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C^{the} CRESSET



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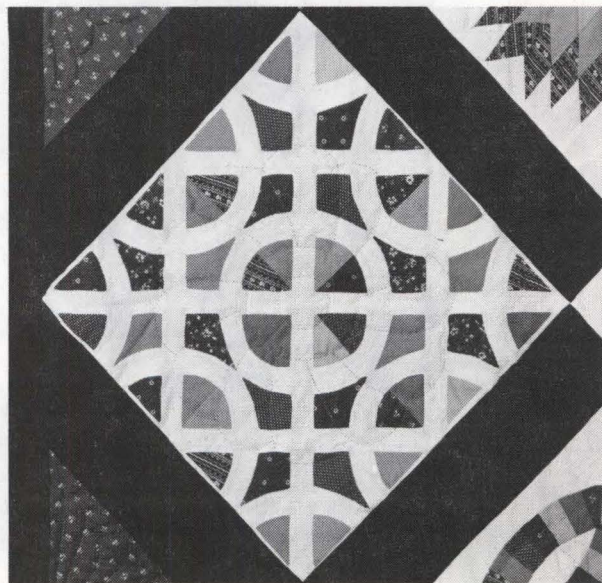
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Cover and detail (*Country Crossroads*) above: Sylvia Pick, *Legacy Quilt*, 1987-88, textile, 119 inches square. Executed by 30 volunteers. University Collection, Valparaiso University Museum of Art. Gift of Joanne Albers. 88.16

This quilt was designed by Sylvia Pick for performances of the play *Quilters* produced by the Valparaiso University Theater, February, 1988. This November it was included in an exhibit of Legacy quilts at the Houston International Quilt Festival.



Comment on Contemporary Affairs by the Editor

The Meaning of the Election

It would of course be utterly tacky for the proprietor of *In Luce Tua* to remind its readers that he predicted—way last January—the outcome of the presidential election. But he did. It remains now only to explain why things turned out in their ordained manner.

The answer is not hard to find (it is indeed difficult to ignore), but one would not imagine so from a very large segment of presumably informed opinion. Much of the immediate post-election analysis located the reason for the outcome either in the presumed ineptitude of the Michael Dukakis campaign or—the same point in reverse—in the unprincipled shrewdness that supposedly guided the George Bush effort. (It is nothing short of astonishing how rapidly the media depiction of Bush progressed in the course of the campaign from that of wimp to forceful leader to bully.) There is no doubt that the Republicans ran more effectively than did the Democrats, but it is not to the relative efficiency of the two campaign efforts that we should look to explain how things turned out.

As always in social analysis, one should begin with the obvious. The campaign was conducted under prevailing conditions of peace and prosperity—however uneasy the former and uneven the latter—and such conditions give an enormous boost to the candidate of the incumbent party. Associated with that is the extraordinary continuing popularity of Ronald Reagan, a phenomenon that transcends ordinary political experience or understanding but which obviously aided his Vice President. Then too, the Republican party begins every presidential campaign with a large advantage in the form of its virtual lock on the electoral votes of the South and most of the West. Other things equal, it takes a lot of blundering on the part of the GOP (or unwonted political sagacity or good luck on the part of the Democrats) for presidential elections to turn out otherwise than with a Republican victory. Or so, at least, the results of five of the last six elections would suggest.

But of course initial advantages, however much they might accumulate, do not by themselves decree the outcomes of particular elections. Specific candidates and issues make a great, often determinative, difference, which is why post-election attention has focused on the personalities and campaign

strategies of Dukakis and Bush. After all, whatever chronic difficulties Democratic candidates might face, the fact remains that Governor Dukakis emerged from his party's convention in Atlanta in July with an eighteen-point lead in the polls, one he managed by election day to turn into an eight-point deficit. No wonder the prevailing question becomes, how did he manage to blow it (or Bush manage to turn things around)?

It is true that the Vice President ran an effective campaign, whatever one thinks of its ethical or aesthetic level. He got rid of the wimp image with a first-rate convention speech and vigorous campaigning thereafter. He put Dukakis on the defensive early and managed to make the Governor's record rather than his own the focus of attention. It is also true that Dukakis could have campaigned better than he did: he moved uncertainly from one theme to another, he sometimes seemed detached and distant in personality (e.g., during the crucial second debate), and he never found an effective way of refuting Bush's charges against him on social issues.

Yet too close a focus on the details of the campaign exaggerates their effects and obscures the larger forces that shaped the outcome of the election. Too much has been made, for example, of the nastiness of the Bush campaign. It *was* negative and it did at times border on the trivial, but it exceeded neither the generally accepted limits of permissible political hardball nor the record of past presidential campaigns with respect to political etiquette. It was not demagogic of Bush to raise the prison-furlough and pledge-of-allegiance issues, and in raising them he did not significantly distort Dukakis' record (the one issue where he perhaps did so was on the environment, the Boston Harbor television ad in particular). It is absurd to equate the Bush campaign's tactics with McCarthyism. In any case, the Dukakis campaign gave as good as it got, beginning with the sneering personal attacks on Bush at the Democratic convention and concluding with a crudely nativist assault ad against the Republicans that ran only on the very last days of the campaign (and that virtually no one has made mention of).

Nor is it either reasonable or fair to pin the Democrats' loss on Michael Dukakis' personal inadequacies. In fact, the Governor displayed throughout the campaign a high degree of intelligence, integrity, psychological balance, and ability to articulate his position. He was not, it is true, Mr.

Warmth, but on balance, whatever his limitations, he ran a creditable campaign. His burdens were essentially political, not personal, and they were the burdens not of Michael Dukakis alone but of the liberal wing of the Democratic party of which he is a representative figure.

Dukakis lost, in short, because he is a liberal, and if the Democrats want to stop losing presidential elections, they need to change not their candidates' personalities or campaign strategies but their ideology. Dukakis indicated awareness of his vulnerability on this point when he insisted in his acceptance speech at the convention that the election was about (read, *ought* to be about) competence, not ideology. But the Republicans knew better than to let Dukakis frame the issues on his terms, and they relentlessly focused their campaign on all those liberal weak points that in the carefully circumscribed ideological world of the Democratic primaries and caucuses had never seen the light of day.

To demonstrate the Democratic dilemma, one need only point to the extraordinary developments of the last ten days of the campaign, when Dukakis drew dramatic attention to himself by finally conceding what Bush had been insisting on all along, that yes, indeed, he was a liberal. What better evidence of the political albatross that adherence to liberalism has become than that confession of the attachment is almost universally acknowledged as an act of noteworthy political boldness, even, perhaps, of reckless courage. But there is more: even Dukakis' confession of liberalism came in carefully qualified terms. He was, he said, a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John Kennedy, thereby studiously distancing himself by silence from what liberalism has become in the quarter-century since JFK's death. And it is *that* liberalism, not that of the New Deal tradition, that has become a political kiss of death.

On economic issues, liberalism—at least the populist liberalism of the New Deal—is still more an asset than a liability, though less conclusively so than it was through the early 1960s. Voters continue to favor Democrats on issues of economic distribution, but they are less sure than they once were that the Democrats are also to be preferred to the GOP on questions of overall economic management. Jimmy Carter's misadventures with stagflation in the 1970s reduced but did not eliminate the traditional Democratic advantage on economic concerns. When deeply in trouble at the end of the campaign, Dukakis turned to the enduring populist theme of economic justice that has been every Democratic candidate's issue of last resort since the

Great Depression.

But the politics of nostalgia was not enough for the Democrats in 1988, any more than it has generally been since the late Sixties. It could not overcome the disability liberalism has become in the realms of defense and foreign policy or in social/cultural affairs. Vice President Bush talked of the differences between himself and Dukakis in terms of a Great Divide, and however much an exercise in hyperbole many might take that to be, it expresses the gap that exists for the majority of middle Americans between their own concerns and those of the liberal community.

The Democrats have never fully recovered from the McGovernizing of the party that was the product of the Vietnam experience—the great reshaping event of modern American politics—and that first expressed itself in the New Politics campaigns of Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy in 1968. America almost came apart in the late Sixties, and the divisiveness of the times took its most intense political form within the liberal community in general and the Democratic party in particular. As a significant portion of the liberal movement lurched spasmodically to the Left, it removed itself from the vital center of American politics and entered upon a curious process of self-marginalization. Liberalism became the adversary culture, and Americans lost confidence in a movement and a party that had to a considerable degree lost confidence in American society itself. Both the Fulbright/McGovern skepticism about American purposes abroad and the counter-cultural assault on traditional values in the social/cultural realm (in areas touching on patriotism, school prayer, feminism [especially abortion], gay rights, racial and sexual quotas, crime and punishment, family life) took the Democratic party along paths that the majority of Americans declined to follow.

Things have cooled down considerably since the 1960s, of course, but the legacy of alienated liberalism remains strong enough within the Democratic party that it continues to accept as presidential candidates only people who, like Dukakis, then have to spend a good part of the general election campaign awkwardly explaining away their records and policy positions. Which means that, other than in times of economic disarray, the Democrats' best weapon of economic populism gets trumped by the gift of cultural populism that the liberals within the party have bestowed on the GOP.

And that explains why, for the foreseeable future, it will continue to make sense to put your presidential-election money on the Republicans. ❏



THE TRADITIONS OF MEN

Alasdair MacIntyre and the Rationality of Traditions

Alasdair MacIntyre's latest book, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, has at least two different but related aims. One is to illuminate contemporary social and political confusion in terms of an account of what went wrong in the Enlightenment and to indicate what rationality must look like now that we have recognized what went wrong. The other is to argue that the Thomist tradition emerges as the strongest contender for our allegiance now that Enlightenment liberalism has failed.

MacIntyre's account of what went wrong in the Enlightenment is likely to be the more interesting part of the book, especially for any who think they still have some cause to rejoice in the Enlightenment. The account is interesting not only because it provides much food for thought, but also because it ends up, despite MacIntyre's intentions, vindicating at least part of the Enlightenment tradition of liberalism.

In this essay I will sketch MacIntyre's crucial notion of the "rationality of traditions." Then I will examine how he puts this notion to work in the criticism of Enlightenment liberalism. I hope to show that MacIntyre's own criticism of the Enlightenment requires the use of resources drawn from the Enlightenment as well as from his notion of the rationality of traditions. What is more, the Enlightenment resources he needs are ones he has been trying explicitly to reject.

This essay is not a regular review, and it will omit many important things that could be mentioned about MacIntyre's book. I should therefore record

that I have found the book to be a very rewarding read, despite its sometimes convoluted syntax. Here is a brief map to a number of topics in the book that will not receive much attention in what follows. First, there is much thought-provoking intellectual and social historical material. Chapters II-VIII provide an interesting interpretation of the development of Greek thought from Homer through Aristotle. MacIntyre helpfully draws on recent scholarship that shows much more continuity between Plato and Aristotle than is often acknowledged. Chapters IX-XI sketch the coming together of Greek philosophy with biblical faith, first in Augustine and then in Thomas Aquinas. Chapters XII-XVI approach the origins of Enlightenment liberalism through an attempt to put Hume in the context of Scottish social, political, and philosophical life. Chapter XVII, "Liberalism Transformed into a Tradition," includes some of MacIntyre's sharpest criticisms of the Enlightenment. The concluding Chapters, XVIII and XX, set out MacIntyre's theory of the "rationality of traditions," and these will receive primary attention in this essay. Chapter XIX contains his discussion of problems with traditions and translations.

A few smaller sections are important to highlight: pp. 290ff. provide some interesting comments on Hume and the "first-person point of view" that comes in with the "way of ideas." It is worth noting the discussion of theories of truth on pp. 356ff. as well as earlier adumbrations of MacIntyre's account in the historical narratives (cf. pp. 71ff., 144, and 167ff.) Sharp criticisms of modern universities and courses of study are to be found on pp. 385ff. and 399f.

I

It is no news today that many of the promises of the Enlightenment have failed of fulfillment. MacIntyre brings to the fore most of the criticisms of

Next month, James V. Bachman will join the Valparaiso University Department of Philosophy as the first occupant of the John R. Eckrich Chair in Religion and the Healing Arts. His previous essay in The Cresset, "Of Pluralism, Truth, and Abortion," appeared in March, 1987.

the Enlightenment now current. In his first chapter he characterizes the main problem with the Enlightenment this way:

the legacy of the Enlightenment has been the provision of an ideal of rational justification which it has proved impossible to attain. And hence in key part derives the inability within our culture to unite conviction and rational justification. . . . Conviction effectively has acquired a life of its own, independent of rational enquiry. (6)

MacIntyre charts the various ways in which the heirs of the Enlightenment have responded to this inability to unite conviction and rational justification. Some have resorted to "academic philosophy," but contemporary philosophy, whether analytic or continental, "turns out by and large to provide means for a more accurate and informed definition of disagreement rather than for progress toward its resolution." (3) Another option is for an individual to participate "in the life of one of those groups whose thought and action are informed by some distinctive profession of settled conviction with regard to justice and to practical rationality." (4) Those who resort to this option may be called "fideists." There are both religious and secular fideists, but in neither case can they escape "the charge of a certain arbitrariness in their commitments." (4) MacIntyre has some fun with this.

