tolstoy, and Freud. The Scandinavian dramatists became the subjects of one of Allen's best *New Yorker* pieces, "Lovborg's Women Reconsidered":

Perhaps no writer has created more fascinating and complex females than the great Scandinavian playwright Jorgen Lovborg, known to his contemporaries as Jorgen Lovborg. Tortured and embittered by his agonizing relationships with the opposite sex, he gave the world such diverse and unforgettable characters as Jenny Angstrom in *Geese Aplenty* and Mrs. Spearing in *A Mother's Gums*. Born in Stockholm in 1836, Lovborg... began writing plays at the age of fourteen. His first produced work, brought to the stage when he was sixty-one, was *Those Who Squirm*, which drew mixed notices from the critics, although the frankness of the subject matter

(cheese fondling) caused conservative audiences to blush. Lovborg's work can be divided into three periods. First came the series of plays dealing with anguish, dread, fear, and loneliness (the comedies); the second group focused on social change (Lovborg was instrumental in bringing about safer ways of weighing herring); finally there were the six great tragedies written just before his death, in Stockholm in 1902, when his nose fell off, owing to tension.⁴

Allen's parody rests on a genuine familiarity with the works of both Ibsen and Strindberg, as the following dialogue (ostensibly from Lovborg's *I Prefer to Yodel*) makes abundantly clear:

HEDVIG: So—[the henhouse] collapsed.

DR. RORLUND: (after a long pause): Yes. It fell down on Akdal's face.

HEDVIG (ironically): What was he doing in the henhouse?

DR. RORLUND: He liked the hens. Oh not all the hens, I'll grant you. But certain ones. (Significantly) He had his favorites.

HEDVIG: And Norstad? Where was he during the...accident?

DR. RORLUND: He smeared his body with chives and jumped into the reservoir.

HEDVIG: (to herself) I'll never marry.

DR. RORLUND: What's that?

HEDVIG: Nothing. Come, Doctor. It's time to launder your shorts...to launder everyone's shorts...⁵

Allen makes several other references to Scandinavian writers in his work. In the opening minutes of *Manhattan*, Isaac Davis (Woody Allen) laments that "When it comes to relationships with women, I'm the winner of the August Strindberg Award."⁶ Shortly after this conversation, he meets the neurotic intellectual Mary (Diane Keaton) who offends Isaac by attacking his idol, Ingmar Bergman ("the only genius in cinema today"):⁷

MARY:...[Bergman's] view is so Scandinavian! It's bleak, my God. I mean all that Kierkegaard, right? Real adolescent, you know, fashionable pessimism.

I mean, the silence, God's silence. Okay, okay, okay, I mean I loved it when I was at Radcliffe, but, I mean, all right, you outgrow it. You absolutely out-grow it.⁸

Allen, like Bergman, has something of a reputation as an intellectual, if not cerebral, director, at least in his several serious films. Yet, like Bergman, he is certainly not academically trained as such (neither Bergman nor Allen finished their university studies). As a filmmaker, Allen is, like Bergman, a true auteur. With just a few exceptions early in their careers, both men have preferred to write their own screenplays and are intimately involved with cinematography, editing, and virtually every aspect of the cinematic art. Over the years, both Bergman and Allen negotiated extraordinary contracts with their respective studios that gave them unusual—and almost total—control over their films. Both artists have had stable repertoires of actors and professionals with whom they have worked for years on many films. A number of Bergman's regulars have also worked in Allen's films, most notably actor Max von Sydow and cinematographer Sven Nykvist. Both men even employ a simplified and consistent usage of title sequences that rarely varies from one film to the next. Music—or sometimes the total lack of it—plays an important background role in the films of both Bergman and Allen. Before retiring from active filmmaking, Bergman wrote and directed over 40 feature films: to date, Allen has written and directed 35.

Finally, one should probably note that both the Swede and the American have written powerful roles for women despite chaotic marital and similar domestic relationships.

Allen's cinematic homage to Bergman began in 1975 with *Love and Death*, a film which Allen even today considers among his favorites.⁹ *Love and Death* is a kind of dual parody, with Tolstoy's *War and Peace* serving as the obvious literary source and the films of Eisenstein as cinematic counterpart. Yet much of the film's genius lies in the philosophic underpinnings which owe more than a little debt to Bergman and *The Seventh Seal*. In fact, while the larger issues of the futility and stupidity of war on a grand scale make this film a striking addition to the cinema of pacifism, it is on the personal level of the inevitability of death and the meaninglessness of existence (centering on the character of Boris Grouchenko, played by Allen) that it achieves genuine originality. As always, Allen couches his metaphysical musings as memorable one-liners or verbal gags:

BORIS: What if there is no God? What if we're just a bunch of absurd people, running around with no rhyme or reason?

SONJA (Diane Keaton): But if there is no God, then life has no meaning. Why go on living? One might as well commit suicide.

BORIS: Well, let's not get hysterical. I could be wrong. After all, I'd hate to blow my brains out and then read in the paper that they'd found something.⁹

This is, of course, a parody of Antonius Block's famous confession to Death, disguised as a monk, in *The Seventh Seal*:

KNIGHT: I call out to Him in the dark but no one seems to be there.

DEATH: Perhaps no one is there.

KNIGHT: Then life is an outrageous horror. No one can live in the face of death, knowing that all is nothingness.¹⁰

At the beginning of *Love and Death*, young Boris has a mystical confrontation with Death, which parallels Block's first meeting with his opponent:

BORIS: Who are you?

DEATH: Death.

BORIS: What happens after we die? Is there a hell? Is there a God? Do we live again?

DEATH: (silent)

BORIS: Okay, let me ask you one key question: are there girls?

DEATH: You're a very interesting young man: we'll meet again.

BORIS: Don't bother.

DEATH: It's no bother.

They do, of course, meet again, when Boris, happy for the first time in his life, experiences an inexplicable urge to commit suicide:

BORIS: I feel a void at the center of my being.

FRIEND: What kind of void?

BORIS: An empty void.

FRIEND: An empty void?

BORIS: Yes, I felt a full void about a month ago, but it was just something I ate.

FRIEND: Maybe what you have is a sickness of the soul.

Suddenly Boris sees Death walking by with the soul of Kropotkin the wine merchant and a woman who is not Mrs. Kropotkin. The penultimate appearance of Death in *The Seventh Seal* is witnessed by Block and Jof, but no one else. So, too, with Boris, whose friend overhears but one side of the conversation.

Allen, like Bergman, would seem to leave the answer to the question of God's existence open, until a self-proclaimed angel of God awkwardly appears in Boris' prison cell, where he is awaiting execution for his attempt on Napoleon's life. The angel informs Boris that Napoleon intends to pardon him just before the execution, but as Boris faces the firing squad, he is reprieved neither by God nor emperor. After his death, Boris makes a final appearance, this time to Sonja, in the film's stunning conclusion. Here, Allen takes Bergman a step further and the dance of death that concludes *The Seventh Seal* becomes a mock ballet to the strains of Prokofiev, as Death slips away with a thoroughly disgruntled Boris whose explanation to Sonja is that he "got screwed" by the false angelic messenger. "If it turns out that there is a God," says Boris in his final monologue to the camera, "I don't think he's evil. I think the worst you could say about him is that he's an underachiever."

Surprisingly, given the almost universal dislike if not outright contempt his fellow-countrymen evince for Bergman's films, it was a Swedish critic who was among the first to see serious parallels between the work of Woody Allen and the Swedish director. Jonas Åberg reviewed *Love and Death* (*Död och pina* in Swedish) for *Chaplin*, the preeminent Swedish film journal. His observations are quite unusual and deserve to be quoted in their entirety:

The last time I felt delight equal to that which I experienced after seeing Woody Allen's latest film was when I saw Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*. I wrote then in a review that it was wonderful finally to see a film in which the director has avoided the artifice and poses, the seeking after effects, and the many descents into banality which had earlier debased his work. It is the same feeling one has for Woody Allen: at last he has dared to be himself! The anguish he feels when confronted with death and sexuality is not to the taste of everyone, nor is Ingmar Bergman, but it is enough that one can identify one's self with and gratefully acknowledge his very personal reckoning with the fundamental problems of life.

To compare Woody Allen with Ingmar Bergman is something that cannot be ignored, not just on account of their choice of subject matter (Is there a God? What happens after death? What is sexuality?), but also because Allen directly alludes to Bergman by adopting the latter's symbolic language in several central scenes: here we might include the crucifixion, the coffins that open in a dream sequence, death as personified with his robe and scythe. One cannot mistake the authenticity of Allen's fear of death. Like Bergman, he sees the film as a way of lessening its burden. Like Bergman, he has held back a long time before he could say: *this is how I am!*

In the same way that Bergman has disguised himself as a magician, an artist, a mystic, and a demon, so has Allen played the role of entertainer, clown, punster, and slightly over-aged teenager. In *Love and Death*, he shows the self behind the poses. And he has succeeded in creating a film which ought to become one of the great classics in the comic tradition.¹¹

Allen's review of *A Magic Lantern* also provides some important information regarding Allen's regard for other films by Bergman. After revealing his admiration for *The Naked Night/Sawdust and Tinsel*, *Wild Strawberries*, *Cries and Whispers*, *The Magician/The Face*, *Persona*, *The Hour of the Wolf*, and *The Passion of Anna/A Passion*, he confesses:

The Seventh Seal was always my favorite film....Who could have thought that the subject matter could yield such a pleasurable experience? If I described the story and tried to persuade a friend to watch it with me, how far would I get? "Well," I'd say, "it takes place in plague-ridden medieval

Sweden and explores the limits of faith and reason based on Danish—and some German—philosophical concepts.” Now this is hardly anyone’s idea of a good time, and yet it’s all dealt off with such stupendous imagination, suspense, and flair that one sits riveted like a child at some harrowing fairy tale. Suddenly the black figure of Death appears to claim his victim, and the Knight of Reason challenges him to a chess game, trying to stall for time and find some meaning to life. The tale engages and stalks forward with sinister inevitability. And the images are breathtaking! The flagellants, the burning of the witch (worthy of Carl Dreyer) and the finale, as Death dances off with all the doomed people to the nether lands is one of the most memorable shots in all movies.¹²

Allen has some interesting insight into Bergman’s style as well, comments that shed light on the creator of *Interiors* and *Another Woman* as much as they do the maker of *Cries and Whispers*:

The predominant arena for conflict in motion pictures has usually been the external, physical world. Certainly that was true for many years...As the Freudian revolution sank in, however, the most fascinating arena of conflict shifted to the interior and films were faced with a problem. The psyche is not visible. If the most interesting fights are being waged in the heart and the mind, what to do? Bergman evolved a style to deal with the human interior, and he alone among directors has explored the human battlefield to the fullest. With impunity he put his camera on faces for unconscionable periods of time while actors and actresses wrestled with their anguish....He created dreams and fantasies and so deftly mingled them with reality that gradually a sense of the human interior emerged. He uses huge silences with tremendous effectiveness. The terrain of Bergman films is different from his contemporaries’....He has found a way to show the soul’s landscape....By rejecting the cinema’s standard demand for conventional action, he has allowed wars to rage inside his characters that are as acutely visual as the movement of armies.¹³

With the release of two films—*Interiors* and *Another Woman*—Allen opened himself up for a round of negative criticism almost unprecedented in its ferocity. The denunciation of both films was essentially the same: first, both films were catastrophes because they weren’t funny; secondly (and really a corollary to the first objection), the films weren’t funny because Allen wasn’t in them; and thirdly, and most seriously, the films were failures because of Allen’s misguided attempts to be “Bergmanesque.”

Interiors was released in the summer of 1978 and received almost universally hostile criticism. Vincent Canby, in *The New York Times*, tried to like the film but felt it to be a disappointment: “The characters are so humorless, so solemn they could have been lobotomized.”¹⁴ Stanley Kaufman went so far as to call the film “a tour of the Ingmar Bergman Room at Madame Tussaud’s,”¹⁵ whatever that might mean. But most scathing of them all was a review by John Simon (who worships Bergman as intensely as he despises Allen) entitled “Bergmania”: “Most of the film is taken over from Bergman in a misunderstood and mismanaged way, particularly from *Cries and Whispers*—one of Bergman’s poorest films, but we can hardly expect anyone tasteless or foolish enough to make *Interiors* to know what to copy.”¹⁶

Pauline Kael—equally critical of Allen in general—nevertheless makes an important observation on the second of Allen’s serious “Bergmanian” films, *Another Woman*:

Not long ago, Woody Allen movies were awaited with joy; then he began to make tasteful versions of Ingmar Bergman pictures. He has a new one, *Another Woman*, and—Well, I didn't much care for *Wild Strawberries* the first time around. (An homage, according to Peter Stone, is a plagiarism that your lawyer tells you is not actionable).¹⁷

Other critics drew similarly negative conclusions about Allen's film, noting that it was a pathetic, desperately imitative move on Allen's part to hire Sven Nykvist, Bergman's "own" cinematographer, to film *Another Woman*.

I do not intend to counter each of these arguments point for point. Nykvist went on to work with Allen on two other films: "Oedipus Wrecks" (the third of *New York Stories*), a "funny" Allen piece in which Allen himself appeared, and *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), much of which he wrote while staying at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm with his and Mia Farrow's family. Despite Kael's unnecessarily vulgar definition of "homage," *Interiors* and *Another Woman* are something more, something new; they constitute the most powerful evidence of Ingmar Bergman's influence on the modern American cinema.

Interiors took its inspiration from *Cries and Whispers* but is crafted along American lines, not Swedish ones. The interiors of the title—in Manhattan high-rises and elegant Long Island ocean front homes—are as cool and sterile as Bergman's are vital: nowhere is there a touch of that red that Bergman felt was the interior of the soul save in Pearl's (Maureen Stapleton's) shockingly gaudy cocktail dress. Everywhere else, we see smooth silky, chilly grays, silvers, and blues, decorating rooms and people alike. This is especially true of Eve (Geraldine Chaplin), the manic-depressive mother, whose inability to adapt to independence drives her to suicide. Allen and his gifted cinematographer Gordon Willis have carefully tailored the sets and the costumes to reflect the inner life of the people who inhabit the elegant rooms and wear the trendy, tweedy clothes. Clearly, Bergman has done the same thing in *Cries and Whispers* with the characters of Agnes, Karin, and Maria. Dressed respectively in virginal white, gloomy black, and sensual red, these three sisters share striking similarities with siblings Renata, Joey, and Flynn.

Both sets of sisters are struggling to break out of lifelong silences, imposed on them from without (unhappy childhoods with unusually aloof and self-absorbed parents) and from within (rigid self-control and inchoate longings for self-expression). In both films the death of a family member brings the siblings together to confront one another, but both films conclude in a return of their familiar silence and isolation from one another. Allen allows the sisters' spouses and parents to play much more active roles in his film, but it is obvious that even the supposedly close relationship each has with their respective families is almost utterly ineffectual in shattering the paralysis that disables each.

Another Woman occupies a unique niche in American cinema: it is Woody Allen's deftest demonstration that he is singularly qualified to carry on the exploration of the human psyche where Bergman left off and that he is bold enough to translate the personal language of Bergman's psychological symbols into modern American imagery. No other director has ever utilized such specifically Bergmanian themes and techniques. But *Another Woman* is neither a remake of *Wild Strawberries*, nor an imitation of a Bergman film. It is more than an homage or a pastiche: it is a correlative, a cinematic equivalent to a musical quodlibet, for lack of a better term, that uses much of Bergman's language to describe the inner struggles of a modern American female parallel to Isak Borg. Allen's use of dreams, flashbacks, childhood memories and a subjective narrator

all have their origins in Bergman's film, but Allen provides a unique perspective of his own. Marion Post, for example, can never possess the certainty that Isak Borg draws from his past:

BORG: I have found that during the last few years I glide rather easily into a twilight world of memories and dreams which are highly personal.... Whenever I am restless or sad, I usually try to recall memories from my childhood.¹⁸

Compare this positive response with Marion's more skeptical one:

MARION: I wondered if memories represent something we retain or something we have lost.¹⁹

The three dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries* are perhaps the most memorable aspects of the film for modern viewers: Borg's harrowing confrontation with his own corpse, his idyllic return to the summer home of his childhood, and the final surrealistic drama of his inquisition and sentence of incompetence. Allen's approach parallels Bergman's but simultaneously differs significantly. Marion, like Borg, undergoes a tripartite ritual of confrontation, but hers occurs in the waking world rather than the world of dreams. And, unlike Borg's dream encounters with his earlier selves, Marion's conflicts are always with other people (her former husband, her present husband's ex-wife, her former lover Larry), which drastically diminish her capacity for insight into her own predicament.

Marion's outer journey only takes her a few blocks across Manhattan while Borg's takes him across Sweden, but her inward journey is as harrowing—and as self-induced—as Borg's. But Allen has added an element of voyeurism (the overheard conversations from the analyst's office) absent in Bergman's film to function as a catalyst to Marion's exploration of self. Marion's dreams and fantasies center on her icy father (John Houseman in his last film role)—a parallel to the elderly fru Borg—and on the shocking revelations of Marion's selfishness as revealed to her by her former friend Claire. But Allen's gradual exposure of Marion's inability to feel any kind of emotion is both crueller and more absolute than Bergman's indictment of Isak Borg. Marion clings to her fictionalized portrait in Larry's (Gene Hackman's) novel as proof she is capable of grand passions, an illusion Borg does not embrace about himself. Her second marriage dissolves largely due to her own frigidity, yet she only hopes the breakup won't affect her stepdaughter's feelings for her. Allen permits little reconciliation, since his protagonist has so patently refused to learn anything from her experiences, while Borg at least will have the comfort of his memories from childhood.

It was not until near the end of the nineties that Allen returned to classical Bergmanian themes. In the meantime he explored the nature of guilt and retribution (or the lack of it) in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989) and revisited marital fidelity (and the lack of it) in *Husbands and Wives* (1992). Both of these themes, of course, resonate in Bergman's films of the 1960s and 1970s. *Skammen* (*Shame*), for example, examines political betrayal and personal guilt, while *Scener ur ett äktenskap* (*Scenes from a Marriage*) and *Ansikte mot ansikte* (*Face to Face*) constitute his most penetrating studies of marriages and their breakups.

With the exception of the Chekov-inspired "serious" film *September* (1987), most of Woody Allen's films over the next decade and a half would be the light, breezy comedies—starring Woody Allen—that audiences had come to expect from him: *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (1993), *Mighty Aphrodite* (1995), *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999), *Small Time Crooks* (2000),

and *Curse of the Jade Scorpion* (2001). He even turned his talent to animated films, lending his voice to the protagonist of *Antz* (1998). In 1997, however, he broke the pattern of the millennial decade and released a film that, while still technically a comedy, was nevertheless a radical departure from anything he had done before. Shockingly vulgar in language and tone, *Deconstructing Harry* stars Allen as Harry Block, a booze-swilling author struggling with writer's block and addicted to numerous prescription pharmaceuticals, kinky hookers, and illicit sex with almost anyone. (Could he even be some distant descendant of Antonious Block as well?) Never before had Allen permitted his screen persona to use such shockingly obscene language. And, while most of his films contain, even revolve around, divorced, often multiply divorced couples or individuals, none of these earlier characters even come close to Harry Block in terms of sheer swinishness. Perhaps reflecting and refracting Allen's own anhedonia (a psychological inability to feel joy), Harry is compulsively compelled to cheat on every woman with whom he has a relationship. Having written a scandalous and thinly-veiled *roman à clef*, Harry is then shocked when one of his furious former lovers is angry enough with him to threaten his life with a gun. He seduces one of his female students, Fay, while simultaneously and repeatedly urging her not to fall in love with him. Ultimately taking his advice, Fay becomes engaged to Harry's best friend, Larry. At this juncture, Harry reverses direction entirely and insists that Fay dump Larry and marry him (Harry) instead. One of his ex-wives, psychiatrist Joan (the mother of his only son), sensibly refuses to allow her child to play hooky just to accompany Harry to his alma mater in upstate New York where he is to be given an award. (This same college, it might be noted parenthetically, had earlier expelled Harry, ostensibly for giving the Dean's wife an enema.) Faced with Joan's implacable opposition, Harry simply kidnaps the boy. Again and again in this film, Allen thrusts his unlikable protagonist into the audience's collective face without supplying any redeeming qualities. What makes *Deconstructing Harry* even more remarkable (as several reviewers have noted), is its unmistakable structural and thematic descent from Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*.

