The Human Experience

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Valparaiso University's Honor System

As the website for Valparaiso University's Honor System states, "Valparaiso University is proud to be one of a select few universities to operate under a student-run honor system. The Honor Code was established in 1943 by the students with the support of the faculty. Signing one's name to the honor code not only ensures academic pride and integrity of oneself and others, but also one's commitment to a future comprised of honest work and integrity.

"The Honor System is a cherished tradition of Valparaiso University. Covering all work submitted for academic credit, including unproctored examinations, it is based on the highest principles of ethics and honesty in class work as well as other phases of campus life, and is regarded as an expression of the Christian character of the University."[1]

The Honor Code Pledge which students must write out and *sign* on every piece of written work submitted reads as follows: "I have neither given nor received nor have I tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid." Every instructor is responsible for clarifying what constitutes unauthorized aid in his or her course. In the Valpo Core course, the following will be considered violations of the Honor Code:

1. Unauthorized giving, receiving, or use of material or information while writing examinations or quizzes.
2. Fraudulent or deceptive generation of data or the knowing use of data gathered in such a manner.
3. One person taking a quiz or examination, or producing a paper, for another.
4. The use of ideas, data or specific written passages of others that are unacknowledged or falsely acknowledged.
5. Presentation of a paper or other work for credit in two distinct courses without prior approval of both instructors.
6. Theft or destruction of library materials or other materials which are meant to be accessible to all other students and faculty.
7. Knowingly presenting false accusation or testimony before the Honor Council or its representatives.
8. Presenting a draft and/or paper which is someone else's work.
9. Tolerance of any of the above.

Some kinds of aid and collaboration are strongly encouraged and are NOT violations of the Honor Code in this course. These include:

1. Making use of the services of the Writing Center.
2. Discussion or brainstorming about written or oral assignments, movies, or other TBA events with other students, faculty, or staff.
3. Getting other students' reactions to written or oral work prior to submitting or presenting it.
4. Working with classmates to revise drafts of assigned papers.

1 Valparaiso University, "Valparaiso University Honor System," http://www.valpo.edu/student/honor/

The Honor Council student officers work hard to uphold the system's integrity and confidentiality. A student wishing to report an Honor Code violation may call the Honor Council Office (464-6019). A confidential message may be left at that number at any hour of the day or night. Only a member of the Honor Council will have access to the message.

If a student becomes aware that someone has made plans to use unauthorized aid on an examination, that student has a right to request that the examination be proctored. Forms for requesting a proctored examination may be picked up in the office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in Huegli Hall. Such requests must be made at least 24 hours prior to the time of the examination. If any student in this course has a question regarding whether or not some means of preparation is a violation of the Honor Code, please consult the instructor of the course.

Statement on Plagiarism

Definition

Plagiarism is the use of the words, facts, ideas, or opinions of someone else without a specific acknowledgment of their source. It is the attempt—deliberate or unintentional—to pass off as one's own work what in fact has been borrowed. Whenever you are writing on an unfamiliar, specialized, or technical subject, it is likely that you will be using printed or oral sources of information. To fail to indicate that you used such sources and/or to fail to identify them constitutes plagiarism.

Direct Quotations

Whenever you use the exact words of a speaker or writer, you must enclose those words in quotation marks and indicate the precise source of the words in a parenthetical reference. This rule applies whether the quotation is two words or two paragraphs long. Furthermore, a quotation must be exact in every detail: no words may be changed, and none may be omitted that would change the meaning of the passage. An omission that would not affect the meaning is permissible, but it must be indicated by an ellipsis, three spaced dots (. . .). Furthermore, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and all such mechanical details must conform exactly to the original.

Other Borrowings

A large part of the borrowed material in any paper is likely to be paraphrased or summarized rather than quoted. There are two important facts to be remembered in this connection. First, the material is still borrowed; therefore exact sources must be acknowledged in parentheses. And second, the wording of paraphrased or of summarized material must be substantially different from the original. When you put another writer's ideas into your own words, those words must be really yours; you may not echo the vocabulary and the phrasing of your source.

Similarly, whenever you use the organization that someone else has provided, whether it be a pattern which you imitated or an actual small part of your overall structure, you should indicate your source in an explanatory note.

Proper Extent of Documentation

When students are told that everything they learn from their reading must be documented they often react with an anguished cry, "But then my whole paper would have to be documented." This protest is not warranted, however, because a research paper, properly speaking, is not just a collection of facts and ideas gathered from sources. Unless you do something original with your material, you probably have not fulfilled the assignment. That is, ordinarily you must present some interpretations of your data and reach some conclusions about your subject. These interpretations and conclusions, which you are basing upon the material you have borrowed, represent your original contribution to the subject.

In using this material, you must demonstrate that you have mastered it. First, you must be careful that you never distort the meaning of another's work, whether you have summarized, paraphrased, or quoted. Second, you must make sure that your interpretations and conclusions follow logically from the evidence you have presented. Therefore, because you have mastered the material and have used it to reach a valid, original conclusion, the paper is your paper.

In this connection, it is helpful to remember the words of the writer James Stephens, "Originality does not consist in saying what no one else has said before. It consists in saying what you yourself truly believe."

As a general rule, the newer a subject is to you, the more acknowledgments you will need. But though it is theoretically true that the number of notes required will vary inversely with the extent of the writer's previous knowledge, it is not always true in practice. In handling certain subjects you will discover that sometimes an entire paragraph, sometimes a half paragraph, has been derived from one source, though at different places in that source. In this instance you may document the borrowing with a series of page numbers rather than with a single page number. Make certain that all the sentences in the paragraph before the parenthetical acknowledgment are derived from the sources indicated.

tudy the documentation of representative scholarly books and articles to become more fully aware of what is involved in the whole business of using acquired knowledge. Keep and use the handbook required for this course. No professional will carelessly lay himself or herself open to a charge of plagiarism. You should be equally careful.

Some Exceptions

There are, however, some exceptions to the rule that you must document everything in an investigation paper that you didn't know before you started. There is much information which is generally known and which is readily available in a wide variety of sources. Dates, for instance, rarely require documentation. Perhaps you don't know that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in 1815, but many people do and the fact is obtainable in dozens of places—history books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, and even calendars; to document such a fact would be sheer pedantry. On the other hand, if you wanted to mention the number of French and British troops who died at Waterloo, you could certainly have to acknowledge the source of your information; you could not assume that those figures could be known without some special investigation. Another exception to the general rule is the quotation which is so familiar as to be almost proverbial, "To be, or not to be," for instance. An acknowledgment after that phrase would be both an insult to the intelligence of your audience and a confession of your own ignorance of what documentation is for. In general, then, you need not document any material that may be assumed to be common knowledge. But if you are unsure whether the educated public is likely to know what you don't, or if there is disagreement among the experts, it is better to be safe and use what may be an unnecessary note than to omit one and thus provoke a suspicion of plagiarism. Never give your reader an occasion to ask, "How do you know?" or "What is your evidence for this point?"

The ultimate responsibility for academic honesty belongs to you. You are responsible for knowing exactly what plagiarism is and for scrupulously avoiding any suspicion of it in all of your writing. From that responsibility no one can excuse you.

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MLA Paper Formatting Guidelines

Student's Last Name 1

Firstname Lastname

Professor _____

CORE 110 (or 115, if Spring semester), Section __

Date (for example, 1 January 2013)

Title of Paper (Centered):

MLA Paper Formatting Guidelines

Your text should begin here, indented ½". The font should be no bigger than **12-point**. The body of your paper should be **double-spaced**. The margins on the left, right, top and bottom of the page should all be **1-inch margins**. You should not add a space between paragraphs.

Page numbers should be inserted at the top right of each page. **Include your last name in the header, right-justified.**

According to the MLA format, **citations** of other sources should be included in the following way. They should appear in parentheses, with the author's name appearing first, followed by the page number of the work you are citing, like this **(Author page)**. Do not use

punctuation between the author's name and the page number. For a more specific example, a paper that cites page fourteen of a work by Ishmael Beah would format the citation this way **(Beah 14)**. If the author is already mentioned in a "signal phrase" in the text, it is only necessary to include the page number in parentheses. Here's an example. Beah writes that his first real exposure to the war in Sierra Leone occurred when he was twelve years old **(6)**. You already know the author's name because it's mentioned in the sentence. There are specific guidelines to follow when you're using more than one source by the same author, which can be found in the section on **"MLA Style" in your *Little Seagull Handbook* (Bullock and Weinberg 93-135)**. That section includes specific formatting guidelines for many other kinds of sources, as well, including: works with no identified author; works with more than one author; plays; poems; works from an anthology; encyclopedias; sacred texts; multivolume works; etc.

The MLA Style requires a **"Works Cited" page** at the end of your paper, which will list, in **alphabetical order** (by authors' last names, or by title, if the author is not known), all of the sources you have cited in your paper. On this page, you will need to provide complete publication information for each source. Your Works Cited page should follow the last page of your paper, as **a separate page**. The *Little Seagull Handbook* includes **formatting guidelines to follow for a wide variety of sources**. Be sure to consult it when you are completing your list, so you know what information you must include. Each entry in your Works Cited should begin at the left margin and each subsequent line in that entry should be indented. This is called a

"hanging indentation" in typical word processing software. This page should be **double-spaced.**

Works Cited

Beah, Ishmael. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007. Print.

Bullock, Richard and Francine Weinberg. *The Little Seagull Handbook*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011. Print.

3

Theme for English B [1951]

Langston Hughes

The instructor said,
Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you---
Then, it will be true.
I wonder if it's that simple?
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.
I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:
hear you, hear me---we two---you, me, talk on this page.
(I hear New York too.) Me---who?
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records---Bessie, bop, or Bach.
I guess being colored doesn't make me NOT like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white---
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me---
although you're older---and white---
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

4

Eve & Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread

from *Eve & Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*

Phyllis Trible

On the whole, the Women's Liberation Movement is hostile to the Bible, even as it claims that the Bible is hostile to women. The Yahwist account of creation and fall in Genesis 2-3 provides a strong proof text for that claim. Accepting centuries of (male) exegesis, many feminists interpret this story as legitimating male supremacy and female subordination.[1] They read to reject. My suggestion is that we reread to understand and to appropriate.

Ambiguity characterizes the meaning of *'adham* in Genesis 2-3. On the one hand, man is the first creature formed (2:7). The Lord God puts him in the garden "to till it and keep it," a job identified with the male (cf. 3:17-19). On the other hand, *'adham* is a generic term for humankind. In commanding *'adham* not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Deity is speaking to both the man and the woman (2:16-17). Until the differentiation of female and male (2:21-23), *'adham* is basically androgynous: one creature incorporating two sexes.

Concern for sexuality, specifically for the creation of woman, comes last in the story, after the making of the garden, the trees, and the animals. Some commentators allege female subordination based on this order of events.[2] They contrast it with Genesis 1-27 where God creates *'adham* as male and female in one act.[3] Thereby they infer that whereas the Priests recognized the equality of the sexes, the Yahwist made woman a second, subordinate, inferior sex.[4] But the last may be first, as both the biblical theologian and the literary critic know. Thus the Yahwist account moves to its climax, not its decline, in the creation of woman.[5] She is not an afterthought; she is the culmination. Genesis 1 itself supports this interpretation, for there male and female are indeed the last and truly the crown of all creatures. The last is also first where beginnings and endings are parallel. In Hebrew literature the central concerns of a unit often appear at the beginning and the end as an *inclusio device*.[6] Genesis 2 evinces this structure. The creation of man first and of woman last constitutes a ring composition whereby the two creatures are parallel. In no way does the order disparage woman. Content and context augment this reading.

The context for the advent of woman is a divine judgment, "It is not good that *'adham* should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18). The phrase needing explication is "helper fit for him." In the Old Testament the word helper (*'ezer*) has many usages. It can be a proper name for a male.[7] In our story it describes the animals and the woman. In some passages it characterizes Deity. God is the helper of Israel. As helper Yahweh creates and saves.[8] Thus *'ezer* is a relational term; it designates a beneficial relationship; and it pertains to God, people, and animals. By itself the word does not specify positions within relationships; more particularly, it does not imply inferiority. Position results from additional content or from context. Accordingly, what kind of relationship does *'ezer* entail in Genesis 2:18, 20? Our answer comes in two way: 1) The word *neged*, which joins *'ezer*, connotes equality: a helper who is a counterpart.[9] 2) The animals are helpers, but they fail to fit *'adham*. There is physical, perhaps psychic, rapport between *'adham* and the animals, for Yahweh forms (*yasar*) them both out of the ground (*'adhamah*). Yet their similarity is not equality. *'Adham* names them and thereby exercises power over them. No fit helper is among them. And thus the narrative moves to woman. My translation is this: God is the helper superior to man; the animals are helpers inferior to man; woman is the helper equal to man.

Let us pursue the issue by examining the account of the creation of woman (21-22). This episode concludes the story even as the creation of man commences it. As I have said already, the ring composition suggests an interpretation of woman and man as equals. To establish this meaning, structure and content must mesh. They do. In both episodes Yahweh alone creates. For the last creation the Lord God "caused a deep sleep (*tardemah*) to fall upon the man." Man has no part in making woman; he is out of it. He exercises no control over her existence. He is neither participant nor spectator nor consultant at her birth. Like man, woman owes her life solely to God. For both of them the origin of life is a divine mystery. Another parallel of equality is creation out of raw materials: dust for man and a rib for woman. Yahweh chooses these fragile materials and in both cases processes them before human beings happen. As Yahweh shapes dust and then breathes into it to form man, so Yahweh takes out the rib and then builds it into woman.[10] To call woman "Adam's rib" is to misread the text which states carefully and clearly that the extracted bone required divine labor to become female, a datum scarcely designed to bolster the male ego. Moreover, to claim that the rib means inferiority or subordination is to assign the man qualities over the woman which are not in the narrative itself. Superiority, strength, aggressiveness, dominance, and power do not characterize man in Genesis 2. By contrast, he is formed from dirt; his life hangs by a breath which he does not control; and he himself remains silent and passive while the Deity plans and interprets his existence.

The rib means solidarity and equality. *'Adham* recognizes this meaning in a poem:[11]

> This at last is bone of my bones
> and flesh of my flesh.
> She shall be called *'ishshah* (woman)
> because she was taken out of *'ish* (man). (2:23)

The pun proclaims both the similarity and the differentiation of female and male. Before this episode the Yahwist has used only the generic term *'adham*. No exclusively male reference has appeared. Only with the specific creation of woman (*'ishshah*) occurs the first specific term for man as male (*'ish*). In other words, sexuality is simultaneous for woman and man. The sexes are interrelated and interdependent. Man as male does not precede woman as female but happens concurrently with her. Hence, the first act in Genesis 2 is the creation of androgyny (2:7) and the last is the creation of sexuality (2:23).[12] Male embodies female and female embodies male. The two are neither dichotomies nor duplicates. The birth of woman corresponds to the birth of man but does not copy it. Only in responding to the female does the man discover himself as male. No longer a passive creature, *'ish* comes alive in meeting *'ishshah*.

Some read in(to) the poem a naming motif. The man names the woman and thereby has power and authority over her.[13] But again I suggest that we reread. Neither the verb nor the noun *name* is in the poem. We find instead the verb *qara'*, to call: "she shall be called woman." Now in the Yahwist primeval history this verb does not function as a synonym or parallel or substitute for *name*. The typical formula for naming is the verb *to call* plus the explicit object *name*. This formula applies to Deity, people, places, and animals. For example, in Genesis 4 we read:

> Cain built a city and *called* the *name* of the city after the *name* of his son Enoch (v. 17).
>
> And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and *called* his *name* Seth (v. 25).
>
> To Seth also a son was born and he *called* his *name* Enoch (v. 26a).
>
> At that time men began to *call* upon the *name* of the Lord (v. 26b).