To the readership of the *New York Times*, or at least to that part of it which shares the presuppositions of those who write that parish magazine of affluent and self-congratulatory liberal enlightenment, the congregations of evangelical fundamentalism appear unfashionably unenlightened. But to the members of those congregations that readership appears to be just as much a community of prerational faith as they themselves are but one whose members, unlike themselves, fail to recognize themselves for what they are, and hence are in no position to level charges of irrationality at them or any one else. (5)

There is a darker side, however, to life in the legacy of the Enlightenment.

Many a modern person "finds him or herself an alien to every tradition of enquiry which he or she encounters and who does so because he or she brings to the encounter with such tradition standards of rational justification which the beliefs of no tradition could satisfy." (395) This alienation results in many moderns living

betwixt and between, accepting usually unquestioningly the assumptions of the dominant liberal individualist forms of public life, but drawing in different areas of their lives upon a variety of tradition-generated resources of thought and action, transmitted from a vari-

ety of familial, religious, educational, and other social and cultural sources. This type of self, which has too many half-convictions and too few settled coherent convictions, too many partly formulated alternatives and too few opportunities to evaluate them systematically, brings to its encounters with the claims of rival traditions a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness except on the rarest of occasions. (397)

Escape from this fundamental incoherence requires finding a way to overcome our alienation from traditions of enquiry, but the Enlightenment has blinded us to the rationality of tradition-based enquiry. Recovery of such a conception of rational enquiry will not be easy. It will in fact require an experience "amounting to a conversion." (396) The reader may not end up converting, but at least the gospel can be preached. Here then is a brief account of the "rationality of traditions" that is to cure our modern, Enlightenment ills. (Some may find it useful to compare MacIntyre's theory to Thomas Kuhn's arguments in the *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), but I will not be working from that comparison here.)

First, a definition of "tradition" is in order:

A tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted. (12)

Chapter XVIII, "The Rationality of Traditions," is the chapter to which we must now turn. The first point to note is that traditions of rational enquiry are inextricably "part of the elaboration of a mode of social and moral life of which the intellectual enquiry itself was an integral part." (349) What this means is that

there is no other way to engage in the formulation, elaboration, rational justification, and criticism of accounts of practical rationality and justice except from within some one particular tradition in conversation, cooperation, and conflict with those who inhabit the same tradition. There is no standing ground, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or other. (350)

On this view any community which embodies a genuine tradition must inevitably be practicing what it preaches. There will not otherwise be a tradition,

nor will the community in any other way be in a position rationally to evaluate its own (or any other) doctrine, practice, and discourse. Indeed, even Enlightenment liberalism inevitably embodies its form of rationality in a particular mode of moral, social, and political life.

MacIntyre thinks that if you are a well-indoctrinated liberal you will most likely at this point argue as follows:

If the only available standards of rationality are those made available by and within traditions, then no issue between contending traditions is rationally decidable. . . . There can be no rationality as such. (352)

MacIntyre says that from this Enlightenment vantage point the options will seem to be either to attempt to resurrect the failed Enlightenment criticism of traditions or to turn to relativism or perspectivism. Relativism claims that every set of standards, every tradition, "has as much and as little claim to our allegiance as any other." Perspectivism claims that all traditions should be understood to be "providing very different, complementary perspectives for envisaging the realities about which they speak to us." (352) The protagonists of relativism and perspectivism "claim that if the Enlightenment conceptions of truth and rationality cannot be sustained, theirs is the only possible alternative." (353)

MacIntyre believes that relativists and perspectivists are heirs of the Enlightenment, and that once Enlightenment errors are exposed so also will be those of relativism and perspectivism. The way to expose all the errors is to expound the rationality of traditions.

MacIntyre emphatically disagrees. He thinks these options to be the "inverted mirror image" of the Enlightenment. Far from being enemies of the Enlightenment, these misguided folks are simply its heirs. Once the errors of the Enlightenment are exposed, so also will be the errors of relativism and perspectivism. The way to expose all the errors is to expound the rationality of traditions.

MacIntyre argues that the "rationality of a tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive enquiry is in key and essential part a matter of the kind of progress which it makes through a number of well-defined types of stage." (354) There are three types

of stage: "a first in which the relevant beliefs, texts, and authorities have not yet been put in question; a second in which inadequacies of various types have been identified, but not yet remedied; and a third in which response to those inadequacies has resulted in a set of reformulations, reevaluations, and new formulations and evaluations, designed to remedy inadequacies and overcome limitations." (355)

This three-stage process enables us to understand the nature of "truth." MacIntyre offers a very thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion of theories of truth:

The test for truth in the present, therefore, is always to summon up as many questions and as many objections of the greatest strength possible; what can be justifiably claimed as true is what has sufficiently withstood such dialectical questioning and framing of objections. In what does such sufficiency consist? That too is a question to which answers have to be produced and to which rival and competing answers will compete rationally, just insofar as they are tested dialectically, in order to discover which is the best answer to be proposed so far. (358)

It is in stages two and three of a tradition's development that such tests for truth are elaborated. It should be noted that MacIntyre's account of a tradition's development permits and indeed seems to predict that stages two and three will be repeated over and over throughout a rational tradition's history.

In this light it appears that genuinely *rational* traditions of enquiry will develop some "common characteristic, if not universal, patterns" over time.

Standard forms of argument will be developed, and requirements for successful dialectical questioning established. . . . The identification of incoherence within established belief will always provide a reason for enquiring further, but not in itself a conclusive reason for rejecting established belief, until something more adequate because less incoherent has been discovered. At every stage beliefs and judgments will be justified by reference to the beliefs and judgments of the previous stage, and insofar as a tradition has constituted itself as a successful form of enquiry, the claims to truth made within that tradition will always be in some specifiable way less vulnerable to dialectical questioning and objection than were their predecessors. (359)

MacIntyre briefly discusses how this conception of the rationality of traditions is at odds with both Cartesianism and Hegelianism. Contra Descartes, first principles are justified only because they have "vindicated themselves as superior to their historical predecessors. Hence such first principles are not self-sufficient, self-justifying epistemological first

principles.” (360) Contra Hegel, “the Absolute Knowledge of the Hegelian system is from this tradition-constituted standpoint a chimaera. No one at any stage can ever rule out the future possibility of their present beliefs and judgments being shown to be inadequate in a variety of ways.” (361)

In MacIntyre’s scheme, it is the possibility of a genuine failure of a tradition that is to give non-relativist and non-perspectivist meaning to the claim that the “rationality of traditions” gives us a way out of the crisis brought on by the Enlightenment.

MacIntyre argues that the answer to relativism and to perspectivism “has to begin from considering . . . that traditions attain or fail to attain intellectual maturity. At any point it may happen to any tradition-constituted enquiry that by its own standards of progress it ceases to make progress.” (360f.) When this happens the tradition is said to be in an “epistemological crisis.” MacIntyre’s account of the rationality of traditions says, in effect, that unless the tradition can solve its crisis in an appropriate way, then the tradition fails and it is no longer rational to work within it. It is this possibility of the genuine failure of a tradition that is to give non-relativist and non-perspectivist meaning to the claim that the “rationality of traditions” gives us a way out of the crisis brought on by the Enlightenment.

The solution to a genuine epistemological crisis requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new type or types of theory which meet three highly exacting requirements. First, this in some ways radically new and conceptually enriched scheme, if it is to put an end to epistemological crisis, must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way. Second, it must also provide an explanation of just what it was which rendered the tradition, before it had acquired these new resources, sterile or incoherent or both. And third, these first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to this point. (362)

This account is said to defeat the relativist because the relativist is committed to saying that each tradition will *always* be able to vindicate its own

truths. A tradition which fails to meet the “three exacting requirements” will have failed to do what the relativist claims it can always do. Also, in actual fact, adherents of a failed tradition tend rather quickly to move on into some alien tradition on a rational basis. That is to say, they look for an alien tradition that can help them understand and solve their problems. In this sense it is untrue “that traditions, understood as each possessing its own account of and practicers of rational justification, therefore cannot defeat or be defeated by other traditions. It is in respect of their adequacy or inadequacy in their responses to epistemological crises that traditions are vindicated or fail to be vindicated.” (366) Furthermore, the relativist also seems unable to account for the fact that some traditions simply collapse and the problems generated within them find no solution anywhere.

The perspectivist challenge fails because it too “is committed to maintaining that no claim to truth made in the name of any one competing tradition could defeat the claims to truth made in the name of its rivals.” (367) The perspectivist has underestimated “how integral the conception of truth is to tradition-constituted forms of enquiry.” (367)

This, in essentials, is MacIntyre’s account of the rationality of traditions. There are a couple features of it that MacIntyre does not specifically highlight in chapter XVIII, but which seem to be crucial not only in chapter XVIII’s account, but also in the way the account is to criticize the Enlightenment tradition. A first feature worth noting is that MacIntyre sometimes seems to imply that a given individual cannot participate simultaneously in two traditions that are antagonistic to each other. Life and thought within a vital tradition appear to be so all-encompassing as to make it impossible for a person to move within more than one circle. There is no other way to be rational “except from within some *one* particular tradition in conversation, cooperation, and conflict with those who inhabit *the same tradition*.” (350; emphasis mine) Whenever the possibility of moving rationally among traditions is mentioned by MacIntyre, it is usually criticized as a notion that only a benighted Enlightenment liberal could entertain. On the other hand, a central hero in the book, Thomas Aquinas, is said to have successfully synthesized what had been two previously alien and antagonistic traditions—Augustinian Christianity and Aristotelianism. More must be said about this problem as it relates to MacIntyre’s project of criticizing and transcending the Enlightenment.

Related to this first feature of his account of the rationality of traditions is a second: the implication

that the rationality of a tradition can only ultimately be assessed from within. An alien tradition will, of course, have plenty of resources within itself for arguing that a conflicting tradition embodies falsehoods. But in the way MacIntyre has set things up, only those *within* a tradition can legitimately tell whether it is in a fatal epistemological crisis. It is only "by its own standards of progress" that a tradition can significantly recognize that it is failing to make progress. (361) And only those *within* can tell whether a new development in the tradition meets the three requirements MacIntyre sets for the solution of a crisis.

In noting these two features of the theory I am not suggesting that under their terms a tradition will be able perpetually to go on fooling itself and others about its crisis. The scheme does seem to show a way in which a tradition may eventually fail in its pursuit of truth. The point I wish to note is that, on MacIntyre's account, no opposing tradition ever defeats another tradition. Instead, according to MacIntyre's scheme, a tradition fails only by defeating itself through failure to solve its epistemological crisis. Other traditions win only in the sense that they remain on the field. To be sure, in order to claim the allegiance of those fleeing the failed tradition, it is the case that the other traditions will need to be able on their own terms to explain and solve or dissolve the problems which destroyed the failed tradition. But even if the other traditions cannot solve the problems to the satisfaction of the orphaned community, they can nevertheless remain in the field so long as they are able, *within themselves and on their own terms*, to avoid a fatal epistemological crisis.

II

These two features of MacIntyre's account of the rationality of traditions are essential to his criticism of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment went wrong, he says, by providing "an ideal of rational justification which it has proved impossible to attain." (6) The specific error in this ideal was that of asserting there could be "principles of shared rationality" across the lines of traditions. (355) The Enlightenment has failed to provide such principles, and "this provides the strongest reason that we can actually have for assertion that there is no such neutral grounds, that there is no place for appeals to a practical-rationality-as-such or a justice-as-such to which all rational persons would by their very rationality be compelled to give their allegiance." (346) Again, "there is no set of independent stan-

dards of rational justification by appeal to which the issue between contending traditions can be decided." (351) So, one must be thoroughly initiated into some *one* tradition of rationality, and only *from within* a tradition can one truly discover either that it has failed or that it is continuing to make progress.

I noted at the beginning that MacIntyre has two aims in this book. One is to show that the Enlightenment tradition has failed, and the other is to argue that the Thomist tradition is a likely contender for our allegiance. His own theory of the rationality of traditions puts him in a significant difficulty over how he should pursue his aims.

Take first his desire to show that the Enlightenment tradition has failed. He can, of course, use Thomist principles of rationality to show that Enlightenment principles are wrong. In fact, the account of the rationality of traditions that he has given is rooted in the Thomist tradition. MacIntyre thinks it is plain that tradition-based rationality is not to be found in the Enlightenment tradition. But by MacIntyre's own Thomist account, no theory which is alien to the Enlightenment can provide rational grounds for the heirs of the Enlightenment to think that their tradition has failed. On MacIntyre's own theory, a genuinely rational demonstration that the Enlightenment tradition has failed requires that the thoroughly committed adherents of the tradition themselves acknowledge that they are in an epistemological crisis for which the tradition has no solutions. But this would seem to require that as *rational* critic of the Enlightenment, MacIntyre should be not an adherent of the Thomist tradition but rather of the Enlightenment tradition.