Unlike *Another Woman*, which incorporated Bergmanian themes from *Wild Strawberries* into a form generated by Allen and dictated by the demands of his very different American, urban world, *Deconstructing Harry* is a kind of coarse parody of the Swedish film. Harry Block, like Isak Borg, is somewhat estranged from his surroundings but not because, like Borg, he has done so willingly: Harry Block has, rather, alienated himself from his family and friends by his boorish and treacherous behavior and his almost limitless ability for self-deception. Withdrawing into his imagination and the various fictions he has created over the years, Harry utilizes his creations as a collective justification for his mean-spirited behavior. This is exactly the opposite effect of Borg's merciless dreams: they lead him onto the path of self-awareness, not self-delusion. (In one of these fictional sequences in *Deconstructing Harry*, we even have a return visit from *Love and Death's* Death, now garbed in a more appropriately somber color.) The central motif of both *Wild Strawberries* and *Deconstructing Harry* is the road trip, of course, the journey the protagonists undertake to their respective universities where they are to be honored for their professional achievements as scientist and artist respectively. Isak Borg's becomes a painful but meaningful voyage of self-discovery and reconciliation with the past, while Harry Block's journey winds up, literally, in Hell. Neither Marion in *Another Woman* nor Harry seems to derive any therapeutic direction from their various journeys across town and upstate: they act and feel as randomly and seem as lacking in insight

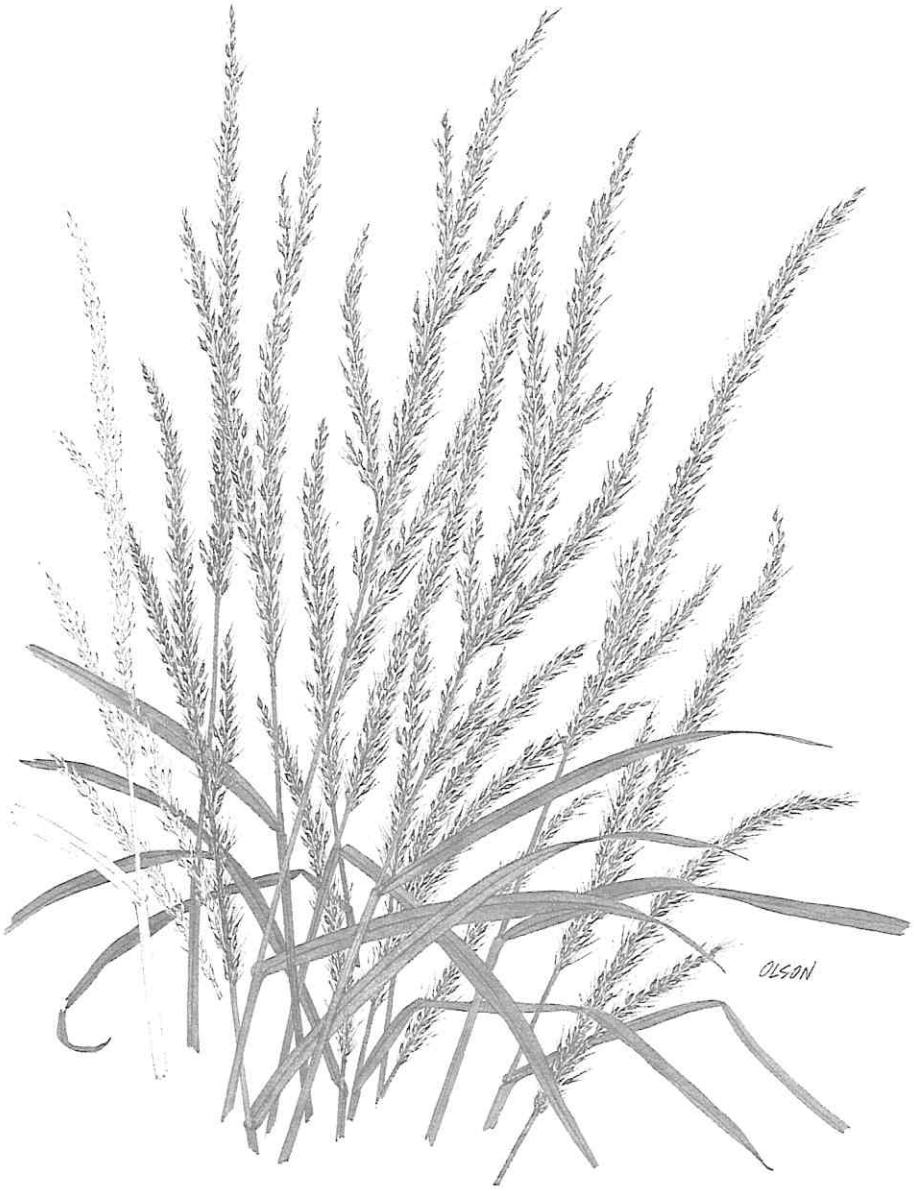
at the end of their respective films as they did in the beginning. Isak's self-harrowing has led him to a deeper understanding of his son Evald, his daughter-in-law Marianne, their marriage, and her pregnancy, as well as of his own shortcomings as a husband and father. Forced to look into his own craven past, at the loveless marriage that he alone had created, at the emotional frigidity of his ancient mother and the achingly innocent Sara whom he had loved and lost, Isak Borg—as Bergman reminds us, he is an “icy fortress”²⁰—finally comprehends the nature of his ruthless dreams. And, like Ingmar Bergman (with whom he shares more than his initials), Isak Borg ultimately even finds solace and a kind of companionship in the company of his dreams.

For all his much-discussed “imagination,” Harry Block doesn't seem to get much out of his literary fantasies at all. Allen mercilessly strips away every layer of Harry's illusions and literary pretensions: even the gratification of worldly fame and recognition is denied him, as his journey ends not in academic honor but first jail then an elevator ride to Hell. (Borg remarks in the first minutes of *Wild Strawberries* that he ought to be recognized as an “Honorary idiot” not an Honorary Doctor by his *alma mater*, Lund University.) Borg's travelling companions—his daughter-in-law Marianne, the young medical and theology students Viktor and Anders, respectively, and the plucky Sara, namesake and twin to Borg's fiancée of long ago—are transformed by Allen into a lurid, comic threesome in *Deconstructing Harry*: his kidnapped son Hilly, an old (and soon to be late) friend, Richard, and a stunning, pot-smoking hooker named Cookie. Like the foursome in Isak's car, these fellow-travelers play no more than a catalytic role in Harry's fruitless trek toward self-knowledge. Ruefully, he sums up the futility of indulging in his literary fantasies: “Six shrinks and three wives and I still can't get my life together.” In another close parallel to Bergman's film, the road company takes a short detour to have lunch with Harry's sister Doris and brother-in-law Burt, both Orthodox Jews, who accuse Harry of being anti-Semitic, an epithet that Harry does not wholly deny. (The same criticism has often been made of Woody Allen, of course, sometimes by Allen himself.) This scene is a counterpart to Isak Borg's side trip to his mother's home near Gränna with his daughter-in-law Marianne. There, Borg confronts emblems of his real past and the landscape of his nightmares (e.g., the famous watch with no hands) and realizes Marianne's accusations of coldness on his part are fully justified.

Woody Allen has come a long way from his first full-scale film *Take the Money and Run* (1970), about as far as Bergman had come from *Hets* (*Torment*, 1944) to *Trollflöjten* (*The Magic Flute*, 1973), so we might be able to expect a dozen more films from him, if Bergman's career is any kind of guide. “Meaning, profundity, style, images, visual beauty, tension, storytelling flair, speed, fecundity, innovation, an actor's director nonpareil.”²¹ This is Woody Allen on Ingmar Bergman, as it turns out, but in many ways, at least in this critic's judgment, the description applies equally well to Woody Allen himself.

ENDNOTES

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- 3 Woody Allen, Review of Ingmar Bergman's *The Magic Lantern*, *New York Times Book Review*, September 18, 1988, 27.
- 4 Woody Allen, "Lovborg's Women Reconsidered," *Without Feathers* (New York: Warner Books, 1976), 29-30.
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- 6 Woody Allen, *Manhattan*, in *Four Films of Woody Allen* (New York: Random House, 1982), 186.
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- 10 Ingmar Bergman, "The Seventh Seal" in *Four Screenplays by Ingmar Bergman*, translated by Lars Malmström and David Kushner (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960), 150.
- 11 Jonas Åberg, "Review of Love and Death," *Chaplin* 18:142 (January 1976), 7.
- 12 Allen, "Review," 29.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 14 Vincent Canby, "Woody Allen: Risking It Without Laughs," *The New York Times*, August 6, 1978.
- 15 Stanley Kaufman, "Interiors," *Before My Eyes* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 145.
- 16 John Simon, "Bergmania," *Reverse Angle* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1982), 362-366.
- 17 Pauline Kael, "What's Wrong with This Picture?" *The New Yorker*, October 31, 1988, 81.
- 18 Bergman, "Wild Strawberries," *Four Screenplays*, 258 and 284.
- 19 Woody Allen, *Another Woman*, Orion Pictures (1988).
- 20 Bergman, *Images*, 20.
- 21 Allen, "Review," 34.



DAG BLANCK

American Influences in Sweden? Reflections on a Trans-Atlantic Relationship

In the mid-1990s, a group of political scientists in Sweden tried to assess their country's relationship to the outside world. In one survey, those Swedes who said that they had considered moving abroad within the last few years indicated their preferences. Among these potential emigrants, the United States was the most popular destination, named by 20 percent of the respondents. Australia came in second with 15 percent, whereas other Scandinavian and European countries were chosen by between five and ten percent of the Swedes.¹

The U.S. was also a common answer when the question was posed where Swedes would move if they were forced to by political upheavals or other circumstances. The most popular choice given between 1991-1995 was, perhaps not surprisingly, Norway, with between 17 and 32 percent of the answers. The U.S. was, however, not far behind with between 12 and 32 percent of the respondents preferring the North American republic, well ahead of Denmark in third place, and then Australia and Great Britain.² It is thus not surprising that Swedish author Torkel Rasmusson has commented that Sweden's American orientation became especially noticeable after World War II when like "a super tanker with a new destination on the radar...the entire country turned westwards" or that Prime Minister Olof Palme made a similar comment about the American presence in Sweden in the mid 1980s.³

Reactions to the U.S. in Sweden have been varied. Many perceive it in a positive light, as is evidenced by the lure of the U.S. as a destination for potential Swedish migrants. Negative comments are, however, also heard, and it is sometimes said that Sweden has become too "Americanized." In 1995, for example, Swedish author Gunder Andersson maintained that "the Swedes are, without knowing or any longer noticing it, completely marinated in American culture."⁴

The Swedish attitudes towards the U.S., American culture, and its relative position in Swedish society are one dimension of a larger conversation about America in Europe. This conversation is not new; it can, in fact be dated back to the colonial era, and a vast literature on the subject of images of America in Europe and of trans-Atlantic opinions exists.⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, Charles Dickens, James Bryce, and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schriber are a few names in a long tradition of European discourse about America. The recent Euro-

American rift over the war in Iraq is thus but one expression of these debates, but may, as Madeleine Albright and others have recently suggested, be of an especially severe nature.⁶ When in 1792 the French Academy announced an essay competition, in which the participants were asked to answer the question about the influence America had on European politics, commerce, and general mores, it is, as historian John Elliott has commented, not hard to empathize with the anonymous winner of the contest who lamented: “What a large and inexhaustible subject. The more one studies it, the more it grows!”⁷

It could be argued that the U.S. occupies a special position in the European minds, in so far that it has always been a country that has been discussed with a special degree of intensity and fervor. In the case of Sweden, for example, no other country prompts opinions and feelings of such vigor as the U.S. Almost everybody has an opinion about the country, its politics, or culture, and very few remain indifferent. The current United States position as the only remaining superpower obviously accounts for some of the contemporary attention devoted to the U.S. outside its borders. The fact that the U.S. in the late eighteenth century sought to establish itself as a new political entity and alternative to contemporary European forms of governments has provided the basis for an on-going discussion of the nature of this new American nation. The mass immigration of close to 35 million Europeans between 1820 and 1930 also created a vast network of contacts and flows of information across the Atlantic, ensuring that the United States became an integral part of the mental landscape of ordinary Europeans. It is worth noting that those European countries that experienced the highest per capita emigration rate to the U.S.—Ireland, Norway and Sweden—are also countries where it is often claimed that the connections—be they negative or positive—to America are particularly close.

In this article the history of the Swedish discussions about the United States will be traced. I will argue that although a number of persons have contributed to the Swedish view of America, it is possible to discern a continuity in the arguments. It is also clear that many discussions of America deal not only with the U.S. but should also be seen in a Swedish context, where they have frequently been used as arguments in debates on issues important to Sweden at the time. This is particularly clear in the discussions about American influences in Sweden—a question that will be addressed in the second part of the article through an examination of the role of American education in Sweden. America has often served as a touchstone, a country whose ideas are accepted, rejected, or modified in the working out of Swedish concerns.

1

The earliest discussions about America in Sweden can be traced back to the eighteenth century.⁸ Swedes paid attention to the political developments on the North American continent, and the events that led up to the Declaration of Independence were followed fairly closely in Sweden. All of the half dozen or so Swedish newspapers at the time wrote about these events and mostly in positive terms. According to Harald Elovson, at the time America became “intimately associated with freedom” in Swedish public opinion, and America’s colonial opposition to the English crown was seen as “a struggle against tyranny.”⁹ Even the king, Gustav III, expressed at least cautious interest and some sympathy for the American case, as he wrote that he admired the colonists’ “courage and audacity,” adding somewhat prophetically that perhaps America would one day contribute to Europe the way in which Europe had

contributed to America during the preceding two centuries.¹⁰

Although it seems as if a positive image of America dominated in Sweden at the time of the American Revolution, negative estimations also existed. Count Axel von Fersen, for example, who had joined the French forces under de Rochambeau during the Revolutionary War and fought at Yorktown,¹¹ wrote about America and the Americans in a letter to his father in 1781: "Money is the prime mover behind their actions; they think of nothing else than how to acquire it. Everyone is for himself and no one thinks of the public good."¹² In Arnold Barton's words, von Fersen showed "a patrician distaste for American materialism and utilitarianism" and a "fear" of the country's Republican form of government.¹³

Two views of America were thus established already towards the end of the eighteenth century in Sweden—on the one hand a country associated with political and personal freedom, and on the other a country dominated by materialism and crass self-interest. This duality in the image of America can be discerned during the nineteenth century as well. To some, the U.S. represented a manifestation of new political ideas that they greeted with great enthusiasm and that they hoped would provide an example for the Old World. In a discussion of the relationship between Europe and America in 1815, it was argued that "it is likely that a better culture will emerge in America than in Europe,"¹⁴ and bishop Esaias Tegnér spoke of America in hopeful terms at the commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation in Lund in two years later. If it were true, he said, that the days were "growing dimmer" for Europe, "far out west...[the sun] rises for a happier world. Europe has already sent many of her best hope there, and mankind will save its house gods there, as Æneas saved his from the falling Ilium."¹⁵

Fredrika Bremer's well-known *Hemmen in nya verlden*, published in 1853-54 and in an English translation as *The Homes of the New World* in 1854, provides one of the best examples of this nineteenth-century position. In the final letter of the third volume of her book, addressed to Danish theologian Hans Martensen, she looks back at her journey. "I wanted to examine the human being, as she emerges in the New World" once "the oppressive burdens" of the Old World have been "cast off," Bremer wrote.¹⁶ And what did she see? "Nowhere on earth," she continued, has "true human freedom" been expressed as fully as in the United States. The highest goal in that country, she concluded, was for "a free, pious and happy people, all of whom [have] equal rights and equal opportunity to acquire the highest human worth, the highest human happiness"—an idea Bremer found to be "the leading principle" behind the United States and "the center of gravity in the cultivation of the New World."¹⁷

A liberal view of America, as Harald Elovson has called it,¹⁸ had thus emerged, associated with political and cultural groupings in nineteenth-century Sweden that were advocating reforms of Swedish society. De Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique* was translated into Swedish as *Om folkväldet i Amerika*¹⁹ only four years after its publication and was one important influence in the Swedish constitutional reform of 1866.²⁰ The radical authors of the 1880s also held a positive view of America. August Strindberg, for example, showed a great interest in the United States, read about the country, and was influenced by several of its authors. Longfellow's "Excelsior" played an important role for him as he was courting his second wife Siri von Essen, and in the second part of his autobiography *Tjänstekvinnans son*, he expresses great admiration for what he called "the neo-American literature," including authors like Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and Artemus Ward.²¹ Strindberg also translated a number of the

American humorists into Swedish,²² and at one point had quite well-developed plans to write about the emigration to the U.S. and to take a journey across the Atlantic.²³

The growing socialist movement towards the end of the century also embraced some of elements of the liberal view of America. August Palm, a Socialist pioneer in Sweden and the founder of the first Social Democratic newspaper in the country, visited the U.S. in 1900 on the invitation of several Swedish-American unions. Although critical of certain aspects of American capitalism, Palm's positive impressions of America dominate, and he underscores that it is a country of "resources [and] opportunity."²⁴ In the ongoing Swedish discussion about the emigration from Sweden to the U.S., Palm encouraged young Swedes to emigrate, as they would "in ninety cases of one hundred be able to establish themselves in a much better and independent financial situation than here at home,"²⁵ also pointing out that it was a country where the poor man was valued as highly as a millionaire: "No-one is judged according to his appearances in this country," he concluded.²⁶

Many examples of a positive view of America from the twentieth century can also be found.²⁷ It is interesting to note that the early positive attitudes towards America in the Swedish labor movement seem to have continued. Many Social Democrats embraced the New Deal, and in 1935 author Anna-Lenah Elgström who had spent time in the U.S. studying the Works Project Administration (WPA), found great hope there at a time when the clouds were getting darker over Europe, arguing that "we democrats of the Old World...should find inspiration in what is going on in the U.S."²⁸ Similarly, Alva Myrdal—who will be discussed in greater detail in the second part of the article—claimed in 1942 that many Swedes had an uninformed view of the U.S., maintaining instead that "a new world is being shaped in America" based on democracy, freedom, and free exchange of ideas and goods—"ideas which are of the greatest importance to us."²⁹

The Swedish interest in the New Deal was reciprocated by an American interest in the Swedish reforms of the 1930s, as a number of American intellectuals and authors visited the country to study its social and political developments. Marquis W. Childs' 1936 *Sweden—The Middle Way* was widely read and became very influential with many New Dealers, including President Roosevelt.³⁰ As historian Merle Curti has argued, Sweden began to occupy a prominent place in the American "social mind,"³¹ laying the foundations for a continued interest in Swedish political and social developments in the U.S. for at least the subsequent two or three decades.