Genesis 2:23 has the verb *call* but does not have the object *name*. Its absence signifies the absence of a naming motif in the poem. The presence of both the verb *call* and the noun *name* in the episode of the animals strengthens the point:

> So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would *call* them; and whatever the man *called* every living creature, that was its *name*. The man gave *names* to all cattle, and to the birds of the air and to every beast of the field (2:19-20).

In calling the animals by name, *'adham* establishes supremacy over them and fails to find a fit helper. In calling woman, *'adham* does not name her and does find in her a counterpart. Female and male are equal sexes. Neither has authority over the other.[14]

A further observation secures the argument: *Woman* itself is not a name. It is a common noun; it is not a proper noun. It designates gender; it does not specify person. *'Adham* recognizes sexuality by the words *ishshah* and *'ish*. This recognition is not an act of naming to assert the power of male over female. Quite the contrary. But the true skeptic is already asking: What about Genesis 3:20 where "the man called his wife's name Eve"? We must wait to consider that question. Meanwhile, the words of the ancient poem as well as their context proclaim sexuality originating in the unity of *'adham*. From this one (androgynous) creature come two (female and male). The two return to their original unity as *'ish* and *'ishshah* become one flesh (2:24) another instance of the ring composition.

Next the differences which spell harmony and equality yield to the differences of disobedience and disaster. The serpent speaks to the woman. Why to the woman and not to the man? The simplest answer is that we do not know. The Yahwist does not tell us anymore than he explains why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the garden. But the silence of the text stimulates speculations, many of which only confirm the patriarchal mentality which conceived them. Cassuto identifies serpent and woman, maintaining that the cunning of the serpent is "in reality" the cunning of the woman.[16] He impugns her further by declaring that "for the very reason that a woman's imagination surpasses a man's, it was the woman who was enticed first." Though more gentle in his assessment, von Rad avers that "in the history of Yahweh-religion it has always been the women who have shown an inclination for obscure astrological cults" (a claim which he does not document).[17] Consequently, he holds that the woman "confronts the obscure allurements and mysteries that beset our limited life more directly than the man does," and then he calls her a "temptress." Paul Ricoeur says that woman "represents the point of weakness," as the entire story "gives evidence of a very masculine resentment."[18] McKenzie links the "moral weakness" of the woman with her "sexual attraction" and holds that the latter ruined both the woman and the man.[19] But the narrative does not say any of these things. It does not sustain the judgment that woman is weaker or more cunning or more sexual than man. Both have the same Creator, who explicitly uses the word "good" to introduce the creation of woman (2:18). Both are equal in birth. There is complete rapport, physical, psychological, sociological, and theological, between them: bone of bone and flesh of flesh. If there be moral frailty in one, it is moral frailty in two. Further, they are equal in responsibility and in judgment, in shame and in guilt, in redemption and in grace. What the narrative says about the nature of woman it also says about the nature of man.

Why does the serpent speak to the woman and not to the man? Let a female speculate. If the serpent is "more subtle" than its fellow creatures, the woman is more appealing than her husband. Throughout the myth she is the more intelligent one, the more aggressive one, and the one with greater sensibilities.[20] Perhaps the woman elevates the animal world by conversing theologically with the serpent. At any rate, she understands the hermeneutical task. In quoting God she interprets the prohibition ("neither shall you touch it"). The woman is both the theologian and translator. She contemplates the tree, taking into account all the possibilities. The tree is good for food; it satisfies the physical drives. It pleases the eyes; it is aesthetically and emotionally desirable. Above all, it is coveted as the source of wisdom (*haskîl*). Thus the woman is fully aware when she acts, her vision encompassing the gamut of life. She takes the fruit and she eats. The initiative and the decision are hers alone. There is no consultation with her husband. She seeks neither his advice [nor] his permission. She acts independently. By contrast the man is a silent, passive and bland recipient: "She also gave some to her husband and he ate." The narrator does not theologize; he does not contemplate; he does not envision the full possibilities of the occasion. His one act is belly-oriented, and it is an act of quiescence, not of initiative. The man is not dominant; he is not aggressive; he is not a decision-maker. Even though the prohibition not to eat of the tree appears before the female was specifically created, she knows that it applies to her. She has interpreted it, and now she struggles with the temptation to disobey. But not the man, to whom the prohibition came directly (2:6). He follows his wife without question or comment, thereby denying his own individuality. If the woman be intelligent, sensitive, and ingenious, the man is passive, brutish, and inept. These character portrayals are truly extraordinary in a culture dominated by men. I stress their contrast not to promote female chauvinism, but to undercut patriarchal interpretations alien to the text.

The contrast between woman and man fades after their acts of disobedience. They are one in the new knowledge of their nakedness (3:7). They are one in hearing and in hiding. They flee from the sound of

the Lord God in the Garden (3:8). First to the man come questions of responsibility (3:9, 11), but the man fails to be responsible: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (3:12). Here the man does not blame the woman; he does not say that the woman seduced him;[21] he blames the Deity. The verb which he uses for both the Deity and the woman is *ntn* (cf. 3:6). So far as I can determine, this verb neither means nor implies seduction in this context or in the lexicon. Again, if the Yahwist intended to make woman the temptress, he missed a choice opportunity. The woman's response supports the point. "The serpent beguiled me and I ate" (3:13). Only here occurs the strong verb *nsh'*, meaning to deceive, to seduce. God accepts this subject-verb combination when, immediately following the woman's accusation, Yahweh says to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all animals: (3:14).

Though the tempter (the serpent) is cursed,[22] the woman and the man are not. But they are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible human life has become as it stands between creation and grace. We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone. Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy, but rather it is condemnation of that very pattern.[23] Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation. Through disobedience the woman has become slave. Her initiative and her freedom vanish. The man is corrupted also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin.[24] This sin vitiates all relationships: between animals and human beings (3:15); mothers and children (3:16); husbands and wives (3:16); man and the soil (3:17, 18); man and his work (3:19). Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.

A further observation about these judgments: They are culturally conditioned. Husband and work (childbearing) define the woman; wife and work (farming) define the man. A literal reading of the story limits both creatures and limits the story. To be faithful translators, we must recognize that women as well as men move beyond these culturally defined roles, even as the intentionality and function of the myth move beyond its original setting. Whatever forms stereotyping takes in our own culture, they are judgments upon our common sin and disobedience. The suffering and oppression we women and men know now are marks of our fall, not of our creation.

At this place of sin and judgment "the man called his wife's name Eve" (3:20), thereby asserting his rule over her. The naming itself faults the man for corrupting a relationship of mutuality and equality. An so Yahweh evicts the primeval couple from the Garden, yet with signals of grace.[25] Interestingly, the conclusion of the story does not specify the sexes in flight. Instead the narrator resumes use of the generic and androgynous term *'adham* with which the story began and thereby completes an overall ring composition (3:22-24).

Visiting the Garden of Eden in the days of the Women's Movement, we need no longer accept the traditional exegesis of Genesis 2-3. Rather than legitimating the patriarchal culture from which it comes, the myth places that culture under judgment. And thus it functions to liberate, not to enslave. This function we can recover and appropriate. The Yahwist narrative tells us who we are (creatures of equality and mutuality); it tells us who we have become (creatures of opposition); and so it opens possibilities for change, for a return to our true liberation under God. In other words, the story calls female and male to repent.

ENDNOTES

1. See, *inter alia*, Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 51-54; Eva Figes, *Patriarchal Attitudes* (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1970), p. 38f.; Mary Daly, "The Courage to See," *Christian Century*, September 22,1971, p. 1110; Sheila D. Collins, "Toward a Feminist Theology," *Christian Century*, August 2, 1972, p. 798; Lilly Rivlin, "Lilith: The First Woman," *Ms.* (December 1972): 93, 114.
2. Cf. E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 172f.; S.H. Hooke, "Genesis," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), p. 179.

3. E.g., Elizabeth Cady Stanton observed that Genesis 1:26-28 "dignifies woman as an important factor in the creation, equal in power and glory with man," while Genesis 2 "makes her a mere afterthought" (*The Woman's Bible*, Part 1 [New York: European Publishing Company, 1895], p. 20). See also Elsie Adams and Mary Louise Briscoe, *Up Against the Wall, Mother…* (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1971), p. 4.

4. Cf. Eugene H. Maly, "Genesis," *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 12: "But woman's existence, psychologically and in the social order, is dependent on man."

5. See John L. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics of Gen. 2-3," *Theological Studies* 15 (1954): 559; John A. Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* (June 1970): 143. Bailey writes emphatically of the remarkable importance and position of the woman in Genesis 2-3, "all the more extraordinary when one realizes that this is the only account of the creation of woman as such in ancient Near Eastern literature." He hedges, however, in seeing the themes of helper and naming (Genesis 2:18-23) as indicative of a "certain subordination" of woman to man. These reservations are unnecessary; see below. Cf. also Claus Westermann, *Genesis, Biblischer Kommentar* I/4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), p. 312.

6. James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* (March 1969): 9f.; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966), *passim* and esp. p. 5.

7. I Chronicles 4:4; 12:9; Nehemiah 3:19.

8. Psalms 121:2; 124:8; 33:20; 115:9-11; Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29.

9. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958), p. 591f.

10. The verb *bnh* (to build) suggests considerable labor. It is used of towns, towers, altars, and fortification, as well as of the primeval woman (Koehler-Baumgartner, [*Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*], p.134). In Genesis 2:22 it may mean the fashioning of clay around the rib (Ruth Amiran, "Myths of the Creation of Man and the Jericho Statues," *BASOR* No. 167, October 1962, p. 24f).

11. See Walter Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gen 2, 23a)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (October 1970): 532-42.

12. In proposing as primary an androgynous interpretation of *'adham*, I find virtually no support from (male) biblical scholars. But my view stands as documented from the text, and I take refuge among a remnant of ancient (male) rabbis (see George Foot Moore, *Judaism* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927], vol. I, p. 453; also Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* [New York: Meridian Books, World Publishing Company, 1970], pp. 152ff., 279f.).

13. See, e.g., G. von Rad, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp.80-82; John H. Marks, "Genesis," *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1971), p. 5; Bailey, ["Initiation and the Primal Woman"], p. 143.

14. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, pp. 316ff.

15. Verse 24 probably mirrors a matriarchal society (so von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 83). If the myth were designed to support patriarchy, it is difficult to explain how this verse survived without proper alteration. Westermann contends, however, that an emphasis on matriarchy misunderstands the point of the verse, which is the total communion of woman and man (*Genesis*, p. 317).

16. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part I (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, n.d.), p. 142f.

17. von Rad, *Genesis*, pp. 87-88.

18. Ricoeur departs from the traditional interpretation of the woman when he writes: "Eve n'est donc pas la femme en tant que 'deuxième sexe'; toute femme et tout home sont Adam; tout home et toute femme sont Eve." But the fourth clause of his sentence obscures this complete identity of Adam and Eve: "tout femme peche 'en' Adam, tout home est seduit 'en' Eve." By switching from an active to a passive verb, Ricoeur makes only the woman directly responsible for both sinning and seducing. (Paul Ricoeur, Finitude et Culpabilité, II, *La Symbolique du Mal* [Aubier, Editions Montaigne, Paris, 1960]. Cf. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1969], p. 255.

19. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics," p. 570.

20. See Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman," p. 148.

21. See Westermann, *Genesis*, p.340.

22. For a discussion of the serpent, see Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, pp. 255-60.

23. Cf. Edwin M. God, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 84, note 4: "Si it not surprising that, in a culture where the subordination of woman to man was a virtually unquestioned social principle, the etiology of the subordination should be in the context of man's primal sin? Perhaps woman's subordination was not unquestioned in Israel." Cf. also Henricus Renckens, *Isrel's Concept of the Beginning* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), p. 217f.
24. *Contra* Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 357.
25. Von Rad, *Genesis*, pp. 94, 148.

5

Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America

Benjamin Franklin

Savages we call them, because their Manners differ from ours, which we think the Perfection of Civility. They think the same of theirs.

Perhaps if we could examine the Manners of different Nations with Impartiality, we should find no People so rude as to be without Rules of Politeness, nor any so polite as not to have some Remains of Rudeness

The Indian Men when young are Hunters and Warriors; when old, Counsellors; for all their Government is by Counsel of the Sages; there is no Force there are no Prisons, no Officers to compel Obedience, or inflict Punishment.—Hence they generally study Oratory; the best Speaker having the most Influence. The Indian Women till the Ground, dress the Food, nurse and bring up the Children, & preserve & hand down to Posterity the Memory of public Transactions. These Employments of Men and Women are accounted natural & honorable, Having few artificial Wants, they have abundance of Leisure for Improvement by Conversation. Our laborious Manner of Life compar'd with theirs, they esteem slavish & base; and the Learning on which we value ourselves, they regard as frivolous & useless. An Instance of this occurr'd at the Treaty of Lancaster in Pennsylvania, anno 1744, between the Government of Virginia and the Six Nations. After the principal Business was settled, the Commissioners from Virginia acquainted the Indians by a Speech, that there was at Williamsburg a College, with a Fund for Educating Indian youth; and that if the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their young Lads to that College, the Government would take Care that they should be well provided for, and instructed in all the Learning of the White People. It is one of the Indian Rules of Politeness not to answer a public Proposition the same day that it is made; they think it would be treating it as a light matter, and that they show it Respect by taking time to consider it, as of a Matter important. They therefore deferr'd their Answer till the Day following; when their Speaker began by expressing their deep Sense of the Kindness of the Virginia Government in making them that Offer, for we know, says he, that you highly esteem the kind of Learning taught in those Colleges, and that the Maintenance of our young Men while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinc'd therefore that you mean to do us Good by your Proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you who are wise must know, that different Nations have different Conceptions of Things, and you will therefore not take it amiss if our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some Experience of it: Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us they were bad Runners ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters Warriors, or Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less oblig'd by your kind Offer tho' we decline accepting it; and to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take great Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.

Having frequent Occasions to hold public Councils, they have acquired great Order and Decency in conducting them. The old Men sit in the foremost Ranks, the Warriors in the next, and the Women & Children in the hindmost. The Business of the Women is to take exact Notice of what passes, imprint it in their Memories, for they have no Writing, and communicate it to their Children. They are the Records of the Councils, and they preserve Traditions of the Stipulations in Treaties 100 Years back, which when we compare with our Writings we always find exact. He that would speak rises. The rest observe a profound Silence. When he has finish'd and sits down; they leave him 5 or 6 Minutes to recollect, that if he has omitted anything he intended to say, or has anything to add, he may rise again and deliver it. To interrupt another, even in common Conversation, is reckon'd highly indecent. How different this is, from the Conduct of a polite British House of Commons where scarce every person without some confusion, that makes the Speaker hoarse in calling to Order and how different from the Mode of Conversation in many polite Companies of Europe, where if you do not deliver your Sentence with great Rapidity, you are cut off in the middle of it by the Impatients Loquacity of those you converse with, and never suffer'd to finish it.