There is perhaps a way out of this dilemma. MacIntyre could argue that he began as a loyal adherent of the Enlightenment. He might refer to work he did in the 1960s. In an essay, "Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing," he offered a fine Enlightenment criticism of Christianity. (1964, 76ff.) He also claimed in good Enlightenment fashion that "beliefs and concepts are not merely to be evaluated by the criteria implicit in the practice of those who hold and use them." (1964, 67) In criticizing Peter Winch's *The Idea of a Social Science*, MacIntyre faulted Winch for failing to see that we are able "to invoke criteria which can be understood independently of any particular way of life." (1967, 129)

So MacIntyre might claim that he is a former card-carrying member of the Enlightenment tradition. Then he could say that he has witnessed the collapse of this tradition, as required, from within.

Thus, he can rationally aver that the Enlightenment tradition has collapsed under an epistemological crisis for which it has no solution. This done, he can picture us all as rationally required to find something else.

Enter only now his allegiance to Thomism. Thomism's explanations of the failure of the Enlightenment are exactly what a new tradition is supposed to supply to refugees from a failed tradition. His Thomist theory of the rationality of traditions now provides an explanation how (through learning a "second first language"—Chapter XIX) we are able to become adherents of a new tradition. He himself has converted to Aristotelianism and Augustinian Christianity as understood through Thomism, and now it is out of that tradition that he seeks to explain the failures of the Enlightenment and to show the resources Thomism has for handling the problems the Enlightenment could not handle.

In some respects, I suspect this is what MacIntyre wanted to think he was doing. It is only on the penultimate pages of this book that he confesses his allegiance to Thomism. Only there does he write that "the point in the overall argument has been reached—it may indeed have been reached somewhat earlier—at which it is no longer possible to speak except out of one particular tradition in a way which will involve conflict with rival traditions." (401)

But, by his own account of rationality, this will not do. It will not do because what we have is simply one philosopher's narrative of his own intellectual, moral, spiritual, and political pilgrimage. The rationality of traditions, however, will not accept first-person accounts of the truth. (cf. 270 & 290ff.) What is needed is that somehow the whole social, intellectual, and political practice of the Enlightenment tradition should grind to a halt in its crisis. The heirs of the Enlightenment need all together to see the failure of the tradition and its inability to develop. There certainly are many post-Enlightenment moderns who currently despair over the future of the Enlightenment tradition. But, by MacIntyre's own account, Enlightenment liberalism is indeed a tradition. Furthermore, many of its adherents have strategies for coping with its crisis. Relativism is one strategy, and MacIntyre himself argues that, from the perspective of the Enlightenment tradition, relativism and perspectivism have a strong claim to be developing the tradition. (It would require another essay for me to argue that there are much stronger contenders in the tradition than relativism and perspectivism.) In other words,

he himself acknowledges that many within the tradition are not ready to make the pilgrimage he himself has made.

Perhaps, then, he is predicting that eventually history will show that the Enlightenment tradition has reached its dead end, and he is inviting the more perceptive among us to join him in elaborating a different, more vital tradition. But it is precisely at this point that MacIntyre falls right back into the crucial problem with which he says the Enlightenment confronts us. The problem is, how can I rationally choose among competing traditions? MacIntyre has argued that in the long view of history we can sometimes see some traditions collapsing while others make progress. But he knows as well as we do that usually we must make choices before the results of history are in.

What advice does his theory of the rationality of traditions give us for our actual situation? It tells us not to look for standards of rationality outside of a given tradition. No rationality outside the tradition is MacIntyre's counterpart to *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. His theory seems to advise us vigorously to participate in our own native tradition so long as it has hope of making progress. But he provides few *internal* means for urging us that it is currently rational to abandon the Enlightenment, let alone to turn to Thomism.

MacIntyre's final chapter, "Contested Justices, Contested Rationalities," more or less acknowledges that after all, as the Enlightenment tradition has been wont to claim, choice of a tradition is actually a prerational decision. In modern life persons are confronted by the claims of many different traditions. "How is it rational to respond to them? The initial answer is: that will depend upon who you are and how you understand yourself." (393) MacIntyre observes that some people are already, prior to a rational decision, participating in a way of life that embodies a particular non-Enlightenment tradition of rationality. In the opening chapter he seemed to dismiss them as fideists; here he invites them to see themselves more fully in the light of their own tradition. Such persons should encounter more detailed expositions of their own tradition as "an occasion for self-recognition and self-knowledge."

What rationality then requires of such a person is that he or she confirm or disconfirm over time this initial view of his or her relationship to this particular tradition of enquiry by engaging, to whatever degree is appropriate, both in the ongoing arguments within that tradition and in the argumentative debates and conflicts of that tradition of enquiry with one or more of its rivals. (394)

In other words, the rational thing for this person to do will be to remain within the tradition that has been his or her main way of life up to this point. Presumably it only becomes time to leave the tradition if and when the tradition collapses under an epistemological crisis. But on whose principles shall our person judge that the tradition has collapsed? Until the final death of the tradition, different people within the tradition will make different judgments about when to leave. Do I have resources within myself for judging when to leave? That sounds too much like the Enlightenment. But must I wait until all the proponents of my tradition acknowledge defeat? Will this be rational?

But on whose principles shall I judge that my tradition has collapsed? Do I have resources within myself for making that judgment? That sounds too much like the Enlightenment. But must I wait to leave a tradition until all its other proponents acknowledge defeat? Will that be rational?

The problems become even more interesting when MacIntyre envisions the poor modern soul that is living in the Enlightenment error of clinging to "standards of rational justification which the beliefs of no tradition could satisfy." (395) It is claimed that such persons "cannot understand the action of entering into any scheme of belief except as an act of arbitrary will, arbitrary, that is, in that it must lack sufficient supporting reasons." (396) What now will be the rational thing for such persons to do? The Enlightenment tradition has, in fact, developed several competing answers within itself for coping with this situation, including arguments that decisions do not necessarily have to lack sufficient supporting reasons. MacIntyre likes none of these answers and seems to believe that a true adherent of the Enlightenment tradition must confess that it has failed. MacIntyre's own account of what is rational follows readily enough from his Thomistic account of the rationality of traditions. Those poor modern souls, reading the *New York Times* and dithering on the edges of many traditions, must "become able not only to recognize themselves as imprisoned by a set of beliefs which lack justification in precisely the same way and to the same extent as do the positions which they re-

ject but also to understand themselves as hitherto deprived of what tradition affords, as persons in part constituted as what they are up to this point by an absence, but what is from the standpoint of traditions [i.e. Thomism] an impoverishment." (396)

But this ability, by MacIntyre's own account, cannot be developed in some rational way. Instead there is need for a change in the person "amounting to a conversion [echoes of Thomas Kuhn], since a condition of this alienated type of self even finding a language-in-use, which would enable it to enter into dialogue with some tradition of enquiry, is that it becomes something other than it now is, a [new] self able to acknowledge by the way it expresses itself in language standards of rational enquiry as something other than expressions of will and preference." (397)

Note carefully that no rational principle is available whatsoever to convince these persons of their need for conversion. MacIntyre really has nothing more to say to those who remain unconverted. He can pity them for living in what, from his perspective, is "a fundamental incoherence which is too disturbing to be admitted to self-conscious awareness." (397) From his Thomist perspective he can rail against the "self-defined success" that heirs of the Enlightenment think they achieve on their own principles. He can shudder at and show disdain for their way of life:

What Durkheim did not foresee was a time when the same condition of *anomie* would be assigned the status of an achievement by and a reward for a self, which had, by separating itself from the social relationships of traditions, succeeded, so it believed, in emancipating itself. This self-defined success becomes in different versions the freedom from bad faith of the Sartrean individual who rejects determinate social roles, the homelessness of Deleuze's nomadic thinker, and the presupposition of Derrida's choice between remaining "within," although a stranger to, the already constructed social and intellectual edifice, but only in order to deconstruct it from within, or brutally placing oneself outside in a condition of rupture and discontinuity. What Durkheim saw as social pathology is now presented wearing the masks of philosophical pretension. (368ff.)

At this point, however, the rationality of traditions is no longer in place. By MacIntyre's own account the Enlightenment has not been defeated precisely because, however distasteful it may be to a Thomist, the liberal tradition has resources for defining in its own terms successful development of the tradition. In strict logic, since MacIntyre believes the typical modern to be above all an inhabitant of this still-developing tradition, his rational advice to such a person must be to continue to de-

velop that tradition in which his way of life moves. In actual fact, however, MacIntyre is convinced that Thomism has exposed the fatal weakness of the Enlightenment, not simply relative to the Thomistic way of life, but somehow more absolutely. Otherwise, why would he, when trying to show us how to be rational, do that which his strict theory rejects, i.e., invite us to judge our own tradition not from within but from without?

Speaking as an Augustinian by way of Martin Luther rather than Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, I find that MacIntyre is much too confident that infused grace can make a tradition morally and intellectually righteous in the sight of God.

It is this difficulty in MacIntyre's account of the rationality of traditions that leads me to claim that in actual practice he needs and uses resources taken from the Enlightenment as well as from other traditions. In particular, his account requires amending in the direction of recognizing that persons can and do move back and forth in rational ways among traditions. They *rationaly* assess traditions not simply in terms of avoiding internal collapse but also in terms of a straight-up comparison between two or more traditions in which they are able to become simultaneously and yet significantly involved. I would think that Thomas Aquinas himself is an excellent example of someone doing this.

Development of this line of thought is beyond the scope of this essay, so I conclude with a few summary comments. First, from the perspective of philosophy, I agree with the contemporary philosopher and social critic Ernest Gellner who writes that it seems "fairly obvious that intellectual traditions inspired by the Cartesian-empiricist virtues, aspiring to atomism, to the breaking up of questions, to abstention from intellectual package deals, to the separation of truth from identity, fact, and value, are, by and large, traditions which have not only been markedly more successful in their cognitive endeavours, but have also been associated with social orders more attractive and acceptable than their rivals, judging by the manner most of mankind votes 'with its feet,' by its concrete choices."

Here is an heir of the Enlightenment who has

learned something about the importance of traditions, but who also is unwilling to let a theory like MacIntyre's encase us too narrowly within one systematic way of life and thought. Beware of intellectual, social, and political package deals! The Enlightenment's high standards of rational justification may, after all, serve an important purpose. Interestingly, Gellner's own recommendation of Cartesian-empiricist virtues is based upon an appeal to the intellectual and social practices and successes of the Enlightenment tradition.

Speaking as an Augustinian by way of Luther rather than Aristotle and Thomas, I find that MacIntyre is much too confident that infused grace can make a tradition morally and intellectually righteous before God. The traditions of men are attempting to nullify the Word of God. (Mark 7:13) The details of MacIntyre's Thomistic account of morality and justice leave little room for a Lutheran's "bold sinning" or the notion that we are "simultaneously sinners and saints." In other words, while the Thomist does indeed acknowledge the grace of God, once the grace has been infused, it seems both possible and necessary that the Kingdom of God should be set forward in a divine package deal on earth. This seems to me an unrealistic and dangerous position both for philosophers and for believers. (To his credit MacIntyre does note that, among other things, both Kant and Lutheran theology need to be dealt with somewhere on down the line.) (11)

I say all this realizing fully that I am judging one tradition in the light of the principles of others. In fact, I think MacIntyre has been doing the same, and we should learn from his example rather than his theory. The "rationality of traditions" needs to learn something from the Enlightenment about the ideal and the reality of *rational* argument across the lines of traditions. ■

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A LUTHERAN VIEW OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN THE LIBERAL ARTS—I

Martin Luther on the Calling of the Christian

(Editor's Note: This is the first part of a two part essay.)

Throughout its history the Lutheran Tradition has had a strong emphasis upon education, first of all for the preparation of clergy and then for political leaders and the general population. This emphasis came from Luther's understanding that the Christian is to be actively involved in the world and by so doing exercise his or her Christian vocation as a way of being a co-creator with God in sustaining the creation itself. In later Lutheranism, however, a duality developed between faith and life such that vocation became primarily identified with one's occupation (Lutheran Orthodoxy) or with personal piety (Lutheran Pietism). It is not so much that these interpretations were wrong as that they were incomplete (Kolden, p. 382).

These changes, along with other forces such as the Enlightenment, helped to create the more secular understanding of vocation that we find in this century. This in turn has directly affected liberal arts study because in more recent years there has developed a strong emphasis upon career and job preparation on the part of undergraduate students. While this is understandable it has, because of a separation from its theological roots in the doctrine of vocation, led to a reduction in the significance of liberal arts study and to the unnecessary separation of one's religious convictions from one's life in the workaday world. Indeed it has even led to seeing college study itself as a "holding pattern" away from

the "real world" where people can begin to exercise their opportunities and responsibilities.