Tage Erlander, Swedish Social Democratic Prime Minister from 1946 to 1969, also expressed positive views of the U.S., feeling, as he put it, "a closeness" to the country. His biographer attributes this to the American efforts on behalf of European freedom in World War II, to the advances of American social sciences, and to his many relatives in America. Erlander said that he was particularly close to "radical America," and he maintained contacts with the representatives of the Democratic party and the American labor movement, such as Hubert Humphrey and Walter Reuther.³² The current Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson, finally, argues that although there are things that one should be critical of in American society, the U.S. still has a political life and debate "far more vital...critical, and open" that we can hope for in our "best European moments," and that the country is "a large, open democracy which has given so many young Swedes a first real understanding of what private initiative and common responsibility really mean."³³

The positive view of the U.S. among Swedish Social Democrats during the twentieth century might seem surprising, given the strong Swedish criticism of the United States during the late 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in a very serious diplomatic crisis between the two countries and in accusations, both domestic and foreign, of anti-Americanism. Clearly, both the Swedish government and Swedish public opinion became increasingly critical of American military involvement in Southeast Asia from the mid-1960s and on. The Swedish government, however, strongly denied any charge of anti-Americanism. In 1969 an official government document maintained that “[a]nti-Americanism is not a feature of Swedish policy,”³⁴ and in 1973 the American chargé d'affaires in Stockholm reported to Washington that Swedish Under-Secretary of State Sverker Åström had told him that Swedish criticism of U.S. Vietnam policies should not be seen as “hostility to the U.S. as such,” and that the Swedish people had the “highest admiration and affection” for the U.S.³⁵

An examination of Swedish official criticism of the U.S. during the Vietnam War does show that by and large it focused on the issue—the war in Southeast Asia—and, with a few exceptions, was not directed at American society as a whole. (This is not to say that anti-American sentiments were lacking in Sweden. Such ideas were certainly expressed in the general, and at times, very intense public debate in Sweden of the issue, in which the discussion of the war in Vietnam was often secondary to a fundamental criticism of American capitalism, social problems, or culture.³⁶) It could be argued that the Social Democratic critique of America in the 1960s and 1970s constituted a parenthesis in a longer pattern of a positive view of the country. As historian Per Thullberg has suggested, American influences have been prominent in a number of ways in the post-World War II Social Democratic developments, something that has not yet been systematically studied.³⁷

The negative views of America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have continued to focus on the materialistic nature of the country. Swedish lieutenant Otto Natt och Dag, who for political reasons fled Sweden for the U.S. in the 1810s, characterized the Americans as “sour,” counting everything “according to gold and silver.” He continued his diatribe, noting that what Swedes called “honor, altruism, integrity, and honesty” were lacking in the U.S., and that the guiding principle for the Americans was “to exploit each and everyone they know.”³⁸ Another element of the negative view of America that is equally enduring was also introduced, namely a superior and condescending attitude towards American culture, which was seen as shallow and lacking in historical continuity and cohesiveness. These ideas came strongly to the fore in Knut Hamsun’s highly critical and dystopian view of the U.S. in *Fra det moderne Amerikas aandsliv* (From the Spiritual Life of America) from 1889, which was based on several years of first-hand experience of life in America. Hamsun painted a very dark picture of America, as an over-patriotic country, without literature or painting, a short history, and with strong xenophobic tendencies, concluding that “because of their temperament and social organization...[the Americans] have no culture.”³⁹

The book had a significant impact in Sweden. Hamsun was a well respected Norwegian author, whose opinions carried a great deal of weight in Sweden, and seems to have deterred at least one Swedish author from traveling to the U.S.⁴⁰ The national poet from the late nineteenth century, Verner von Heidenstam, became one exponent of these ideas. In his first work of fiction, *Från Col di Tenda till Blocksberg* from 1888 he compares the earth to a house with five rooms, where Europe becomes the stately dining room, Africa “a sunny

little smoking parlor," Asia the grand and exciting living room, and Australia a guest room. "Dull America," lastly, "whose soil we hope never to set foot on" is relegated to the role of the servants quarters and the kitchen.⁴¹

This negative view of American culture became stronger during the twentieth century, especially as American mass culture also began to reach Sweden. One of many examples of a critique of American mass culture is the influx of American popular culture after World War I. It was seen as a threat to Swedish culture, and a debate about "Americanization" and its dangers began. This was not something unique to Sweden. Already in 1902 British journalist William T. Stead had, for example, published his book *The Americanisation of the World*, which he claimed would be "the trend of the twentieth century,"⁴² and the issue was being discussed in other European countries as well.⁴³

American films were seen as a particularly dangerous influence in Sweden. They quickly came to dominate both the European and Swedish film markets, and it has been estimated that before World War II some two thirds of the films showed in theaters came from the U.S.⁴⁴ In 1924, *Filmjournalen*, a Swedish film magazine, wrote that "week after week we are flooded with films from the large American companies—a huge flood of films, which slowly but surely provides the millions of Swedish spectators with American customs and ways of thinking, promotes American interests, and will make them believe in American ideals."⁴⁵

Reactions in Sweden included an attempt to regulate the importation of American films. Proposals were made in Parliament in 1919 and 1920 to nationalize movie theaters in order to guarantee the quality of the films. The 1920 proposal specifically mentioned American films as dangerous. In 1926, Social Democratic Members of Parliament Ivar Englund and Ernst Hage proposed that a government committee be appointed to look into the economic structure of the Swedish film market. The members were especially critical of American films, as they put commercial interests ahead of artistic, and were said to be representative of foreign cultural influences that were damaging to Swedish national psyche. The Swedish Parliament approved the proposal, but the committee never seems to have been appointed.⁴⁶

These two views of America in Sweden have thus proven resilient, and it seems possible to speak of a continuity in the Swedish discussions about America across time. French historian Philippe Roger has recently underscored the longevity of the negative discussions about America in France, identifying what he calls an American "discourse" in France. The discourse transcends the immediate context in which the U.S. is being discussed, providing a longer tradition in which the discussions take place. Roger even suggests that the existence of this discourse on America makes it possible for individual participants in the conversations about America to be part of a longer negative (or positive) discussion and to (re)use the different arguments about America without being aware of them.⁴⁷ A similar American discourse seems to have existed in Sweden as well.

2

America and American conditions have frequently been used in a Swedish context and in attempts to change Swedish society, both as models and as negative examples. One field of particular importance has been education. Already in 1770 Benjamin Franklin and his Academy of Philadelphia were discussed as a positive example for Sweden, and in 1849 the Swedish government sent P.A. Siljeström, one of the most influential educators in the country

at the time, on a study tour of America. He published a highly influential two-volume account of his journey, *Resa i Amerika* (A Journey in America), arguing that Sweden had a great many things to learn from public education in America, among other things the notion children should be taught to become “independently thinking and acting persons.”⁴⁸

The twentieth century saw a massive influx of American educational ideas in Sweden. Alva Myrdal, a leading Social Democratic politician, social scientist, and eventually a cabinet minister and Nobel Peace Laureate, played a crucial role in this context. She first visited the United States on a Rockefeller scholarship together with her husband Gunnar in 1929, a year which historian Walter Jackson has called “a turning point” in their lives.⁴⁹ Much of what they encountered there shaped their future careers, and Alva devoted her year to studying psychology, family sociology, and developmental psychology. In 1938 the couple returned to the U.S., staying until 1940 and returning again in 1942 for a final visit. Gunnar Myrdal had been commissioned to do a study of American race relations, which became his influential *An American Dilemma*. Alva, on her part, continued to develop her interests in education, particularly the educational philosophies of John Dewey. The Myrdals’ son Jan attended a school in New York based on these educational ideas,⁵⁰ which gave his mother ample opportunities to learn more about them.

The U.S. had a deep and long-lasting influence on both Gunnar and Alva. In 1970, Gunnar summarized their feelings: “America—the New World—made an extraordinarily deep impression on us....We came to identify very deeply with America, and we have never been able to quite shed this sense of identification.”⁵¹ This impact is obvious in both their jointly authored book *Kontakt med Amerika* (Contact with America) from 1941, which aimed to teach Swedes to understand the U.S. better, maintaining that “we Swedes have quite a lot to learn from America,”⁵² and from other writings and speeches.

In the chapter in *Kontakt* dealing with American education Alva Myrdal emphasizes the American capacity for reform in this field. She argues that in the “extraordinarily important field of education” the U.S. could not only offer solid scholarship but also “practical experiences that are worthy of our most serious attention.” The Swedish school system, which once had been of high quality, was now “lagging behind,” and serious reforms were needed. “It is a matter of life and death for our nation that we receive new and powerful stimulances from American education,” she concludes.⁵³

A couple of areas seem particularly important to her. The first is the existence of a comprehensive school form in the U.S.—that is, a school system from grade school up through high school, common and open to all students regardless of social or economic background. To Alva Myrdal, the establishment of a common school was a matter of giving all children equal access to education, something that had been developed in the United States. The contrast to the Swedish system with its division of students into several tracks of study, resulting in a segmented and non-inclusive school system, was striking. The Swedish division of students in different school forms and levels had simply never existed in the U.S., Myrdal noted. She commented ironically that “the passion which Swedes expend in protecting a selected part of the country’s youth from sharing its destiny with others for more than four years” can simply not be understood in America.⁵⁴

The current Swedish system resulted in educational class differences, as she pointed out in her regular column in the Stockholm newspaper *Aftonbladet* in May 1943. In Sweden, only ten percent of all children received the necessary

educational preparation for higher education, whereas under the American system more than 50 percent of the students were prepared for higher studies. Swedes often think of the American worker as an illiterate immigrant, Myrdal remarked. This was, however, no longer the case, as the comprehensive system of American public education meant that “the American worker will soon have a higher level of education than his Swedish compatriots.”⁵⁵ “In America,” Myrdal wrote in 1944, “the [educational] ideology is the open school policy,” where over 70 percent of young Americans attended high school. Still, she noted that attempts were being made to increase that figure to 90 percent—“a fantastic goal for us Swedes but obviously not unattainable for the Americans.”⁵⁶

A second important dimension of American educational practices was the way in which education in America reflected the changing needs of society. “American education is in a state of constant flux,” Myrdal claimed, and the keywords here, going back to John Dewey, were “education for a changing world.” This societal orientation of American education, which was completely absent in the Swedish schools,⁵⁷ could be seen in many ways. Children were given different kinds of psychological aptitude tests to make sure that their training corresponded to their own needs and abilities. Methods of instruction, school curricula, and textbooks were adapted according to the latest psychological scholarship so that optimal instructional and learning situations were created. In this way American schools “existed in the present time,” fulfilling both theoretical and practical needs. The author devoted quite some attention to the way in which American school children studied domestic subjects, such as cooking and food, questions relating to household economics and to issues dealing with living conditions in general. In this way, the educational process sought to give the students a “complete” education, both theoretical and practical, that would prepare them for the entirety of life.⁵⁸

Ultimately, Alva Myrdal argued, education was a matter of democracy. A democratic society was both shaped and defended by democratic schools, and such schools were being built in the United States. In a speech in 1940 she offered some key words that she felt characterized the American educational practice, namely a belief in rationality, a belief in biological determinism, a belief in popular education and in the possibility of changing and improving individuals.⁵⁹ The discussion about reforming Swedish schools was fundamentally not a discussion about pedagogical methods, but rather a discussion about the nature of contemporary Swedish society and its citizens, as she wrote in one of her columns in *Afontidningen* in 1943. By establishing a common school with equal access for all, by introducing new pedagogical methods, and by being willing to change the instructional contents, a new democratic school would be created, and with it a new democratic person.⁶⁰

Following her return from the U.S. in 1942, Alva Myrdal became very active in the work to reform the Swedish school system—and did do much influenced by her American experiences. She became a member of the school committee within the Social Democratic Party, and played a key role in the parliamentary school commission that was appointed in 1946 to propose reforms for the Swedish schools.⁶¹

The official report of the school commission was presented in 1948,⁶² and many of the educational ideas that Alva Myrdal had argued for are reflected in the report. One of its main proposals was the elimination of the divided Swedish schools and the establishment of a nine-year comprehensive school for all students,⁶³ a change that was central to her vision of reform. Moreover, the report also emphasized Myrdal’s assertion that as Swedish society changed,

so should the Swedish schools, affirming that “[t]he schools have not been able to keep up with societal developments in general.”⁶⁴ Finally, Alva Myrdal’s advocacy for the role of Swedish schools in shaping a democratic society was also strongly endorsed by the commission, and the report did declare that the “main task” for Swedish schools was “to educate democratic persons,” meaning that each student should become an independent individual and be able to develop her particular skills and talents to the fullest. At the same time, students should also be taught to work together for the common good, respecting each others’ differences, and avoiding an individualism resulting in egotism.⁶⁵

Judging from the reforms of the Swedish school system carried out during the following decades, it seems clear that many of the ideas advocated by Alva Myrdal, as educational historians Åke Isling and Gunnar Richardsson both have pointed out, became important dimensions of the new Swedish comprehensive school as it emerged in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁶ In many ways, then, American educational ideas, mediated through Alva Myrdal, found their way into the discussions of the organization of Swedish public education. As these American educational impulses were transformed into Swedish practice, they took on a new and “Swedish” character, losing their American origins and undergoing a process of domestication. Clearly, the new Swedish school system became perceived as a center piece of the Social Democratic reform project in building a welfare state—or *folkhemmet* (the People’s Home) as it was called in Sweden or the Middle Way as Marquis Childs dubbed it—in Sweden during the post-war era. This project has become an integral part of the Swedish self-image or national identity in the latter part of the twentieth century, and has also clearly been seen as a uniquely Swedish development, with very little sense of foreign roots.⁶⁷

In many ways the Myrdals, then, were path-breakers for the continued Swedish interest in and contacts with the world of American education. During the decades following World War II, the American educational influences in Sweden continued to grow, and in 1994, political scientist Olof Ruin noted that the Swedish universities and colleges constitute “the best example of a conscious ‘Americanization’ of Swedish society.”⁶⁸

The organizational structure of American higher education has attracted Swedish attention. When the Swedish Ph.D. degree was reformed in the early 1970s, it was strongly influenced by American models, and a government study from 1977 called it “almost...a translation of the American Ph.D.-degree.”⁶⁹ When Swedish students choose to study in foreign universities, the U.S. is by far the leading country of choice, and during the past half century thousands of Swedes have been students at various levels and for various lengths of time in American colleges and universities. In 2002 it was estimated that over 4,500 Swedes were enrolled in American colleges or universities, placing Sweden fourth among Western European countries sending undergraduates to the U.S., after Germany, the U.K., and France.⁷⁰

The social sciences have consistently drawn Swedes to American institutions of higher learning, with business administration, economics, and political science as leading subjects.⁷¹ Engineering has been another popular field of study, especially before 1960. To many Swedish engineers, a period in the U.S. seems to have been a natural part of their training, and in the 1930s and 1940s, J. Sigfrid Edström, the head of the electrical engineering company ASEA actively recruited engineers with American experience. The natural sciences and medicine, finally, have become increasingly important fields of study since World War II. With regard to medicine, the first generation of Swedish

anesthesiologists was trained almost entirely in the United States,⁷² and it is sometimes jokingly said that there are three kinds of medical researchers in Sweden: those who currently are in the United States, those who have just returned, and those who are planning their trip.

American models and practices have also been important for developments of several disciplines in Swedish higher education. American influences have, for example, always been strong in the social sciences. Education has already been discussed above. Economics and business administration are two other fields where the exchange of persons and ideas has been very lively, and where study trips to America and the use of American textbooks have been very common. Further examples include sociology, which was established in Swedish universities in 1947, and political science.⁷³ It also seems clear that a period of study in an American university has been beneficial for further academic careers in Sweden.⁷⁴

Education is thus a field where American ideas and models have played a major role for Sweden. It is a clear example of how American influences have reached the country—and at times are referred to as “Americanization.” Fears of Americanization have been one reason for anti-American sentiments in Sweden, especially with regard to popular culture. Given the many American influences in the field of education in Sweden, anti-American attitudes could well have been expected. Their absence is thus quite significant, and can be attributed to the fact that, by and large, Swedes do not perceive their schools or universities as particularly “American.” Their “American roots” have instead become an important part of the sense of what is Swedish, and through this process of incorporation or domestication taken a new—and long-lasting—meaning in their new Swedish cultural context.

ENDNOTES

1 Anna Rönström and Lennart Weibull, “Världen utanför,” in Sören Holmberg and Lennart Weibull, eds., *Mitt i nittioalet* (Göteborg, 1996), 415.

2 Ibid.

3 Ludvig Rasmusson, *Fyrtiotalisterna* (Stockholm, 1985), 130; Olof Palme, “Preface” in Sture Lindmark and Tore Tallroth, eds., *Swedes Looking West* (Stockholm, 1983).

4 Gunder Andersson, “Svenskarna—marinerade i amerikansk kultur,” *Aftonbladet*, November 9, 1995, 4.

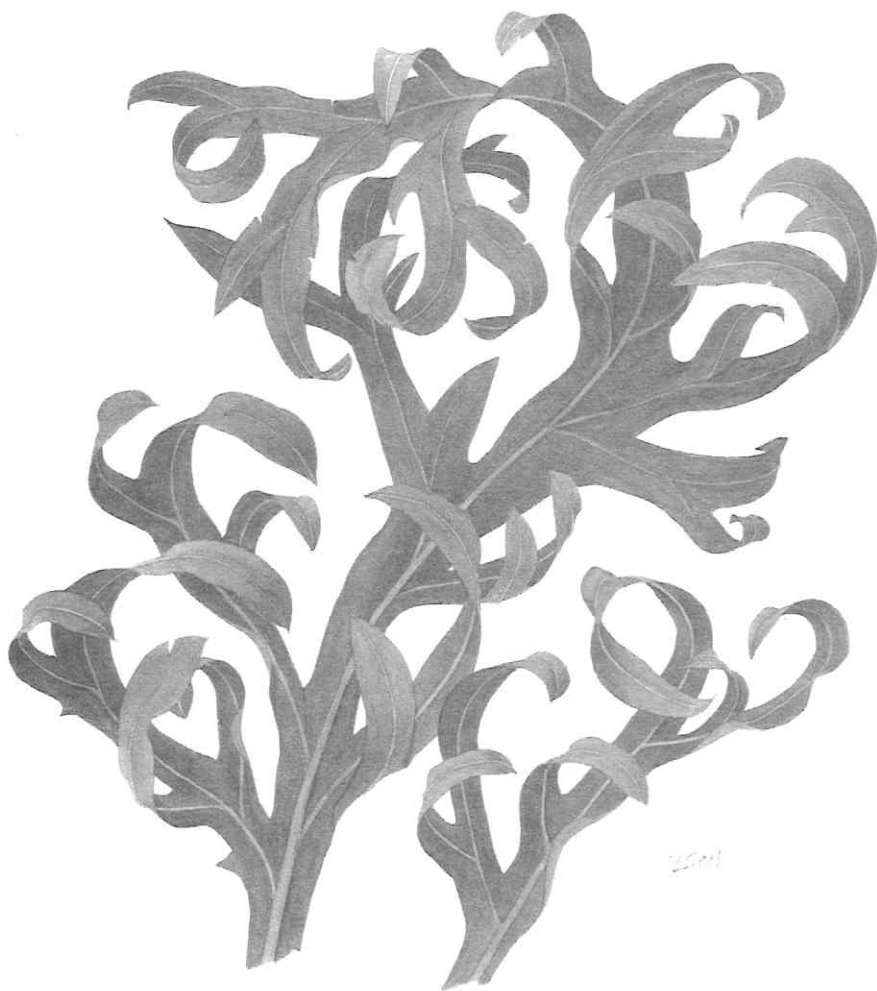
5 Some “classic” studies include Gilbert Chinard, *L’Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1934); Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West. A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (Princeton, N.J., 1957); Sigmund Skard, *The American Myth and the European Mind. American studies in Europe 1776-1960*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1958), and Daniel J. Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe. Reflections on American Thought* (New York, 1960). For some stimulating examples from the last decade or so, see for example C. Vann Woodward, *The Old World’s New World* (New York, 1991), Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995), Richard Pells, *Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York,

- 1997) and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings. Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).
- 6 Madeleine Albright et al., "Pour le renouveau du partenariat transatlantique," *Le Monde*, 15 May 2003. Recent data from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press Global Attitude Project also confirm an increase in negative attitudes in Europe towards the United States following the war in Iraq ("In War's Wake, Hostility and Mistrust. Poll Shows U.S. Isolation," *International Herald Tribune*, June 4, 2003, 1, 6).
- 7 J.H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492-1650* (Cambridge, Engl., 1970), 2.
- 8 The botanist Pehr Kalm, a student of Linnæus, who visited North America between 1748 and 1751 on behalf of the Swedish Academy of Sciences must also be mentioned. His three volume *En resa til norra America* (A Voyage to North America) published in Stockholm 1753-6, was quickly translated into other languages, and in the author's lifetime, *En Resa* appeared in two German translations (1754 and 1764), an English translation (1770-1771) and a Dutch translation (1772), playing an important role in shaping both a Swedish and European understanding of North America.
- 9 Harald Elovson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur 1750-1820* (Lund, 1930), 75.
- 10 Aurélien Vivie, ed., *Lettres de Gustave III à la comtesse de Boufflers et de la comtesse au roi de 1771 à 1791* (Bordeaux, 1900), 101-02. Quoted in Elovson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur* 83. Eventually, however, his enthusiasm for the Revolution cooled significantly. Cf. H. Arnold Barton, "Sweden and the War of American Independence," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 23 (1966), 419-27.
- 11 H. Arnold Barton, *Count Hans Axel von Fersen. Aristocrat in an Age of Revolution* (Boston, 1975), 27-28.
- 12 R.M. Klinckowström, ed., *Le comte de Fersen et la cour de France*, 1 (Paris, 1877), 50-51. Quoted in Elovson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur*, 89.
- 13 Barton, *Count Hans Axel von Fersen*, 35.
- 14 Klio, *Historisk månadsskrift* (Stockholm), February 1815. Quoted in Elovson, 279.
- 15 Esaias Tegnér, "Vid Jubelfesten 1817," in *Samlade skrifter*, 3 (Stockholm, 1883), 148.
- 16 Fredrika Bremer, *Hemmen i den nya världen*, 3 (Stockholm, 1854), 507.
- 17 Bremer, *Hemmen*, 510.
- 18 Harald Elovson, "Den liberala amerikabilden," in Lars Åhnebrink, *Amerika och Norden* (Uppsala, 1964), 75-112.
- 19 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Om folkväldet i Amerika*, 6 vols, (Stockholm, 1839-1846).
- 20 Richard Swedberg, "Tocqueville in Sweden," *The Tocqueville Review/La Revue Tocqueville*, 22 (2001:1), 201-205.
- 21 August Strindberg, *Tjänstekvinnans son*, 2 (Stockholm, 1913), 108-09.