The Politeness of the Savages in Conversation is indeed carried to excess, since it does not permit them to contradict or deny the truth of what is asserted in their presence; by this means they indeed avoid disputes, but then it becomes difficult to know their minds, or what impression you make upon them. The missionaries who have attempted to convert them to Christianity, all complain of this as one of the great difficulties of their mission: The Indians hear with patience the truths of the Gospel explain'd to them, and give their usual tokens of assent & approbation: You would think they were convinc'd. No such matter. It is mere civility. A Swedish Minister, having assembled the Chiefs of the Saquehanah Indians, made a Sermon to them, acquainting them with the principal historical Facts on which our Religion is founded, such as the Fall of our first Parents by eating an apple; the Coming of Christ, to repair the mischief; his miracles & suffering, &c. When he had finished, an Indian orator stood up to thank him. What you have told us, says he, is all very good. It is indeed a bad thing to eat Apples. It is better to make them all into cider. We are much oblig'd by your kindness in coming so far to tell us these things which you have heard from your Mothers; in return I will tell you some of those we have heard from ours. In the Beginning our Fathers had only the Flesh of Animals to subsist on, and if their hunting was unsuccessful, they were starving. Two of our young Hunters having kill'd a Deer, made a Fire in the Woods to broil some Part of it. When they were about to satisfy their Hunger, they beheld a beautiful young Woman descend from the Clouds, and seat herself on that Hill which you see yonder among the blue Mountains. They said to each other, It is a Spirit that perhaps has smelt our broiling Venison & wishes to eat of it: Let us offer some to her. They presented her with the Tongue, She was pleas'd with the Taste of it, and said, Your Kindness shall be rewarded: Come to this Place after thirteen Moons, and you shall find something that will be of great Benefit in nourishing you and your Children to the latest Generations. They did so, and to their Surprise found Plants they had never seen before, but which from that antique time have been instantly cultivated among us to our great Advantage. Where her right Hand had touch'd the Ground they found Maize; Where her left hand had touch'd it, they found Kidney Beans, and where her Backside had rested on it, they found Tobacco.—The good Missionary disgusted with this idle Tale, said, What I delivered to you were sacred Truths, but what you tell me is mere Fable, Fiction and Falshood. The Indian offended, reply'd, My Brother, it seems your Friends have not done you Justice in your Education, they have not well instructed you in the Rules of common Civility. You saw that we who understand and practice those Rules, believ'd all your Stories: Why do you refuse to believe ours?

When any of them come into our Towns, our People are apt to crowd round them, gaze upon them, & incommode them where they desire to be private; this they esteem great Rudeness, the Effect of & Want of Instruction in the Rules of Civility & good Manners. We have, say they, as much Curiosity as you, and when you come into our Towns, we wish for Opportunities of looking at you; but for this purpose we hide our Selves behind Bushes where you are to pass, and never intrude ourselves into your Company.

Their Manner of entering one anothers villages has likewise its Rules. It is reckon'd uncivil in travelling Strangers to enter a Village abruptly, without giving Notice of their Approach. Therefore as soon as they arrive within Hearing, they stop & hollow, remaining there till invited to enter. Two old Men usually come out to them, and lead them in. There is in every Village a vacant Dwelling called the Strangers House. Here they are plac'd, while the old Men go round from Hut to Hut, acquainting the Inhabitants

that Strangers are arriv'd who are probably hungry & weary; and every one sends them what he can spare of Victuals & Skins to repose on. When the Strangers are refresh'd, Pipes & Tobacco are brought, and then, but not before, Conversation begins, with Enquiries who they are, whither bound, what News, &c. and it usually ends with Offers of Service if the Strangers have occasion of Guides or any Necessaries for continuing their Journey, and nothing is exacted for the Entertainment.

The same Hospitality esteem'd among them as a principal Virtue, is practic'd by private Persons, of which Conrad Weiser, our Interpreter gave me the following Instance. He had been naturaliz'd among the Six Nations, & spoke well the Mohock Language. In going thro' the Indian Country to carry a Message from our Governor to the Council at Onondaga, he call'd at the Habitation of Canasetego an old Acquaintance, who embrac'd him, spread Furs for him to sit on, plaid before him some boil'd Beans & Venison, and mix'd some Rum & Water for his Drink. When he was well refresh'd, and had lit his Pipe, Canassetego began to converse with him, ask'd how he had fard the many Years since they had seen each other, whence he then came, what occasion'd the Journey, &c. &c. Conrad answer'd all his Questions, & when the Discourse began to flag, the Indian to continue it, said, Conrad, you have lived long among the white People and know something of their Customs. I have been sometimes at Albany, and have observed that once in Seven Days they shut up their Shops, and assemble all in the great House; tell me, what is it for? what do they do there?—They meet there, says Conrad, to hear and learn good Things. I do not doubt says the Indian, that they tell you so: They have told me the same; But I doubt the Truth of what they say, and I will tell you my Reasons. I was lately to Albany to sell my Skins, & buy Blankets, Knives, Powder &c Rum &c You know I us'd generally to deal with Hans Hanson, but I was a little inclin'd this time to try some other Merchant; however, I call'd first upon Hans, & ask'd him what he would give for Beaver. He said he could not give more than four Shillings a Pound; but says he I cannot talk on Business now; this is the Day when we meet together to learn good Things, and I am going to the Meeting. So I thought to myself, since we cannot do any Business today, I may as well go to the Meeting too; and I went with him. There stood up a Man in Black, and began to talk to the People very angrily. I did not understand what he said; but perceiving that he look'd much at me, and at Hanson, I imagin'd he was angry at seeing me there, so I went out, sat down near the House, struck Fire and lit my Pipe, waiting till the Meeting should break up. I thought too that the Man had mention'd something of Beaver, & I suspected it might be the Subject of their Making. so when they came out, I accosted my Merchant, Well, Hans, says I, I hope you have agreed to give more than four Shillings a Pound. No, says he, I cannot give so much; I cannot give more than three shillings & sixpence. I then spoke to several other Dealers, but they all sung the same Song. Three & sixpence, Three & sixpence. This made it clear to me that my Suspicion was right; and that whatever they pretended of meeting to learn Good Things, the real purpose was to consult how to cheat Indians on the Price of Beaver. Consider but a little, Conrad, and you must be of my Opinion. If they met so often to learn Good Things, they would certainly have learnt some before this time. But they are still ignorant. You know our Practice. If a white Man in travelling thro' our Country, enters one of our Cabins, we all treat him as I treat you; we dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, we give him Meat & Drinks that he may allay his Thirst and Hunger, and spread soft Furs for him to rest & sleep on: We demand nothing in return. But if I go into a white Man's House at Albany, and ask for Victuals & Drink, they say, where is your Money? and if I have none; they say, Get out you Indian Dog. You see they have not yet learnt those little Good Things, that we need no Meetings to be instructed in, because our Mothers taught them to us when we were Children: And therefore, it is impossible their Meeting, Should be as they say, for any such purpose, or have any such Effect. They are only to contrive *the Cheating of Indians in the Price of Beaver.*

6

Corn Mother

[Penobscot]

What the buffalo represented to the nomadic tribes of the Plains, corn was to the planting people of the East and the Southwest—the all-nourishing sacred food, the subject of innumerable legends and the central theme of many rituals. Derived from a wild grass called teosintl, corn was planted in Mexico's Tehuacan Valley as early as 8,000 years ago. The oldest corn found north of the border was discovered in New Mexico's Bat Cave. It is about 5,500 years old. The Hopis say: "Moing'iima makes corn. Everything grows on his body. He is short, about the height of a boy. He has a female partner. Every summer he becomes heavy, his body is full of vegetables: watermelon, corn, squash. They grow in his body. When the Hopi plant, they invariably ask him to make the crop flourish; then their things come up, whether vegetables or fruit. When he shaves his body, the seeds come out, and afterward his body is thin. He used to live on this earth and go with the Hopi. When things grow ripe, he becomes thin and is unhappy. He stays in the west." Corn had equal significance for tribes in the East, as we see in this tale from a New England tribe.

When Kloskurbeh, the All-maker, lived on earth, there were no people yet. But one day when the sun was high, a youth appeared and called him "Uncle, brother of my mother." This young man was born from the foam of the waves, foam quickened by the wind and warmed by the sun. It was the motion of the wind, the moistness of water, and the sun's warmth, which gave him life-warmth above all, because warmth is life. And the young man lived with Kloskurbeh and became his chief helper.

Now, after these two powerful beings had created all manner of things, there came to them, as the sun was shining at high noon, a beautiful girl. She was born of the wonderful earth plant, and of the dew, and of warmth. Because a drop of dew fell on a leaf and was warmed by the sun, and the warming sun is life, this girl came into being-from the green living plant, from moisture, and from warmth.

"I am love," said the maiden. I am a strength giver, I am the nourisher, I am the provider of men and animals. They all love me."

Then Kloskurbeh thanked the Great Mystery Above for having sent them the maiden. The youth, the Great Nephew, married her, and the girl conceived and thus became First Mother. And Kloskurbeh, the Great Uncle, who teaches humans all they need to know, taught their children how to live. Then he went away to dwell in the north, from which he will return sometime when he is needed.

Now the people increased and became numerous. They lived by hunting, and the more people there were, the less game they found. They were hunting it out, and as the animals decreased, starvation came upon the people. And First Mother pitied them.

The little children came to First Mother and said: "We are hungry. Feed us." But she had nothing to give them, and she wept. She told them: "Be patient. I will make some food. Then your little bellies will be full." But she kept weeping.

Her husband asked: "How can I make you smile? How can I make you happy?"

"There is only one thing that will stop my tears."

"What is it?" asked her husband.

"It is this: you must kill me."

"I could never do that."

"You must, or I will go on weeping and grieving forever."

Then the husband traveled far, to the end of the earth, to the north he went, to ask the Great Instructor, his uncle Kloskurbeh, what he should do.

"You must do what she wants. You must kill her," said Kloskurbeh. Then the young man went back to his home, and it was his turn to weep. But First Mother said: "Tomorrow at high noon you must do it. After you have killed me, let two of our sons take hold of my hair and drag my body over that empty patch of earth. Let them drag me back and forth, back and forth, over every part of the patch, until all my flesh has been torn from my body. Afterwards, take my bones, gather them up, and bury them in the middle of this clearing. Then leave that place."

She smiled and said, "Wait seven moons and then come back, and you will find my flesh there, flesh given out of love, and it will nourish and strengthen you forever and ever."

So it was done. The husband slew his wife and her sons, praying, dragged her body to and fro as she had commanded, until her flesh covered all the earth. Then they took up her bones and buried them in the middle of it. Weeping loudly, they went away.

When the husband and his children and his children's children came back to that place after seven moons had passed, they found the earth covered with tall, green, tasseled plants. The plants' fruit-corn-was First Mother's flesh, given so that the people might live and flourish. And they partook of First Mother's flesh and found it sweet beyond words. Following her instructions, they did not eat all, but put many kernels back into the earth. In this way her flesh and spirit renewed themselves every seven months, generation after generation.

And at the spot where they had buried First Mother's bones, there grew another plant, broad-leafed and fragrant. It was First Mother's breath, and they heard her spirit talking: "Burn this up and smoke it. It is sacred. It will clear your minds, help your prayers, and gladden your hearts."

And First Mother's husband called the first plant Skarmunal, corn, and the second plant utarmur-wayeh, tobacco.

"Remember," he told the people, "and take good care of First Mother's flesh, because it is her goodness become substance. Take good care of her breath, because it is her love turned into smoke. Remember her and think of her whenever you eat, whenever you smoke this sacred plant, because she has given her life so that you might live. Yet she is not dead, she lives: in undying love she renews herself again and again."

– *Retold from three nineteenth-century sources, including Joseph Nicolar.*

SOURCE: From *American Indian Myths and Legends*, Selected and Edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, Pantheon Books, New York, a Division of Random House, Inc., 1984. Pages 11–13.

7

History of the Miraculous Apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531

Herein is told, in all truth, how by a great miracle the illustrious Virgin, Blessed Mary, Mother of God, Our Lady, appeared anew, in the palce known as Tepeyacac.

She appeared first to an Indian named Juan Diego; and later her divine Image also appeared in the presence of the first Bishop of Mexico, Don Fray Juan de Zumarraga; also there are told various miracles which have been done. It was ten years after the beginning of bringing water from the mountain of Mexico, when the arrow and the shield had been put away, when in all parts of the country there was tranquility which was beginning to show its light, and faith and knowledge of Him was being taught through Whose favor we have our being, Who is the only true God.

In the year 1531, early in the month of December, it happened that an humble Indian, called Juan Diego, whose dwelling, it is said, was in Quahutitlan, although for divine worship he pertained to Tlatilolco, one Saturday very early in the morning, while he was on his way to divine worship according to his custom, when he had arrived near the top of the hill called Tepeyacac, as it was near dawn, he heard above the hill a singing like that when many choice birds sing together, their voices resounding as if echoing throughout the hills; he was greatly rejoiced; their son gave him rapture exceeding that of the bell-bird and other rare birds of song.

Juan Diego stopped to wonder and said to himself: *Is it I who have this good fortune to hear what I hear? Or am I perhaps only dreaming? Where am I? Perhaps this is the place the ancients, our forefathers, used to tell about—our grandfathers—the flowery land, the fruitful land? Is it perchance the earthly paradise?*

And while he was looking towards the hilltop, facing the east, from which came the celestial song, suddenly the singing stopped and he heard someone calling as if from the top of the hill, saying: *Juan*. Juan Diego did not dare to go there where he was being called; he did not move, perhaps in some way marveling; yet he was filled with great joy and delight, and then, presently, he began to climb the summit where he was called.

And, when he was nearing it, on the top of the peak he saw a lady who was standing there who had called him from a distance, and, having come into her presence, he was struck with wonder at the radiance of her exceeding great beauty, her garments shining like the sun; and the stones of the hill, and the caves, reflecting the brightness of her light were like precious gold; and he saw how the rainbow clothed the land so that the cactus and other things that grew there seemed like celestial plants, their leaves and thorns shining like gold in her presence. He made obeisance and heard her voice, her words, which rejoiced him utterly when she asked, very tenderly, as if she loved him:

Listen, xocoyote[1] *mio, Juan, where are you going?*

1 *Xocoyote*: This Nahuatl word is variously translated into Spanish as if it were "my little son" or "my dear son." *Xocoyota* is the form for "daughter."

And he replied: *My Holy One, my Lady, my Damsel, I am on my way to your house at Mexico-Tlatilulco; I go in pursuit of the holy things which our priests teach us.*

Whereupon She told him, and made him aware of her divine will, saying: *You must know, and be very certain in your heart, my son, that I am truly the eternal Virgin, holy Mother of the True God, through Whose favor we live, the Creator, Lord of Heaven, and Lord of the Earth. I very much desire that they build me a church here, so that in it I may show and may make known and give all my love, my mercy, and my help and my protection—I am in truth your merciful mother—to you and to all the other people dear to me who call upon me, who search for me, who confide in me; here I will hear their sorrow, their words, so that I may make perfect and cure their illnesses, their labors, and their calamities. And so that my intention may be made known, and my mercy, go now to the episcopal palace of the Bishop of Mexico and tell him that I send you to tell him how much I desire to have a church built here, and tell him very well all that you have seen and all that you have heard; and be sure in your heart that I will pay you with glory and you will deserve much that I will repay you for your weariness, your work, which you will bear diligently doing what I send you to do. Now here my words, my dear son, and go and do everything carefully and quickly.*

Then he humbled himself before her and said: *My Holy One, my Lady, I will go now and fulfill your commandment.*

And straightaway he went down to accomplish that with which he was charged, and took the road that leads straight to Mexico.