The thesis of this essay is that scholarship itself is a spiritual endeavor and therefore an acceptable expression of Christian vocation, thus helping to correct the occupationalism of our time and strengthen the value of liberal arts education. In light of this vocational understanding of scholarship, it will be argued that students are exercising their Christian vocation while studying in an undergraduate liberal arts context, and that this is a valid expression of their vocation apart from whatever particular callings they pursue upon graduation. It is hoped that this brief essay will not only show the value of Christian vocation for understanding liberal arts study, but also affirm that vocation on the part of both faculty and students in undergraduate liberal arts education.

Scholarship is a spiritual endeavor and an expression of Christian vocation. It can help to correct today's occupationalism and strengthen the value of liberal arts education.

Clearly there is much that could be said concerning the understanding of vocation from many different disciplines, and I will make no attempt to be exhaustive in this essay. Rather I will highlight some of the historical and theological issues which I believe help in understanding where we have come from and perhaps where we might head. By focusing upon Luther's understanding of vocation it is not assumed that he has the final word on all matters; certainly some necessary changes must be made between his time and ours. His work forms the basis of this essay because of the historical tradi-

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tion of which Lutheran colleges are a part and the significant contributions that Lutheranism has made to higher education in general.

There are many issues facing undergraduate liberal arts education, and this essay is focusing only on one of them, namely the issue of "occupationalism." In light of this focus, the essay will be divided into three sections: first of all, "Luther on Christian Vocation"; second, "Scholarship as a Spiritual Endeavor"; and finally, "Christian Vocation in the Liberal Arts." It is hoped that a broader consideration of the Christian understanding of vocation can provide a framework not only to confront the dualistic thinking of many of our students but also to place their scholarly work in a more inclusive and edifying context.

I

Before turning to a discussion of Luther's concept of Christian vocation it would be helpful to briefly review the biblical understanding of this concept. In the biblical witness the primary word used to express vocation is the word meaning "to call" (IDB, p. 791), explicitly associated with a call from God. The calling of God always proceeds from God's grace and is an invitation to participate in the blessings of God's creation through that same grace. It is not a call out of the world but into it and, especially in the Old Testament, it is corporate (Kittel, pp. 488, 491).

Indeed, in the Hebraic understanding, the fundamental purpose of human creation is to give glory to God, humanity's creator, and this is principally done in this life. God's purpose in the creation is *shalom*, which is peace incarnated in love through justice, a love providing all that is necessary for life.

Following upon this understanding of God's activity, then, Dorothy Soelle observes that "whatever meaning we find in the concept of creation, in a creator, and in our having been created hinges on love. The concept of creation is rendered empty and meaningless if it is not out of love that God created the world" (p. 16). This creation out of love then elicits a loving response on the part of the creatures created out of love. Thus one can view the calling from God to ultimately be the reciprocation of God's love in the world through human imaging of his love. If we are created in the image of God and God is love and the work of creation is a work of love, then we are called to embody love in our work in the world as well.

One of the direct consequences of love is of course also justice, so that as Soelle reminds us our

works of love in the world must also be works of justice and liberation (Chaps. 2-4). Thus the call of God touches *all* that we do in life, especially our work. This concept of call then places all earthly human endeavor in a theological, or transcendent, context in light of which it derives its ultimate significance. It is precisely the loss of this context that threatens us today, changing an incarnational notion of vocation based upon the call of God into primarily a carnal one based on material satisfaction.

When one turns to the New Testament one finds in the person of Jesus Christ the complete embodiment of this biblical vision of vocation. Jesus was called by God and fulfills the promises of God upon the understanding of which vocation rests. As the book of Genesis, chapter one, relates, the whole creation is voiced forth from the word of God, and St. John (1:1-14) records that this word, this *logos*, is one with God and is God and has entered into human flesh. This is to say that the whole of creation is Christocentric in that as the second person of the Trinity the *logos* was the means for the creation, and this very principle of creation within God

Little Boy Blue

North from Heron, looking for redneck pheasants flushed out of corn stubble, I first glimpse the blue sleeves flapping in the Christmas wind. Turning back, I slowly approach the figure, wishing it a clay mummy. Hair grows on the little knuckles instead. A cloaked child has fallen dead to me. Pathologists tell me the body is bathed in rich mineral salts, has perfect milk teeth and healthy bones. There's no inkling of foul play. His face I remember peacefully sleeping, abandoned by his keepers. Lost on a highway beneath the cold Nebraska stars they wept, gently laid the lad to rest, his hand put over his heart. Since in my dreams, I watch the Christ child naked, crying in straw and the hot vapor of stable beasts. Stumbling outside, as far off I can see, miles of hoary fields where nothing even on a prayer lives through the night.

Edward C. Lynskey

then also though the incarnation enters into the creation which it has made possible.

The Creator becomes one with the creation. The principle impelling both creation and incarnation is the divine love of God so that all existence, then, is a symbiosis, a life together, in love proceeding from the love of creation and reconciled and restored through the incarnation of that love in Jesus Christ. Such was Jesus' calling, and the Christian calling then follows upon this symbiosis. The Christian is called (*klesis*, as Paul uses the term, see Romans 8:30 and I Cor. 7:20) to then trust in this promise of God through faith and live out this faith through loving service to one's neighbor through symbiotic life in the world.

As this understanding of the Christian call developed down through the centuries, particularly with the rise of the monastic movements, it became increasingly identified with specific "religious" callings. One sees this in Augustine's *Confessions*, where to follow one's Christian calling is to seek "Christian perfection" (Gengenbach 1987, pp. 7-8) a pursuit not available to the ordinary person, for one had to leave "worldly" occupations to pursue them. In an excellent article in these pages written shortly before her death, Constance Gengenbach observed that "by the latter Middle Ages the very words *vocatio* and *Ruf* meant the official calling of a candidate to a clerical benefice by those who had power of ecclesiastical appointment. Christian vocation was thus split off from the ordinary life of human beings in the world" (1987, p. 8).

It was this separation of the Christian calling from the world which Martin Luther and the Reformation was radically to change. It may be that Luther's particular contribution in the understanding of the Christian calling was to connect it specifically to one's station or work in life (Kittel, pp. 492-93). In a very real sense the Reformation, by emphasizing the priesthood of all believers and denying any superiority to specifically "religious" vocations, brought about a secularization of the understanding of vocation, and by so doing returned it to its original biblical roots.

One of the primary bases for the understanding of the Christian calling and vocation is the role of hope, the impact of the transcendent future upon present action, and it is this emphasis which Luther explicitly develops in his understanding of the two rules or kingdoms of God.

Luther was a relational thinker. He saw all human life as existing simultaneously in relationship with God and neighbor, so all discussion of human life, including the life of faith, is to be ex-

pressed through a dialectical understanding. It is the simultaneity of these relationships which gives human life its tension but also its ultimate meaning. The relationship before God (*coram Deo*) is one maintained by God's grace alone and trusted in by the Christian through faith. The Christian relates to God, for Luther, though faith alone (*sola fide*). That is not the end of the relationships, however, for the Christian also lives in the worlds of nature and history so that there is a relationship to the world (*coram mundo*) which is maintained in love.

For Luther one relates to God through faith and to one's neighbor through love (Luther, "Lectures on Galatians," perhaps the most comprehensive single presentation of his theology. See Kolden, p. 384.). What this means then is that vocation belongs exclusively to *this* world. We do not, for Luther, exercise our vocation in order to please God or for entrance into the world to come, but rather, following the Old Testament emphasis, vocation is for this life and is done primarily for neighbor (Wingren, pp. 11-12). This is where the two kingdoms understanding enters in.

In the kingdom of the world to come (God's future kingdom and the ground for Christian hope), God rules directly through the Gospel and the law does not function, for it has been fulfilled. The Christian in the world today lives in anticipation of this kingdom but is still in this world indeed living as a justified sinner. This future kingdom overlaps with the world of today precisely in the lives of individual Christians. For Luther, there is nothing that particularly distinguishes Christians from non-Christians in regard to life in the present world. All stand under the command and judgment of the law both in its civil use (the first use) to maintain order in society and in its theological use (the second use) to convict of sin.

It is particularly in relation to the first use of the law that Luther understands the role of Christian vocation in the world of today. The first use of the law is grounded in the order of creation itself, whereby there *is* a creation rather than a chaos. The biblical understanding of this order in creation is that God continues to maintain the creation, even uphold it, in the face of chaos so that creation is understood as ongoing (*creatio continua*) and not an over and done, one-and-for-all occurrence. Drawing upon this understanding, Luther sees the first use of the law as grounding "stations" or "offices" in society in which humans can participate with God in continuing the creation. This is one of the functions of being created in God's image, that humans become co-creators with God in sustaining the crea-

tion itself.

Christian vocation then follows the demands of the law, both natural and civil, in maintaining nature and society. Here is where the Christian's calling to loving service is expressed. Vocation for Luther, as Wingren brings out, is more than just one's occupation—it entails all that one does in the world. Vocation includes personal, communal, and historical relationships as well as occupational. (Wingren, Part I.) Kolden summarizes this understanding concisely when he states:

Vocation belongs to our situation between baptism and the final resurrection—a situation in which there are two kingdoms (earth and heaven, in Luther's terminology), two contending powers (God and the devil), two antagonistic components within the Christian person (the old self and the new self), and when Christians are involved in constant struggle. Vocation is our calling in our situation in life, through which we serve God's creative work by being under the law. (p. 383).

The world of today is not a neutral place, but rather one of competing and conflicting powers in which struggle is a daily experience. It is for this reason that Luther argued against leaving the world for the cloister, for this would be to abdicate one's calling to serve God against the forces of destruction present in the world. Vocation is for the earth and the world of today so that as Gustaf Wingren summarizes, "Human action is a medium for God's love to others." (Wingren, p. 180.)

Luther did not have a dualistic conception of Christian life but rather a dialectical one. It is this dialectical movement which allowed him to see the action of God in the world even when this action was hidden behind the "masks" (*larvae*) of God in creation. This dialectical tension allows the Christian to live *both* in the world of today and the world to come and to immerse him/herself in the life of this world through Christian freedom. Such is the power of faith in life.

It is the tragedy of later Lutheranism that it became uncomfortable with this dialectical tension and collapsed it into a dualism which saw vocation as personal spirituality and left the public sphere to the devil or to secular authority alone (which at times in western history has amounted to the same thing). In Lutheran orthodoxy this dualism led to political quietism which did not see a necessary prophetic voice to be uttered in the area of public policy or social matters. Later pietism, on the other hand, turned inward to a personal understanding of the call which saw it primarily in relationship to God and not to neighbor. H. Richard Niebuhr summarizes this condition:

Luther's answer to the Christ-and-culture question was that of a dynamic, dialectical thinker. Its reproductions by many who called themselves his followers were static and undialectical. They substituted two parallel moralities for his closely related ethics. As faith became a matter of belief rather than a fundamental, trustful orientation of the person in every moment toward God, so the freedom of the Christian man became autonomy in all the spheres of culture. It is a great error to confuse the parallelistic dualism of separated spiritual and temporal life with the interactionism of Luther's gospel of faith in Christ working by love in the world of culture (p. 179).

This "parallelistic dualism" permitted the separation of religious reflection from society and was only intensified by the intellectual developments of the Enlightenment and later natural as well as social scientific thought. Other branches of the Reformation, such as Calvinism, did not suffer the dualistic fate which Lutheranism courted but rather succumbed to an equally dangerous collapse of the separation of the two kingdoms into an implied identification of religious election with success or failure in this world. It was not Lutheran dualism but the opposite stance in Calvinism that was responsible for the final conversion of work as a Christian vocation into work as worldly success (Gengenbach, 1987, p. 10; see also the works of Weber and Tawney).

It is the tragedy of later Lutheranism that it became uncomfortable with Luther's dialectical tension and collapsed it into a dualism which saw vocation as personal spirituality and left the public sphere to the devil or to secular authority alone (which has often amounted to the same thing).

Needless to say neither Luther nor Calvin would have supported the later developments made from their thought, but this history of transformation has brought us to the present day where vocation has become synonymous with occupation and the primary value of occupations is defined in financial terms. It is this condition which is now so perniciously intruding itself into undergraduate liberal arts education, seeing it primarily as glorified technical training to get the "better" jobs and not seeing it as preparation for life itself and ongoing contributions of service to one's neighbor. Scholarship then becomes seen as a technical endeavor rather

than a spiritual activity giving glory to God. One of the tasks of Christian liberal arts study is to retrieve this spiritual understanding, and to that we will turn in the second part of the essay. ❏

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Stars

In a stellar performance of "We three Kings,"
our Sunday School class of seven
sang "star of wonder, star of night."
But for us, all stars were night stars,
wonder-full holes of glory
in an endless black umbrella.