- 22 Carl L. Anderson, "Strindberg's Translations of American Humor," in Harald Naess and Sigmund Skard, eds., *Americana Norvegica*, vol III. *Studies in Scandinavian-American Interrelations Dedicated to Einar Haugen* (Oslo, 1971), 153-94.
- 23 Harald Elovson, "August Strindberg and Emigration to America until ca. 1890," in Harald Naess and Sigmund Skard, eds., *Americana Norvegica*, vol III. *Studies in Scandinavian-American Interrelations Dedicated to Einar Haugen* (Oslo, 1971), 129-152.
- 24 August Palm, *Ögonblicksbilder från en tripp till Amerika* (Stockholm, 1901), 243.
- 25 Palm, *Ögonblicksbilder*, 240.
- 26 Palm, *Ögonblicksbilder*, 243.
- 27 See, for example, Gunnar Eidevall's discussion of positive images of America among such Swedish twentieth-century authors as Victor Vinde, Thorsten Jonsson, Eyvind Johnson, Herbert Tingsten, Vilhelm Moberg, Jan Olof Olsson, Folke Isaksson, and Lars Gustafsson. Gunnar Eidevall, *Amerika i svensk 1900-talslitteratur* (Stockholm, 1983), chapters 6, 7, 8, and 11.
- 28 Anna-Lenah Elgström, *U.S.A. i örnens tecken* (Stockholm, 1934), 20-22.
- 29 Notes for speech "Det nya Amerika" (The New America), October, November, and December 1942, in Alva Myrdal Archives, Arbetarrörelsens arkiv (Archives of the Swedish Labor Movement), Stockholm.
- 30 Merle Curti, "Sweden in the American Social Mind of the 1930s," J. Thomas Tredway and J. Iverne Dowie, eds., *The Immigration of Ideas. Studies in the North Atlantic Community* (Rock Island, Ill., 1968), 176.
- 31 Curti, "Sweden in the American Social Mind," *passim*.
- 32 Olof Ruin, *I välfärdsstatens tjänst. Tage Erlander 1946-1969* (Stockholm, 1986), 312.
- 33 *Dagens Nyheter*, January 2, 2002, 2.
- 34 Utrikesfrågor: *Offentliga dokument m m rörande viktigare svenska utrikesfrågor* (Stockholm, 1969), 125.
- 35 Quoted in Leif Leifland, *Frostens år. Om USA:s diplomatiska utfrysning av Sverige* (Stockholm, 1997), 29.
- 36 For two early expressions see, for example, Artur Lundkvist, "Problemet är USA," *Clarté*, 1964:4, 2-3, and Sara Lidman, "Medan det regnar," *Expressen*, June 16, 1965, 4.
- 37 Per Thullberg, "USA, makarna Mydal och socialdemokraternas efterkrigsprogram," *Tiden*, No. 10, 1986, 594. See below for a more detailed examination of one of these areas, education.
- 38 Quoted in Elovson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur*, 271.
- 39 Quoted in the English translation *The Cultural Life of Modern America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 145.

- 40 Birgitta Steene, "The Swedish Image of America," in Poul Houe and Sven Haakon Rossel, eds., *Images of America in Scandinavia* (Amsterdam, 1998), 170.
- 41 Verner von Heidenstam, *Från Col di Tenda till Blocksberg* (Stockholm, 1943), 168-69. [Orig. published in 1888].
- 42 William T. Stead, *The Americanisation of the World, or, The Trend of the Twentieth Century*, (London, 1902).
- 43 Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion. American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919-1933* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984), chapters 5 and 6; Pells, *Not Like Us*, 7-21.
- 44 Göran Andolf, *Sverige och utlandet 1930-1975. Indikatorer för mätning av Sveriges kulturella beroende* (Lund, 1976), 67.
- 45 "Köpa vi för mycket utländsk film?" in *Filmjournalen*, no 15, 1924.
- 46 Martin Alm, *Americanitis. Amerika som sjukdom eller läkemedel. Svenska berättelser om USA åren 1900-1939* (Lund, 2002), 232.
- 47 Philippe Roger, *L'Ennemi américain. Généalogie de l'antiaméricanisme français* (Paris, 2002), 16-20.
- 48 Per Anders Siljeström, *Resa i Amerika*, vol. 1 (Stockholm, 1852), 218.
- 49 Walter Jackson, "Gunnar Myrdal: America's Swedish Tocqueville," *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, 50 (October 1999), 209.
- 50 Sissela Bok, *Alva. Ett kvinnoliv* (Stockholm, 1987), 129.
- 51 Quoted in Lars Lindskog, *Alva Myrdal. 'Förnuftet måste segra'* (Stockholm, 1981), 20.
- 52 Gunnar and Alva Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika* (Stockholm, 1941), 28-29. Although the book was a joint project, the authors obviously had the main responsibility for the chapters dealing with their own specialties. It thus seems clear that Gunnar wrote chapter two, "The American Creed," which is an early formulation of a theme that was to become so central in *An American Dilemma*, which was published three years later, and that Alva wrote about education.
- 53 Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kontakt*, 30.
- 54 Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kontakt*, 101.
- 55 Alva Myrdal, "En studie av skolfördomarna," *Aftontidningen*, May 5, 1943.
- 56 Alva Myrdal, "Västerlandets skola demokratiseras: Amerikas skola inför efterkrigsvärlden," *Lärarinneförbundet*, 31, March 8, 1944, 8.
- 57 Alva Myrdal, "Kultur eller kunskapsexercis," *Aftontidningen*, August 25, 1943.
- 58 Myrdal and Myrdal, *Kontakt*, 108-109.
- 59 Notes for speech on education in America, August 6, 1940 in Alva Myrdal Archives, Arbetarrörelsens arkiv, Stockholm.

- 60 Alva Myrdal, "Bildningsstandarder efter kriget," *Aftontidningen*, October 20, 1943.
- 61 Per Thullberg, "Alva Myrdal" in *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 26 (Stockholm, 1987-89), 164-165.
- 62 SOU [Statens Offentliga Utredningar] 1948:27, *1946 års skolkommissons betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling* (Stockholm, 1948).
- 63 SOU 1948:27, chapters 3-4.
- 64 SOU 1948:27, 1.
- 65 SOU 1948: 27, 4.
- 66 Åke Isling, *Kampen för den demokratiska skolan*, 1. *Samhällsstruktur och organisation* (Stockholm, 1980), 313-316; Gunnar Richardsson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940-1945. Idéer och realiteter i pedagogisk debatt och politiskt handlande* (Stockholm, 1978), 249.
- 67 Orvar Löfgren, "Nationella arenor," in Orvar Löfgren, et al. eds, *Försvenskningen av Sverige. Det nationellas förvandlingar* (Stockholm, 1993), 78.
- 68 Olof Ruin, *Amerikabilder. Anteckningar om USA från 50-tal till 90-tal* (Stockholm, 1994), 228.
- 69 Li Bennich-Björkman, *Learning A Passionate Profession. The Failing of Political Reform in Higher Education. A Swedish Example* (Stockholm, 1993).
- 70 *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 22, 2002.
- 71 The following is based on Dag Blanck, "The Impact of the American Academy in Sweden," in Rolf Lundén and Erik Åsard, eds., *Networks of Americanization. Aspects of the American Influence in Sweden*, (Uppsala, 1992), 85-86.
- 72 Franklin Scott, *The American Experience of Swedish Students. Retrospect and Aftermath* (Minneapolis, 1956), 103.
- 73 Blanck, "The Impact of the American Academy," 87-88.
- 74 Scott, *The American Experience*, 96.



KENNETH R. JOHNSTON

**LINES, written a Few Years beyond Augustana College,
on Revisiting the Banks of the Mississippi,
during a Homecoming/Reunion, anytime.**

My theme, like my title, imitates William Wordsworth's meditation on that Romantic cliché, "You Can't Go Home Again," popularly preserved in Thomas Wolfe's all-but-forgotten novel of 1940. All these titles and texts raise doubts, despite their best intentions, that our past is ever *there*, as we want it to be, in useable form—such as the happy public occasions for remembering provided by a college homecoming or class reunion. Put in another way, the Romantic question, from the time of Wordsworth's elegiac ode onward, has been: can our memories persist despite our histories? Or despite history in general, whether "ours" or not? Is memory merely a retreat into private sentiment, or can it be tapped for social purposes of recapitulation, restoration, and revival, as a way of making good on past—and perhaps failed—promises? In Wordsworth's contemporary terms, the form of this question was, most often: are modern hopes for the Rights of Man to be forever shadowed by Reigns of Terror? In our present more modest terms, can Homecomings in the fall or reunions in the spring be, more than annual fun events, returns to important intellectual and spiritual *origins*, such as small colleges like Augustana regularly promise their students and alumni?

I choose Wordsworth's ode as a basis for these questions rather than Thomas Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" because the subject of Gray's poem, though it sounds more appropriate for a collegiate theme, belies its tone. His Neoclassical memories of "college" (private boarding school, actually) are relatively unproblematic, compared to Wordsworth's more Romantic—and thus more modern—doubts and affirmations. Gray writes from a posture of assured, if regretful, maturity, looking back condescendingly on his own youth and on current young Etonians. We still do the same thing, of course, when we say, for example, "Ah, look at [this or that] silly college behavior! But, let them do it: what do they know? They'll soon enough live to regret it." Gray's famous concluding lines expose the poverty—or the irony—of such views, in their apparently cynical view of educational philosophy: "Where Ignorance is Bliss, 'tis folly to be Wise!"

Our reunions usually do fall, coincidentally, within the same time-frame that Wordsworth repeats with apparently banal amazement: "Five years have past; five summers, with the length / Of five long winters!" College students in English classes often ask of Wordsworth's poem, from the privileged perspective of youth, "What's the big deal with five years?" But at our reunions five, twenty-five, or fifty years later, we no longer have to ask: we know. Like

any homes we try return to, we have always changed, relative to Augustana, as Wordsworth had, toward Tintern Abbey. Do we ever really come home? Can we? We can and do, physically, of course, but our pleasure in these returns is always mixed. There's always another side, not necessarily an underside, to the advertised pleasure, those ambivalent "Kodak moments," of seeing old friends in old places. It would be hard to imagine any of us re-entering the scenes of our college past without mixed emotions: who we see, what they look like (and what do we look like to them?), how small and drab some things look compared with how large they loom in our memories, and so on. These combinations of memory and perception come back, as "the picture of the mind revives again," with a twinge, with "somewhat of a sad perplexity" that requires of us—as it did of Wordsworth—a certain amount of mental insistence that there is in these moments "a renovating virtue." This is what he claimed for his wonderfully-named "spots of time" from his childhood memories in his masterpiece, *The Prelude* ("the poem on the growth of my own mind"), of which his meditation above Tintern Abbey is his first mature example.

I raise these questions not only in relation to the evident message of Wordsworth's famous poem, but also in the context of the ways that that message has been complicated and enriched in recent years by the force of a new kind of literary history, usually called the "New Historicism." In a nutshell, this form of history writing (including literary history) puts historical backgrounds and foregrounds into a more active give-and-take relationship with each other—so that, for example, Wordsworth's poem of 1798 is regarded as both *influencing and being influenced by* William Pitt's war policies and political crises of that year.¹ I hope that complicating such a profound poetical meditation is appropriate to a volume honoring Tom Tredway's professional calling as a historian, and his deep appreciation of the particular history of Augustana College, in which he has been so central an actor, influencing and being influenced by it.

Wordsworth's poem is not hard to read (it's printed at the end of this essay). Indeed, much of it is written in language that exemplifies the modern limpity of his famous language experiment (poetry written in "a selection of the language really used by men"). It could almost as well have been written in 2004 as in 1798.

The speaker returns to a place he's been five years before and stresses his amazement and joy, satisfaction, and sorrow at seeing the same things again. Then, in the second verse paragraph, he asserts that his recollections of this scene in the intervening five years have "not been to [him] as is a landscape to a blind man's eye." That is, he's remembered them in very important ways: physiologically, emotionally, morally, and even spiritually: when "we are laid asleep in body" and "see into the life of things." Then, as if aware that his claims for his landscape recollections have been pitched too high, he interjects (as it were) the short third paragraph, which is grammatically an incomplete sentence, a fragment. It raises the all-too-obvious objection—"If [all] this be but a vain belief"—only to force it down by the sheer force of his personal emotional investment in it: "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, / O sylvan Wye ... / How often has my spirit turned to thee!" That is to say: never mind your abstract philosophic objections to my extreme claims for this place, it has been this important to me. Thus restored, he pushes on further, and the fourth paragraph becomes an elaboration of the claims of the second, now not merely within the bodily experience of a single individual, but extended throughout his entire life-experience, from childhood through adolescence to maturity

(at least to the ripe old age of twenty-eight, Wordsworth's age in 1798). And, by implication, to the lives of all people: "we are laid asleep in body," for the power of such recollections of Nature "rolls through all things," "all thinking things, all objects of all thought." These are extreme claims indeed. By the end of the fourth paragraph, the poem has become a credo for a religion of man's emotional and moral interactions with the natural world, though not for any other transcendental or revealed form of religion.

But he again objects against himself, as the fifth and final paragraph opens: "Nor perchance, / If I were not thus taught, should I the more suffer my genial [artistic, creative] spirits to decay: / *For thou art with me.*" The last paragraph ostensibly bolsters Wordsworth's generalized faith in Nature with his emotional faith in his relationship to his beloved sister, Dorothy. And yet it does so in the most explicitly religious—and erotic—language the poem has yet employed. "For thou are with me here upon the banks / Of this fair river." We can hear echoes of allusions to the Good Shepherd of the Twenty-Third Psalm throughout this paragraph: for thou art with me, beside these still waters, the presence of mine enemies, the valley of the shadow of death. By the end of the poem, the scene, though still ostensibly the Welsh landscape "a few miles above Tintern Abbey," has become an insistently religious scene as well: "I, so long / A worshipper of Nature, hither came / Unworn in that service: rather say / With warmer love—oh! With far deeper zeal of holier love."

In such a paraphrase, the poem supports some of the strongest generalizations about the main line of British (and, for that matter, American) Romanticism: the individual's possibilities for spiritual restoration under the influence of beautiful, beneficent Nature—as reinforced and aided by the presence of a supporting human love. It is one of the strongest examples of the "Greater Romantic Nature Ode" which the modern scholar M.H. Abrams has identified as one of Romanticism's characteristic achievements, especially when measured against earlier eighteenth-century models like the odes of Gray, Cowper, and Collins. In this perspective, it is a poem about almost everything, and has the force of such credal statements as, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," or, "I believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

And yet, the way in which Wordsworth's poem goes about professing its credal statement is complicated. It is not necessarily a reassuring poem, and certainly not easily so, as various kinds of twentieth-century literary criticism have shown, by carefully attending to the poem's language.

Rhetorically, its entire framework is marked by strong negative turning points: "these beautiful forms ... have not been to me ...," "If this be but a vain belief ...," "somewhat of a sad perplexity," "Nor, perchance, if I were not thus taught," and the like. As an affirmation, it reads like The Lord's Prayer as recited by Thomas the Doubting Apostle. Generically, such turns of language are appropriate to Pindaric odes, of which "Tintern Abbey" is a modern version. Yet their demonstrable connection to aspects of Wordsworth's personal life and historical times gives the sincerity which they are intended to convey a more than merely generic power.

Philosophically, its generalizations are so sweeping that they easily collapse under rigorous analysis. William Empson in the 1930s famously subjected lines 92-102 to a logical positivist examination and concluded that their "presence," "sense sublime," and "motion and spirit" were both tautological and internally self-contradictory. When one of the strongest anchoring points of reference in a philosophic statement is the word "something," we are obviously in trouble,

philosophically speaking. But again, as in the third verse paragraph, we cannot dispute the sincerity of Wordsworth's belief, only its possible applicability to ourselves.

More recently, New Historicist critics have picked up on the social and urban quality of the crisis points throughout the poem, suggesting that Wordsworth's positive affirmations reflect his failing faith, by 1798 (nine years to the day, minus one, from the fall of the Bastille), in the political possibilities of spiritual reformation. They note, for example, how nervous he seems to be in the first paragraph about allowing any social human forms into his landscape painting. Hedgerows, which were used increasingly to mark property lines after all the Enclosure Acts of the eighteenth century, are fondly altered by him to "hardly hedgerows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild." And the "vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods," which he knew perfectly well were the beggars and paupers populating the ruined abbey, are transformed by a wholly fictional conjecture into "some Hermit's cave, where by his fire / The Hermit sits alone." So too, the scenes of discomfort and alienation in which he seeks comfort are easily recognizable as the workaday public worlds we all know too well: "lonely rooms ... 'mid the din of cities" (25-26), and "evil tongues, / Rash judgements [and] the sneers of selfish men" (128-29).

Finally, the erotic language of the final paragraph is no longer read simply in the Picturesque register from which it obviously derives, but also in terms of Wordsworth's strong romantic feelings for his sister. This is not to suggest that their relationship was incestuous, but to insist that his feelings for Dorothy were inevitably and inextricably bound up with his feelings for his French mistress, Annette Vallon, whom he may have last seen in the early fall of 1793, "when first / I came among these hills ... more like a man / Flying from something that he dreads, than one / Who sought the thing he loved" (66-67, 70-72). This simile, as a statement of intense desire, ostensibly for purely landscape experiences, has the same negative "spin" of much of the rest of the poem's language, and would be perfectly appropriate to his feelings of ambivalence for either woman, each of whom was unavailable to him in some irremediable way (i.e., either because of England's war with France or because of the incest taboo). Or—what amounts to the same thing—whose availability, if realized, would fundamentally compromise his career hopes for himself as a poet.

The point of attending to these different language registers is not to undercut the force of the poem's credo, or to suggest that Wordsworth is insincere or hypocritical. Rather, they dramatize and humanize the difficulties we feel Wordsworth is wrestling with, in ways that help us to recognize our own struggles with our life-memories when we return to beloved places in search of some kind of restoration.

How might these new readings of an old standard affect our own homecomings, at Augustana or elsewhere? Clearly, our personal returns are always crossed by the same kinds of currents, philosophical, social, erotic, psychological, and religious. And, just as clearly, trying to resolve the inevitable contradictions in our lives by simply accepting that we *cannot* go home again is no satisfactory solution: it would only be an admission (or another kind of negative faith) that our life has no continuous meaning, that we are the toys and sport of unmitigated contingency, here today and gone tomorrow.

All the tensions that Wordsworth is wrestling with are parts of our own biography, in some form or another. Who would deny the presence of historical and political, erotic and romantic, psychological and philosophical, or natural

and religious aspects in his or her collegiate experience? We were, for the most part, in college between the ages of 18 and 22, years from which many of us date some of our most important life-decisions. Wordsworth first passed by Tintern Abbey at age 23 as an accidental tourist, returning to—or fleeing from—his responsibilities to Annette and their child, Caroline. And he returned at age 28 to write his famous meditation on it, just before leaving England again for two years (though he only stayed away seven months), ostensibly to learn German language and philosophy, but not accidentally to escape as well from the political repression of free speech (including poetry) that Pitt's war policies were brutally forcing down upon the country. These are crucial years of late adolescent self-discovery, Wordsworth's a little more "post-graduate" than ours. But what was he doing at Tintern Abbey, and was his being there at all like our being at Augustana?

Tintern Abbey is in Wales, just a few miles across the border (the river Wye) from Bristol; that is, it is not part of Wordsworth's famous home stamping-grounds, the English Lake District. He was, in short, a temporary visitor there, a tourist. The two-hundred-year-old ruin of the former Cistercian abbey at Tintern was then a highly popular venue for the new fashion of picturesque landscape appreciation, because England's "Minister's War" against revolutionary France—also dating from 1793—had closed the Continent to more favored locations in the Alps and Italy.

But he was hardly "just" a tourist. Instead, he was a young man with a mission who passed through the Wye valley at two critical moments in his young life. In 1793, he was walking from Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge to North Wales, his mind oppressed with thoughts of his French lover and their child, born the previous December. In a couple of months (September-October, 1793) he was, all his modern biographers agree, despite the lack of hard evidence, about to make a spectacularly dangerous crossing back to France, to try to rescue or marry Annette. Hence the power of his odd expression, "more like a man/ Fleeing from something that he dreads, than one / Who sought the thing he loved." That is, in July of 1793, he was *heading in the wrong direction*, away from rather than towards France. And yet the question of what was the "right" direction was by no means so clear—any more than it was for most of us at college, when we often seemed to flee the things we loved, or vice versa. For returning to France meant going into a dangerous war zone that was certainly to be dreaded. Marrying Annette under these circumstances would have meant determining much of his adult life from that moment onwards: *i.e.*, with a wife and child to care for, he would've had to accept his uncles' offer of a Church of England curacy, an offer he had weaseled out of in 1791, but which he returned from France a year later pleading for—yet for reasons his uncles could no longer countenance (a French Catholic mistress, an illegitimate child). Talk about the double-binds of the Freudian "family romance"!

Our college tensions were usually not so dramatic, though many a marriage was made there, and many intellectual and vocational life-choices were made in social contexts as freighted with significance as England's war against republican France, whether we remember World War II, Vietnam, the Civil Rights movement, Watergate, or the fall of Communism.