And when he had arrived within the city, he went at once to the episcopal palace of the Lord Bishop, who was the first [Bishop] to come, whose name was Don Fray Juan de Zumarraga, a religious of St. Francis. And having arrived there, he made haste to ask to see the Lord Bishop, asking his servants to give notice of him. After a good while they came to call him, and the Bishop advised them that he should come in; and when he had come into his presence, he knelt and made obeisance, and then after this he related the words of the Queen of Heaven, and told besides all that he had seen and all that he had heard. And [the Bishop] having heard all his words and the commandment as if he were not perfectly persuaded, said in response:

My son, come again another time when we can be more leisurely; and I will hear more from you about the origin of this; I will look into this about which you have come, your will, your desire.

And he departed with much sorrow because he had not been able to convince him of the truth of his mission.

Thereupon he returned that same day and went straightaway to the hill where he had seen the Queen of Heaven, who was even then standing there where he had first seen Her, waiting for him, and he, having seen Her, made obeisance, kneeling upon the ground, and said:

My Holy one, most noble of persons, My Lady, my Xocoyota, my Damsel, I went there where You sent me; although it was most difficult to enter the house of the Lord Bishop, I saw him at last, and in his presence I gave him your message in the way You instructed me; he received me very courteously, and listened with attention; but he answered as if he could not be certain and did not believe; he told me: Come again another time when we can be at leisure, and I will hear you from beginning to end; I will look into that about which you come, what it is you want and ask me for. He seemed to me, when he answered, to be thinking perhaps that the church You desire to have made here was perchance not Your will, but a fancy of mine. I pray You, my Holy One, my Lady, my Daughter, that any one of the noble lords who are well known, reverenced and respected be the one to undertake this so that Your words will be believed. For it is true that I am only a poor man; I am not worthy of being there where You send me; pardon me, my Xocoyota, I do not wish to make your noble heart sad; I do not want to fall into your displeasure.

Then the always noble Virgin answered him, saying: *Hear me, my son, it is true that I do not lack for servants or ambassadors to whom I could entrust my message so that my will could be verified, but it is important that*

you speak for me in this matter, weary as you are; in your hands you have the means of verifying, of making plain my desire, my will; I pray you, my xocoyote, and advise you with much care, that you go again tomorrow to see the Bishop and represent me; give him an understanding of my desire, my will, that he build the church that I ask, and tell him once again that it is the eternal Virgin, Holy Mary, the Mother of God, who sends you to him.

And Juan Diego answered her, saying: *Queen of Heaven, my Holy One, my Damsel, do not trouble your heart, for I will go with all my heart and make plain Your voice, Your words. It is not because I did not want to go, or because the road is stony, but only because perhaps I would not be heard, and if I were heard I would not be believed. I will go and do your bidding and tomorrow in the afternoon about sunset I will return to give the answer to your words the Lord Bishop will make; and now I leave You, my Xocoyota, my Damsel, my Lady; meanwhile, rest You.*

With this, he went to his house to rest. The next day being Sunday, he left his house in the morning and went straightaway to Tlatilulco, to attend Mass and the sermon. Then, being determined to see the Bishop, when Mass and the sermon were finished, at ten o'clock, with all the other Indians he came out of the church; but Juan Diego left them and went to the palace of the Lord Bishop. And having arrived there, he spared no effort in order to see him and when, after great difficulty, he did see him again, he fell to his knees and implored him to the point of weeping, much moved, in an effort to make plain the words of the Queen of Heaven, and that the message and the will of the most resplendent Virgin would be believed; that the church be built as She asked, where She wished it.

But the Lord Bishop asked Juan Diego many things, to know for certain what had taken place, questioning him: Where did he see Her? What did the Lady look like whom he saw? And he told the Lord Bishop all that he had seen. But although he told him everything exactly, so that it seemed in all likelihood that She was the Immaculate Virgin, Mary most pure, the beloved Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop said he could not be certain. He said: It is not only with her words that we have to do, but also to obtain that for which she asks. It is very necessary to have some sign by which we may believe that it is really the Queen of Heaven who sends you.

And Juan Diego, having heard him, said to the Lord Bishop: *My Lord, wait for whatever sign it is that you ask for, and I will go at once to ask the Queen of Heaven, who sent me.* And the Lord Bishop, seeing that he had agreed, and so that he should not be confused or worried, in any way, urged him to go; and then, calling some of his servants in whom he had much confidence, he asked them to follow and to watch where he went and see whomsoever it was that he went to see, and with whom he might speak. And this was done accordingly, and when Juan Diego reached the place where a bridge over the river, near the hill, met the royal highway, they lost him, and although they searched for him everywhere they could not find him in any part of that land. And so they returned, and not only were they weary, but extremely annoyed with him, and upon their return they abused him much with the Lord Bishop, over all that had happened, for they did not believe in him; they said that he had been deceiving him, and had imagined all that he had come to relate to him, or perhaps he had dreamed it, and they agreed and said that if he should come again they would seize him and chastise him severely so that he would not lie another time.

The next day, Monday, when Juan Diego was to bring some sign by which he might be believed, he did not return, since, when he arrived at his house, an uncle of his who was staying there, named Juan Bernardino, was very ill of a burning fever; Juan Diego went at once to bring a doctor and then he procured medicine; but there still was no time because the man was very ill. Early in the morning his uncle begged him to go out to bring one of the priests from Tlatilulco so that he might be confessed, for he was very certain that his time had come to die, now that he was too weak to rise, and could not get well.

And on Tuesday, very early in the morning, Juan Diego left his house to go to Tlatilulco to call a priest, and as he was nearing the hill on the road which lies at the foot of the hill towards the west, which was his usual way, he said to himself: *If I go straight on, without doubt I will see Our Lady and She will persuade*

me to take the sign to the Lord Bishop; let us first do our duty; I will go first to call the priest for my poor uncle; will he not be waiting for him?

With this he turned to another road at the foot of the slope and was coming down the other side towards the east to take a short cut to Mexico; he thought that by turning that way the Queen of Heaven would not see him, but She was watching for him, and he saw Her on the hilltop where he had always seen Her before, coming down that side of the slope, by the shortest way, and She said to him:

Xocoyote mio, where are you goin? What road is this you are taking?

And he was frightened; it is not known whether he was disgusted with himself, or was ashamed, or perhaps he was struck with wonder; he prostrated himself before Her and greeted Her, saying: *My Daughter, my Xocoyota, God keep You, Lady. How did You waken? And is your most pure body well, perchance? My Holy One, I will bring pain to your heart—for I must tell You, my Virgin, that an uncle of mine, who is Your servant, is very sick, with an illness so strong that without doubt he will die of it; I am hastening to Your house in Mexico to call one of Our Lord's dear ones, our priests, to come to confess him, and when I have done that, then I will come back to carry out Your commandment. My Virgin, my Lady, forgive me, be patient with me until I do my duty, and then tomorrow I will come back to You.*

And having heard Juan Diego's explanation, the most holy and immaculate Virgin replied to him:

Listen, and be sure, my dear son, that I will protect you; do not be frightened or grieve, or let your heart be dismayed; however great the illness may be that you speak of, am I not here, I who am your mother, and is not my help a refuge? Am I not of your kind?[2] *Do not be concerned about your uncle's illness, for he is not now going to die; be assured that he is now already well. Is there anything else needful?* (And in that same hour his uncle was healed, as later he learned).

And Juan Diego, having heard the words of the Queen of Heaven, greatly rejoiced and was convinced, besought Her that She would send him again to see the Lord Bishop, to carry him some sign by which he could believe, as he had asked.

Whereupon the Queen of Heaven commanded him to climb up to the top of the hill where he had always seen her, saying: *Climb up to the top of the hill, my xocoyote, where you have seen me stand, and there you will find many flowers; pluck them and gather them together, and then bring them down here in my presence.*

Then Juan Diego climbed up the hill and when he had reached the top he marvelled to see blooming there many kinds of beautiful flowers of Castile, for it was then very cold, and he marvelled at their fragrance and odor. Then he began to pluck them, and gathered them together carefully, and wrapped them in his mantle, and when he had finished he descended and carried to the Queen of Heaven all the flowers he had plucked. She, when she had seen them, took them into her immaculate hands, gathered them together again, and laid them in his cloak once more and said to him:

My xocoyote, all these flowers are the sign that you must take to the Bishop; in my name tell him that with this he will see and recognize my will and that he must do what I ask; and you who are my ambassador worthy of confidence, I counsel you to take every care that you open your mantle only in the presence of the Bishop, and you must make it known to him what is that you carry, and tell him how I asked you to climb to the top of the hill to gather the flowers. Tell him also all that you have seen, so that you will persuade the Lord Bishop and he will see that the church is built for which I ask.

And the Queen of Heaven having acquainted him with this, he departed, following the royal highway which leads directly to Mexico; he traveled content, because he was persuaded that now he would succeed; he walked carefully, taking great pains not to injure what he was carrying in his mantle; he went

2 The Virgin identifies herself as an Indian.

glorying in the fragrance of the beautiful flowers. When he arrived at the Bishop's palace, he encountered his majordomo and other servants and asked them to tell the Bishop that he would like to see him; but none of them would, perhaps because it was still very early in the morning or, perhaps recognizing him, they were vexed or, because they knew how others of their household had lost him on the road when they were following him. They kept him waiting there a long time; he waited very humbly to see if they would call him, and when it was getting very late, they came to him to see what it was he was carrying as a proof of what he had related. And Juan Diego, seeing that he could not hide from them what he was carrying, when they had tormented him and jostled him and knocked him about, let them glimpse that he had roses, to deliver himself from them; and they, when they saw that they were roses of Castile, very fragrant and fresh, and not at all in their season, marvelled and wanted to take some of them. Three times they made bold to take them, but they could not because, when they tried to take them, they were not roses that they touched, but were as if painted or embroidered. Upon this, they went to the Lord Bishop to tell him what they had seen, and that the Indian who was there often before had come again and wanted to see him, and that they had kept him waiting there a long time.

The Lord Bishop, having heard this, knew that now this was the sign that should persuade him whether what the Indian had told him was true. He straightaway asked that he be brought in to see him.

Having come into his presence, Juan Diego fell to his knees (as he had always done) and again related fully all that he had seen, and full of satisfaction and wonder he said: *My Lord, I have done that which you asked me; I went to tell my Holy One, the Queen of Heaven, the beloved Virgin Mary, Mother of God, how you asked me for some sign that you might believe that it was She who desired you to build Her the church for which She asked. And also I told Her how I had given my word that I would bring you some sign so that you could believe in what She had put in my care, and She heard with pleasure your suggestion and found it good, and just now, early this morning, She told me to come again to see you and I asked Her for the sign that I had asked Her to give me, and then She sent me to the hilltop where I have always seen Her, to pluck the flowers that I should see there. And when I had plucked them, I took them to the foot of the mountain where She had remained, and She gathered them into her immaculate hands and then put them again into my mantle for me to bring them to you. Although I knew very well that the hilltop was not a place for flowers, since it is a place of thorns, cactuses, caves, and mezquites, I was not confused and did not doubt Her. When I reached the summit I saw there was a garden there of flowers with quantities of the fragrant flowers which are found in Castile; I took them and carried them to the Queen of Heaven and She told me that I must bring them to you, and now I have done it, so that you may see the sign that you ask for in order to do Her bidding, and so that you will see that my word is true. And here they are.*

Whereupon he opened his white cloak, in which he was carrying the flowers, and so as the roses of Castile dropped out to the floor, suddenly there appeared the most pure image of the most noble Virgin Mary, Mother of God, just exactly as it is, even now, in Her holy house, in Her church which is named Guadalupe;[3] and the Lord Bishop, having seen this, and all those who were with him, knelt down and gazed with wonder; and then they grew sad, and were sorrowful, and were aghast, and the Lord Bishop with tenderness and weeping begged Her forgiveness for not having done Her bidding at once. And when he had finished, he untied from Juan Diego's neck the cloak on which was printed the figure of the Queen of Heaven. And then he carried it into his chapel; and Juan Diego remained all that day in the house of the Bishop, who did not want him to go. And the following day the Bishop said to him: *Come, show us where it is the Queen of Heaven wishes us to build Her church.* And when he had shown them where it was, he told them that he wanted to go to his house to see his uncle Juan Bernardino who had been very ill and he had set out for Tlatilulco to get a priest to confess him, but the Queen of Heaven had told him that he was already cured.

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3 The original significance of this word is unclear. It is probably a Hispanic form of a compound derived from the Nahuatl (Aztec) word for "snake," *coatl*, and the Spanish word for "crush, trample," *llope*. Thus, *coatl-llope*, "she crushes the serpent." Interestingly, the image described here is clearly modelled on traditional Catholic figures of Immaculate Mary, Queen of Heaven, statues of whom (based on Genesis 3:15) feature the Virgin standing on a half-moon, crushing with her foot the Devil, represented as a snake. In addition, the Aztec culture hero is Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, and the Virgin is requesting that her Cathedral be built over the site of an Aztec place of worship, which, in fact, it was.

They did not let him go alone, but went with him to his house, and when they arrived there, they saw that his uncle was well and that nothing was now the matter with him; and the uncle wondered much when he saw such a company with his nephew, and all treating him with great courtesy, and he asked him: *How is it they treat you this way? And why do they reverence you so much?*

And Juan Diego told him that when he had gone from the house to call a confessor for him, he saw the Queen of Heaven on the hill called Tepeyacac and She had sent him to Mexico to see the Lord Bishop to have a church built for Her. And that She had also told him not to worry about his uncle, that he was now well.

Whereupon his uncle showed great joy and told him that it was true at that very hour he had been healed, and that he himself had seen exactly that same Person, and that She had told him how She had sent him to Mexico to see the Bishop, and also that when he saw him again, to tell him all that he had seen also, and how, miraculously, he had been restored to health, and that the most holy Image of the Immaculate Virgin should be called Santa Maria de Guadalupe.

And after this they brought Juan Bernardino in to the Lord Bishop's presence so that he might tell him under oath all that he had just related; and the Bishop kept the two men (that is, Juan Diego and Juan Bernardino) as his guests in his own house several days until the church for the Queen of Heaven was built where Juan Diego had shown them. And the Lord Bishop moved the sacred Image of the Queen of Heaven, which he had in his chapel, to the cathedral so that all the people could see it.

All the city was in a turmoil upon seeing Her most holy portrait; they saw that it had appeared miraculously, that no one in the world had painted it on Juan Diego's mantle; for this, on which the miraculous Image of the Queen of Heaven appeared, was *ayate*, a coarse fabric made of cactus fibre, rather like homespun, and well woven, for at that time all the Indian people covered themselves with *ayate*, except the nobles, the gentlemen, and the captains of war, who dressed themselves in cloaks of cotton, or in cloaks made of wool.

The esteemed *ayate* upon which the Immaculate Virgin, Our Sovereign Queen, appeared unexpectedly is made of two pieces sewn together with threads of cotton; the height of Her sacred Image from the sole of Her foot to the top of Her head measures six hands, and one woman's hand. Her sacred face is very beautiful, grave, and somewhat dark; her precious body, according to this, is small; her hands are held at her breast; the girdle at her waist is violet; her right foot only shows, a very little, and her slipper is earthen in color; her robe is rose-colored; in the shadows it appears deeper red, and it is embroidered with various flowers outlined in gold; pendant at her throat is a little gold circlet which is outlined with a black line around it; in the middle it has a cross; and one discovers glimpses of another, inner vestment of white cotton, daintily gathered at her wrists. The outer mantle which covers her from her head almost to her feet is of heavenly blue; half-way down its fullness hangs in folds, and it is bordered with gold, a rather wide band of gold thread, and all over it there are golden stars which are in number forty-six. Her most holy head is turned towards the right and is bending down; and on her head above her mantle she wears a shining gold crown, and at her feet there is the new moon with its horns pointed upward; and exactly in the middle of it the Immaculate Virgin is standing, and, it would seem also, in the middle of the sun, since its rays surround her everywhere. These rays number a hundred; some are large and others are small; those on each side of her sacred face and those above her head number twelve, in all they number fifty on each side. And outside the edges of this and her robes She is encircled with white clouds. This divine Image as it is described stands above an angel, half of whose body only appears, since he is in the midst of clouds. The angel's outstretched arms hold the edges of her outer robes as they hang in folds near her sacred feet. His garment is of rosy color with a gold ornament at his neck; his wings are made or composed of various sizes of feathers, and it seems as if he were very happy to be accompanying the Queen of Heaven.