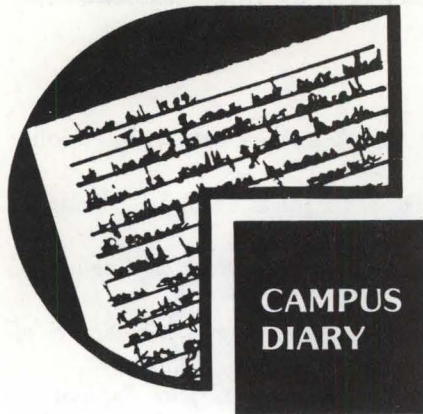
At Boston University, the stars
had shot light years away
and shone by day as well as night.
They were out there by the millions,
our own low-voltage Sun just one of them,
if only one had the faith of a telescope.

In World War II, stars warred
in rank insignias of generals. Stars shone,
too, as out-of-this-world entertainers
visiting the far-flung, ill-starred troops.

At Acme Advertising, the stars
all gleam from heavenly Hollywood
or stud-starred Super-Bowls.
The skies dim ever darker over
the star-struck palaces of our Jerusalems.

I set an ancient silver star atop our tree,
humming "Star of wonder, star of night . . ."

Bernhard Hillila



Homage to a Great Communicator

Richard Lee

Three years ago, during voluntary servitude as Acting Chairman of the University's fledgling Department of Communication, a genial colleague tried to cheer me up. "At least your job of recruiting students is a cinch. Your best recruiter is Ronald Reagan. No President in living memory could so clearly sell students on a career in communication—and the success that comes from becoming a great communicator."

Our Department of Communication in fact now bulges with eager students—no thanks to me nor, I think, to President Reagan—but my colleague's teasing and tempting consolation comes back to me now for some reflection as a grateful nation prepares to bid Ronald Reagan farewell at the end of his extraordinary presidency.

When President Reagan is praised as "the great communicator" our Communication students probably should see that praise placed exactly where it's due. This sobriquet was given

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Reagan by his fellow communicators in the media, not by academia, and the two estates often disagree upon what makes good, much less great communication. The media tend to focus on the packaging of the message and its marketability, and the academy tends to focus on the consistency and truthfulness of the message and its adequacy to the problems it addresses.

For example, a communication student probably should learn that President Reagan, for all his considerable gifts as a communicator, was not a particularly accomplished rhetorician. In the academy rhetoric is not salesmanship, it is moral leadership. It is the art of persuading people toward the good or the better in matters requiring difficult choices. It takes little rhetorical skill to persuade most Americans to pump-prime the economy with tax cuts, military spend-ups, and massive deficits. In his fiscal rhetoric, Reagan never advocated a painful course of action for the long-term good of the country, and too often he greatly communicated promises of a painless prosperity which were too good to be true.

This rhetorical failure is measured in part by the tripled national debt, the decline of the country from the world's largest creditor to the largest debtor, and the trillion dollars of foreign capital flooding the country to buy up our assets and buoy up our economy. The Reagan legacy of debt "up to our great-grandchildren's ears" should surely force some hard choices upon the next President (and Congress), who will need genuine rhetorical gifts to commend sacrifice to the American people.

If his mettle as a rhetorician would not earn Reagan the title of "the great communicator,"

neither probably would his skills as a debater, teacher, or preacher. His skills as a debater suffered from too much forgetfulness of the facts (and sometimes the arguments) at issue in the few occasions in which he debated, and his grasp of some issues was rather limited by his ideology. The give and take of debate—or even a news conference—too often left Reagan waffling or reduced to zingers, one-liners, or endearing but unilluminating anecdotes.

When he was unopposed by an adversary, however, and with a script in hand, Reagan possessed truly remarkable skills as a controversialist and provocateur, especially on radio and TV. While the disarray and decline of the Democratic Party was obviously to his advantage, one cannot gainsay his own impressive achievement in redefining the national debate of this country. The completion of the conservative hegemony in American public discourse is Reagan's signal achievement.

The title, "Great Communicator," was given Reagan by his fellow communicators in the media.

As the nation's teacher Reagan gets half marks, partly because he held too few press conferences where he could be questioned and partly because he was too disengaged from his own administration to transmit much reliable information about what it was doing. One felt he was too often surprised by what was in fact happening in his own administration and too inclined to defend the indefensible when it was

known. Reagan was much better as the nation's preacher and genuinely seemed to enjoy the bully pulpit. If his creed was a rather narrow individualism and not the whole vision of America, he nevertheless revitalized that part of our public faith which believes in personal responsibility, private enterprise, the work ethic, technological progress, and a "peace-keeping" military presence in the world. Gradually, however, his moral admonitions became risible in the light of the corruption and contempt for the law in his own administration, and after Iranamok he was left largely preaching to the choir. His gospel of getting the government off our backs came to mean a glaring lack of law enforcement within the government itself.

Reagan's achievement is that he was able to be a grandfatherly Eisenhower for those of us longing for Fifties' assurances.

Where, I suspect, the Communication student should most clearly see the President earning his title as "the great communicator" would be in a kind of genius no Department of Communication can teach. That genius was Reagan's special kind of national story telling in which unpleasant present realities are narrated into bearability and a rosy vision of the future of the country releases its citizens' energies for genuine achievements. This symbolic triumphalism was the narrative subtext in all his speaking, and his best communication in word, image, and personal example was doubtless the regeneration of the American Dream itself. Not since F.D.R. has

there been such a triumph of personality in the presidency and such persuasive narration of the American Dream for a majority of American citizens.

"Mankind," said T. S. Eliot, "cannot bear too much reality." There is nothing necessarily perverse in the President redeeming reality with a story. The bald, unmediated reality for the United States in recent years has been a relative decline in national power. Emerging from World War II as the world's preeminent economic and military giant and in apparent control of world affairs, America has more recently experienced a slow erosion of that power—or a more competitive world in which to exercise that power. The two-income family now required to enjoy the same standard of living one income supported in the 50s and 60s is writ large in the nation as a whole which must *double* its efforts to remain *even* in a more competitive world economy.

This recent decline in American power is marginal, but it is real. (Fortunately, in the same period, the power of the Soviet bloc declined more seriously into political fragmentation and economic exhaustion.) Reagan's steady narration of an America ever renewing itself during this difficult period undoubtedly helped many Americans get through a troubled time and may have bought some time for us to work on our competitive problems.

Reagan's achievement as "the great communicator" is that he was able to be a grandfatherly Eisenhower for those of us longing for the assurances of the 50s and a big brotherly mentor for entrepreneuring yuppies seeking the economic adventures of the 80s. Both old and young could find a place for themselves in the

triumphant national story told by a President who himself seemed both old and young, if not immortal, at once.

What the American people heard in the Reagan narration of the nation's story was hope in the midst of decline.

It is true that some polls show astonishingly little commitment to many of Reagan's actual policies, but my own view is that Reaganism has more staying power, especially in foreign affairs, than the polls suggest. Certainly his personal consolation can be that he retains the love of the majority of the electorate as he leaves office—no mean achievement in the modern American presidency. Indeed, it seems clear that the lingering affection for Reagan and Reaganism played no small part in bringing a quite ordinary Presidential candidate and an undistinguished Vice-Presidential candidate of his party to electoral victory.

What the American people heard in the Reagan narration of the nation's story was hope in the midst of decline, action against drift, cheer through adversity, and an honest effort by an essentially decent President—who if he did not always do well meant well. A Communication student probably should learn that the solutions to our national problems will require more than a Reaganesque capacity for telling the American people their story in ways in which they can hope for the future. The student, however, should also learn that the solutions will require nothing less.





Private Parts

John Steven Paul

What a story! Shocking. Lurid. Incredible. Laughable.

The kind of story made for, and made up for, the theatre. But there it is in the *New York Times* on May 11, 1986. "A former French diplomat and a Chinese opera singer have been sentenced to six years in jail for spying for China after a two-day trial that traced the story of clandestine love and mistaken sexual identity. . . . Mr. Bouriscot was accused of passing information to China after he fell in love with Mr. Shi, whom he believed for twenty years to be a woman."

What, David Henry Hwang must have asked, could have underlay Monsieur Bouriscot's prodigious mistake? In his play *M. Butterfly*, the Chinese-American playwright proposes that the root of M. Bouriscot's problem (Bouriscot is here transformed into Rene Gallimard) was his obsession with Giacomo Puccini's popular operatic masterpiece, *Madama Butterfly*. *M. Butterfly* opened in New York in February and, after garnering several prestigious awards including the An-

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toinette Perry Award for best play, it is still running on Broadway.

M. Butterfly is a wonderfully theatrical and deeply disturbing play about human relations of several kinds, from intimate to international. It is a play about power and violation; about deception, rape, and, perhaps most disturbingly, about the power of art.

What could be *less* disturbing than listening to a performance of *Madama Butterfly*? Of course, Puccini has his detractors. But for amateur aficionados, those of us who are undyingly grateful to Texaco for sponsoring the Metropolitan Opera on the radio, *Butterfly* is hard to beat: a thrilling tenor-baritone duet in the first act, an ecstatic soprano aria in the second, and a tragic suicidal death in the third. Listening to David Belasco's tragic play set to Puccini's most emotionally compelling music is simply one of the joys of life—*especially* when it's sung in Italian. Yes, many of us in the audience share a common pleasure with wretched Rene Gallimard, sitting in his Parisian prison cell.

For those not familiar with *Butterfly*, Gallimard tells it—no, acts it out—with musical illustration played on the little tape recorder that his jailers have allowed him to have. Now we are confronted with the story *in English*, or should we say "American."

In *Madama Butterfly*, the Yankee lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton comes to Nagasaki, "having wandered the earth casting anchor where and when it suits him, until he runs into a storm and then life isn't worth living unless he can lavish himself with the best of the pleasures and loves of the country in which he happens to find himself." Putting his philosophy into action, Pin-

kerton has secured both a beautiful house and wife, Cho-Cho-San, who is the epitome of delicate and mysterious femininity. She is known as "Madame Butterfly."

Pinkerton is pleased with both his acquisitions, but he has no intention of lighting for longer than it pleases him to do so. He tells the American consul, Sharpless, that this arrangement will serve his purpose until he officially marries a woman in the United States. Shortly after the ceremony, Pinkerton leaves Japan and Cho-Cho-San, who pines for him. Her faithful servant Suzuki tries to tell her mistress that her husband will never return, but she will hear none of it. She has renounced her native religious traditions in deference to Pinkerton's Christianity, borne him a child, turned down a marriage proposal from one of her distinguished countrymen, and pondered suicide should her American husband never return.

***M. Butterfly* is a play about power and violation; about deception, rape, and, perhaps most strikingly, about the power of art.**

Pinkerton does return and he is indeed married, but to an American woman named Kate. Cho-Cho-San offers her son to Kate, on the condition that Pinkerton himself come to take him. By the time Pinkerton arrives, *Butterfly* is in the throes of death from a self-inflicted knife wound. The Yankee can only cry "Butterfly."

The tale of *Madama Butterfly*, beautifully tragic at a distance, is rather revolting up close. And in Gallimard's vernacular rendition

the story is disgusting.

Gallimard now acts out the role of Pinkerton as a world-traveling voluptuary, a coarse and contemptible Don Juan in a military uniform, who uses his position to satiate his sexual appetite. Right now he wants an "oriental girl. They want to be treated bad! And when I leave, she'll know what its like to have been loved by a real man."

This is old Gallimard's story told in retrospect from his prison cell, where he wallows in self-loathing and self-pity. But as a diffident, awkward, and sexually frustrated young man, Gallimard treasured Puccini's opera. To him it was a fantasy of a confident man-of-the-world, easy with women, who sought and secured the love of a perfect woman, a woman whose primary objective was to please a man, to respond to his every request.

In 1960, Gallimard was a member of the French diplomatic service stationed in Beijing. He had, he thought, given up his pursuit of the Butterfly fantasy. He married a woman much older than himself and invested his passion in his work. Then, at another of an endless succession of embassy parties, a Chinese opera singer, Song Liling, sings Madame Butterfly's death aria. Gallimard is swept away by the performance. When he manages to speak with the singer, however, she bluntly tells him she detests *Butterfly* as a Western Fantasy of the "submissive Oriental woman and the cruel white man":

"Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage to a young Kennedy. Then when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. Now, I

believe you would consider this girl to be a deranged idiot, correct? But because it's an Oriental who kills herself for a Westener—ah!—you find it beautiful."

Tough and worldly as this butterfly is, Gallimard is infatuated with her. He goes first to see her at the Chinese opera and then to her apartment. Gradually they develop an intensely loving relationship. Song plays out her role of Gallimard's ancient and amorous fantasy.

Gallimard acts out the role of Pinkerton as a world-traveling voluptuary, a coarse and contemptible Don Juan in a military uniform.

But if we had begun to be happy for Gallimard, playwright David Hwang introduces Madame Chin to shove us backward for a view of the larger reality. As Cho-Cho-San was served by Suzuki, Chin is Song Liling's companion. A disciple of Chairman Mao and member of the Communist revolutionary party, Comrade Chin is really running this show, and the actor Song Liling, a superb female impersonator, is her agent. Song pays for his relatively independent lifestyle with information. From Gallimard, he has learned about American troop strength in Southeast Asia. The Party, barks Chin, now wants information about the planned American bombing of Vietnam. As she exits, she pointedly reminds Comrade Song that "there is no homosexuality in China."