In 1798 Wordsworth revisited the site with his sister Dorothy, this time in a deliberate spirit of reunion or homecoming, just prior to their leaving England again. Politics and personal life join very close together here, as they often do at our own reunions, though such connections tend to come out in important private conversation rather than in public celebration. Surely

Wordsworth's thoughts about Annette five years earlier are embedded in his ostensible language about the banks of the Wye, nowhere more clearly than in his renunciatory turn to Dorothy in the poem's final paragraph. Such language must be imbued with Wordsworth's emotional history: it would be monstrous of him not to have been aware of its connections to the other emotional facts of his life. For he is, in a sense, wedding himself to his sister in place of his mistress (whom he has not seen for almost six years, although some letters have passed between them). Yet he obviously cannot be "wedding" his sister in the same way: hence his strong language for maturation as the process of taming passion: "When these wild ecstasies shall be matured / Into a sober pleasure" (138-39).

Homecomings and reunions are never purely events of memory or nostalgia, or are so only in our least reflective moments. They must always be moments of changed, advanced, or at least *reconciled* memory. And not only for ourselves, but also for the place, the "home," to which we return. Tintern Abbey had changed almost as much as William Wordsworth's personal emotional life. By 1798, it was much more a resort for beggars than it had been in 1793, because the war effort had produced many more beggars through its ruinous effects on England's domestic economy: "many of the rich / Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor, / And of the poor did many cease to be / And their places knew them not" ("The Ruined Cottage," MS. M, 529-32). Hence Wordsworth, always trying to keep the place safe for his memories, carefully describes its "vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods": "vagrant dweller" is a kind of oxymoron, and does not sound quite so bad as, for example, "homeless person." The increased war effort was very much in evidence around Tintern Abbey in 1798, in the thriving charcoal-burning trade that went on among the hills surrounding it, whose forests were being burned down to supply fuel for the foundries that were producing materiel for England's staggering war effort ("and wreaths of smoke / Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!").

Thinking back on Augustana College and the Quad Cities in the 1950s, I recall it as comfortably suburban and prosperous, like the rest of America. But revisiting it in the 1980s, Rock Island and Moline seemed—and were—depressed, bleak, and massively unemployed. Now, by the turn of our century, they are recovering, having switched over to the new service and tourist industries, from dependence on nineteenth-century railroads and the manufacture of heavy farm equipment, evident in the hotels, restaurants, and shopping malls where the John Deere and International Harvester plants used to be. How much did we think about the history of that "mighty Mississippi" when we sang, lustily or tearfully, our school song? (Though there have always been professors, like Henriette Naeseth and Roald Tweet, who reminded us that Augustana was a real place in America, on the Rock Island Line, and not just the Latin form of a famous Lutheran site in Germany.) Such observations were probably not much in our minds when we were at "Old Augie," sequestered on its idyllically forested campus, amid pleasant undergraduate delights. And yet they must be on the minds of the people who live and work there all the time, nowhere more so than in the mind of its presidents—three since I arrived there in 1955, and the one in particular whom we honor here, since 1975. "Twenty-eight years have past, *twenty-five* summers, with the length of *twenty-eight* long winters!"—some of them very long indeed, for a president thinking and worrying over his charge for future generations. Tintern Abbey in 1798 had been a ruin for over two hundred years, its religious meaning almost entirely drained away in Protestant prejudice against Catholic "superstition." Augustana College is not a ruin but a thriving educational and religious enterprise. Keeping it so is not only a worry

in the mind of its president, but a responsibility for all us, when we think about going “home” yet once again, revisiting the banks of our youthful selves and bringing with us the baggage of our memories. I cannot presume to construct other peoples’ memories for them, but we could do worse than try to read our college experience in and through Wordsworth’s return to his scene of initiation into adulthood:

Some years have past; some summers, with the length
Of some long winters! and again we hear
These waters, rolling from their northern springs
With a strong midland murmur. - Once again
Do we behold these steep and lofty bluffs,
That on a tough industrial scene impress
Thoughts of more deep reflection; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the school.
The day will come when we again repose,
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of college ground, these campus trees,
Which at all seasons, with their unripe youth,
Are glad in one gay hue, and lose themselves ...

LINES, Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,
on Revisiting the Banks of Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. —Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: —feelings too 30
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime: that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world, 40
Is lightened: —that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft— 50
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man 70
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. —I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. —That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes 90
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadow and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear, —both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110
 Of all my moral being.

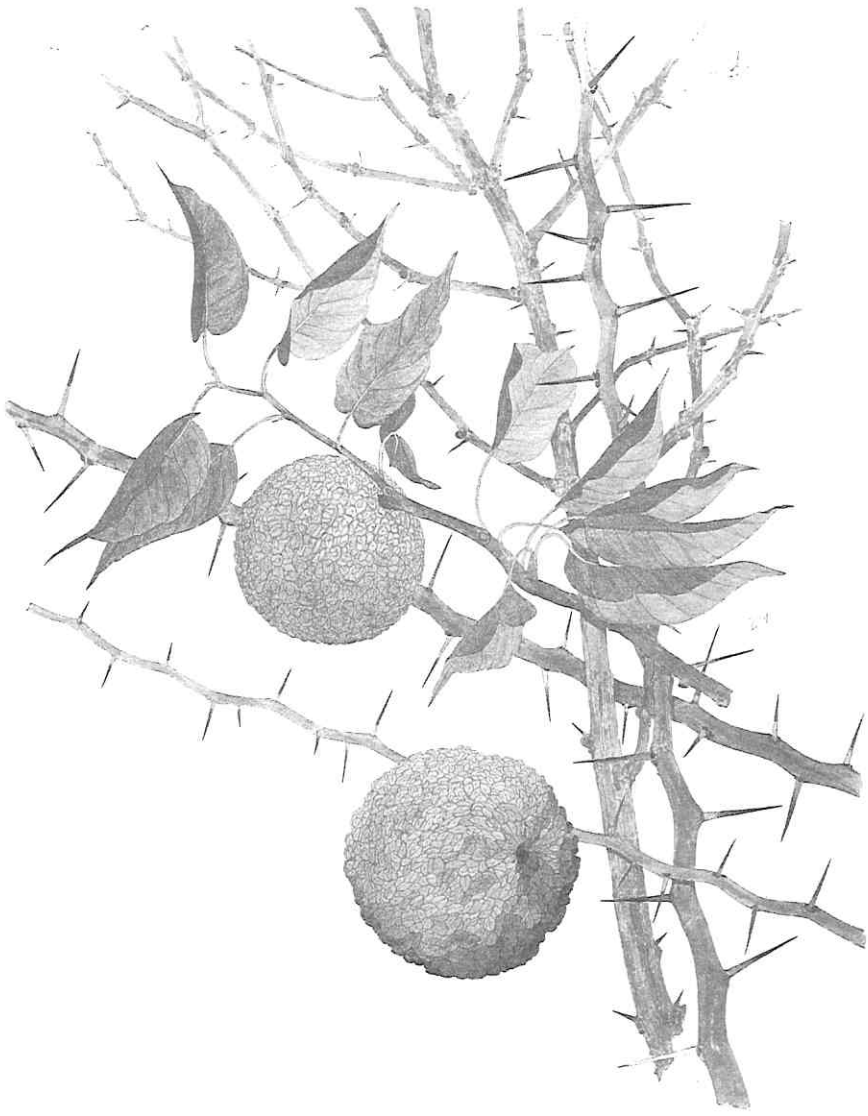
Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 For thou art with me here upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once, 120
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgements, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free
 To blow against thee: and, in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 140
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—

If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love —oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

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ENDNOTE

1 My remarks about “Tintern Abbey” are derived from my discussion of it in *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (W.W. Norton, 1998), especially Chapter 24, “Wye Wandering,” pp. 588-608.



DOROTHY J. PARKANDER

Songs of Apollo and Songs of Sion: Milton's Puritan Poetic

"A puritan poetic" sounds like a contradiction in terms. That would certainly be the opinion of one of the first English Puritans I know—the Good Parson of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. When, last of all the pilgrims, he is called upon to tell a tale, he answers decisively:

Thou getest fable noon ytold for me;
For Paul, that writeth unto Tymothee,
Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse,
And tellen Fables and swich wrecchednesse.
Why sholde I sowen draf [chaff, tares] out of my fest
Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?

And so, instead of a story, he gives them a holy meditation on the human pilgrimage to the celestial city.

With the rise of Puritanism in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the protest against poetry and the poet becomes increasingly hysterical. For that angry young man Stephen Gosson, the poet is a liar and the father of lies. For William Prynne, the subject matter of poetry is abomination: "Rapes, Adulteries, Murthers, Thefts, Deceites, Lasciviousness, and other execrable Villanies of Dunghill, Pagan-gods and Goddesses." Poets themselves are "the very caterpillars of the Commonwealth."

If, to be called a Puritan, you must share this condemnation of poets and poetry, indeed of the arts in general, then, of course, John Milton does not fit the label. To be able to create a poem, he believes, is a gift from God. A poet is born, not made. And the making of a poem is one of the supreme activities the human being is capable of. For the poet in his making or creating shows evidence of his divine origin. To make a "divine song," says Milton, "is the unrivalled glory of the heaven-born human mind and an evidence of our ethereal origin and celestial descent."¹

Such praise is significant, for it reflects Milton's early and long fascination with the archetypal poet Orpheus, particularly as the Renaissance saw that figure of myth, legend, and folklore. The story of Orpheus stresses three aspects: he is poet-musician; he is priest of Apollo; and he is lover. As priest of Apollo and musician, he sailed, we are told, with Jason and the Argonauts and, by the power of his song which took as its theme the creation of the world from chaos, he diverted the Argonauts from listening to the sweet but deadly music of the Sirens. When his beloved wife Eurydice died from a snakebite, he went with his lyre into Hades itself and, by his notes, drew, as Milton says, "iron tears down Pluto's cheek/And made hell grant what love did seek" (*Il Penseroso*

ll. 107-108)—that is, the restoration of Eurydice to the world of the living. But Orpheus broke the taboo Pluto had placed upon him—that he must not turn and look at Eurydice until both were in the sunlight—and Eurydice, so nearly returned to love and life, had to go back to the shades of death. Inconsolable, Orpheus retreated from society, and went home to his native Thrace where he played and sang to the world of nature, making stones dance and taming wild beasts. For whatever reason, the women of Thrace resented him, turned on him in a Dionysiac frenzy, and tore him limb from limb. His severed head floated, still singing, down the Hebrus river—to the sea and across to the island of Lesbos where it communicated the gift of Apollo's songs.

To the early Christians who wished to make room for classical tradition in their theology, and for the allegorizing Middle Ages, Orpheus's story was a treasury of possibilities. Orpheus is God as Creative Word; he is Christ harrowing hell; he is David the shepherd and sweet psalmist; he is even the first Adam—in a version which makes poor Eurydice stand for materialism and damning physical desire. (Orpheus's pursuit of materialism leads him to hell.) And of course he is troubadour and courtly lover as well.²

Emblematic and allegorical oddities like these were familiar to Milton, but the real force of the Orpheus figure for him comes by way of the Italian Renaissance, through the writings of the Neo-Platonist Ficino. Ficino's followers called him Orpheus, even believing he was the reincarnation of the ancient poet, and Ficino, far from discouraging such identification, himself carried a lyre with the name Orpheus on it.³ For Ficino, Orpheus is "the first poet to celebrate the mysterious principles that underlie the universe."⁴ And Orpheus understands those principles because he is a great poet, possessed of the divine madness. An artist himself, he perceives the mystery of the world which is also a work of art. He shares something with the mind of the Creator. Through the divine fury which is his imagination and inventive energy, he recognizes "the music in the mind of God" and the music of the spheres. This music he reflects in his own poems. His theme is "to celebrate the name of God forever."⁵

Milton, considering the Orpheus myth, makes clear that for him Orpheus, as priest and poet-musician, succeeds through the singing word, not through the musical line alone. Writing to his father, a musician of international reputation, Milton says:

...what pleasure is there in the inane modulations of the voice without words and meaning and rhythmic eloquence? Such music is good enough for the forest choirs but not for Orpheus, who by his song—not by his cithara—restrained rivers and gave ear to the oaks, and by his singing stirred the ghosts of the dead to tears. That fame he owes to his song ("Ad Patrem" ll. 53-62).

Milton's most Orphic lyric, "At a Solemn Music," shows Ficino's own blending of Platonic, Pythagorean, Neo-Platonic, and Christian elements. In this lyric the poet pictures himself listening to a sacred concert where word and music are perfectly wedded, imaging forth celestial music and so inviting the hearer to move in holy fancy from sin-cacophonous earth to the harmonies of heaven. Music and word in perfect concord serve the purpose of reconciliation between God and humanity. Here, most certainly the poet-musician has a priestly function:

...Voice and Verse

Wed your divine sound, and mixt power employ
Dead things with inbreath'd sense able to pierce,
And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbed Song of pure concent
Aye sung before the sapphire-color'd throne
To him that sits thereon

...

That we on Earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise.... (ll. 2-8; 17-18)

Not all poets, of course, sing the songs of Apollo; and not all who sing Apollo's songs are also his priests. In the dramatic poem entitled *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, popularly called *Comus* (1634), Milton, perhaps recalling the Orpheus who accompanied the Argonauts, considers two types of music. One is music sung by Circe and the Sirens. It exerts a powerful enchantment. It can "lap the soul in Elysium," make the monster Scylla weep and Charybdis "softly applaud with her waves." But it is music which enervates, lulls the soul to sleep, robs it of its self-awareness. As such, it is dangerous. In contrast is the music of the virtuous soul, symbol of Platonic chastity. This music also enchants, but communicates a "sober certainty of *waking bliss*" [italics mine]. It shares with the Divine music the power to create. "I was all ear," proclaims a character in the masque, "and took in strains that might create a soul under the ribs of death...." (*Comus* ll. 560-562).

Milton considers the non-priestly songs of Apollo in his Christmas verse-letter to his friend Charles Diodati. Milton has just celebrated his twenty-first birthday but his family seems soberly unaffected either by Yuletide or birthday. In contrast, young Diodati has been having an "hilarious December." Evidently in his elegy-epistle to Milton, which Milton is answering, Diodati has apologized for the quality of his verses. He finds it difficult to write poetry with all the partying about him. Milton responds: "Why do you complain that poetry is a fugitive from wine and feasting? Song loves Bacchus and Bacchus loves songs. Phoebus was not ashamed to wear the green garland of ivy and to prefer its leaves to his own laurel" ("Elegia Sexta" ll. 14-18).

But, he goes on to write, the poet who wishes to be also prophet and priest, to serve as intermediary between the mortal world and the mysterious realms of the deities, must have a totally different style of life. "Let him live sparingly and chastely, as did Orpheus when he tamed the wild beasts among the lonely caves" (ll. 63; 81-82). For "truly the bard is sacred to the gods and is their priest. His hidden heart and his lips alike breathe out Jove" (ll. 93-95). Milton never modified his conviction on that last point. The poet and his poem must sing the same song.

By the time Milton came to write his three major works, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, he seems to have abandoned the figure of Orpheus as his model of the poet. In Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* he says he sings now "with other notes than to th'Orphean lyre" (l. 17). His Muse is no longer one of the Classical Nine. As early as writing the monody *Lycidas* Milton had noted that Orpheus's own mother, one of the Muses, was helpless to assist her son when the Thracian women with "hideous roar" killed him (ll. 61-63). Milton, now himself suffering from both total blindness and from the collapse of his great dream of establishing God's Kingdom on earth, needs illumination and inspiration from a source more powerful than the Muses provide. Milton's muse

now is, rather, heavenly, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Knowledge that leads to Wisdom, Urania, celestial light. Milton does not abandon Mt. Parnassus, haunt of the classical Muses, but he prefers Mt. Sion, the "Mount of lore and teaching, as it is written in Isaiah, Out of Sion shall come lawe; mount of prophesy and revelation".⁶ What accounts for this shift from Athens to Jerusalem, from the Classical to the Scriptural?

Both Classical Greece and Rome share certain reservations about the figure of Orpheus. There are suggestions in both cultures of Orpheus' self-centeredness, his egoism, his narcissism. Plato, in the *Symposium*, has the speaker Phaedrus contrast Orpheus unfavorably with Alcestis. Alcestis, like Orpheus, went into the world of the dead motivated by love. Alcestis' husband Admetus had learned that his thread of life was already spun, but that, if he could get someone to die in his place, he could go on living. No one, not his old parents nor his friends, is willing to make the sacrifice; no one, that is, except his wife. Now in Plato's comparison between Alcestis and Orpheus he notes that Alcestis makes a real sacrifice. Hers is a gift of *herself*, a wholehearted gift of love. Orpheus, on the other hand, offered to Hades *only his gift of song*, not himself.⁷ And in Plato's version, Hades found this offering poor-spirited. So Orpheus was given, not the real Eurydice, but only a phantom.

The versions of the Orpheus myth which come from Virgil and Ovid also imply criticism of the poet-lover. Glorious as is Virgil's picture of the loving, lamenting Orpheus who still descants upon the name of his lost lady as his severed head is carried down the streams of the river Hebrus, Virgil puts the story of the inconsolable lover into a frame which suggests that Orpheus could have tried to cope with the tragedy of his loss. He did not have to retire from civilized society to sing in the wilds of Thrace. Here, says Latinist W.S. Anderson, "is an emblem of inertia and death."⁸

And Ovid's version, found in the *Metamorphosis*, "transforms the Virgilian tragic failure into a character...melodramatic, egoistic, a poet of overblown rhetoric and shallow self-indulgent sentimentality. Ovid's Orpheus serves as a particularly ironic comment on poets and their personalities, on the poetic environment of Augustan times."⁹ It is tempting to illustrate this comment, since Ovid's account gives this paper its one light touch. When Ovid's Eurydice gets bitten on her heel by a snake, Orpheus, says Ovid, "*sufficiently* laments her in the upper air"¹⁰ and then decides to try his luck persuading Hades to send her back. (Not exactly a courtly lover here.) Ovid even gives us the song Orpheus sings to move hell. It turns out to be no poem at all, but an oration full of clichés, the most telling of which is a kind of bargaining plea.¹¹ After all, says Orpheus to Hades, it isn't as if you were giving Eurydice *back*. She'll be returning to you in due time. She's just on loan. Thanks to this impassioned oration, Eurydice, with Hades' permission, "limps in" (Ovid hasn't forgotten that snake bite on the heel). When the attempted rescue fails, Orpheus, in a fit of disgust, gives up the love of women for the love of boys, and it is this that makes the women of Thrace murder him. In Ovid's version, Orpheus's lyre and head, floating down the Hebrus, lament "*something or other tearful*" and then Orpheus's shade joins Eurydice's. For Ovid, then, Orpheus is both flawed poet and flawed lover (Anderson 47).¹²

Renaissance interpreters of the story considered Orpheus's head and lyre which continued to make music after the poet's death, as images of all-important fame (" 'a famous man lives on/after his death/by his fame'"). Like most Renaissance humanists, Milton was intoxicated by the idea of fame. In his elegy to his father urging him, please let me be a poet, not a lawyer, Milton

reaches a glowing peroration: "I shall sit with the ivy and laurel of a victor...And you, my juvenile verses..., if only you dare hope for immortality and a life and a glimpse of the light beyond your master's funeral pyre, and if dark oblivion does not sweep you down into the throngs of Hades, perhaps you will preserve this eulogy and the name of the father whom my song honors..." ("Ad Patrem" ll. 116-117; 116-126).

The quest for fame, however, belongs to the humanist, not to the Christian. In the much-quoted line from Milton's *Lycidas*, fame is defined as the "last infirmity of noble mind" (l. 71). By the time Milton composed *Paradise Lost* he has wholly "Christianized" the quest, borrowing from the First Epistle to Timothy. Books 5 and 6 of *Paradise Lost* narrate the war in heaven when one-third of the host of angels, led by Satan, revolt against God. Alone among the rebel forces is Abdiel, the angel who remains faithful to God. He earns from God this praise:

Servant of God, well done, well has thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained
Against revolted multitudes the Cause
Of Truth, in word mightier than they in Arms;
And for the testimony of Truth, hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care
To stand approved in sight of God, though Worlds
Judg'd thee perverse...(Paradise Lost 6 ll. 29-37).

The "Christianizing" of the quest for fame involves not just substituting God's praise for human praise. It involves a different concept of the hero. In 1642 Milton had written of his hope as a poet to "lay the pattern of a Christian hero" (*The Reason of Church Government*). He does so in various sonnets, but the pattern is not fully cut until his three major works. In the early Orphic-inspired masque *Comus*, to be sure, we have a portrait of a virtuous heroine who, like the faithful angel in *Paradise Lost*, resists every temptation to vice. But what Milton honors in the lady and recommends to his audience is Platonic Chastity, love as eros, the upward striving of the soul for union with the One. Almost missing in that study of virtue is love as agape, Christian Charity, the downward reach of the Divine arm to lift and assist the struggling soul. The Lady of *Comus*, then, is not a real pattern of Christian hero.

That pattern is fully seen in the forgiven Eve and Adam after the fall; in the tested Christ as second Adam in *Paradise Regained*; in the blind Samson raised from the abyss to a new sense of purpose; in all the heroes of faith found in the Scriptures and listed in the final books of *Paradise Lost*—and, not least, in the blind poet Milton himself.