1649

8

Still I Rise

Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

9

Claiming an Education

Adrienne Rich

IN THIS IMPORTANT ESSAY, Adrienne Rich (b. 1929) argues that education entails being responsible for oneself- not just for women, but for all students. Her emphasis is on clear thinking, active discussion, and the intellectual and imaginative capacity to be persuaded that new ideas might be true.

Rich, a well-known feminist, has written numerous essays and many volumes of poetry, including The Necessities of Life (1966), Leaflets (1969), The Will to Change (1971), and An Atlas of the Difficult World (1991). "Claiming an Education," a talk given at the Douglass College convocation in 1977, was first printed in the magazine The Common Woman *in 1977.*

For this convocation, I planned to separate my remarks into two parts: some thoughts about you, the woman students here, and some thoughts about us who teach in a women's college. But ultimately, those two parts are indivisible. If university education means anything beyond the processing of human beings into expected roles, through credit hours, tests, and grades (and I believe that in a women's college especially it *might* mean much more), it implies an ethical and intellectual contract between teacher and student. This contract must remain intuitive, dynamic, unwritten; but we must turn to it again and again if learning is to be reclaimed from the depersonalizing and cheapening pressures of the present-day academic scene.

The first thing I want to say to you who are students, is that you cannot afford to think of being here to *receive* an education; you will do much better to think of yourselves as being here to *claim* one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb "to claim" is: *to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face if possible contradiction*. "To receive" is *to come into possession of; to act as receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritative or true.* The difference is that between acting and being acted-upon, and for women it can literally mean the difference between life and death.

One of the devastating weaknesses of university learning, of the store of knowledge and opinion that has been handed down through academic training, has been its almost total erasure of women's experience and thought from the curriculum, and its exclusion of women as members of the academic community. Today, with increasing numbers of women students in nearly every branch of higher learning, we still see very few women in the upper levels of faculty and administration in most institutions. Douglass College itself is a women's college in a university administered overwhelmingly by men, who in turn are answerable to the state legislature, again composed predominantly of men. But the most significant fact for you is that what you learn here, the very texts you read, the lectures you hear, the way your studies are divided into categories and fragmented one from the other—all this reflects, to a very large degree, neither objective reality, nor an accurate picture of the past, nor a group of rigorously tested observations about human behavior. What you can learn here (and I mean not only at Douglass but any college in any university) is how men have perceived and organized their experience, their history, their ideas of social relationships, good and evil, sickness and health, etc. When you read or hear about "great issues," "major texts," "the mainstream of Western thought," you are hearing about what men, above all white men, in their male subjectivity, have decided is important.

Black and other minority peoples have for some time recognized that their racial and ethnic experience was not accounted for in the studies broadly labeled human; and that even the sciences can be racist. For many reasons, it has been more difficult for women to comprehend our exclusion, and to realize that even the sciences can be sexist. For one thing, it is only within the last hundred years that higher education

has grudgingly been opened up to women at all, even to white, middle-class women. And many of us have found our-selves poring eagerly over books with titles like: *The Descent of Man; Man and His Symbols; Irrational Man; The Phenomenon of Man; The Future of Man; Man and the Machine; From Man to Man; May Man Prevail?; Man, Science, and Society; or One-Dimensional Man*—books pretending to describe a "human" reality that does not include over one-half the human species.

Less than a decade ago, with the rebirth of a feminist movement in this country, women students and teachers in a number of universities began to demand and set up women's studies courses—to *claim* a woman-directed education. And, despite the inevitable accusations of "unscholarly," "group therapy," "faddism," etc., despite backlash and budget cuts, women's studies are still growing, offering to more and more women a new intellectual grasp on their lives, new understanding of our history, a fresh vision of the human experience, and also a critical basis for evaluating what they hear and read in other courses, and in the society at large.

But my talk is not really about women's studies, much as I believe in their scholarly, scientific, and human necessity. While I think that any Douglass student has everything to gain by investigating and enrolling in women's studies courses, I want to suggest that there is a more essential experience that you owe yourselves, one which courses in women's studies can greatly enrich, but which finally depends on you, in all your interactions with yourself and your world. This is the experience of *taking responsibility toward yourselves.* Our upbringing as women has so often told us that this should come second to our relationships and responsibilities to other people. We have been offered ethical models of the self-denying wife and mother; intellectual models of the brilliant but slapdash dilettante who never commits herself to anything the whole way, or the intelligent woman who denies her intelligence in order to seem more "feminine," or who sits in passive silence even when she disagrees inwardly with everything that is being said around her.

Responsibility to yourself means refusing to let others do your thinking, talking, and naming for you; it means learning to respect and use your own brains and instincts; hence, grappling with hard work. It means that you do not treat your body as a commodity with which to purchase superficial intimacy or economic security; for our bodies and minds are inseparable in this life, and when we allow our bodies to be treated as objects, our minds are in mortal danger. It means insisting that those to whom you give your friendship and love are able to respect your mind. It means being able to say, with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre:* "I have an inward treasure born with me, which can keep me alive if all the extraneous delights should be withheld or offered only at a price I cannot afford to give."

Responsibility to yourself means that you don't fall for shallow and easy solutions—predigested books and ideas, weekend encounters guaranteed to change your life, taking "gut" courses instead of ones you know will challenge you, bluffing at school and life instead of doing solid work, marrying early as an escape from real decisions, getting pregnant as an evasion of already existing problems. It means that you refuse to sell your talents and aspirations short, simply to avoid conflict and confrontation. And this, in turn, means resisting the forces in society which say that women should be nice, play safe, have low professional expectations, drown in love and forget about work, live through others, and stay in the places assigned to us. It means that we insist on a life of meaningful work, insist that work be as meaningful as love and friendship in our lives. It means, therefore, the courage to be "different"; not to be continuously available to others when we need time for ourselves and our work; to be able to demand of others—parents, friends, roommates, teachers, lovers, husbands, children —that they respect our sense of purpose and our integrity as persons. Women everywhere are finding the courage to do this, more and more, and we are finding that courage both in our study of women in the past who possessed it, and in each other as we look to other women for comradeship, community, and challenge. The difference between a life lived actively, and a life of passive drifting and dispersal of energies, is an immense difference. Once we begin to feel committed to our lives, responsible to ourselves, we can never again be satisfied with the old, passive way.

Now comes the second part of the contract. I believe that in a women's college you have the right to expect your faculty to take you seriously. The education of women has been a matter of debate for centuries, and old, negative attitudes about women's role, women's ability to think and take leadership, are still rife both in and outside the university. Many male professors (and I don't mean only at Douglass) still feel that teaching in a women's college is a second-rate career. Many tend to eroticize their women students—to treat them as sexual objects—instead of demanding the best of their minds. (At Yale a legal suit [*Alexander v. Yale*] has been brought against the university by a group of women students demanding a stated policy against sexual advances toward female students by male professors.) Many teachers, both men and women, trained in the male-centered tradition, are still handing the ideas and texts of that tradition

on to students without teaching them to criticize its antiwoman attitudes, its omission of women as part of the species. Too often, all of us fail to teach the most important thing, which is that clear thinking, active discussion, and excellent writing are all necessary for intellectual freedom, and that these require *hard work*. Sometimes, perhaps in discouragement with a culture which is both anti-intellectual and antiwoman, we may resign ourselves to low expectations for our students before we have given them half a chance to become more thoughtful, expressive human beings. We need to take to heart the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a poet, a thinking woman, and a feminist, who wrote in 1845 of her impatience with studies which cultivate a "passive recipiency" in the mind, and asserted that "women want to be made to *think actively:* their apprehension is quicker than that of men, but their defect lies for the most part in the logical faculty and in the higher mental activities." Note that she implies a defect which can be remedied by intellectual training, *not* an inborn lack of ability.

I have said that the contract on the student's part involves that you demand to be taken seriously so that you can also go on taking yourself seriously. This means seeking out criticism, recognizing that the most affirming thing anyone can do for you is demand that you push yourself further, show you the range of what you can do. It means rejecting attitudes of "take-it-easy," "why-be-so-serious," "why-worry-you'll-probably-get-married-anyway." It means assuming your share of responsibility for what happens in the classroom, because that affects the quality of your daily life here. It means that the student sees herself engaged with her teachers in an active, ongoing struggle for a real education. But for her to do this, her teachers must be committed to the belief that women's minds and experience are intrinsically valuable and indispensable to any civilization worthy the name; that there is no more exhilarating and intellectually fertile place in the academic world today than a women's college—if both students and teachers in large enough numbers are trying to fulfill this contract. The contract is really a pledge of mutual seriousness about women, about language, ideas, methods, and values. It is our shared commitment toward a world in which the inborn potentialities of so many women's minds will no longer be wasted, raveled-away, paralyzed, or denied.

WHAT DOES SHE SAY?

1. This essay is a famous statement of feminist ideas. Quickly and without censoring, make a list of the first five things that come to mind when you hear the word feminism. How do you think your assumptions will influence your reading of "Claiming an Education"? What will you be looking for? What do you expect to find?

2. As you read the essay, mark three passages that don't fit your expectations, that in some way are counter to what you think of when you hear the word feminism. Come to class prepared to read one of these aloud.

3. Rich talks about the "ethical and intellectual contract" that exists between teacher and student. As you read, mark this and any other passage that talks explicitly about ethics and the connection between ethics and intellectual life. Why is this essay included in a book about ethics?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

4. Rich argues that the use of the word man as a synonym for all people, as in mankind or humanity, implies a bias against women and ultimately harms their status. Explain why you agree or disagree. Does the use of a single word make that much difference? Does language matter? If you are a man, how would you react if the word woman was used as a synonym for all people?

5. Explain what Rich means by the" ethical and intellectual contract" that exists between teacher and student. In groups, develop a list of three further elements of such a contract. What do students agree to do in a class? What do teachers agree to do? What is the larger, ethical goal of these agreements? What is the connection between ethical and intellectual concerns, for Rich and for you?

6. Rich's essay is the text of a speech that she delivered to an audience of students at an all-female college. Do you think that the speech applies only to women? Would the essay make sense if every reference to women were changed to include men and women both? Would the argument still hold? Would the argument hold if every reference to women were changed to refer to men only?

7. Rich implicitly criticizes what she calls the "ethical model" of the "self-denying wife and mother." Write an essay responding to this criticism, based on your experience and reading as a college student. You can write this essay as a portrait of a particular woman you know-your mother or grandmother perhaps-or you can focus on a famous figure in our culture. As you reflect, consider whether "self-denial" is necessarily a bad thing. Shouldn't men be "self-denying," too? Why or why not? How does the issue of "self-denial" look in the twenty-first century, after decades of women working and assuming many of the roles once reserved for men?

10

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Chapter 2

On the "banking concept of education"

<http://www.Marxist.org/subject/education/freire/pedagogy/ch02.htm>

Paulo Freire

A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified. Education is suffering from narration sickness.

The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to "fill" the students with the contents of his narration—contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity.

The outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power. "Four times four is sixteen; the capital of Para is Belem." The student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance of "capital" in the affirmation "the capital of Para is Belem," that is, what Belem means for Para and what Para means for Brazil.

Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are.

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry, human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence—but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher.

The *raison d'etre* of libertarian education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students.

This solution is not (nor can it be) found in the banking concept. On the contrary, banking education maintains and even stimulates the contradiction through the following attitudes and practices, which mirror oppressive society as a whole:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
(d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them.

The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another.

Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in "changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them";[1] for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated. To achieve this end, the oppressors use the banking concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of "welfare recipients." They are treated as individual cases, as marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a "good, organized, and just" society. The oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society, which must therefore adjust these "incompetent and lazy" folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality. These marginals need to be "integrated," "incorporated" into the healthy society that they have "forsaken."

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not "marginals," are not people living "outside" society. They have always been "inside"—inside the structure which made them "beings for others." The solution is not to "integrate" them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become "beings for themselves." Such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressors' purposes; hence their utilization of the banking concept of education to avoid the threat of student *conscientizacao*.

The banking approach to adult education, for example, will never propose to students that they critically consider reality. It will deal instead with such vital questions as whether Roger gave green grass to the goat, and insist upon the importance of learning that on the contrary, Roger gave green grass to the rabbit. The "humanism" of the banking approach masks the effort to turn women and men into automatons—the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human.

Those who use the banking approach, knowingly or unknowingly (for there are innumerable well-intentioned bank-clerk teachers who do not realize that they are serving only to dehumanize), fail to perceive that the deposits themselves contain contradictions about reality. But, sooner or later, these

contradictions may lead formerly passive students to turn against their domestication and the attempt to domesticate reality. They may discover through existential experience that their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human. They may perceive through their relations with reality that reality is really a *process*, undergoing constant transformation. If men and women are searchers and their ontological vocation is humanization, sooner or later they may perceive the contradiction in which banking education seeks to maintain them, and then engage themselves in the struggle for their liberation.

But the humanist, revolutionary educator cannot wait for this possibility to materialize. From the outset, her efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this, they must be partners of the students in their relations with them.

The banking concept does not admit to such partnership—and necessarily so. To resolve the teacher-student contradiction, to exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation.

Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator. In this view, the person is not a conscious being *(corpo consciente);* he or she is rather the possessor of a consciousness: an empty "mind" passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside. For example, my desk, my books, my coffee cup, all the objects before me—as bits of the world which surround me—would be "inside" me, exactly as I am inside my study right now. This view makes no distinction between being accessible to consciousness and entering consciousness. The distinction, however, is essential: the objects which surround me are simply accessible to my consciousness, not located within it. I am aware of them, but they are not inside me.

It follows logically from the banking notion of consciousness that the educator's role is to regulate the way the world "enters into" the students. The teacher's task is to organize a process which already occurs spontaneously to "fill" the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge.[2] And since people "receive" the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world. The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is a better "fit" for the world. Translated into practice, this concept is well suited to the purposes of the oppressors, whose tranquility rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it.

The more completely the majority adapt to the purposes which the dominant minority prescribe for them (thereby depriving them of the right to their own purposes), the more easily the minority can continue to prescribe. The theory and practice of banking education serve this end quite efficiently. Verbalistic lessons, reading requirements,[3] the methods for evaluating knowledge, the distance between the teacher and the taught, the criteria for promotion: everything in this ready-to-wear approach serves to obviate thinking.

The bank-clerk educator does not realize that there is no true security in his hypertrophied role, that one must seek to live *with* others in solidarity. One cannot impose oneself, nor even merely co-exist with one's students. Solidarity requires true communication, and the concept by which such an educator is guided fears and proscribes communication.

Yet only through communication can human life hold meaning. The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students' thinking. The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible.