Events speed by. Gallimard's fortunes as a diplomat rise and fall. His early predictions about

American military success in Vietnam turn out to be wrong. He has a wild love affair with a Danish student. His marriage sours as he and his wife argue about which of them is infertile. Chairman Mao ages and the Cultural Revolution sweeps across China.

Through it all, Song and Gallimard sustain their love. On the pretext of modesty, Song insists that they make love only in the dark and that she remain clothed throughout. The combination of Song's expertise and Rene's passionate suspension of disbelief is enough to convince him of her femininity. Once, when Gallimard insists that Song strip naked, the wily actor gambles that all the diplomat really wants is submission. Song obediently submits to Rene's wish, but Gallimard is so overcome with feelings of love and guilt that he withdraws his demand. Finally, Song claims to be pregnant with Gallimard's child; he begs to marry Song and claim the child, but she refuses, saying that they would be a burden to him.

Suddenly, Gallimard becomes a liability to the French and he is reassigned to low-level deskwork in Paris. Song Liling is publically humiliated by agents of the Cultural Revolution as a homosexual and an actor, and is assigned to field labor on a communal farm. At the end of a four year "rehabilitation period," Comrade Chin informs Song that he will be sent to Paris, partly to rid China of homosexual pollution and partly to obtain further information from Gallimard. Fifteen years after Song's arrival in China and Gallimard's happy reunion with those he considered his wife and son, the two were arrested for stealing and dispatching classified information.

So, twenty-six years after the

opening scene at an embassy party in Beijing, their opera reached its climax in a courtroom in Paris. Unlike the tragic *Madama Butterfly*, however, *M. Butterfly* is an opera *buffa*, at which Gallimard hears the whole world laughing.

David Henry Hwang, the son of first-generation immigrants to California, is interested in much more than the humiliation of a French diplomat. Using Bouris-cot's pathetic story as a platform and *Madama Butterfly* as a paradigm, the playwright launches a dramatic meditation on the minds and behavior of white Western men as they roam the world, especially the Oriental world. The West comes to the East with rape-mentality: "their mouths say 'no,' but their eyes say yes."

Hwang's central device is his identification of Gallimard with Puccini's Lieutenant Pinkerton, the swaggering American military officer. Hwang's Pinkerton is nothing but a cad. He cares little for the feeling and futures of others, lest care interfere with gratification and pleasure. Pinkerton, in Hwang's interpretation, is not a man of courage or intellect, but a man of bounding libido. He is a man defined, not by his heart or mind, but by his penis. And ultimately it is the male sexual organ that is the central image and issue of *M. Butterfly*.

Even in our jaded society, a serious play about a man's most private part is more than just disturbing; it is, at least initially, shocking. *M. Butterfly* is not a lewd work, nor is David Henry Hwang the first man of the theatre to put the penis at the center of a theatre piece. Classical Greek comedy was derived from fertility rites and phallic celebrations. The exposed, oversized

organ was a standard part of the comic costume in the ancient world. In the Greek theatre, the erect phallus was a symbol of fertility, of life, a bringer of joy, a reason for a party.

Playwright David Henry Hwang, the son of immigrants to California, is interested in much more than the humiliation of a French diplomat.

In *M. Butterfly*, however, the male sexual organ becomes a source of disappointment and an object of ridicule. While Gallimard's passions are aroused by Pinkerton's operatic conquest of Butterfly, his own experience is marked by sexual dysfunction, impotence, and infertility. As a boy he was obsessed with pornographic magazines, but as a young man he couldn't get a date. He entered into a loveless marriage, and then was unable to give his wife a child. While he is in Beijing, Gallimard meets a nineteen-year-old Danish woman studying languages in China. She is a Scandinavian stereotype: big, beautiful, and blond. Her name is Renee. Renee seduces Rene, and in the moments after their first time, Renee delivers a startlingly contemptuous diatribe on male penis anxiety. Ironically, Rene carries on a strenuous liaison with this woman who laughs at his maleness.

In the ultimate deprecation of male potency, Song Liling presents Gallimard with a child that she says is his own. Actually, of course, the baby has been obtained through the machinations of a woman, Madame Chin, and

a homosexual. And, to make the point a bit too clearly, Song insists that "their" baby be called "Song Pee-Pee."

If we are to look for a classical ancestor of *M. Butterfly*, we will not find it in the fertility plays, but in Aristophanes' Athenian comedy *Lysistrata*. Lysistrata, an Athenian woman, exasperated by her soldier-husband's continual absence, decides to end the war. With the help of some female comrades she captures the Acropolis and then calls a summit conference of women from other *poleis*. The women vow to refrain from sexual relations with their husbands until they agree to end the war. When the men realize they can no longer come home on furlough to the sexual embraces of their wives, they give up the fighting. One hilarious scene of agony between a soldier and his wife makes it clear that the men do not end the war because they love their wives, but because their sexual needs are so great that the frustration renders them powerless. Thus, in *Lysistrata*, the penis is not a symbol of veneration but a mark of weakness. There is connubial feast at the end of the play, but the characters celebrate more out of deference to comic convention than as a salute to marital bliss.

Incidentally, *Lysistrata* has long held its place in the canon of classical dramatic literature. The play is full of sexual allusions, references, and repartee—costume bulges, raised spears, etc. Unfortunately, audiences and producers have found its theme so disturbing and its action so indecent that it is rarely produced without a substantial sanitizing of the language and the *mise-en-scene*.

In *M. Butterfly*, as in *Lysistrata*, the penis is the essence and symbol of maleness: a symbol of conquest, dominance, and violence.

The Pinkertons of the world have not brought fertility and life; they have, rather, violated and raped whoever would submit. Yet the men of both *Lysistrata* and *M. Butterfly* are not to be feared but to be laughed at.

The Pinkertons of the world have not brought fertility and life; they have simply assaulted whoever was available.

For John Dexter's production at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre, designer Eiko Ishioka has ringed the stage opening with concentric blood-red circles. A long ramp begins high up on the right side of the stage and gracefully circles downward across the back of the stage. Underneath the ramp are spaces that house scenery and a small orchestra. For most of the play, these spaces are darkened; the supporting structure of the ramp is faced in black. The face of the ramp, actually an inclined plane descending from right to left, takes the shape of a huge phallus piercing the red orifice. The attitude of the phallic shape is not raised in celebration but pointed, laterally, for violation.

As a theatre piece, *M. Butterfly* is wonderfully, disconcertingly fluid. Setting, action, and character are constantly changing in front of our eyes. Walls become transparent, prison cells become embassy halls, characters move in and out of historical contexts, then becomes now, men become women and women men. In the intermission between Acts II and III, B.D. Wong, the actor who plays Song, takes off his extremely elaborate make-up and dons an Armani suit. It is a stunning and complete transforma-

tion of the woman into the man.

As he sits in prison, Rene Gallimard is tortured by these whirling transformations. One horrid fantasy is particularly haunting. It is of Song confronting him as a man and then stripping himself naked in front of Gallimard, forcing Gallimard finally to see him for what he is. When Rene sees that his Butterfly is really and only a man, a man with a penis, he breaks down in anguished laughter.

One more transformation awaits us. Poor Gallimard, laughed out of his role as Pinkerton, has finally come to understand who he really is and has been since his childhood. With the help of two Kabuki-style stagehands, Rene makes himself over and dons the wig and costume of Cho-Cho-San, Madame Butterfly. He begins the death aria and stabs himself at its end.

From a great distance above, Song looks on and whimpers lovingly, "Butterfly."

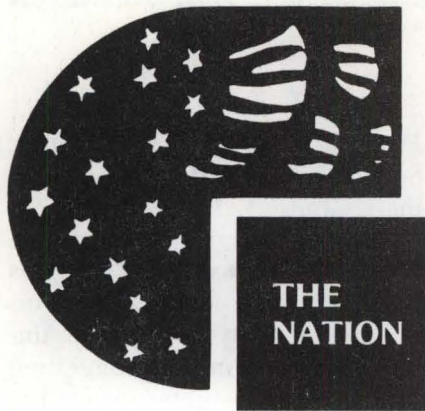
The reversal of Gallimard and Song seems distracting at this point. Hwang has made his points well. Why does he risk undermining them by suggesting that all that has gone before has been only a matter of individual psychic confusion? Does he really mean to say that had Rene gotten some therapy along the way, all this might never have happened?

Notwithstanding his brilliant insights concerning the relationship between women and men and East and West, it is David Hwang's invention of Gallimard's operatic obsession that may finally be the powerful message of *M. Butterfly*. What role does Art play in the shaping of our consciousness? How wary ought we to be of popular masterpieces like *Madama Butterfly*—or Rambo? ❏

Dimension

Where is light so hard, so bold
As this light I remember
From late day, late year Florida
Except North, as far north as North
Where deep in ice, light carves
And shapes itself until shadows lift
The one side light has of itself
Like summer or winter moons rising,
Or even as mind rises and peers
From ground to horizon to learn
Dimension, to see half the world
Hidden like faith north and south
Of revelation. So we've stopped here,
Deep South; we'll go no further
Until the far side, the dark,
Falls deep into itself, as cold
Must fall, back into memory.

Robert Pawlowski



The Lulling Effect of Peace

Albert R. Trost

As 1988 rolls to an end, the world looks more peaceful than it has for many years.

One of the bloodiest and most persistent wars, that between Iran and Iraq, seems to have ended, though bellicose talk and sometimes action is still heard in that region. The war in Afghanistan is also near an end as the Russians continue a slow withdrawal from that country, leaving mainly rival groups of Afghans to work out the peace. The withdrawal of Cuba and South Africa from Angola, while less imminent than the withdrawal of the Russians from Afghanistan, is a distinct possibility. That is so because the Cubans and South Africans very much want to withdraw, and their respective supporters, the Soviet Union and the United States, want them to pull back as well. Again, only the rival Angolan groups are unclear about what they want to do. Even places like Central America and Southeast Asia (centering on Kam-

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puchea) have cooled a bit over the past year as outside interests (whether the United States, the Soviet Union, or Cuba) display diminished enthusiasm for aiding clients in these regions. In none of the above cases are all parties gathered around a table at a public peace conference, but cease-fires and secret negotiations are in the wind and they have had their effects in less bloodshed on the ground.

The most hopeful sign of all is the one taking place inside of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev continues to press his case for reforms in the economy of the USSR and in its domestic political processes. He continues to press his domestic opponents and to score some victories over them. These domestic developments in the Soviet Union have had the effect of the Russians displaying less activity and interest in the rest of the world. There are still grounds for optimism about the prospects for further agreements with the United States, and perhaps even a general settling of differences between the Soviet Union and China. The Russians appear to want the stability outside of their borders that such agreements would bring.

This is not to say that peace is everywhere breaking out. The Middle East is as threatening as ever. The Palestinians have revived, even though they are probably more isolated from neighboring Arab nations than ever before. They press their case against the Israelis more radically than they have since the early 1980s. Outside the Middle East, Northern Ireland continues to fester, and new civil unrest has appeared in Burma, Algeria, and Yugoslavia. Still, the overall impression is that a general condition of peace is closer than it has been for many years.

The impression of peace is now quite widespread. It prevails in our own country, extends through Western Europe, reaches to Japan, and may even be acknowledged in the Soviet Union. The main effect of the impression that we are entering a more peaceful world is that nations (not least the great powers) and regions turn in on themselves. Domestic concerns move to the fore. Mild forms of nationalism and xenophobia become more evident. Talk of globalism and interdependency wanes.

Evidence of an inward turning in the face of a presumably diminished external threat is clearly present in our own country. We have just concluded a presidential election campaign where discussion of foreign policy issues was minimal. The major substantive issue in the campaign, if any, concerned the optimal level of government intervention in domestic economic and social issues. What should the government do about crime, unemployment, housing, and education? These were the topics. The term "liberal" became a code word for more government intervention (and spending).

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The closest the campaign came to a foreign policy issue involved the drug problem. In a strange twist, it was acknowledged as a domestic concern, but was as-

signed causes outside of our country. The problem of drug supplies and even drug dealing was given a foreign cast. One of the few places foreign aid or the use of American troops overseas came up was in connection with dealing with the supply of drugs.

When international trade or Japan was talked about during the campaign, it was done with the hint of protectionism found in Richard Gephardt's earlier brief campaign for the presidency. The only real mention of Europe and our relations with nations in that region came in the context of spending less money on defence there, and of the possibilities of an American troop withdrawal from that region. This was an election campaign, in short, without any major foreign policy issues, unless these could be given a domestic or a xenophobic slant. George Bush did not even seem to want to take credit for the widespread peace on behalf of the previous Republican Administration. A claim for credit for safe streets and domestic prosperity seemed enough.