To the classical heroic virtues of courage, fortitude, daring, ambition, rhetorical power, and physical prowess—all signs of the Promethean fire—Milton, in characterizing the Christian hero, adds patience, humility, loving obedience, temperance, and faith. The hero possessed of these qualities is the magnanimous Christian champion. Always, for Milton, the hero is one who has been sorely tested ("I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue" [*Areopagitica*]), who is acquainted with grief and despair, and also with grace. Wearing, as St. Paul says, the whole armor of God, he acts, significantly, not for his personal purification and salvation but for the good of others, for human beings in community.

When the poet makes it his task to set out the pattern of the Christian hero, he is concerned with something more than "civilizing society" and winning fame for himself by his success. His work is, instead, redemptive; is *caritas*, sacrificial

charity which means the surrender of the self. The aesthetic theory involved in this assumption is suggested in Milton's small epic *Paradise Regained*. The success of the theory emerges in Milton's final and, I think, most moving work, the drama *Samson Agonistes*.

Paradise Regained, stylistically modeled not on the sonorous resonances of the Hebrew Bible but on the spare, unadorned language of the New Testament or of a Socratic dialogue, shows Christ as second Adam. The epic centers not on the crucifixion but on the diabolic temptations in the wilderness. In that wilderness to which Adam and Eve were exiled after Eden was lost to them, the second Adam by patience and obedience overcomes evil. The Son of God has fasted forty days and now feels hunger. In this state he meets that other Son of God, Satan, disguised as a shepherd in quest of a lost sheep. Perceiving Jesus's physical hunger, Satan says,

But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread:
So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste
(*Paradise Regained*, First Book, ll. 342-345).

These four lines introduce two great images which together will become, I believe, Milton's new aesthetic. They are the images of Creative Word (command) and Bread of Life. In Satan's mouth both are, of course, perverted. Satan designs them to tempt Christ into distrusting, in his hunger, the divine providence; into impatiently seizing time instead of waiting upon God's will, and then using false charity as an excuse for yielding to the temptation. This perversion of the images of Word and of Bread continues throughout the confrontation between Christ and Satan. The temptation of the kingdoms of the world is bread for the ambitious seeker of military earthly glory. The temptation of the wisdom stemming from the poets and philosophers of ancient Greece is bread to feed the seeker of knowledge for its own sake, food for the withdrawn, Stoic, or contemplative life rather than passionate involvement in life.

Unperverted, however, the images of Creative Word and Bread of Life unite the pictures of God as Creator in the Old Testament and *Paradise Lost*, and of God as Redeemer in the New Testament and *Paradise Regained*. The Creative Word which becomes Word made flesh is the sacramental Word celebrated in Holy Communion, the Table spread in the wilderness with its love feast of wine and bread. The highest poetry the human maker can aim for, Milton suggests, is indeed priestly. It must feed the hungry sheep, and Milton had learned that the cost of such poetry is more than personal discipline; it is complete sacrifice. Poet and poem both must lay the pattern of the Christian hero. Only the good person can give the good gift.

Here, I think, is what may be called a "Puritan" poetic. For the Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans, only one doctrinal idea emerges that may be called unique to them. And that is their exaltation of the preaching of the Word of God to sacramental status. As the Holy Scriptures are a Bread of Life, so, when the Puritan preacher divides his text, analyzing and clarifying it for his congregation, he acts as the priest who breaks and distributes the Communion loaf. Puritan dogma said unequivocally: no one can be saved without an experience of conversion. Conversion occurs through hearing the Word preached. Such a doctrine of course affected both the matter and the manner of the sermon. It had to be explication and exposition of Holy Writ, not a descant upon a holy theme. It had to be couched in language which imitated Scripture and so exalted God, not the wit of the preacher.

For most of his life Milton had set the poet side by side with the preacher. Both, he believed, have the power, through the Holy Word, to work a conversion, to lead a nation into the love of truth. Like the ordained preacher, the poet has been touched by the spirit of God, especially elected and gifted by nature to “celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God’s almightiness” (*The Reason of Church Government*). And the poet has the advantage of being able to teach through image.

As Milton’s disillusionment with the Commonwealth government deepened (“New Presbyter is but old Priest WRIT LARGE,” he lamented [“On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament” l. 20]), he relied less and less on the preaching of sermons and more and more on the impact of poetic word to communicate the ideas of God’s Kingdom. It behooved him, therefore, to sing with fervor the songs of Sion, not the songs of Apollo.

And the success of this mission is his drama *Samson Agonistes*. Here Milton blends Classical form, Hebraic story, and Christian vision, for Samson is indeed a tragedy; but it is a tragedy sounding the themes of redemption and grace. Like Adam, Samson had betrayed the good. When the drama opens, his voice is despairing:

Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza, at the Mill with slaves....

O dark, dark, dark amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
Without all hope of day! (ll. 40-41; 81-83)

But inner illumination does come to him. Heroically struggling on the edge of the abyss, he receives from God a new surge of purpose. “Some rousing motions [I feel] which dispose to something extraordinary my thoughts” (ll.1381-1383). He recognizes these motions as from God; he obeys them in humility and patience. When summoned, this once Champion of the Israelites, to do tricks for the holidaying Philistines, he agrees. By becoming God’s Fool, he becomes God’s chosen—the Christian hero.

Ironically enough, in the drama neither Samson’s friends nor his father Manoa perceives what Milton intends his seventeenth-century reader to see. Samson for his countrymen and for Manoa is a hero appropriate to what Milton would have called the Orpheus tradition. His death is one final and glorious feat of strength, vindicating the God-given powers endowed him at his birth and rewarding him with earthly immortality. Young men and women will bring laurel wreaths to his monument and rejoice in his name. Samson “hath acquit himself like Samson” (ll. 1709-1710). It is left for Milton’s reader to acknowledge in Samson something more. He becomes both First and Second Adam: he is sinner, he is redeemed, and he acts for the redemption of others as God directs him.

ENDNOTES

1 “Ad Patrem” ll. 20-25 in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Merritt Y. Hughes, ed. (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957). All subsequent quotations from Milton’s work are from this edition and will be noted in parenthesis in the text.

2 Eleanor Irwin, “The Songs of Orpheus and the New Song of Christ” in *Orpheus: the Metamorphosis of a Myth*. John Warden, ed. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1982), 54-59.

3 John Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino" in *Orpheus: the Metamorphosis of a Myth*. John Warden, ed. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1982), 87.

4 Warden, 93.

5 Warden, 94.

6 Hughes, 258, footnote.

7 Emmet Robbins, "Famous Orpheus" in *Orpheus: the Metamorphosis of a Myth*. John Warden, ed. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1982), 16.

8 W.S. Anderson, "The Orpheus of Virgil and Ovid" in *Orpheus: the Metamorphosis of a Myth*. John Warden, ed. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1982), 34.

9 Anderson, 36.

10 Anderson, 40.

11 Ibid.

12 Anderson, 41.



RICHARD SWANSON

little crick
(2001)

little crick flows today
 where and just as
 once it flowed in the small town of my boyhood

it divides my town east from west
 but only geographically
the railroad did the big divide
 blacks from whites

it flows from south to north
 i never noticed
 or don't remember
 little crick doesn't mind

i played in it
 beside it
 through its culverts

i crossed it
 east to west to get to south school
 west to east to get to central school
 and high school

i crossed it
 worshiper
 paper boy
 piano student
 dental patient
 boy scout
 mcallister's store janitor
 seventh grade
 lover
 eighth grade

i never thought about it
 it was just there
 little crick

some
 lacking respect
 call it martin's ditch

i respect it
 little crick
 it is

its depth measures in inches
 it flows slowly
 stays in its banks
 seldom makes a sound

it starts invisibly south of town
 no one knows where for sure
 (except those who claim to know the beginning
 of everything)

briefly held
 in beautified parklike retaining ponds
 that weren't there in my day

then runs free
 next to the world war two
 summer labor camp for german prisoners
 who packed asparagus and peas and sweet corn
 replacing our men
 fighting germans in germany

near the cemetery
 where i played taps
 on memorial days

behind blooch petrie's house
 whose mental retardation
 made him the perfect willing host
 for the annual sportsmen's club
 rabbit skinning party

under my street

through tom hooker's backyard

by swan olson's gravel pit

skirting the town dump

into the kishwaukee
 where it turns left
 toward new orleans
 and the sky

little crick flows today
 where and just as
 once it flowed in the small town of my boyhood

little crick also flows in the heart of my manhood
 reminding me still
 of unrememberable beginning
 and unknowable future
 flowing always
 in god only knows



ARTHUR MAMPEL

Campus President

A thousand mile roll
from state to state,
winding the earth's curve,
so various, so new
through valleys, plains and climbs
that widen into glory,
into heavy, green metaphors
of sensuous space,

or the soft peddle
past farming towns,
counties, townships
and lake country,
may serve the vision of heart,
mystify sound thought
or fashion life's pursuit.

Whatever we sift from dreams
or take of Nature's bounty,
coats the layer of perception
with verities: wild and unfolding.

We raise temples for the mind,
produce quantities of wisdom
among the pomp and tutorial,
a myriad of proficient art;

and what is new in thought,
perceived in tranquility,
lies bare among the quiet,
and ponderable hills.



WILLIAM BONDESON

The Ideals of a Liberal Education or What's "Blooming" in Higher Education?

Long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away, when I was much younger, 15 to be exact, I left Austin High School on the West Side of Chicago and the community of St. Paul's Lutheran Church just down the street from my house, rode the "El" to the South Side, and entered the University of Chicago. It was a journey of only a few miles, but for me it was an intellectual journey of light years and cosmic dimensions. I left high school with a friend; we were both planning to be physicians, and Chicago seemed an ideal place for a premedical education. I believe that we were in the last class to be admitted on what was then known as the Hutchins Program, which gave high-school students early admission to the University and then placed them in regular classes and courses of study. It was a heady experience to say the least, and to this day I can remember listening to David Riesman, the author of *The Lonely Crowd*. The names of Fermi in physics and Urey in chemistry were a part of our education, and Robert Maynard Hutchins, the man himself, was still there. We followed the Great Books curriculum, which I want to discuss shortly, and Humanities I, Social Science I, and Natural Science I, all year-long courses, were followed in the second year by, what else, Humanities II, Social Science II, and Natural Science II, all a long way from the endlessly proliferating series of courses on contemporary campuses. (Academics believe that there are two ways to solve the world's problems: either create a new course or make some course required—or both.)

The University of Chicago was a good, though not necessarily successful, place for me at that time. As a commuter student, I never felt a part of the campus community, and I'm not sure, in that group of iconoclasts, that there ever was a community to join. The advising was minimal, and little attempt was made to connect a new student with the campus. I believe that I may have had the intellectual ability to succeed, but I am equally sure that I didn't have the maturity to pursue serious study at that level. Ever since, I've had a particular affection and concern for the alienated and estranged student for whom the culture of the university is like that of a foreign land. And I've stressed, again and again, the importance of high-quality, recognized, and rewarded advising.

Leaving Chicago after two years and with it my plans for a career in medicine, I headed for Augustana and the Lutheran ministry. The feeling at Augustana was entirely different. There was a sense of community from the very beginning, friendships were easily formed, social and cultural events abounded, music was everywhere, and faculty members had wonderful connections with their students. George Arbaugh, Theodore Celms, Dorothy Parkander, Harry

Johnson, and many others were inspirational as good teachers always are, and Dr. Arbaugh, in particular, became a mentor and friend. Becky Beckstrom, who ran the dining halls, told us to think of Augustana as our “home away from home.” We reacted cynically to that remark, especially considering the food, but ultimately she was right. My world was shaped looking out from a fourth floor single in Andreen Hall with books and high fidelity all around. The DONs took me in, and their intellectual and cultural interests became my own. I made the Chapel Choir but never the Augustana Choir, which, for me at least, would have been the pinnacle of achievement. I’ve remarked on many occasions since that I came from a school where it was far more important to have made the choir than the football team. And so it should be.

Three years later I left to return to the University of Chicago, thanks to a Danforth Foundation Fellowship, having given up the ministry to pursue a degree in philosophy. After two years of graduate work there, I decided to try my hand at Greek and took a Master’s in Classics at the University of Illinois (where Harry Johnson had urged me to study with his mentor, Gertrude Smith). I returned once again to Chicago to complete a Ph.D. in Philosophy and then came to the University of Missouri where I’ve been ever since.

Virtually every semester at Missouri I’ve taught a section in the Honors College Humanities Sequence, another Great Books program, though with some interesting differences from the Chicago model. The experience in that course, working with my faculty colleagues, and the connections with very bright students over the years have convinced me that teaching is what I was born to do, a calling or vocation in the best Lutheran sense of the term. That teaching has brought about these reflections on liberal or general education.

What is a liberal education? What kind of higher education is so basic for human beings that it should be recommended for virtually all citizens of a democracy able to pursue it in sufficient depth and detail? Indeed, what kind of education produces the best, most informed, and participating citizens? Although the theories of liberal or general education are many, they essentially revolve around four basic theses. These are about skills, subjects, facts, and texts.

First, many theorists have defined a liberal education in terms of the acquisition of a set of basic skills. The most ancient group of paid teachers of a general education, the Sophists of fifth and fourth century Greece, believed that skills in reasoning and argument were essential for a good education. They claimed to train people to argue effectively and to speak persuasively. In that happy day when there were no lawyers and everyone represented himself both in court and before the Athenian assembly, a rhetorical education was absolutely essential. Not only was the ability to reason essential, perhaps even more crucial was the ability to put that reasoning into verbal forms. One was taught to speak with references to the past, to literary texts, and to the great myths. Unfortunately, there were charlatans then as now and what, in the best case, amounted to a decent and respected kind of education for Athenian gentlemen could descend to the Sophistic claim of teaching almost anyone to “make the worse argument appear to be the better.” When Socrates was identified, albeit wrongly, in the popular Athenian mind with that kind of trickery, his trial and death were not far off.

Nevertheless, the ideal of producing an educated person with a critical intellect and with the ability to read analytically, write effectively, and speak persuasively is among the oldest ideals of liberal or general education. Plato called this ability “dialectic,” the asking and answering of questions, forming

hypotheses, and tracing out inferences, through essentially an inductive and deductive method (although Plato had a far better idea of deduction than he had of induction). Aristotle used the same term but framed the ideal in terms of the ability to hit on the middle term of the syllogism and the ability to see, in some remarkable way, the universal in the particular. Dialectic, for Aristotle, also included the ability to find and critically examine those principles from which syllogistic reasoning begins. Later philosophers, the rationalists for example, discussed the ideal in terms of analysis and synthesis, the ability to break a problem or concept down into its simple component parts and then to reassemble those parts into a logical and coherent whole.

At the present time, there is a movement to develop critical thinking as a basic skill for our students. Indeed, the development of a writing program and writing-intensive courses on my campus is based on the belief that the ability to write is the externalized version of the ability to think and that better writers are better thinkers. While writing skills are exceedingly important, we have altogether forgotten that we live in as much a verbal culture as in a written culture. Like those ancient Athenian citizens, our students will have to know how to express themselves in speeches, in talks, and in presentations, even though they can hire lawyers to do their speaking for them in court. Verbal communications will be an essential part of their lives both personally and professionally. I would argue for the reinstatement of rhetoric as a requirement for a liberal education.

This basic-skill view has recently incorporated some new skills. We are now talking about mathematical literacy or a set of basic skills in the mathematical sciences, to which we should add computer and information literacy as well. I remember very clearly a discussion I had several years ago with a former member of the Economics Department at the University of Missouri who maintained that the ability to speak a foreign language was not nearly as important as the ability to speak the far more universal language of accounting! Whatever those basic skills might be, one group of theories about the nature of a liberal education is framed in terms of some set of those basic skills.

Second, other theorists maintain that liberal education is defined not in terms of basic skills but rather in terms of basic disciplines or sciences. The liberally educated person knows something about each of these disciplines or sciences. Each discipline or set of disciplines provides a different approach to humankind and nature; each uses a different methodology. These differences go back to Aristotle who disagreed strongly with Plato on the question of the unity or plurality of the sciences, and these views still have their proponents on either side today. Throughout the centuries Plato and his followers have maintained, in one form or another, that knowledge is ultimately one, that the sciences ultimately coalesce, and that there are only a few first principles (would that we could know them!) from which all else can be derived.

Aristotle, on the other hand, believed that the sciences are many, that there are several ways of knowing, and that the sciences are distinguished by different starting points, by different subject matters, by different degrees of precision, accuracy and certainty, and ultimately by different reasons for being. The theoretical sciences provide knowledge for its own sake, the practical sciences provide knowledge for the sake of action, and the productive sciences provide knowledge for the sake of making or production. In other words, the sciences have different final causes. To paraphrase Aristotle's famous words, one cannot expect ethics and politics to have the same precision and certainty as mathematics. As a result, the liberally educated person is defined as one who

knows something about these differing sciences, understands their differing methodologies, and recognizes each as an important approach to humankind and nature. Whether, with Aristotle, the sciences are the theoretical, practical, and productive, or whether they are the trivium and quadrivium of the medieval university, or whether in contemporary terms they are the natural sciences, the social sciences, the behavioral sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts, the ideal remains the same. However knowledge is divided, the student must have a comprehensive view of all of its parts. This kind of liberal education is enshrined, at least theoretically, in the graduation requirements of many liberal-arts colleges, and it was also a part of the curriculum of the University of Chicago when I was there in the fifties and sixties. There were three year-long courses in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. In addition, a tenth course, known as "O.M.P.," was required in the senior year. This course on the organization, methods, and principles of the sciences was a grand philosophy of sciences course; it articulated the Aristotelian principles of the entire curriculum, a capstone course if there ever was one. The author of this scheme was a great Aristotelian, Richard P. McKeon, one of Chicago's major professors and intellectual forces. I can still recall his pressing questions about my dissertation at the oral exam.

This discipline-based view of liberal education can be contrasted with a third theory based on a set of basic facts or pieces of information. The latest version of this theory is E.J. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*¹ followed by his *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*.² The basic question is astoundingly simple, and we ask it of one another all the time: "How can people call themselves educated and not know...?" One can fill in the blank with hundreds of items such as when Socrates died, who Machiavelli was, what the human genome is, what feudalism is, who Rembrandt was, what continental drift is, etc. The list can be without end although Hirsch puts limits on it, without ever clearly stating how those limits are defined. What students don't know is the second favorite topic of conversation at faculty cocktail parties, following just after the general despair about why they can't write anymore (could they ever?). It's as though liberal education is preparation for a grand identification test in which the ideal is achieved by matching the terms with the answers or filling in the blanks. In fact, these theorists often talk about the vocabulary of the liberally educated person, believing that a set of commonly understood terms and concepts results in the ability to discuss any problem or issue intelligently and with a sense of historical perspective. To be fair, Hirsch and his colleagues focus on the requirements for literate discourse in a democracy and this literacy leads to, but is not inclusive of, a liberal education. Nevertheless, there are many proposed curricula of liberal education that are based on a factual knowledge of some cultural or historical period, some civilization, or group of scientific ideas. Or, in the latest version, a liberally educated person knows something about the cultures of race, class, or sex (or conversely, and perversely I would claim, students should know that everything is racist, class-based, or sexist).

Fourth, and finally in this brief description of theories, liberal education is defined as a study of the Great Books, those masterpieces of human thought and creativity which both ask and answer the best questions in the best and most comprehensive ways. One proponent of that ideal is Alan Bloom³ whose book over a decade ago produced a flurry of discussion.⁴ Those great books are the texts that have influenced human thought and action at the times they were written and whose influence has extended beyond those times as well. The debate about what should be included in this canon of texts continues across

the country to this day. Are we to include the texts of minorities and women that have not been included before? What about the texts from non-Western traditions that have been as influential in those traditions as our own texts have been in ours? Doesn't the study of the Great Books lead to an easy and superficial reading by assuming that they are all equally available? (I have yet to recover from the Spanish professor who lectured on *Don Quixote* and spent the first fifteen minutes of the lecture telling the students why they could not possibly get an appreciation of the book either from his lecture or their reading of it.) Education is reduced to a cultural buffet, where you take a bit here and add some sauce there, and a sort cocktail party approach to ideas. Bloom has voiced some of the standard objections, although he believes they are not telling:

It [the study of the Great Books] is amateurish; it encourages an auto-didact's self-assurance without competence; one cannot read all of the Great Books carefully; if one only reads Great Books, one can never know what a great, as opposed to an ordinary, book is; there is no way of determining who is to decide what a Great Book or what the canon is; books are made the ends and not the means,... it engenders a spurious intimacy with greatness.⁵

We need to continually ask what it is that makes a book great and why it should be on a list of required reading. Indeed, I would maintain that the debate over which are the truly great books is a part of what a liberal education is all about. For our students, however, that question can only be approached after the reading of the books in the current list has been completed, not before.