Because banking education begins with a false understanding of men and women as objects, it cannot promote the development of what Fromm calls "biophily," but instead produces its opposite: "necrophily."

While life is characterized by growth in a structured, functional manner, the necrophilous person loves all that does not grow, all that is mechanical. The necrophilous person is driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, to approach life mechanically, as if all living persons were things. ... Memory, rather than experience; having, rather than being, is what counts. The necrophilous person can relate to an object—a flower or a person—only if he possesses it; hence a threat to his possession is a threat to himself; if he loses possession he loses contact with the world. ... He loves control, and in the act of controlling he kills life.[4]

Oppression—overwhelming control—is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life. The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power.

When their efforts to act responsibly are frustrated, when they find themselves unable to use their faculties, people suffer. "This suffering due to impotence is rooted in the very fact that the human equilibrium has been disturbed."[5] But the inability to act which causes people's anguish also causes them to reject their impotence, by attempting

> ... to restore [their] capacity to act. But can [they], and how? One way is to submit to and identify with a person or group having power By this symbolic participation in another person's life, [men have] the illusion of acting, when in reality [they] only submit to and become a part of those who act.[6]

Populist manifestations perhaps best exemplify this type of behavior by the oppressed, who, by identifying with charismatic leaders, come to feel that they themselves are active and effective. The rebellion they express as they emerge in the historical process is motivated by that desire to act effectively. The dominant elites consider the remedy to be more domination and repression, carried out in the name of freedom, order, and social peace (that is, the peace of the elites). Thus they can condemn—logically from their point of view—"the violence of a strike by workers and [can] call upon the state in the same breath to use violence in putting down the strike."[7]

Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression. This accusation is not made in the naive hope that the dominant elites will thereby simply abandon the practice. Its objective is to call the attention of true humanists to the fact that they cannot use banking educational methods in the pursuit of liberation, for they would only negate that very pursuit. Nor may a revolutionary society inherit these methods from an oppressor society. The revolutionary society which practices banking education is either misguided or mistrusting of people. In either event it is threatened by the specter of reaction.

Unfortunately, those who espouse the cause of liberation are themselves surrounded and influenced by the climate which generates the banking concept, and often do not perceive its true significance or its dehumanizing power. Paradoxically, then, they utilize this same instrument of alienation in what they consider an effort to liberate. Indeed, some "revolutionaries" brand as "innocents," "dreamers," or even "reactionaries" those who would challenge this educational practice. But one does not liberate people by alienating them. Authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it. Those truly committed to the cause of liberation can accept neither the mechanistic concept of consciousness as an empty vessel to be filled, nor the use of banking methods of domination (propaganda, slogans—deposits) in the name of liberation.

Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world. "Problem-posing" education, responding to the essence of consciousness—intentionality—rejects communiques and embodies communication. It epitomizes the special characteristic of consciousness: being *conscious of* not only as intent on objects but as turned in upon itself in a Jasperian "split"—consciousness as consciousness *of* consciousness.

Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information. It is a learning situation in which the cognizable object (far from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates the cognitive actors—teacher on the one hand and students on the other. Accordingly the practice of problem-posing education entails at the outset that the teacher-student contradiction be resolved. Dialogical relations—indispensable to the capacity of cognitive actors to cooperate in perceiving the same cognizable object—are otherwise impossible.

Indeed, problem-posing education, which breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfil its function as the practice of freedom only if it can overcome the above contradiction.

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of* freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are "owned" by the teacher

The banking concept (with its tendency to dichotomize everything) distinguishes two stages in the action of the educator. During the first he cognizes a cognizable object while he prepares his lessons in his study or his laboratory; during the second, he expounds to his students about that object. The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Nor do the students practice any act of cognition, since the object towards which that act should be directed is the property of the teacher rather than a medium evoking the critical reflection of both teacher and students. Hence in the name of the "preservation of culture and knowledge" we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor true culture.

The problem-posing method does not dichotomize the activity of the teacher-student: she is not "cognitive" at one point and "narrative" at another. She is always "cognitive," whether preparing a project or engaging in dialogue with the students. He does not regard cognizable objects as his private property but as the object of reflection by himself and the students. In this way the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*.

Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality.

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge. Because they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed.

Education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it.

> La conscience et le monde sont dormes d'un meme coup: exterieur par essence a la conscience, le monde est, par essence relatif a elle.[8]

In one of our culture circles in Chile, the group was discussing (based on a codification[9]) the anthropological concept of culture. In the midst of the discussion, a peasant who by banking standards was completely ignorant said: "Now I see that without man there is no world." When the educator responded: "Let's say, for the sake of argument, that all the men on earth were to die, but that the earth itself remained, together with trees, birds, animals, rivers, seas, the stars. ... wouldn't all this be a world?" "Oh no," the peasant replied emphatically. "There would be no one to say: 'This is a world'."

The peasant wished to express the idea that there would be lacking the consciousness of the world which necessarily implies the world of consciousness. *I* cannot exist without a *non-I*. In turn, the *not-I* depends on that existence. The world which brings consciousness into existence becomes the world of that consciousness. Hence, the previously cited affirmation of Sartre: *"La conscience et le mond sont dormes d'un meme coup."*

As women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase the scope of their perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena:

In perception properly so-called, as an explicit awareness [*Gewahren*], I am turned towards the object, to the paper, for instance. I apprehend it as being this here and now. The apprehension is a singling out, every object having a background in experience. Around and about the paper lie books, pencils, ink-well, and so forth, and these in a certain sense are also "perceived", perceptually there, in the "field of intuition"; but whilst I was turned towards the paper there was no turning in their direction, nor any apprehending of them, not even in a secondary sense. They appeared and yet were not singled out, were not posited on their own account. Every perception of a thing has such a zone of background intuitions or background awareness, if "intuiting" already includes the state of being turned towards, and this also is a "conscious experience", or more briefly a "consciousness of" all indeed that in point of fact lies in the co-perceived objective background.[10]

That which had existed objectively but had not been perceived in its deeper implications (if indeed it was perceived at all) begins to "stand out," assuming the character of a problem and therefore of challenge. Thus, men and women begin to single out elements from their "background awareness" and to reflect upon them. These elements are now objects of their consideration, and, as such, objects of their action and cognition.

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation. Although the dialectical relations of women and men with the world exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether or not they are perceived at all), it is also true that the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world without dichotomizing this reflection from action, and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action.

Once again, the two educational concepts and practices under analysis come into conflict. Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way human beings exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the *intentionality* of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world, thereby denying people their ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation. In sum: banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take the people's historicity as their starting point.

Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of *becoming*—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity.

Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to *be*, it must *become*. Its "duration" (in the Bergsonian meaning of the word) is found in the interplay of the opposites *permanence* and *change*. The banking method emphasizes permanence and becomes reactionary; problem-posing education—which accepts neither a "well-behaved" present nor a predetermined fixture—roots itself in the dynamic present and becomes revolutionary.

Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic (and, as such, hopeful). Hence, it corresponds to the historical nature of humankind. Hence, it affirms women and men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the fixture. Hence, it identifies with the movement which engages people as beings aware of their incompletion—an historical movement which has its point of departure, its Subjects and its objective.

The point of departure of the movement lies in the people themselves. But since people do not exist apart from the world, apart from reality the movement must begin with the human-world relationship. Accordingly, the point of departure must always be with men and women in the "here and now," which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene. Only by starting from this situation—which determines their perception of it—can they begin to move. To do this authentically they must perceive their state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting—and therefore challenging.

Whereas the banking method directly or indirectly reinforces men's fatalistic perception of their situation, the problem-posing method presents this very situation to them as a problem. As the situation becomes the object of their cognition, the naive or magical perception which produced their fatalism gives way to perception which is able to perceive itself even as it perceives reality, and can thus be critically objective about that reality.

A deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation. Resignation gives way to the drive for transformation and inquiry, over which men feel themselves to be in control, if people, as historical beings necessarily engaged with other people in a movement of inquiry, did not control that movement, it would be (and is) a violation of their humanity. Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.

This movement of inquiry must be directed towards humanization—the people's historical vocation. The pursuit of full humanity however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed. No one can be authentically human while he prevents others from being so. Attempting *to be more* human, individualistically, leads to *having more*, egotistically a form of dehumanization. Not that it is not fundamental *to have* in order *to be* human. Precisely because it *is* necessary, some men's *having* must not be allowed to constitute an obstacle to others *having*, must not consolidate the power of the former to crush the latter.

Problem-posing education, as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality. The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization.

Problem-posing education does not and cannot serve the interests of the oppressor. No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question: Why? While only a revolutionary society can carry out this education in systematic terms, the revolutionary leaders need not take full power before they can employ the method. In the revolutionary process, the leaders cannot utilize the banking method as an interim measure, justified on grounds of expediency with the intention of *later* behaving in a genuinely revolutionary fashion. They must be revolutionary—that is to say dialogical—from the outset.

Footnotes

1. Simone de Beauvoir; *La Pensee de Droite*, *Aujord'hui* (Paris); ST, El Pensamiento politico de la Derecha (Buenos Aires, 1963), p. 34.
2. This concept corresponds to what Sartre calls the "digestive" or "nutritive" concept of education, in which knowledge is fed" by the teacher to the students to "fill them out." See Jean-Paul Sartre, "Une idee fundamentale de la phenomenologie de Husserl: L'intentionalite," *Situations* 1 (Paris, 1947).
3. For example, some professors specify in their reading lists that a book should be read from pages 10 to 15—and do this to "help" their students!
4. Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
5. Ibid., p.31.
6. Ibid.

7. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York, 1960), p.130.
8. Sartre, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
9. *See* Chapter 3.—Translator's note.
10. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas -General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London, 1969), pp. 105—106.

11

"Allegory of the Cave"

from Plato's *Republic*

translated with notes and
an interpretive essay by allan bloom

BOOK VII

"Next, then," I said, "make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets."

"I see," he said.

"Then also see along this wall human beings carrying all sorts of artifacts, which project above the wall, and statues of men and other animals wrought from stone, wood, and every kind of material; as is to be expected, some of the carriers utter sounds while others are silent."

"It's a strange image," he said, "and strange prisoners you're telling of."

"They're like us," I said. "For in the first place, do you, suppose such men would have seen anything of themselves and one another other than the shadows cast by the fire on the side of the cave facing them?"

"How could they," he said, "if they had been compelled to keep their heads motionless throughout life?"

"And what about the things that are carried by? Isn't it the same with them?"

"Of course."

"If they were able to discuss things with one another, don't you believe they would hold that they are naming these things going by before them that they see?" [1]

"Necessarily."

"And what if the prison also had an echo from the side facing them? Whenever one of the men passing by happens to utter a sound, do you suppose they would believe that anything other than the passing shadow was uttering the sound?"

"No, by Zeus," he said. "I don't."

"Then most certainly," I said, "such men would hold that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of artificial things."

"Most necessarily," he said.

"Now consider," I said, "what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them. Take a man who is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw before. What do you suppose he'd say if someone were to tell him that before he saw silly nothings, while now, because he is somewhat nearer to what is and more turned toward beings, he sees more correctly; and, in particular, showing him each of the things that pass by, were to cornpel the man to answer his questions about what they are? Don't you suppose he'd be at a loss and believe that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown?"

"Yes," he said, "by far."

"And, if he compelled him to look at the light itself, would his eyes hurt and would he flee, turning away to those things that he is able to make out and hold them to be really clearer than what is being shown?"

"So he would," he said.

"And if," I said, "someone dragged him away from there by force along the rough, steep, upward way and didn't let him go before he had dragged him out into the light of the sun, wouldn't he be distressed and annoyed at being so dragged? And when he came to the light, wouldn't he have his eyes full of its beam and be unable to see even one of the things now said to be true?"

"No, he wouldn't," he said, "at least not right away."

"Then I suppose he'd have to get accustomed, if he were going to see what's up above. At first he'd most easily make out the shadows; and after that the phantoms of the human beings and the other things in water; and, later, the things themselves. And from there he could turn to beholding the things in heaven and heaven itself, more easily at night—looking at the light of the stars and the moon—than by day—looking at the sun and sunlight."

"Of course."

"Then finally I suppose he would be able to make out the sun—not its appearances in water or some alien place, but the sun itself by itself in its own region—and see what it's like."

"Necessarily," he said.

"And after that he would already be in a position to conclude about it that this is the source of the seasons and the years, and is the steward of all things in the visible place, and is in a certain way the cause of all those things he and his companions had been seeing.

"It's plain," he said, "that this would be his next step."

"What then? When he recalled his first home and the wisdom there, and his fellow prisoners in that time, don't you suppose he would consider himself happy for the change and pity the others?"

"Quite so."

"And if in that time there were among them any honors, praises, and prizes for the man who is sharpest at making out the things that go by, and most remembers which of them are accustomed to pass before, which after, and which at the same time as others, and who is thereby most able to divine what is going to come, in your opinion would he be desirous of them and envy those who are honored and hold power among these men? Or, rather, would he be affected as Homer says and want very much 'to be on the soil, a serf to another man, to a portionless man,' [2] and to undergo anything whatsoever rather than to opine those things and live that way?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose he would prefer to undergo everything rather than live that way."

"Now reflect on this too," I said. "If such a man were to come down again and sit in the same seat, on coming suddenly from the sun wouldn't his eyes get infected with darkness?"

"Very much so," he said.

"And if he once more had to compete with those perpetual prisoners in forming judgments about those shadows while his vision was still dim, before his eyes had recovered, and if the time needed for getting accustomed were not at all short, wouldn't he be the source of laughter, and wouldn't it be said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted, and that it's not even worth trying to go up? And if they were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead up, wouldn't they kill him?"

"No doubt about it," he said.

"Well, then, my dear Glaucon," I said, "this image as a whole must be connected with what was said before. Liken the domain revealed through sight to the prison home, and the light of the fire in it to the sun's power; and, in applying the going up and the seeing of what's above to the soul's journey up to the intelligible place, you'll not mistake my expectation, since you desire to hear it. A god doubtless knows if it happens to be true. At all events, this is the way the phenomena look to me: in the knowable the last thing to be seen, and that with considerable effort, is the *idea* of the good; but once seen, it must be concluded that this is in fact the cause of all that is right and fair in everything—in the visible it gave birth to light and its sovereign; in the intelligible, itself sovereign, it provided truth and intelligence—and that the man who is going to act prudently in private or in public must see it."

"I, too, join you in supposing that," he said, "at least in the way I can."

"Come, then," I said, "and join me in supposing this, too, and don't be surprised that the men who get to that point aren't willing to mind the business of human beings, but rather that their souls are always eager to spend their time above. Surely that's likely, if indeed this, too, follows the image of which I told before."

"Of course it's likely," he said.

"And what about this? Do you suppose it is anything surprising," I said, "if a man, come from acts of divine contemplation to the human evils, is graceless and looks quite ridiculous when—with his sight still dim and before he has gotten sufficiently accustomed to the surrounding darkness—he is compelled in courts or elsewhere to contest about the shadows of the just or the representations of which they are the shadows, and to dispute about the way these things are understood by men who have never seen justice itself?"

"It's not at all surprising," he said.

"But if a man were intelligent," I said, "he would remember that there are two kinds of disturbances of the eyes, stemming from two sources—when they have been transferred from light to darkness and when they have been transferred from darkness to light. And if he held that these same things happen to a soul too, whenever he saw one that is confused and unable to make anything out, he wouldn't laugh without reasoning but would go on to consider whether, come from a brighter life, it is in darkness for want of being accustomed, or whether, going from greater lack of learning to greater brightness, it is dazzled by the greater brilliance. And then he would deem the first soul happy for its condition and its life, while he would pity the second. And, if he wanted to laugh at the second soul, his laughing in this case would be less a laugh of scorn than would his laughing at the soul which has come from above out of the light."