Less obvious to us is how the perception of growing peace has affected Europe. Its clearest expression is the desire of Europeans to lessen their commitments to the Atlantic alliance and to lessen their obligations to the United States for our role in defending them. For over a decade, there has been a large popular movement to withdraw nuclear arms from Europe. There is now growing disenchantment with American troops, bases, and conventional arms in Europe. Popular expressions of this disenchantment are strongest in Spain, Greece, and West Germany. In addition, there is large and growing pressure to lower defence budgets in almost every Western European nation. For most Euro-

peans, peace cannot break out too soon, in the sense that this would mean the lowering of the temperature of East-West confrontation.

For most Europeans, peace cannot break out too soon, in the sense that this would mean the lowering of the temperature of East-West confrontation.

It is also easy enough to see some xenophobia and nationalism on the part of Europeans in their reaction to foreign workers. Its latest and most graphic expression was in the 10 per cent of the vote garnered by Mr. Le Pen in the first round of the French presidential elections. However, this resentment of foreign workers can be found throughout Western Europe, even in such globally-oriented nations as Sweden and Denmark. It would be implausible to link this xenophobic expression with the break-out of peace elsewhere in the world, but it is part of a general decline of globalism which peace has otherwise stimulated.

During the past year or two, the most dramatic example of Europe's inward-turning occurred at the regional level rather than at the national level. This was the re-invigoration of Europe's drive for economic integration through the vehicle of the European Community, with a goal of achieving a completely unified internal market for the twelve nations of the EC by 1992. This market will include over 320 million people and will be the largest tariff and restriction-free

market in the developed world.

The accomplishments of the European Community through this year, and certainly the goals it has set for itself by 1992, might well be evaluated from the opposite perspective, i.e., as progress away from narrowness and nationalism toward a more cosmopolitan supranationalism. When the European Community movement started in the early 1950s, its founders meant it to be an attack on nationalism, which they largely blamed for World Wars I and II. The strategy in this attack was to combine regionalism and functionalism as the realistic way to build a Europe without national loyalties. A regional focus of loyalty, Western Europe, was considered a more realistic focus for new loyalties than was globalism. The functionalist approach stressed solid economic accomplishments for Europe before any attempt at building integrated political institutions.

Solid economic achievements were, in fact, the rule, from the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 through the beginnings of the European Economic Community in 1957. A customs union on coal, steel, and other industrial products was achieved even ahead of an ambitious timetable. Indeed, so much progress was made toward establishing a "common market" for industrial commodities that political integration of Europe was pushed ahead. It failed, however, first in the face of De Gaulle and French nationalism in the 1960s, and then under the pressure of OPEC and oil boycotts and price rises in the 1970s.

Movement toward political integration of Europe stopped after 1965, but economic integration went forward, and with it

through the 1960s and 1970s economic growth and prosperity in all the original six national members, as well as in Britain, Ireland, and Denmark, which were added as members in the early 1970s. Both the question of oil supply and the addition of the three new members and their adjustment restrained supranational political development through the 1970s. Then Greece was added to the EC as a new member in early 1980, followed by Spain and Portugal in the mid-1980s. Some political movement away from a nation-state emphasis occurred in 1979 with the first direct elections of a European Parliament. However, it was still the economic features of the European Community that attracted most support.

A more peaceful international community allows Europeans to concentrate more on building the European Community. One hopes they will not forget the rest of the world.

In fact, it was the achievement of almost all of the explicit economic objectives of the original treaties setting up the Economic Community that brought Europe back in 1985-86 to the consideration of further political integration. A "common market" in the sense of an absence of tariffs and border controls on the movement of goods and people among the twelve nations had been achieved. It was recognized that for even further economic integration to occur "common policies" in transport, money and banking, unemployment, social security, and taxes would have to be passed in

all twelve nations. Only then would goods and people be truly competitive and restriction free in all of the Community. Such a policy goal would seem to suggest close coordination, even uniformity, of national policies, or even, as was intended by the founders, a set of powerful and supranational European institutions. It is to a unified internal market with common policies that the twelve have now committed themselves by 1992.

If the achievement of an integrated Europe with common policies and institutions is seen as a half-way house on the way to the inclusion of more and more territory and people, broadening eventually beyond Europe, it can be seen as making its own independent contribution to peace and prosperity. If, on the other hand, it is merely a new level of exclusivity which rejects or closes off the non-European world, such a development is to be regretted.

When there was less peace in the world, the European nations had to worry more about their global supplies of oil, the coordination of their respective foreign

policies with regard to warring areas of the world, their relationship to the national security posture of the United States, and their obligations and responsibilities toward their poorer former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. A more peaceful and stable international environment allows them to concentrate more on building the European Community. One hopes that caught up in their present enthusiasm over 1992, they will not forget the rest of the world.

One hopes even more that we, lulled by peace and distracted by our domestic problems, and turned-off by a new wave of anti-Americanism, will not forget them. We have already seemed to ignore a good portion of the world. Weakening our historical interest in Europe would be an awful price to pay even for the achievement of limited peace. The real problems of the future are still global ones: the disparity of wealth between North and South, environmental pollution, and yes, even peace, the present appearance of which is only temporary and illusory. ❏

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Moving Images

Edward Byrne

When cinema was invented, it was initially used to record life, like an extension of photography. It became an art when it moved away from the documentary. It was at this point that it was acknowledged as no longer a means of mirroring life, but a medium by which to intensify it.

—Francois Truffaut

There are more valid facts and details in works of art than there are in history books.

—Charlie Chaplin

In 1888 a young inventor, George Eastman, discovered that flexible film made from a celluloid base could be marketed in rolls for photography, replacing the cumbersome glass plates previously used. That same year Thomas Edison filed for a patent to protect his notion that flexible film could be used to create moving images as well as still pictures. This patent led to the production of the kinetoscope, a box containing a roll of flexible film to be viewed individually by patrons peering through peep-holes. It is safe to say that this popular, though primitive, invention was

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the forerunner to the modern movie projector.

Now, one hundred years after these innovations initiated a novel manner of viewing the world around us, a major industry supplying much of the world's entertainment, a new medium for transmitting information throughout the world, and a promising art form to interpret man's position in the world, the first national museum founded to celebrate and conserve the history of moving images has just opened in New York City. The American Museum of the Moving Image, appropriately built within the shell of an old movie studio in Queens, is devoted to the presumption that film and television are media which have influenced our nation's development in the twentieth century, to the preservation of unique, rare, and historical moving images which have been recorded by these media, and to the promotion of both media as art forms to be recognized, respected, and rewarded.

As one reviews the procession of national and global events as well as the parade of social and technological advancements which have evolved so swiftly in the last century, one can watch with wonder the growing power and the elevated position media of the moving image have assumed in today's world. But truly no one should be surprised by their rapid rise in popularity and influence. Film and television have emerged like butterflies from cocoons, metamorphosed from faint ideas in the minds of a few to become the dominant forms of art and communication in the modern age.

Perhaps in the past couple of decades the public personages slowest to perceive the power of the moving image and to acknowledge this ascendancy in

rank by the media of the moving image to the rung where art forms are offered ceremonious assent have been some of our library directors, university educators, and museum curators, individuals who act as the keepers of the culture, agents of art whose agencies conventionally accord formal status to those works which meet prescribed or customary standards. Nevertheless, an ever-increasing number of our nation's library stacks store videocassettes, and the silence of the reading rooms is sometimes interrupted by the sounds emanating from nearby video rooms. Additionally, in the hallowed halls of our educational institutions film studies and filmmaking have begun to gain credibility as subjects for intellectual inquiry. Even art museums have started to accommodate movie enthusiasts by enlarging their stock of film classics, by restoring some silent films, and by adding separate sections for screenings of film festivals and revival series.

However, despite the progress seen in these recent developments, film always has been viewed as an adjunct to the other more acceptable arts, a subordinate form often used almost as a loss leader. Its admission into the art world has hinged upon its overwhelming popularity; originally, film was permitted entrance with the basic purpose of attracting new art advocates who would not otherwise express interest in the institutions. Furthermore, since television arrived on the scene nearly a half century after film, this fledgling industry has thus far received only a fraction of the respect film has achieved. It has been clear all along to many of the participants in film and television that the only way to overcome such a second-class status would be to

exhibit superior and noteworthy examples from the media of the moving image in a setting of their own. Finally, this has occurred.

Whether the American Museum of the Moving Image will succeed soon in attaining for film and television an artistic equivalence with the other forms already held sacred by the American public is hard to say. When movies and television programs are easily accessible to the populace in their own living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms, and the act of viewing the two media is part of our ordinary daily or weekly routines, the mystique usually associated with great art is easily stripped away. The average individual can own a printed reproduction of a Picasso painting for hanging in the family hall or see a community rendition of a Shakespeare play on a stage at the town hall, but both experiences are far inferior to the original intent of the artists. However, when one catches a film at a local movie theatre or views a program on television, the projection seen is exactly what the director meant for the audience to experience. In fact, when observed in a museum setting, many of the television programs and movie productions may appear out of place.

Ironically, the problem which confronts the management of this new museum may be unlike any encountered by previous museum administrators: contrary to the tasks facing others in their position, they must convince the public to re-examine as classic art those familiar images so long regarded as mere entertainment. The Latin origin for the word *classic* referred to ancient art forms appealing to the Roman elite, and eventually the term was applied to all art designated as relating to the superior class of

any society. Through the auspices of its educational and cultural institutions, our society throughout its history has fostered this definition and has indoctrinated Americans to believe that the objects of art, even when their subject matter concerns the everyday lives of ordinary individuals, are always to be separate from the workaday existence of the average citizen. Often, art has been promoted devoutly as an alternative to the worldly experiences of the working class.

This has been especially true in the tumult of the twentieth century, the age of modern art, a period in which creativity has become a religion and the creations of the imagination have supplanted God in the minds of many prominent practitioners as well as in the hearts of a multitude of their followers. As Wallace Stevens once stated: "If one no longer believes in God (as truth), it is not possible merely to disbelieve; it becomes necessary to believe in something else. Logically, I ought to believe in essential imagination, but that has its difficulties. It is easier to believe in a thing created by imagination."

Thus today symphony orchestras and opera companies perform in cathedral-like edifices. Performances of the great plays and ballets are relegated to suitably reverent locations a considerable distance from the vast majority of Americans: these presentations are consigned to our largest metropolises, the capitols of culture to which many seeking intellectual and artistic enrichment make regular pilgrimages. In large part, these activities are priced beyond the means of the masses, especially for most of those who inhabit these cities; consequently, these solemn rituals of art maintain what might be

seen as merely a mythological presence for a plurality of the populace. Paintings and sculptures are bought for millions of dollars and sold for millions more, permanent property of the wealthy elite; and although many of these works may be viewed at times in the museums of our urban centers, they are enshrined like holy relics.

In contrast, film and television have cut across all strata of class to become integral components in contemporary society. Although television's most significant and most persuasive contributions have been its live special reports of breaking news, its extensive documentation of our society's past four decades, and its coverage of major sporting events, regular programming also has affected the attitudes and opinions of the American people. Whether we use television to teach our children with *Sesame Street* or to educate ourselves with *A Walk through the Twentieth Century*, whether we are moved by a poignant episode of *Masterpiece Theatre* or are affected by a touching scene in *St. Elsewhere*, whether we are compelled through the biting comedy of *All in the Family* to challenge our nation's sadly enduring acceptance of racism or asked through the bittersweet humor of *M*A*S*H* to question the ancient and overtly glorious descriptions of war, the pictures presented daily on our television sets have indelibly marked our minds and forever influenced all of our lives.

Likewise, the images of film have become fixed in the collective memory of our society. The imposing figure of Charles Foster Kane has shaped Americans' opinions of the excesses and eccentricities of the wealthy as much as any authentic biography. For most Americans, the horrors

and the hardships of the Civil War have become more real through the eyes of Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler than from the pages of any academic's historical text. Our understanding of romance, our respect for personal sacrifice, and our empathy for victims of circumstances beyond their control have been enhanced by two former lovers, Rick and Ilsa, caught in a North African city occupied by the Nazis during World War II. For many, Rocky Balboa's pursuit of the heavyweight championship has personified the underdog's battle against all odds, just as Terry Malloy, a slow-witted ex-fighter working as a longshoreman, has helped formulate a definition of courage. George Bailey annually has offered all Americans an affirmation of the preciousness of life, and when a young man with the plain name of Smith (bearing a striking resemblance to Bailey) repeatedly has travelled to Washington, he has carried with him the hopes and values of all watching.

One can go on and on with a seemingly unending list of characters and images from simple or sophisticated movies—some admittedly better than others, but all of which have moved and inspired their audiences throughout this first century of film. Unlike the icons of other arts which we venerate as sacred and distant (almost otherworldly), the individuals who populate the scenes of our most popular and most influential films very nearly have become close acquaintances, many with friendly faces to which we turn again and again, especially since the advent of the videocassette recorder, for confirmation, comfort, and counsel.