What is it that makes a book great? This question has not been well answered in recent debates because it has not been well asked. It can be posed in two forms: a) What texts, in our own or any other cultural tradition, have been widely recognized throughout history as having asked and answered the basic questions about human life, its meaning, its value, and its possibilities in ways that are powerful, comprehensive, and compelling? What works have later authors returned to again and again, if only to disagree? Augustine read Plato, Plato read Homer, Aquinas read Aristotle, Cervantes knew the romances, Dostoevsky knew Marx, Thomas Mann read Shopenhauer, and on and on. The question, then, is really about who has been most influential rather than about who has been most widely read. It's not the numbers sold that counts, it's what has been added to the debate.

A quite different way of formulating the question is: b) At the present time, and in our world of many cultures, what texts ought to be on a list of books that we consider to be great? That's an entirely different question, and the list of books it generates is dramatically different. Many of the books omitted in the former list belong in the latter: the works which our cultural narrowness has not recognized, the works of the minorities of sex or race or class, the works of unrecognized traditions or times. These should all be considered. It is a mistake, however, to confuse these two questions and, on the basis of that confusion, try to develop a canon of texts by answering both questions at the same time. Both questions are legitimate, and the debate about these questions is essential to a liberal education.

The above comments might lead one to suppose that the argument for the Great Books is essentially an argument for the study of fundamental literary and philosophical works, *i.e.*, the Great Books are books in the Humanities. This is only partly true and, in my view, reflects a serious problem in higher education. Let me go back to my time at Chicago for a moment. There were three basic

courses in each year and the works read in the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences were considered to be classics as much as the works in the Humanities. I struggled through Newton and Galileo, through Lavoisier and the gas laws, and through Mendel and Darwin, all this in the years of the Natural Science courses. In the Social Science courses we read the works of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln in the section devoted to American history. In the more broadly based course we read Tawney and Weber, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and David Riesman. It was assumed that there are great books in all of the disciplines. The Chicago version of the ideal of liberal education was not limited to classic texts alone. It was in the Humanities courses that I first saw and read about Picasso's *Guernica* and first heard and studied Schubert's *Trout Quintet*. We should also explore, therefore, the assumption that there are not only great written works but that there are also great musical and visual works as well, all fitting into that long conversation about the basic questions and the great ideas. What has happened in American higher education is that this approach to liberal education remains only in some Humanities courses. Bloom states:

None of the three great parts of the contemporary university is enthusiastic about the Great Books approach to education. The natural scientists are benevolent toward other fields and toward liberal education, if it does not steal away their students and does not take too much time from the preparatory studies. But they themselves are interested primarily in the solution of the questions now important in their disciplines and are not particularly concerned with discussions of their foundations, inasmuch as they are so evidently successful.... Scientific progress, they believe, no longer depends on the kind of comprehensive reflection given to the nature of science by men like Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Kant and Marx. This is merely historical study, and for a long time now, even the greatest scientists have given up thinking about Galileo and Newton.⁶

He contends that the matter is even worse in the social sciences since "the social scientists are in general hostile, because the classic texts tend to deal with the human things the social sciences deal with, and they are very proud of having freed themselves from the shackles of such earlier thought to become truly scientific."⁷ Except for Weber and Freud, he finds few classic texts in the social sciences.

The Chicago ideal of a liberal education, at least when I was there, combined the Great Books curriculum with an Aristotelian conception of the organization of knowledge by disciplines. The great books were not randomly read; their study was organized by disciplines with a course about the organization of those disciplines at the end.

If, as I claim, there are four general kinds or types of theories of liberal education, then what are we to make of them? It appears to me that Bloom's view is only partial and that the four theories, when viewed together, are not mutually exclusive. They give us a comprehensive set of questions about the ideals of a liberal education and a core curriculum, and arguments for a liberal education can be developed by putting these four kinds of theories together. My optimism, then, is the polar opposite of Bloom's pessimism:

The great universities—which can split the atom, find cures for the most terrible diseases, conduct surveys of whole populations and produce massive dictionaries of lost languages—cannot generate a modest program of general education for undergraduate students. This is a parable for our times.⁸

Bloom believes that fragmentation of higher education has resulted in the demise of liberal education.⁹ In that context, there are no architectonic sciences, the disciplines are irremediably separated from one another, specialization is ever more narrow, and the only ties between the disciplines are the parking lots between their buildings. Lacking unity, the social sciences are arguing over turf; having lost their unity, the natural sciences go their own way, and the humanities linger in the academic basement with philosophy reduced to just another collection of specialties.

At the end of his pessimistic vision, Bloom contends that

comparative literature has now fallen largely into the hands of a group of professors....The school is called Deconstructionism, and it is the last, predictable, stage in the suppression of reason and the denial of the possibility of truth in the name of Philosophy. The interpreter's creative activity is more important than the text; there is no text, only interpretation. Thus the one thing most necessary for us, the knowledge of what these texts have to tell us, is turned over to the subjective, creative selves of these interpreters, who say that there is both no text and no reality to which these texts refer.... Everything has tended to soften the demands made on us by tradition; this simply dissolves it.¹⁰

In addition to Bloom's contentions about the intellectual disarray of the disciplines, I would add that we do not have a clear vision of what a university is. There are at least five models of what a university can and ought to be. First there are those who want the university to be the bastion of the liberal arts, the protector and transmitter of our cultural heritages. In this view, the university is the place where the great works of the human mind and spirit are studied, discussed, and preserved for our own edification and that of future generations. In the last analysis this is Bloom's view and the one which I believe should have the highest priority.

Second, there are also those who believe that the university ought to primarily support research and the acquisition of new knowledge; it is essentially a research institution where future researchers are educated. It is tragic, I believe, that many colleges these days want to model themselves after research institutions. Third, some claim that the university ought to be the training ground for the professions and, as such, exists to certify and credential memberships in those professions that it chooses to serve. Fourth, there are those who believe that the university ought to be a social servant that exists to meet the educational needs of the society which supports it. The university ought to be involved in finding ways to apply the results of its research to meet social problems. Finally, there are those who maintain that the university ought to be society's own best critic where controversial ideas are discussed and debated, where social trends are analyzed, and where the lessons of the past are applied to the issues of the future. It should be fairly obvious to anyone who has lived through the late sixties and early seventies that these last two models inevitably collide. And in the eighties and nineties we've seen the unfortunate development of athletic-business and research-business partnerships. Who's running whom? That the university is viewed in various ways by its various publics and that the university is difficult to manage internally should be clear to anyone. Part of these difficulties arise because members of the public rank order the above models differently, and the differences occur among members of the university's own internal community as well. No wonder we don't get along with one another!

With these disagreements about what constitutes a liberal education and

what role the university should play in society, what does Bloom advocate? Why the incredible popularity of the book? Let me try to answer the second question first. I believe *The Closing of the American Mind* was popular because Bloom attacked almost every current belief and cultural institution from feminism to rock music, from equal opportunity programs to relations between the sexes, and from the inadequacy of the young to the inadequacy of the university. A critic of almost any aspect of the current culture can find a supporting passage in Bloom's book. In reality, it is not one book but three: one describing contemporary students, one describing American culture since the 1930s, and one on the recent decades in the history of the American university.¹¹ There is something here for everyone, and Bloom has been charged with idealism, sexism, racism, elitism, Straussianism, esoteric writing, sloppy writing, absolutism, making scapegoats of students, ignorance of professional philosophy, un-Americanism, failure to understand rock music, pessimism, uncritical advocacy of the Great Books, bad scholarship, and neglect of religion.¹² Other critics have found him to be a defender of some neglected traditional values, a reinterpreter of the foundations of democracy, and a visionary political, cultural, and educational conservative. Here, I will restrict my comments to Bloom's defense of his ideal of liberal education, such as it is, and his defense of his model of the university. Along with some of his critics, I believe his defense has its difficulties, even though there is considerable agreement about the nature and importance of what he is defending. Two of Bloom's philosophical critics have astutely analyzed his arguments for a liberal education. These critics are Richard Rorty and Martha Nussbaum.

Nussbaum, a classicist and historian of ancient philosophy, now at Chicago, disagrees with Bloom's elitist conception of philosophy:

But if we approach Bloom's book expecting it to be a work of Socratic philosophy, answering the Socratic demand for definitions, explanations, and rational arguments, we may be mistaking its purpose. Portions of the book, especially in its early chapters, do indeed seem to defend a conception of philosophy much like that shared by Socrates and the Stoics, according to which philosophy is each individual person's search for the good through active reasoning and critical argument. On this view of philosophy's role in human life, we would expect the claim that in this democracy each and every person ought to have both the opportunity and the incentive to engage in studies that awaken the rational search for a good life. But in later chapters of Bloom's book, [he has a conception] of a philosophy that is not practical, alive, and broadly distributed, but contemplative and quasi-religious, removed from ethical and social concerns, and the preserve of a narrow elite.¹³

Nussbaum finds Bloom's readings of the ancients to be largely based on interpretations of them by one of his mentors, Leo Strauss, the major figure of Chicago's Political Science Department from the late fifties to the early seventies. I attended many of Strauss' lectures and came away from them disturbed by the esoteric character of his interpretations as well as his proclivity to find meanings behind the meanings in the ancient texts. Nussbaum maintains that Bloom shares Strauss' elitist conception of philosophy and finds a neglect of ethical concerns or a search for social justice in his emphasis on philosophy as a contemplation of certain theoretical principles. Bloom places the contemplative life above, and perhaps even without any significance for, the moral and political life. As most readings of the ancients will show, this a serious mistake.

Richard Rorty sees Bloom as a proponent of a Platonic absolutism in con-

trast to Rorty's own Deweyan historicism.¹⁴ In Rorty's interpretation, Bloom wants to begin from some ahistorical first principles in the manner of Plato, and anything less than those beginnings leads either to tyranny or anarchy.¹⁵ Rorty, and his hero Dewey, maintain that

first principles are abbreviations of, rather than justifications for, a set of beliefs about the desirability of certain concrete alternatives over others; the source of those beliefs is not 'reason' or 'nature,' but rather the prevalence of certain institutions or modes of life in the past. So we think that the method of political theory is what Rawls calls 'the attempt at reflective equilibrium.'¹⁶

The differences between Bloom, on the one hand, and Rorty and Nussbaum on the other, are matters of the philosophical justification for philosophy and for a liberal education. Both critics support a Great Books kind of education, although not without reservations. With what does Bloom leave us? Given all the debates about what constitutes a liberal education and the role of the university in society, as well as his criticisms of higher education, we are left with the highly ambiguous:

The University's task is thus well defined, if not easy to carry out or even keep in mind. It is, in the first place, always to maintain the permanent questions front and center. This it does primarily by preserving—and keeping alive—the works of those who best addressed these questions.¹⁷

Or:

To sum up, there is one simple rule for the University's activity: it need not concern itself with providing its students with experiences that are available in democratic society. They will have them in any event. It must provide them with experiences they cannot have there. Tocqueville did not believe that the old writers were perfect, but he believed that they could best make us aware of our imperfections, which is what counts for us. The universities never performed this function well. Now they have practically ceased trying.¹⁸

Although Bloom's contentions are extremely general, they have some plausibility. If there are to be genuine institutions of higher education in a free and democratic society, then they must educate citizens for participation in that society. Going beyond the purely theoretical contemplation Bloom advocates, colleges and universities must find ways of persuading those citizens, while they are students, of the importance of citizenship itself. They must protect the asking and answering of the big questions and they must provide students with a range of intellectual materials which stimulate those questions. Bloom's ideal of the university centers on the model of the university as the bastion of liberal education, and he conceives of liberal education in terms of the Great Books. And that is about all he has to say. This is a thin solution at best, and in his final pages Bloom leaves us only with some very general comments about respect for reason, the place of America in world history as the latest defender of freedom, and the role of philosophy in that defense.¹⁹ There is nothing in Bloom's book about how the undergraduate curriculum might be reformed, about how those who teach the great books might be trained, about how and in what structure those texts are to be read, or about how higher education might be reorganized to bring those ideals about.

In spite of that vacuum, what concerns about higher educations were so well articulated by Bloom that the public bought his book in such numbers?

Perhaps a report from the National Endowment for the Humanities, only one of the latest in a long string of critical forays, articulates some of those concerns.²⁰ The report details what university graduates do not know. For example, seventy-eight percent graduate without a course in the history of Western civilization, thirty-eight percent without any history at all, forty-five percent without studying the natural or physical sciences.²¹ I believe that it is failures such as these which disturb the purchasers of Bloom's book, giving them a sense that higher education has no commonality and no central vision of what it means to be educated.

We might wring our hands in despair over this crisis of confidence in higher education as Bloom does, or we might, instead, take heart and use it as an opportunity to re-think what a liberal education is all about. We desperately need a core curriculum, whether it be the fifty-hour one proposed by NEH or some other.²² We desperately need members of the university community who are able to articulate and defend the liberal arts to their students and to the general public. We need to be able to show the public that supports us that an education is not a random sampling of courses that have neither coherence nor connection. We need to show that a university and an education is something much more than a Balkanized collection of departments and courses with parking lots in between.

Bloom is correct, I believe, in calling for a return to a seriously conceived curriculum of liberal education, but he is wrong in claiming that the Great Books alone will make all the difference. If my outline of the various theories of liberal education is correct, then Bloom has only partially seen what a liberal education can be about. Educated citizens need the skills of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking; educated citizens need to know about the interrelationship of the basic disciplines; educated citizens need to know some basic facts about their own and others' history and culture, and finally they need to have met some of the great intellects and their works. If we can find a way of combining all of these ideals into a coherent core curriculum, then a democratic society and its citizens will have been well served.

However, no text will save us from being less than fully educated and no curriculum of prescribed texts, by itself, will free us from the tyranny of the present. The only thing that will save us is a new commitment by higher education to the centrality of teaching. The university must return to the production of scholars whose research is for the sake of their teaching and not the reverse; it must produce scholars whose teaching is not a duty but a delight, those scholars, in all of the disciplines, who take their learning to be a part of a great conversation with their fellow citizens of all the ages, and who are able to continue that conversation, without end, with their students.

At the end of Plato's dialogue the *Phaedrus* (279B), after a long conversation about love, rhetoric, and the soul, Socrates ends with his prayer: "Beloved Pan, and all the other gods who dwell in this place, may the inner and the outer man be as one; may I count the wise man rich, and may I have such a measure of gold as a wise man, and he alone, can bear and carry." Socrates asks Phaedrus if he should add anything else; Phaedrus says no, and says that is sufficient because friends "should have all things in common." What we should have in common is that continuing conversation and that is what makes us all friends together. That conversation, for me, was nourished at Augustana and for that I am very, very grateful.

ENDNOTES

1 E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

2 E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988).

3 Allen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). The subtitle is: "How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students."

4 Robert L. Stone, Editor, *Essays on the Closing of the American Mind* (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Review Press, 1989). For the book sales, see the Introduction, xiii; for a listing of reviews, see the bibliography, 377-382. The reviews now number about three hundred.

5 Bloom, 344. He continues: "But one thing is certain: whenever the Great Books make up a central part of the curriculum, the students are excited and satisfied, feel they are doing something that is independent and fulfilling, getting something from the university they cannot get elsewhere. The very fact of this special experience, *which leads nowhere beyond itself*, provides them with a new alternative and a respect for study itself. The advantage they get is an awareness of the classics—particularly important for our innocents; an acquaintance with what big questions were when there still were big questions; models, at the very least, of how to go about answering them; and perhaps most important of all, a fund of shared experiences and thoughts on which to ground their friendships with one another" (344). The italicized emphasis is mine; note the purely theoretical character of Bloom's justification of the Great Books. His best critics, two of whom I will discuss later, point out the curiously amoral and apolitical character of his ideas. In this respect, Bloom and Hirsch, although identified together in the popular press, are substantially different. For Hirsch, cultural literacy leads to a better and richer political dialogue.

6 Bloom, 345.

7 Ibid.

8 Bloom, 340.

9 Bloom asserts that "since the sixties the scientists have had less and less to say to, and do with, their colleagues in the social sciences and the humanities. The university has lost whatever polis-like character it had and has become like the ship on which the passengers are just accidental fellow travelers soon to disembark and go their separate ways. The relations between natural science, social science and humanities are purely administrative and have no substantial intellectual content. They only meet on the level of the first two years of undergraduate education, and there the natural scientists are largely concerned with protecting their interest in the young who will be coming their way" (350). For the rise of the MBA as a symptom of this decline, see 369ff.

10 Bloom, 379.

11 See the articles by Robert N. Bellah, 91, and by William A. Galston, 119, in the Stone anthology.

- 12 Werner J. Dannhauser, in Stone, 24.
- 13 Stone, 205.
- 14 Stone, 98.
- 15 Stone, 101.
- 16 Stone, 98. It is interesting to note that Rorty first studied with McKeon at Chicago.
- 17 Bloom, 252.
- 18 Bloom, 256.
- 19 Bloom, 38.
- 20 National Endowment for the Humanities, *50 Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students*, reprinted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 11, 1989, A16ff.
- 21 See the prologue to the NEH report, A16 above.
- 22 NEH report, A17.



RONALD GOETZ

The Sinlessness of Christ?

Can there be any life left in the ancient Christian dogma of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ? To be sure, the New Testament consistently proclaims that Jesus Christ was without sin, and it was the unquestioned dogma for centuries of mainstream Christians, both East and West, Catholic and Protestant. However, for well over three hundred years, modern naturalistic rationalism, in its myriad permutations, has marshaled a continuous onslaught against the acceptance of any seemingly wondrous claims. What could be more wondrous than the story of one living an absolutely blameless life?

To be sure, not all higher biblical critics are thoroughgoing naturalist rationalists, but it is the methodological assumption of higher criticism that the Scriptures, irrespective of their ultimate inspiration, come to us as the quite finite products of human witness, thought, and penmanship. As such, criticism holds that in order to understand the full intention of Scripture, it is necessary to inquire radically into the historical setting, and it would seem apparent, on the very face of the matter, that to take a radically historical perspective on anything, is to uncover its relative, culturally conditioned character and the utter moral ambiguity that is the lot of all historical existence.

In dramatic contrast to our modern or postmodern mindsets and methodologies, for many centuries mainstream Christianity found the affirmation of Christ's sinlessness to be easily compatible with the various world views which emerged during the long period of Christianity's cultural ascendancy. Be they neo-Platonic, neo-Aristotelian, or even nominalist, they were all Christianized versions of the same and thus permitted, quite unselfconsciously, a vision of reality that anticipated wonderful occurrences, divine inbreaks into ordinary life. The sinlessness of Jesus Christ not only had Scriptural authority, but it could be seen, unparadoxically, as a reflection of the very nature of things. The ancient and ineluctable Christological formula that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human, two natures and one person was interpreted in the light of the well-nigh universal presumption of the immutable, impassible, and manifest lordship of God.

In the East, Cyril of Alexandria operated with a Christology that was so "high" as to come within a hair's breadth of monophysitism, the doctrine that the humanity of Jesus was totally subsumed in his divinity, that Jesus Christ walked the earth as undifferentiated divinity. Cyril could indeed speak of the Incarnation in terms of the *Kenosis*, the self-emptying of Christ (Phil. 2: 7). However, what Cyril meant in affirming the divine "self-emptying" sounded almost like its denial. Christ was God enfleshed:

But when seen as a babe and wrapped in swaddling clothes, even when still in the bosom of the virgin who bore him, he filled all creation as God, and was enthroned with him who begot him.

Given such a reading of the divine consciousness of Jesus Christ, his sinlessness followed axiomatically, free of any hint of paradox.

In contrast, the *Tome* of Pope Leo I, Cyril's fifth-century western theological counterpart, expounded Christ's *Kenosis* in terms which would appear to be more in sync with the paradox many modern Christians feel in affirming Christ's divinity:

... the Creator and Lord of all things willed to be one among mortals, [it] was stooping down of compassion, not a failure of power ... he began to exist in time; the Lord of the universe allowed his infinite majesty to be overshadowed, and took upon him the form of a servant; the impassible God did not disdain to become passable, and the immortal one to be subject to the laws of death.

Christ's "stooping down in compassion," his becoming "passable" rings with implications for our modern context, though admittedly such implications were not picked up in the ancient church. Indeed, while both Cyril and Leo were established as standards of orthodoxy by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, Cyril's spin on the matter prevailed in both East and West. For example, throughout the whole medieval period in portrayals of the Madonna and child, the Christ child was always portrayed as a little adult, reigning from the Virgin's lap. By the time of the Renaissance, artists did indeed render the Christ child as an infant; however, this did not lead the theology of the Catholic Church which gloried in such art to any real sense that such a radical humanization of Christ demanded a rethinking of the ancient doctrine of his sinlessness.

From the Protestant side, Luther took the sinlessness of Christ to be an indisputable article of Christian faith. To be sure, in Luther's theology of the cross he radically stressed the genuine human suffering of Christ. Indeed, Lutheran pietism could carry Luther's focus on Christ's suffering to graphic extremes. However, this did not lead directly to any systemic rethinking as to how the consciousness of one who could suffer so completely could at the same time be impervious to humanity's greatest torment—sin.