"What you say is quite sensible," he said.

"Then, if this is true," I said, "we must hold the following about these things: education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be. They presumably assert that they put into the soul knowledge that isn't in it, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes."

"Yes," he said, "they do indeed assert that."

"But the present argument, on the other hand," I said, "indicates that this power is in the soul of each,[3] and that the instrument with which each learns—just as an eye is not able to turn toward the light from the dark without the whole body—must be turned around from that which *is coming into being* together with the whole soul until it is able to endure looking at that which *is* and the brightest part of that which is. And we affirm that this is the good, don't we?"

"Yes."

"There would, therefore," I said, "be an art of this turning around, concerned with the way in which this power can most easily and efficiently be turned around, not an art of producing sight in it. Rather, this art takes as given that sight is there, but not rightly turned nor looking at what it ought to look at, and accomplishes this object.

"So it seems," he said.

"Therefore, the other virtues of a soul, as they are called, are probably somewhat close to those of the body. For they are really not there beforehand and are later produced by habits and exercises, while the virtue of exercising prudence is more than anything somehow more divine, it seems; it never loses its power, but according to the way it is turned, it becomes useful and helpful or, again, useless and harmful. Or haven't you yet reflected about the men who are said to be vicious but wise, how shrewdly their petty soul sees and how sharply it distinguishes those things toward which it is turned, showing that it doesn't have poor vision although it is compelled to serve vice; so that the sharper it sees, the more evil it accomplishes?"

"Most certainly," he said.

"However," I said, "if this part of such a nature were trimmed in earliest childhood and its ties of kinship with becoming were cut off—like leaden weights, which eating and such pleasures as well as their refinements naturally attach to the soul and turn its vision downward—if, I say, it were rid of them and turned around toward the true things, this same part of the same human beings would also see them most sharply, just as it does those things toward which it now is turned."

"It's likely," he said.

"And what about this? Isn't it likely," I said, "and necessary, as a consequence of what was said before, that those who are without education and experience of truth would never be adequate stewards of a city, nor would those who have been allowed to spend their time in education continuously to the end—the former because they don't have any single goal in life at which they must aim in doing everything they do in private or in public, the latter because they won't be willing to act, believing they have emigrated to a colony on the Isles of the Blessed [4] while they are still alive?"

"True," he said.

"Then our job as founders," I said, "is to compel the best natures to go to the study which we were saying before is the greatest, to see the good and to go up that ascent; and, when they have gone up and seen sufficiently, not to permit them what is now permitted."

"What's that?"

"To remain there," I said, "and not be willing to go down again among those prisoners or share their labors and honors, whether they be slighter or more serious."

"What?" he said. "Are we to do them an injustice, and make them live a worse life when a better is possible for them?"

"My friend, you have again forgotten," I said, "that it's not the concern of law that any one class in the city fare exceptionally well, but it contrives to bring this about in the city as a whole, harmonizing the citizens by persuasion and compulsion, making them share with one another the benefit that each is able to bring to the commonwealth. And it produces such men in the city not in order to let them turn whichever way each wants, but in order that it may use them in binding the city together."

"That's true," he said. I did forget."

"Well, then, Glaucon," I said, "consider that we won't be doing injustice to the philosophers who come to be among us, but rather that we will say just things to them while compelling them besides to care for and guard the others. We'll say that when such men come to be in the other cities it is fitting for them not to participate in the labors of those cities. For they grow up spontaneously against the will of the regime in each; and a nature that grows by itself and doesn't owe its rearing to anyone has justice on its side when it is not eager to pay off the price of rearing to anyone. 'But you we have begotten for yourselves and for the rest of the city like leaders and kings in hives; you have been better and more perfectly educated and are more able to participate in both lives. So you must go down, each in his turn, into the common dwelling of the others and get habituated along with them to seeing the dark things. And, in getting habituated to it, you will see ten thousand times better than the men there, and you'll know what each of the phantoms is, and of what it is a phantom, because you have seen the truth about fair, just,

and good things. And thus, the city will be governed by us and by you in a state of waking, not in a dream as the many cities nowadays are governed by men who fight over shadows with one another and form factions for the sake of ruling, as though it were some great good. But the truth is surely this: that city in which those who are going to rule are least eager to rule is necessarily governed in the way that is best and freest from faction, while the one that gets the opposite kind of rulers is governed in the opposite way.'"

"Most certainly," he said.

"Do you suppose our pupils will disobey us when they hear this and be unwilling to join in the labors of the city, each in his turn, while living the greater part of the time with one another in the pure region?"

"Impossible," he said. "For surely we shall be laying just injunctions on just men. However, each of them will certainly approach ruling as a necessary thing—which is the opposite of what is done by those who now rule in every city."

"That's the way it is, my comrade," I said. "If you discover a life better than ruling for those who are going to rule, it is possible that your well-governed city will come into being. For here alone will the really rich rule, rich not in gold but in those riches required by the happy man, rich in a good and prudent life. But if beggars, men hungering for want of private goods, go to public affairs supposing that in them they must seize the good, it isn't possible. When ruling becomes a thing fought over, such a war—a domestic war, one within the family—destroys these men themselves and the rest of the city as well."

"That's very true," he said.

"Have you," I said, "any other life that despises political offices other than that of true philosophy?"

"No, by Zeus," he said. "I don't."

"But men who aren't lovers of ruling must go [5] to it; otherwise, rival lovers will fight."

"Of course."

12

Commencement Keynote Address

Fareed Zakaria

President Lawrence, Chairman of the Board John Hill, Trustees, members of the faculty, parents, and, of course—the reason we are all here—graduating seniors. Thank you for inviting me to be part of this wonderful tradition. This is one of the great moments in American life and it is a delight to be able to share in it with you.

This is my second Sarah Lawrence graduation. The first was in 2010, when my wife, Paula, got a Master of Fine Arts in Writing. I know from her glowing accounts what a special—even unique—place you have here. Unfortunately, attending that graduation did not make my job today any easier. The commencement speaker in 2010 was the actress Julianna Margulies, who gave a beautiful, moving speech in which she explained that she turned down a $27 million TV contract to follow her muse and do off-Broadway theater in New York. I have to tell you up front, I can't match that. I have occasionally turned down a nice speaking fee to stay home with my kids but my moral compass has not been given that kind of stress test. If it were, it would probably fail.

In preparing for this talk, it came to my attention that I know a few people who are graduating this year. Well, actually, I know their parents. That's when you know you've passed a certain age. I still think of myself as vaguely post-graduate, so getting e-mails from friends telling me that their children or nieces are graduating is a reminder that I'd better start stocking up on the Metamucil. Of course there's nothing like having young kids to do that. Sofia, our six-year old, recently informed me that she had learned in school that there was a time in human history when salt was the most precious thing in the world. Then she paused and said, "Daddy, when you were young, was salt very expensive?"

Anyway, once I got over the fact that I was a generation removed from the graduates, I was delighted to learn that among them is a celebrity; a quiet celebrity, whose gift to humanity has not really been properly appreciated. Nadia Rahman is graduating from Sarah Lawrence this year. Now many of you know her as a lovely and talented person but did you know that Nadia is the world's most important math student? You see, in 2004, aged 12, she did badly on a math test, was shaken up by this, and asked her cousin to help her. But he lived thousands of miles away. They decided to work online using a virtual blackboard. The cousin was Sal Khan, and that blackboard was the beginning of Khan Academy, the amazing online learning center that is now used by 10 million students around the world every month. Christopher Marlowe said that Helen of Troy was "the face that launched a thousand ships." Nadia, you are the student that launched 300 million lessons. So from everyone out there who has ever used Khan Academy, thanks!

You are graduating from Sarah Lawrence, the quintessential liberal arts college, at an interesting moment in history—when the liberal arts are, honestly, not very cool. You all know what you're supposed to be doing these days—study computer science, code at night, start a company, and take it public. Or, if you want to branch out, you could major in mechanical engineering. What you're not supposed to do is get a liberal arts education.

This is not really a joke anymore. The governors of Texas, Florida and North Carolina have announced that they do not intend to spend taxpayer money subsidizing the liberal arts. Florida Governor Rick Scott asks, "Is it a vital interest of the state to have more anthropologists? I don't think so." Even President Obama recently urged students to keep in mind that a technical training could be more valuable than a degree in art history. Majors like English, once very popular and highly respected, are in steep decline.

I can well understand the concerns about liberal arts because I grew up in India in the 1960s and 1970s. A technical training was seen as the key to a good career. People who studied the liberal arts were either weird or dumb. (Or they were women because, sadly, in those days, the humanities was seen as an appropriate training for an aspiring housewife but not for a budding professional). If you were bright, you studied science, so I did. I even learned computer programming—in India in the 1970s! When I came to the United States for college, I brought with me that mindset. In my first year at Yale, I took a bunch of science and math courses. But I also took one course in the history of the Cold War. That course woke me up and made me recognize what I really loved. I dove into history and English and politics and economics and have stayed immersed in them ever since.

In thinking about my own path, I hope to give you some sense of the value of a liberal education. But first, a point of clarification. A liberal education has nothing to do with "liberal" in the left-right sense. Nor does it ignore the sciences. From the time of the Greeks, physics and biology and mathematics have been as integral to it as history and literature. For my own part, I have kept alive my interest in math and science to this day.

A liberal education—as best defined by Cardinal Newman in 1854—is a "broad exposure to the outlines of knowledge" for its own sake, rather than to acquire skills to practice a trade or do a job. There were critics even then, the 19th Century, who asked, Newman tells us, "To what then does it lead? Where does it end? How does it profit?" Or as the president of Yale, the late Bart Giamatti, asked in one of his beautiful lectures, "what is the earthly use of a liberal education?"

I could point out that a degree in art history or anthropology often requires the serious study of several languages and cultures, an ability to work in foreign countries, an eye for aesthetics, and a commitment to hard work—all of which might be useful in any number of professions in today's globalized age. And I might point out to Governor Scott that it could be in the vital interests of his state in particular to have on hand some anthropologists to tell Floridians a few things about the other 99.5% of humanity.

But for me, the most important earthly use of a liberal education is that it teaches you how to write. In my first year in college I took an English composition course. My teacher, an elderly Englishman with a sharp wit and an even sharper red pencil, was tough. I realized that coming from India, I was pretty good at taking tests, at regurgitating stuff I had memorized, but not so good at expressing my own ideas. Over the course of that semester, I found myself beginning to make the connection between thought and word.

I know I'm supposed to say that a liberal education teaches you to think but thinking and writing are inextricably intertwined. The columnist Walter Lippmann, when asked his thoughts on a particular topic, is said to have replied, "I don't know what I think on that one. I haven't written about it yet." There is, in modern philosophy, a great debate as to which comes first—thought or language. I have nothing to say about it. All I know is that when I begin to write, I realize that my "thoughts" are usually a jumble of half-baked, incoherent impulses strung together with gaping logical holes between them. It is the act of writing that forces me to think through them and sort them out. Whether you are a novelist, a businessman, a marketing consultant, or a historian, writing forces you to make choices and brings clarity and order to your ideas.

If you think this has no earthly use, ask Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon. Bezos insists that his senior executives write memos—often as long as six printed pages—and begins senior management meetings with a period of quiet time—sometimes as long as 30 minutes—while everyone reads the memos and

makes notes on them. Whatever you will do in life, the ability to write clearly, cleanly and—I would add—quickly will prove to be an invaluable skill. And it is, in many ways, the central teaching of a liberal education.

The second great advantage of a liberal education is that it teaches you how to speak and speak your mind. One of the other contrasts that struck me between school in India and college in America was that an important part of my grade was talking. My professors were going to judge me on the process of thinking through the subject matter and presenting my analysis and conclusions—out loud. The seminar, which is in many ways at the heart of a liberal education—and at the heart of this college—teaches you to read, analyze, dissect, and above all to express yourself. And this emphasis on being articulate is reinforced in the many extra-curricular activities that surround every liberal arts college—theater, debate, political unions, student government, protest groups. You have to get peoples' attention and convince them of your cause.

Speaking clearly and concisely is a big advantage in life. You have surely noticed that whenever someone from Britain talks in a class, he gets five extra points just for the accent. In fact, British education—and British life—has long emphasized and taught public speaking through a grand tradition of poetry recitation and elocution, debate and declamation. It makes a difference—but the accent does help, too.

The final strength of a liberal education is that it teaches you how to learn. I now realize that the most valuable thing I picked up in college and graduate school was not a specific set of facts or a piece of knowledge but rather how to acquire knowledge. I learned how to read an essay closely, find new sources, search for data so as to prove or disprove a hypothesis, and figure out whether an author was trustworthy. I learned how to read a book fast and still get its essence. And most of all, I learned that learning was a pleasure, a great adventure of exploration.

Whatever job you take, I guarantee that the specific stuff you have learned at college—whatever it is—will prove mostly irrelevant or quickly irrelevant. Even if you learned to code but did it a few years ago, before the world of apps, you would have to learn anew. And given the pace of change that is transforming industries and professions these days, you will need that skill of learning and retooling all the time.

These are a liberal education's strengths and they will help you as you move through your working life. Of course, if you want professional success, you will have to put in the hours, be disciplined, work well with others, and get lucky. But that would be true for anyone, even engineers.

I kid of course. Remember, I grew up in India. Some of my best friends are engineers. And honestly, I have enormous admiration for engineers and technologists and doctors and accountants. But what we must all recognize is that education is not a zero sum game. Technical skills don't have to be praised at the expense of humanities. Computer science is not better than art history. Society needs both—often in combination. If you don't believe me, believe Steve Jobs who said, "It is in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough. It's technology married with liberal arts—married to the humanities that yields us the result that makes our hearts sing."

That marriage—between technology and the liberal arts—is now visible everywhere. Twenty years ago, tech companies might have been industrial product manufacturers. Today they have to be at the cutting edge of design, marketing, and social networking. Many other companies also focus much of their attention on these fields, since manufacturing is increasingly commoditized and the value-add is in the brand, how it is imagined, presented, sold, and sustained. And then there is America's most influential industry, which exports its products around the world—entertainment, which is driven at its core by stories, pictures, and drawings. (Did I mention that Julianna Margulies was offered $27 million?)

You will notice that so far I have spoken about ways that a liberal education can get you a job or be valuable in your career. That's important but it is not its only virtue. You need not just a good job but also a good life. Reading a great novel, exploring a country's history, looking at great art and architecture,

making the connection between math and music—all these are ways to enrich and ennoble your life. In the decades to come, when you become a partner and then a parent, make friends, read a book, listen to music, watch a movie, see a play, lead a conversation, those experiences will be shaped and deepened by your years here.

A liberal education makes you a good citizen. The word liberal comes from the Latin liber, which means "free." At its essence, a liberal education is an education to free the mind from dogma, from controls, from constraints. It is an exercise in freedom. That is why America's founding fathers believed so passionately in its importance. Benjamin Franklin—the most practical of all the founders, and a great entrepreneur and inventor in his own right—proposed a program of study for the University of Pennsylvania that is essentially a liberal arts education. Thomas Jefferson's epitaph does not mention that he was president of the United States. It proudly notes that he founded the University of Virginia, another quintessential liberal arts college.