Given this sense of familiarity, it may be difficult for many Americans to see their favorite

film and television personalities as museum pieces, perfect objects of art preserved in air-tight enclosures for posterity. Additionally, since these characters have provided much of our lively entertainment throughout the years, it could seem criminal to condemn them to the cultural taxidermy associated with most museums. After all, these are the figures who have supplied us with enjoyment, the subjects who have distracted us from the mundane travails of everyday living.

A process of elevating those who brought to life these characters from the simple status of performers or filmmakers to formally acknowledged artists, to permanent residents of a dignified cultural institution, to artifacts of an age would be difficult for many Americans to accept. By requesting that Americans regard the media of the moving image with such respect,

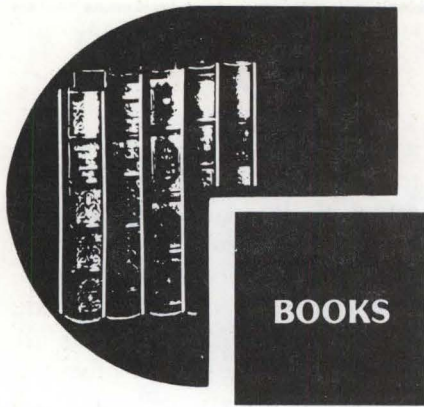
it may appear as if the court jester suddenly were being presented to the people of the palace for coronation or, in the eyes of some, for public execution.

Still, the elevation of the media of the moving image and its artists through the establishment of this museum is a welcome, and somewhat overdue, development. Although only one hundred years have passed since the first technical breakthrough allowed it to be possible for even the primitive viewing of motion pictures by the American public, film and television have built a rich tradition full of works which have served as witness to times of turmoil in the twentieth century. Through their images, the two media already have exerted enough political impact and social influence to substantially give shape to the American society soon to step tentatively toward the twenty-first century. ■

Der alte Hermann

In the evening lugs
old Hermann a load of
opinions beneath his belt,
ballooning and perma-pressed,
from diner to newsstand and back,
self-appointed town crier
and local connoisseur,
savoring with fleshy
German lips Torte and Tee,
and savoring
die sehr schönen Fräuleins
with skin as wholesome
as the finest cheese.

David Morgan



Review Essay

Writing Oneself

Jill Baumgaertner

Scandal

By Shusaku Endo. Translated by Van C. Gessel. New York: Dodd, Mead. 261 pp. \$18.95.

Scandal, the latest novel by Shusaku Endo, the Japanese Christian, is about duplicity and contradiction, about sin and evil, about old age and death, but it is also about redemption, light, and the Resurrection. It is, in short, about the contradiction that is at the heart of human experience.

Shusaku Endo is Japan's leading novelist and has won a number of prestigious awards for his novels and short stories, the best known of which are *Silence*, *Wonderful Fool*, and *Stained Glass Elegies*. It is a curious phenomenon that Endo's work, most of which develops explicitly Christian themes, is so popular in a nation in which Christianity has never flourished in spite of many centuries of concerted missionary efforts. *Scandal* has particular interest in this regard because it is

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about an esteemed Japanese Christian novelist who is at work on a novel called *Scandal: An Old Man's Prayer*, blurring the distinctions between autobiography and fiction, allowing the reader to look into this book as if it were a mirror held up in front of another mirror, reflecting itself hundreds of times.

To further complicate the picture, the novelist, Suguro Sensei, discovers that he has a double, a doppelganger, who frequents the red-light district and is attracted to a group of sadomasochists. This double is a sinister, degenerate fraud who seems determined to undermine Suguro's reputation, attempting to reveal the novelist as an opportunist, and a hypocrite and liar about his faith. Suguro sets out to find this double and along the way discovers that a young reporter is on his trail, too, and ready to advance his own journalistic career by uncovering the scandal of an ostensibly pious man with a sordid secret.

Suguro's dilemma is complex. He is known as a Christian novelist, but he did not really mean to proselytize in his work. He meant only to write stories, but in the process he could not help revealing what he was. When a young man approaches him after an autograph session and tells Suguro that his writing has actually converted him to Christianity, Suguro can only feel embarrassed and hypocritical because "he had not written a single story with the intent of instructing others. He had not become a novelist with a goal of promulgating Christianity." He does not want his readers to overestimate him. Instead, he insists in a television interview, "I'm not a theologian. . . . I've just stumbled toward that idea [about sin] while writing my stories."

Suguro meets a woman who on the one hand lives a saintly life, volunteering in a children's hospital to care for the sick and dying, and yet, she confesses to Suguro, she experiences much pleasure in remembering a violent act her husband committed during the war. In a letter, she writes, "You might want to ask, which of these two is the real Mariko? All I can say is that both of them are me. You might ask, don't the contradictions between the two cause you any torment? Yes, sometimes when I think about those contradictions, I horrify myself. I am repelled by myself. But there are also times when I am not, and there is nothing I can do about it."

This novel is about authorial intent, Christian aesthetics, and the contradictory beings we all are.

Suguro had previously written about the ambiguity of human action, but his emphasis had been significantly different. He had contended that each sin contained within it the human hunger for rebirth. He had never, however, really confronted evil. Now he finds himself looking evil straight in the face—and the face is his own, or rather that of his double, hanging in a portrait gallery. Are the actions of that doppelganger completely separate from his own, he begins to wonder.

This novel is about authorial intent, Christian aesthetics, and the contradictory beings we all are. Suguro discovers that he is filled with antithetical traits. He is meek and arrogant, bullish and victimized, wise and foolish, sin-

ful and redeemed. He is no more, no less, than any of us. He has seen the Vision, he has been in the stable on Christmas morning where, as W. H. Auden says, "everything became a 'You' and nothing was an 'it'"—and even after experiencing the Incarnation he has "failed to entertain it as more than an agreeable possibility." Living in limbo between Christmas and Easter, he sees the possibility for redemption, but has not yet experienced a true resurrection—nor will he, really, until death, his final healing.

Living between Christmas and Easter, he sees the possibility for redemption, but he has not yet experienced a true resurrection—nor will he until death.

In Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitri agonizes over his contradictory nature. "Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower," he cries. "Let me be accursed. Let me be vile and base, only let me kiss the hem of the veil in which my God is shrouded. Though I may be following the devil, I am Thy son, O Lord, and I love Thee, and I feel the joy without which the world cannot stand."

It is this sort of contradiction that Endo examines in *Scandal*. All fiction writers, of course, rely on contradictions, for the story-making faculty is one of ordering the chaos, of using contradiction and conflict to make sense of the contradictions and conflicts of our everyday lives, but the Christian writer adds yet another dimension to the dilemma. How can God take murder and violent

death and make it redemptive? How can the cross, an instrument of torture, be also the sign of salvation? How can the last be first? How can death become birth? How can our end be our beginning?

"Oh, to vex me," John Donne says, "contraries meet in one. I durst not view heaven yesterday; and today in prayers and flattering speeches I court God. Tomorrow I quake with true feare of his rod." We are, according to Donne and Dostoevsky and Endo, connected to heaven, while we are simultaneously stuck in this often muddy earth. Our two natures are yoked violently together. And it is often not a satisfactory fusion.

The ambiguities and uncertainties are intriguing, making Endo's story oddly believable. The only problem with the book is the uneven writing, which may be the fault of the translator. I suspect, however, that the problem is Endo's himself. Reading this book, one has the sense that the idea came before the characters—that even though Endo chose someone like himself as his persona, he didn't feel compelled to spend too much time developing this other "double" as a separate, believable entity. But even though the characters are strangely flat, the story works because the questions it presents are central to human life.

So what is the answer for Suguro? It is provided partially in a startling encounter in a hotel room, but it is also left partially unresolved. Shusaku Endo, in fact, has no complete answers. Near the end of the book, Suguro is asked some pointed questions by Mariko:

"This Jesus you believe in . . . I wonder if he was murdered because he was too innocent, too pure."

"What are you driving at?"

"As Jesus, bathed in blood, carried his cross to the execution ground, the crowds reviled him and threw stones at him. Don't you think they did that because of the pleasure it gave them, the pleasure I'm always trying to describe to you? A naive, pure human being is suffering right before their eyes. Can't we assume that it was the pleasure of heaping further indignities on such a person that consumed the mobs that day? Jesus was too blameless, too unblemished . . . so much so that we wanted to destroy him. . . . That feeling is shared by all of us. It inhabits the depths of our hearts. But no one wants to stare it in the face. That's how you've felt for many years, Sensei. Even in your novels . . . in reality all you've written about are men who have betrayed Jesus but then weep tears of regret after the cock crows three times. You've always avoided writing about the mob, intoxicated with pleasure as they hurled stones at him."

"There are things a novelist can't bring himself to write about."

"That's a neat evasion."

Even though the characters are strangely flat, the novel works because its questions are central to human life.

This novel asks the questions that need to be articulated. The answers, however, are not so easy because they lie in the realm of dream and mystery, of doppelgangers, demons, and the Resurrection. At the end of *Scandal* the threatening phone calls continue, even though the reporter has been paid off. Or do they continue *because* the reporter has been paid off? The implication is, finally, that Suguro cannot tell the truth because no one would ever believe it. In fact, the "truth" is itself suspect. Is that a neat evasion, or is that just the way it is?



The Annual Battles Of Christmas

Dot Nuechterlein

Oh, dear, it is December. That means we are just around the corner from The Annual Battles of Christmas. Obviously I inherited an incredible amount of fortitude from some stalwart ancestor, because when it comes to The A B of C, I stand totally alone.

The first A is the less serious of the Bs, but it leaves me drained and dragging. My family shows no mercy, each year pointing accusing fingers in my direction and claiming I simply ruin their enjoyment of the Holy Holiday.

It has to do with timing, and traditions, and stuff like that. As you may have heard me say before, I was brought up to believe that Christmas is a season unto itself, preceded by Advent and followed by Epiphany, and I tried to raise my children in these same beliefs. Alas. They are creatures of the general culture, which holds that Christmas begins the day after Thanksgiving and ends Dec. 25 at midnight.

It wasn't easy to shush them up even as babes, but it has grown worse with each succeeding year. I have stuck to my guns, refusing to buy a tree until the last weekend before the great Eve and Day. But oh, how I have suffered for it.

"It's not fair," one would complain every Dec. 1st (meaning in translation BAD MOTHER), "everyone else has a tree but us." "Yeah," would chime in another, "you don't care" (BAD MOTHER); "we might as well not bother to put one up at all." "Yeah," would echo the third, "there won't be anything good left

by the time we get one anyway" (BAD MOTHER).

As they reached the age of reason I would try a reasonable argument; the Christmas season, I would say, is not meant for University faculty persons—we are grading papers and exams right up till the last minute (like this year's deadline is Dec. 22).

That point would boomerang, however, reminding them of the impoverishment of growing up in a two-career family (BAD MOTHER) where the only Christmas cookies you-know-who ever baked came on New Year's or later or never, and where the relevant parent couldn't be trusted to volunteer for school parties, etc. That the annual greeting-card-cum-letter to relatives and friends normally comes out in January didn't interest them—which is just as well, as no self-respecting person calling herself Mom would ever allow such a tragedy.

Himself took little part in this Battle, agreeing with the *kinder* that things were usually in a sorry state tree-wise by Advent IV, but unwilling to make too big a fuss for fear he might be maneuvered into attending to matters solo.

However, he has always egregiously forsaken his vows to love, honor, and come to some sort of intelligent compromise with wifery when the second A B of C turns up, as it does each and every year without fail. I'm sorry to seem defensive, but you simply cannot fathom how hopeless and helpless the squabble has become. I refer to the question of "Real vs. Fake."

They are all against me, every blessed one of them. I keep explaining over and over how plastic and artificial fake trees seem, but the cleverness of that argument makes not the tiniest dint in their acceptance of this *horror* of modernity. It's a matter of taste. I like

the look and smell and feel of God's trees; besides, can you imagine Martin Luther starting this business using any substance with "poly" in its name? Now, really. True, Fake are quick and easy (although hazardous—my brother-in-law once broke his arm trying to get one together)—and true, Fake will not leave little reminders behind which show up months later—Fake does not shed.

But Fake is not *Real*, which in my book is what counts. So I've held out. And you should know that the only reason I manage to win this Battle, every year, is because all of them want lights on the tree, but not one has any tendency whatsoever to provide the labor needed to make it happen. That is strictly Mom's Job. So okay, says I, then argue and complain all you want, but Mom will only do it on Real.

So into the house comes whatever bedraggled leftover we can find and onto it go the lights and all the ornaments we possess and sometimes but not always we throw on some tinsel, and then we turn out all the other lights and sit there looking at it and making cracks about how deformed it is (as it *always* is) and reminiscing about past Christmases, and we listen to Dad's same old collection of Christmas records and the A B of C are, for the moment, forgotten, and everyone seems contented.

But woe—there's a cloud on the horizon: next Christmas I'll be living in New York City, where, I'm been told, one cannot even contemplate Real for less than many bucks. They say smugly they will "civilize" me yet! But I will find a way. I WILL—if nothing more than by adopting a baby Norfolk pine. I mean, after all, some things are just sacred.

Merry Christmas. 