Calvin's overwhelming sense of the absolute sovereignty of God extended to his doctrine of the two natures of Christ. In the Incarnation, Christ's divinity was thus sovereign over his humanity. A Christ who could be truly assaulted by sin was systemically unthinkable.

One might have expected that nineteenth-century liberalism, given its skepticism concerning miracles and wonders and its early alliance with higher biblical criticism, would have called into question Christ's sinlessness from the outset. How could a theological enterprise, in apologetic dialogue with the mindset of modern rationalism, skepticism, and empiricism, hope, or even wish, to preserve a doctrine of Christ's sinlessness?

Yet this was precisely the course taken by that most original of all liberal theologians, Friedrich Schleiermacher. Though Schleiermacher rejected the objective reality of miracles in general, and the Resurrection of Christ in particular, he insisted on the absolute sinlessness of Christ as an unchallengeable truth of Christian faith. In expounding Christ's unique and "utter sinlessness," Schleiermacher claimed that "the existence of God in the Redeemer is posted as the innermost fundamental power within him, from which every activity proceeds and which holds every element together." On the face of it, Schleier-

macher, in his own way, would seem to have bordered on monophysitism fully as much as did Cyril in his own way.

Though Schleiermacher was fully cognizant of higher criticism and in many matters worked within its context, he denied it had any decisive relevance to the teachings of Jesus. Thus, Jesus' teachings were neither historically conditioned nor philosophically deduced. Coming directly from God, and consistent with Christ's sinlessness, they are "faultlessly true":

... to regard His teachings as a purification and a development of the ethics current among his people, springing out of the universal human reason, is part of the empirical conception we have rejected. Rather, the source of His teaching was the absolutely original revelation of God in Him.

Schleiermacher was not unaware of the contradiction that might seem to exist between his naturalistic antipathy to physical miracles and his own extremely high, indeed miraculous Christology. However, in Schleiermacher's thinking the tension disappears when one sees that all the miracles that might ever have occurred, past, present, and future, are nothing when compared with Christ's person as the "total spiritual miracle."

The New Testament offers two distinctly different visions of Christ's person, that of the Gospel of John and that of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In John, Christ is portrayed as the imperious Lord of all events, knowing other people's innermost thoughts, knowing the end from the beginning. Christ was fundamentally unaffected by his historical context. Christ was thus less God made fully human and more God among us in human form. Because John does not deny the humanity of Jesus, the wonder for him was how one so clearly divine could be human. The sinlessness of Christ in the Johannine portrait thus follows as an unparadoxical given.

In the Synoptics, by contrast, Jesus' humanity is in full view. He did not know when the end would come: "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father" (MK 13:32). "No one knows the times and seasons the father has fixed by his own authority." He knew genuine temptation and underwent a human maturation process: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature" (LK 2:52). On the cross he did not determine for himself when he had suffered enough. John reports Jesus imperiously pronouncing, "It is finished" (QN 19:30). In the Marcan tradition the shattered Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (MK 15:34). To be sure the Synoptics would never draw the inference that this cry of dereliction represented a sinful cleavage between the Son and his heavenly Father. However, it does underscore a radically different spin on the Christ story. The wonder for the Synoptics in proclaiming Christ's divinity is how one so clearly human could be divine, though of course, as with John, in the Synoptics Christ's divinity is never in question.

Orthodoxy, which developed in a pre-critical era, simply did not see the difference between John and the Synoptics as problematic. Orthodoxy saw no difficulty in harmonizing the four gospels, with John, of course, being the key to the harmonization. By reading the Synoptics through the lens of John, the complicating passages in the Synoptic Gospels were automatically relieved of their full weight and the sinless perfection of Jesus could be affirmed without conscious ambiguity.

However, once the contention that Mark was prior to John and closer to the "historical" Jesus gained currency, Mark and the Synoptic tradition became, for many, the lens through which John was read. Thus John's Gospel was seen

as a kind of imaginative retelling of the life of Jesus as if he relived it in a post-Resurrection form. Once John's historical status was minimized, it could be only a matter of time until the tradition of Christ's sinlessness would become a critical modern and postmodern theological problem, even though it is often not frankly faced up to as such.

The cultural milieu of contemporary postmodern liberalism is radically different from that in which the liberalism of Schleiermacher was wrought. Postmodernism lives and breathes by what has been styled the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Under the strictures of which nothing is to be taken at face value, the issue for postmodern interpreters is not just what a given writer claims is his or her intention, but the unspoken agenda, the self-serving, privileged, inherently oppressive assumptions that lurk beneath the writer's ostensive idealism, particularly in great and venerated texts. In such a view texts must be deconstructed to reveal their darker intents.

Schleiermacher, living in a generally more idealistic, far less cynical age, could embrace much of modern rationalism, naturalism, and skepticism while, at the same time, "privileging" Jesus from its scrutiny and get away with it. To be sure, it was acceptable within the older liberal theological community to assail what was regarded as the scientifically primitive worldview of the New Testament. It was perceived as legitimate despite the dubious historical conjecture required to attempt to modernize, and thus sanitize, Jesus (an undertaking so brilliantly debunked by Albert Schweitzer). However, Jesus' status as one or another kind of moral paragon was to remain largely unchallenged.

However, in the contemporary context, many theologians have long ceased trying to keep the barbarians from the gate. Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, are, in some theological contexts, given more authority than Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, or Calvin. Therefore, it should not be surprising that any number of New Testament accounts of the sayings and doings of Jesus arouse postmodern suspicions. They are problematic, even offensive to postmodern sensitivities, not merely because of their perceived "mythological" content, as with older liberalism, but because they are by contemporary standards, politically, even morally, "incorrect." No reversion to one or another form of monophysitism seems available to relieve the tension created by such critiques. For anyone who takes seriously the implications of the methodology of postmodern criticism, the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ must either be reconceived or abandoned.

Few texts in the New Testament rise to quite the level of "insensitivity" as does the account of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician women as reported by Mark (MK 7:24-30). We cite it here because it would appear to touch so many bases in its blatant political incorrectness. It can be read as being racist and/or male chauvinist, religiously exclusivistic, and disturbingly superstitious.

In Mark's account a Gentile woman comes to Jesus and begs him to cast out the demon that was afflicting her daughter. Jesus would seem to refuse the woman, claiming that the children of Israel must first be fed: "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." No doubt the woman is forced by her daughter's desperate need to accept this dog-like designation; however, she has not lost her tongue. She retorts, "Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Jesus, pleased by her quick wit accedes, "For this saying you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter."

Mark would have us realize that at least at this moment in his ministry, Jesus' understanding of the Messianic office was shaped by a profound sense

of exclusivistic Jewish priority. Some feminists have argued Jesus' comment is less a religio-racist thing than it was a cruel slam at women, who were generally relegated to the level of dogs by the first-century patriarchal society. I think that this goes beyond what the text would support, but I must admit that it is not an impossible reading. For if Jesus' mindset and teachings carried in them a residue of Jewish nationalism, why not a residue of Jewish patriarchy as well?

There are those who would excuse Jesus by the argument, difficult to sustain, that Jesus was merely ironically bantering words with the woman. This strikes me as a dangerous line. For Jesus to banter words with a woman desperately concerned for her daughter's survival suggests a certain innate cruelty of character that is, perhaps, even more disconcerting than a culturally conditioned sense of racial or gender superiority. And what would have happened to the woman's daughter if the woman had not been bright and feisty? Would Jesus have been reduced to lamely contending "I was only kidding?" The text gives no suggestion that Jesus was playing the ironic jester.

Add to these matters the problem of Jesus' belief in demons. Don't the New Testament stories that presuppose a demonic explanations of diseases, mental or physical, only encourage the gullible to embrace the dubious nostrums of the occult, thus delaying proper medical attention for themselves and perhaps more importantly, for others? In short, it is hard to keep this text from being destroyed before our very eyes. Indeed, it is one of many that would seem to wither under the scrutiny of a hermeneutics of suspicion.

Other examples abound. Jesus' attacks on the Pharisees can be read as preludes to the history of Christian anti-Semitism. His warning of hell-fire can be read as symptoms of an unforgiving we/they mindset wholly at odds with the postmodern drive to tolerance and inclusivity. His insistence we turn the other cheek and resist not the evil man raises the hackles of many liberationists. Are feminists expected to offer such counsel to battered women? Is this to be Christianity's word to the oppressed peasants of Latin America? Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard who receive a full day's pay for one hour's work would seem to validate the right of employers to be arbitrary. How does Jesus' command "If your right eye causes you to sin pluck it out" (MT 5:29) sound in the ear of a person tormented by a sense of guilt or one contemplating suicide, the ultimate self-mutilation? Jesus' detestation of divorce can be interpreted as demanding that individuals persist in the misery of a loveless marriage, cruelly placing a guilt rap on people seeking a modicum of peace and happiness. Is not "sell what you have, and give to the poor" (MK 10:21) a dangerous assault on one of the chief foundations of liberal democracy, i.e. the legitimacy of private property? What help can a poor family, desperate to keep the wolf from the door, derive from Jesus' radically imprudent advice: "Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall drink or what you shall eat, nor about your body" (MT 6: 22). The Resurrection accounts, as they would seem to witness to the absolute uniqueness of the authority and truth of the Christian faith, would appear to be inconsistent with the religious relativism, which is bandied about so commonly in even Christian postmodern circles. We could go on.

I do not see, once Pandora's box has been opened by hermeneuticians of suspicion, how it can ever be closed again. The spirits of distrust are abroad, and it would be naive to suppose we can control them once we have summoned them to expose the pernicious intentions of our ideological opponents. To be sure many who practice the hermeneutics of suspicion imagine that because they see the venality of others that their own cause is immune to the devastation they have wrought on others. However, this practice of what amounts to a

hermeneutic of self-exemption can prove convincing only to fellow ideologues.

Instead of trying to exempt our own perspective from suspicious scrutiny, we must face the fact that it is not possible, in the realm of historical reality, for anyone to live a life that does not give offense at one point or another, at one time or another, to someone or another. Thus, by our very being we are sinning, or at least perceived to be sinning by those to whom our existence gives offense. No one can be blameless from the perspective of everyone else. Certainly, the New Testament witness about Jesus, the only witness that has any genuine tie to the apostles who knew him that we have or are likely to have, is no exception. The ecology of existence is such that we can never do just one thing. Everything has unforeseen repercussions. No one lives in this world without making waves, advertently and inadvertently injuring others. In this sense, perfect innocence is impossible. Jesus, by resolutely pursuing his inevitably conflictual sense of calling, knowing it must lead to the cross, was willing to make other people his murderers.

Without in any way denying the radical uniqueness of Jesus' messianic vision, the Synoptics make it inescapably clear that Jesus' grasp of his calling in all its uniqueness, was modeled out of the very stuff of first-century Jewish humanity. As such, Jesus came to his messianic vision, as we come to our own less exalted visions of calling before God, in fragmented, culturally conditioned insights, awareness in bits and pieces. Jesus was, as any human being must be, not only shaped by the perspectives of his time, but by its prejudices as well. Clearly, Jesus, as he comes to us out of the pages of the Synoptics, was not a Messiah whose self understanding was fully formed from birth, one seeing with perfect clarity the end from the beginning.

The Synoptics report that Jesus' public ministry began when, after hearing the voice from heaven at his baptism naming him as God's son, he went into the desert for forty days and forty nights to be tempted by Satan. The temptations as they are specified in Matthew and Luke are over such absolutely fundamental questions as, what is the Messiah called to do? And even more tellingly, could Jesus be certain that he even was the Messiah? Though the Synoptic Gospels do not permit us to reconstruct anything like a reliable time line for the events in Jesus' life, the ministry of the Jesus to whom they witness was developmental. Luke goes out of his way to tell us that Jesus grew wiser with the passing of the years. Yet, there remained crucial matters that eluded even his most mature wisdom. As we've noted, he did not know when the world would end.

Paul's Letter to the Hebrews, speaking at this point fully in harmony with the Synoptic witness, tells us that "although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and having been made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8). Jesus was *made* perfect through what he endured. The maturity of his ministry and his understanding of his ministry were not cheaply gained nor were they an automatic possession. Jesus proceeded in his ministry by faith and hope, not in absolute certitude.

One of the tragic, if inadvertent, spin-offs of monophysite-leaning Christologies is that they give the impression that Christ's divinity was so manifest that only the deliberately recalcitrant would fail to acknowledge it. Much anti-Semitism is born of such thinking. In fact, however, even Jesus' disciples came to a full recognition only in bits and drabs. Peter, at Caesaria Philippi, in a moment of glittering insight, could confess that Jesus was "the Christ" (MK 8:27-23), yet he was not averse to arguing with Jesus over the very nature of the Messianic office. Peter rebuked Jesus for prophesying his crucifixion and resurrection. (Peter never did believe in these eventualities until he witnessed

them himself.) Jesus rebukes Peter in turn, telling him that he was on the side of Satan, not on the side of God (MK 8:31-33). Perhaps, this is why Matthew records Jesus' response to Peter's confession: "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven" (MT 16:17). Indeed, from an empirical, flesh-and-blood perspective, there was nothing self-evidently messianic, nothing self-evidently divine, in Jesus' words and deeds. This is why though Peter had witnessed directly much of Jesus' ministry, he could have been so blind as to its purpose and direction, even at the very end. This is why Jesus ended upon the cross.

I find it is a great consolation to know that the Son of God made himself subject to the same indeterminacies, the same historical relativities that confront and often bedevil us. Jesus Christ knew first hand what it is to be human, that is, what it is to be genetically determined, culturally formed, and facing life with but finite insight. The Christ who will judge us is one who knows from the inside the limiting conditions of existence as they hold us in their thrall.

How could there be unambiguous individual innocence when we are shaped by culture and no culture can prevail by being innocent? Each of us has life because our respective ancestors were on the victorious side in the ceaseless and ruthless struggle for survival. As Reinhold Niebuhr never tired of reminding us, but, alas, too many currently have tired of hearing, the most cherished mores and values of every culture and every interest group, however morally pristine they style themselves, are, to some extent at least, mere ideological constructs, the rationalizations and self-justifications that the groups and cultures generate to make bearable the terrible things existence requires of us. It does not matter whether the interest group is as large as a nation or as small as a revolutionary cadre, its sense of truth and justice is shaped by its interests, its schemes, and its dreams. One hopes there is more to morality than this, but no ethicist can escape the fact that his or her feet are planted firmly in the utter ambiguity of human existence.

The apostle Paul, who was much more in touch with the teachings and doings of Jesus than is sometimes acknowledged, seems to have summarized the entire life of Jesus in the recognition that God "made him to be sin who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5:21). Jesus Christ was indeed plunged into brokenness and contingencies of existence; he did indeed share the burden of our brokenness and sin.

Jesus Christ was not a Teflon Messiah upon whom nothing of the ambiguity of our condition sticks. Jesus Christ was made subject to the terms of existence, and he was broken by existence. We should never try to explain away his terrible cry from the cross, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?"

What did the "flesh and blood" of Jesus' ministry reveal, *qua* flesh and blood? He taught an ethic which ranged from the sublimely idealistic, "Judge not, love your enemy," to the terrible, "If your eye offend you pluck it out," to wildly the impractical, "Take no heed for the morrow." He confused and befuddled his disciples right up to the day of his death. Then as now his mighty works were subject to controversy. He so reinterpreted the Messianic hope of his fellow Jews that he appeared to some to be a crank, to others, a heretic. To be sure, his idiosyncratic character might elicit a certain fascination for lovers of the offbeat, but sinlessness? I suspect that this would not be the first thought or the fiftieth thought to spring to mind to one who never having heard of Jesus read the Synoptics for the first time sans the Resurrection accounts.

But, of course, it is the Resurrection and Pentecost that cast everything in an utterly new light. It was at Pentecost that Peter finally knew who's who and what's what. Thus he proclaimed, "God raised him up, having loosed the pangs

of death for it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24). Henceforth, as Paul recognized, we are compelled to deal, not with flesh and blood, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor 15:50), but "with he who has been raised [in] a spiritual body" (I Cor 15:44), one who has thereby been revealed by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, to be the vindicated Son of God. In the light of Christ's vindication, could it be that everything he ever said or did upon this earth, despite its finite frame, was validated by God?

Now the ball is in our court. Behind this seemingly benighted rabbi, rejected by his people and abandoned by his disciples, stands the authority of God. This forces upon us the question: How are we going to justify our disobedience if to disobey Jesus is to stand against God's vindicated one? From our human point of view, we may indeed be confounded by Jesus' commandments, we may be critical of their seeming inappropriateness, their perceived insensitivity, we may be unable to even vaguely imagine, let alone establish, a social order that implements the Sermon on the Mount, and we certainly are perfectly incapable of obeying him personally. Yet, we cannot get his person or his commandments out of our craws, for as we have been touched by his spirit, we know he has been vindicated by God. It is in the light of Christ's vindication and our poor efforts to adjust ourselves to that vindication that we are able to see what our personal responsibility in and for sin is all about and, conversely, how perfectly sinless was Jesus Christ our savior.

It is obvious that when Paul said that God "made him to be sin who knew no sin" he was speaking of sin in two senses. In the first sense, there is the recognition that to live at all is to be sin's victim. Thus, even Jesus, in his life upon this earth did not transcend the biases, the relativities, the ambiguities, the chronic indeterminacies, the inevitable conflicts, with which we all must grapple. Thus, he was plunged by his very living and acting in the resultant guilt that plagues us all. It is not only shallowly Pelagian, but is to fail to locate the loci of our own sin, to imagine that any finite being, including Jesus, can be innocent.

However, there is a critical difference between being "made to be sin" in the sense of our being victims of sin by the virtue of existing, and being, in the second sense of sin with which Paul was operating, sin's willing collaborator. Like victims of oppressive regimes who have been brainwashed into kissing the very hand that strikes them, we have, in confronting what we take to be the reality of things, convinced ourselves that sin and death are ultimate realities, as such they are God. Governed by so dark a faith, we feel compelled to live in compliance with the order of sin and death as it governs our day-to-day existences in the world. In our collaboration with sin, we regard the eternal promises of God to be, at best, merely agreeable possibilities, but nothing we can bank on. If there is a heaven it would be icing on the cake, but it is shrewd to live as if, in terms of an old beer commercial, we only go around once in life, so we should grab all the gusto we can.

To be sure, we are not all rapacious beasts selfishly savaging everything and everyone we come in contact with. Often, our self-interest is enlightened. Many understand that it is in the interest of the health of the body politic to arrest the development of a permanent underclass. Many see that the ruthless exploitation of the environment is destructive of humane living. Many understand that diplomatic solutions are better than war. Many are saddened by being reminded of world poverty. Yet, somehow few of us can quite summon the resolve to address such problems in such a manner as to require radical self-restraint and self-sacrifice. We want to be assured that we will get ours. If

it comes to a choice between my needs and the needs of strangers, the natural law of self-survival requires I serve my needs first. Thus, despite our idealistic pontifications, social alienation continues unabated. Nature continues to be raped. We are perpetually at war or preparing for war, and we are the richest nation the world has ever seen while world poverty grows apace.

Jesus Christ was not God setting an example of perfection from the safety of heaven. In his *Kenosis*, his self-emptying, he gave up the certitude of his own divinity. He understood as fully as we do the allure of the order of sin and death. Yet he never became sin's willing collaborator. To affirm the great Christian tradition, that Jesus knew no sin, is to recognize that he stood fast in his commitment to his calling. He didn't look back or to the right or to the left. True enough, Jesus Christ progressed toward his human destiny, which was Calvary and Crucifixion, through the fogs of the ignorance and prejudice and parochialism of his time. Yet, despite his finitude and temptations, which pertain to his humanness, despite seemingly false starts and seeming misalliances with faltering, even treacherous disciples, despite short-tempered moments of angry dismay, Jesus' ministry did in fact end on the cross. It is unimaginable to Christian faith that anyone viewing Christ on the cross could call him a sinner. If, for no other reason than when viewing the slain Christ, we are viewing the very death of the ultimate power of sin itself.

The Son of God, though he was totally subject to the conditions of existence, could not fail to stand fast in his righteousness anymore than God could cease to be God. Yet, as he lived among us he seemed to risk it all. One false step by the Son of God, and the very righteous order of the universe would be undone. In the fight of his accomplishment, the "why" question, why Jesus Christ would engage in such daring, seems perfectly clear: Jesus Christ, out of his inestimable love, desired to take common cause with us so completely that he shared even our vulnerability. However, it is at the point of the "how" of that vulnerability that our minds are dazzled. We cannot hope to penetrate the incredible paradox of the absolutely invulnerable becoming absolutely vulnerable. Yet, when we look to the person of Jesus, born of Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and on the third day risen from the dead, there it is, in all its humbling mystery.