But there is a calling even higher than citizenship; ultimately, a liberal education is about being human. More than two thousand years ago, the great Roman philosopher, lawyer, and politician Cicero explained why it was important that we study for its own sake—not to acquire a skill or trade, but as an end unto itself. We do it, he said, because that is what makes us human: It is in our nature that "we are all drawn to the pursuit of knowledge." It is what separates us from animals. Ever since we rose out of the mud, we have been on a quest to unravel the mysteries of the universe and to search for truth and beauty.

So, as you go out into the world, don't let anyone make you feel stupid or indulgent in having pursued your passion and studied the liberal arts. You are heirs to one of the greatest traditions in human history, one that has uncovered the clockwork of the stars, created works of unimaginable beauty, and organized societies of amazing productivity. In continuing this tradition you are strengthening the greatest experiment in social organization, democracy. And above all, you are feeding the most basic urge of the human spirit—to know.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Class of 2014, Godspeed.

13

Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage

Stephanie Coontz

Introduction

Writing this book about marriage over the last several years has been a lot like adjusting to marriage itself. No matter how well you think you know your partner beforehand, the first years are full of surprises, not only about your spouse but about yourself. The struggle to reconsider preconceived notions often takes you in directions you never anticipated when you began.

This is not the book I thought I was going to write. I have been researching family history for thirty years, but I began focusing on marriage only in the mid-1990s, when reporters and audiences started asking me if the institution of marriage was falling apart. Many of their questions seemed to assume that there had been some Golden Age of Marriage in the past. So I initially decided to write a book debunking the idea that marriage was undergoing an unprecedented crisis and explaining that the institution of marriage has always been in flux.

I soon changed my approach, but this was not an unreasonable starting point. After all, for thousands of years people have been proclaiming a crisis in marriage and pointing backward to better days. The ancient Greeks complained bitterly about the declining morals of wives. The Romans bemoaned their high divorce rates, which they contrasted with an earlier era of family stability. The European settlers in America began lamenting the decline of the family and the disobedience of women and children almost as soon as they stepped off the boats.

Worrying about the decay of marriage isn't just a Western habit. In the 1990s, sociologist Amy Kaler, conducting interviews in a region of southern Africa where divorce has long been common, was surprised to hear people say that marital strife and instability were new to their generation. So Kaler went back and looked at oral histories collected fifty years earlier. She found that the grandparents and great-grandparents of the people she was interviewing in the 1990s had also described their own marital relations as much worse than the marriages of *their* parents' and grandparents' day. "The invention of a past filled with good marriages," Kaler concluded, is one way people express discontent about other aspects of contemporary life.[1]

Furthermore, many of the things people think are unprecedented in family life today are not actually new. Almost every marital and sexual arrangement we have seen in recent years, however startling it may appear, has been tried somewhere before. There have been societies and times when nonmarital sex and out-of-wedlock births were more common and widely accepted than they are today. Stepfamilies were much more numerous in the past, the result of high death rates and frequent remarriages. Even divorce rates have been higher in some regions and periods than they are in Europe and North America today. And same-sex marriage, though rare, has been sanctioned in some cultures under certain conditions.[2]

On the other hand, some things that people believe to be traditional were actually relatively recent innovations. That is the case for the "tradition" that marriage has to be licensed by the state or sanctified by the church. In ancient Rome the difference between cohabitation and legal marriage depended solely upon the partners' intent. Even the Catholic

Church long held that if a man and woman said they had privately agreed to marry, whether they said those words in the kitchen or out by the haystack, they were in fact married. For more than a thousand years the church just took their word for it. Once you had given your word, the church degreed, you couldn't take it back, even if you'd never had sex or lived together. But in practice there were many more ways to get out of a marriage in the early Middle Ages than in the early modern era.

However, as I researched further and consulted with colleagues studying family life around the world, I came to believe that the current rearrangement of both married and single life is in fact without historical precedent. When it comes to any particular marital practice or behavior, there may be nothing new under the sun. But when it comes to the overall place of marriage in society and the relationship between husbands and wives, nothing in the past is anything like what we have today, even it if may look similar at first glance.

The forms, values, and arrangements of marriage are indeed changing dramatically all around the globe. Almost everywhere people worry that marriage is in crisis. But I was intrigued to discover that people's sense of what "the marriage crisis" involves differs drastically from place to place. In the United States, policy makers worry about the large numbers of children born out of wedlock. In Germany and Japan, by contrast, many planners are more interested in increasing the total number of births, regardless of the form of the family in which the children will be raised. Japanese population experts believe that unless the birthrate picks up, Japan's population will plunge by almost one-third by 2050. So while federal policy in the United States encourages abstinence-only sex education classes for young people and the media tout teenage "virginity pledges," Japanese pundits lament the drop in business at Japan's rent-by-the-hour "love hotels." One Japanese magazine recently pleaded: "Young People, don't hate sex."[3]

The United Nations kicked off the twenty-first century with a campaign to raise the age of marriage in Afghanistan, India, and Africa, where girls frequently wed by age twelve or thirteen, often with disastrous effects on their health. On the other hand, in Singapore the government launched a big campaign to convince people to marry at a younger age. In Spain, more than 50 percent of women aged twenty-five to twenty-nine are single, and economic planners worry that this bodes ill for the country's birthrate and future growth. In the Czech Republic, however, researchers welcome the rise in single living, hoping that will reduce the 50 percent divorce rate.[4]

Each region also blames its marriage crisis on a different culprit. In Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, governments criticize women's families for demanding such high bride prices that it is impossible for young men to marry, even though they are eager to do so. But in Italy, commentators are concerned about the growing numbers of *mammoni*, or "mamas' boys," who choose not to marry. These are educated men in their twenties and thirties with good jobs who stay in their parents' homes, where their mothers continue to cook, clean, and shop for them. More than one-third of single Italian men between the ages of thirty and thirty-five live with their parents.[5]

Two Canadian authors, a physician and a psychiatrist, recently argued that the crisis in family life is caused by too much gender equality. In societies with high degrees of gender equality, they predict, birthrates will fall until the culture eventually collapses and is replaced by a society that restricts women's options in order to encourage higher fertility. But in Japan, many women say they are avoiding marriage and childbearing precisely because of the lack of equality between the sexes. In China, traditional biases against women could end up making it impossible for many men ever to find wives. Because of China's strict policy limiting family size to one child, many parents abort female fetuses, with the result that there are now 117 boys born in China for every 100 girls. By 2020 China could have between 30 million and 40 million men who cannot find wives.[6]

Reviewing the historical trends behind these various concerns, I began to see some common themes under all these bewildering differences. Everywhere marriage is becoming more optional and more fragile. Everywhere the once-predictable link between marriage and child rearing is fraying. And everywhere relations between men and women are undergoing rapid and at times traumatic transformation. In fact, I realized, the relations between men and women have changed more in the past thirty years than they did in the previous three thousand, and I began to suspect that a similar transformation was occurring in the role of marriage.

My effort to understand origins and nature of that transformation forced me to go much farther into the past than I originally intended. Along the way I had to change many other ideas I once had about the history of marriage. For example, like many other historians and sociologists, I used to think that the male breadwinner/full-time housewife marriages depicted in 1950s and 1960s television shows like *Leave It to Beaver* and *Ozzie and Harriet*, the kinds of

marriages that actually predominated in North America and Western Europe during those decades, were a short-lived historical fluke. In writing this book, I changed my mind.

It is true that 1950s marriages were exceptional in many ways. Until that decade, relying on a single breadwinner had been rare. For thousands of years, most women and children had shared the tasks of breadwinning with men. It was not unusual for wives to "bring home the bacon"—or at lest to raise and slaughter the pig, then take it to the market to sell. In the 1950s, however, for the first time, a majority of marriages in Western Europe and North America consisted of a full-time homemaker supported by a male earner. Also new to the 1950s was the cultural consensus that everyone should marry and that people should wed at a young age. For hundreds of years, European rates of marriage had been much lower, and the age of marriage much higher, than in the 1950s. The baby boom of the 1950s was likewise a departure from the past, because birthrates in Western Europe and North America had fallen steadily during the previous hundred years.

As I continued my research, however, I became convinced that the 1950s *Ozzie and Harriet* family was not just a postwar aberration. Instead it was the culmination of a new marriage system that had been evolving for more than 150 years. I now think that there was a basic continuity in the development of marriage ideals and behaviors from the late eighteenth century through the 1950s and 1960s. In the eighteenth century, people began to adopt the radical new idea that love should be the most fundamental reason for marriage and that young people should be free to choose their marriage partners on the basis of love. The sentimentalization of the love-based marriage in the nineteenth century and its sexualization in the twentieth each represented a logical step in the evolution of this new approach to marriage.

Until the late eighteenth century, most societies around the world saw marriage as far too vital an economic and political institution to be left entirely to the free choice of the two individuals involved, especially if they were going to base their decision on something as unreasoning and transitory as love. The more I learned about the ancient history of marriage, the more I realized what a gigantic marital revolution had occurred in Western Europe and North America during the Enlightenment.

This led me to another surprising finding: From the moment of its inception, this revolutionary new marriage system already showed signs of the instability that was to plague it at the end of the twentieth century. As soon as the idea that love should be the central reason for marriage, and companionship its basic goal, was first raised, observers of the day warned that the same values that increased people's satisfaction with marriage as a relationship had an inherent tendency to undermine the stability of marriage as an institution. The very features that promised to make marriage such a unique and treasured personal relationship opened the way for it to become an optional and fragile one.

The skeptics were right to worry about the dangers of the love match. Its arrival in the late eighteenth century coincided with an explosion of challenges to all the traditional ways of organizing social and personal life. For the next 150 years, societies struggled to strike the right balance between the goal of finding happiness in marriage and the preservation of limits that would keep people from leaving a marriage that didn't fulfill their expectations for love. The history of the love-based marriage from the late eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century is one of successive crises, as people surged past the barriers that prevented them from achieving marital fulfillment and then pulled back, or were pushed back, when the institution of marriage seemed to be in jeopardy.

THE *REAL* TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

To understand why the love-based marriage system was so unstable and how we ended up where we are today, we have to recognize that for most of history, marriage was not primarily about the individual needs and desires of a man and woman and the children they produced. Marriage had as much to do with getting good in-laws and increasing one's family labor force as it did with finding a lifetime companion and raising a beloved child.

Reviewing the role of marriage in different societies in the past and the theories of anthropologists and archaeologists about its origins, I came to reject two widespread, though diametrically opposed, theories about how marriage came into existence among our Stone Age ancestors: the idea that marriage was invented so men would protect women and the opposing idea that it was invented so men could exploit women. Instead, marriage spoke to the needs of the larger group. It converted strangers into relatives and extended cooperative relations beyond the immediate family or small band by creating far-flung networks of in-laws.

As civilizations got more complex and stratified, the role of marriage in acquiring in-laws changed. Marriage became a way through which elites could hoard or accumulate resources, shutting out unrelated individuals or even "illegitimate" family members. Propertied families consolidated wealth, merged resources, forged political alliances, and concluded peace treaties by strategically marrying off their sons and daughters. When upper-class men and women married, there was an exchange of dowry, bridewealth, or tribute, making the match a major economic investment by the couple's parents and other kin. In Europe, from the early Middle Ages through the eighteenth century, the dowry a wife brought with her at marriage was often the biggest infusion of cash, goods, or land a man would ever acquire. Finding a husband was usually the most important investment a woman could make in her economic future.[7]

Even in the lower classes, marriage was an economic and political transaction, although on a much smaller scale. The concerns of commoners were more immediate: "Can I marry someone whose fields are next to mine?"; "Will my prospective mate meet the approval of the neighbors and relatives on whom I depend?"; "Would these particular in-laws be a help to our family or a hindrance?"

Moreover, farms or businesses could rarely be run by just a single person, so a prospective partner's skills, resources, and tools were at least as important as personality and attractiveness. In those days there were few two-career marriages. Most people had a two-person, married-couple career that neither could conduct alone.

Traditionally, marriage also organized the division of labor and power by gender and age, confirming men's authority over women and determining if a child had any claim on the property of the parents. Marriage was the most important marker of adulthood and respectability as well as the main source of social security, medical care, and unemployment insurance.

Certainly, people fell in love during those thousands of years, sometimes even with their own spouses. But marriage was not fundamentally about love. It was too vital an economic and political institution to be entered into solely on the basis of something as irrational as love. For thousands of years the theme song for most weddings could have been "What's Love Got to Do with It?"

Because marriage was too important a contract to be left up to the two individuals involved, kin, neighbors, and other outsiders, such as judges, priests, or government officials, were usually involved in negotiating a match. Even when individuals orchestrated their own transitions in and out of marriage, they frequently did so for economic and political advantage rather than for love.

As a result, many of the greatest love stories of the ages, such as the tale of Antony and Cleopatra, had more to do with political intrigue than romantic passion. The marriages of the rich and famous in the ancient and medieval worlds can be told as political thrillers, corporate mergers, military epics, and occasionally even murder mysteries. But they were not the tales of undying love that I imagined when I was a teenager, and they often make modern marriage scandals seem tame in comparison.

The system of marrying for political and economic advancement was practically universal across the globe for many millennia. But the heritage of Rome and Greece interacted with the evolution of the Christian church to create a unique version of political marriage in medieval Europe. As early as the sixteenth century the distinctive power struggles among parents, children, ruling authorities, and the church combined with changes in the economy to create more possibilities for marital companionship in Europe than in most other regions of the world.

But only in the seventeenth century did a series of political, economic, and cultural changes in Europe begin to erode the older functions of marriage, encouraging individuals to choose their mates on the basis of personal affection and allowing couples to challenge the right of outsiders to intrude upon their lives. And not until the late eighteenth century, and then only in Western Europe and North America, did the notion of free choice and marriage for love triumph as a cultural ideal.

In the nineteenth century, most Europeans and Americans came to accept a new view of husbands as providers and of wives as nurturing homebodies. Only in the mid-twentieth century, however, could a majority of families in Western Europe and North America actually survive on the earnings of s single breadwinner.

The 1950s family, then, was not so new a development as we used to think. Rather, it was the culmination of a package of ideals about personal life and male-female relations that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and gradually became the norm across Western Europe and North America. These ideals gave people unprecedented opportunities

to get more personal satisfaction from their marriages, but they also raised questions that posed a fundamental challenge to traditional ways of ordering society.

If marriage was about love and lifelong intimacy, why would people marry at all if they couldn't find true love? What would hold a marriage together if love and intimacy disappeared? How could household order be maintained if marriages were based on affection rather than on male authority?

No sooner had the ideal of the love match and lifelong intimacy taken hold than people began to demand the right to divorce. No sooner did people agree that families should serve children's needs than they began to find the legal penalties for illegitimacy inhuman. Some people demanded equal rights for women so they could survive economically without having to enter loveless marriages. Others even argued for the decriminalization of homosexual love, on the ground that people should be free to follow their hearts.

There was a crisis over these questions in the 1790s, and another in the 1890s, and yet another in the 1920s. Then, in the 1950s, everything seemed to calm down. More people than ever before embraced the ideals of love and marital companionship without following them to the dangerous conclusion that loveless marriages ought to end in divorce or that true marital partnerships should be grounded in the equality of men and women.

Still, even as people became convinced they had at last created the perfect balance between individual desires and social stability, and even as virtually all of North America and Western Europe finally embraced this marital model, it was on the verge of collapse. When people remarked on the stability of marriage in the 1950s and early 1960s, they were actually standing in the eye of a hurricane.

For years, historians and public-policy makers have debated why lifelong marriage and male breadwinner families began to unravel in the 1970s. The real question, I now believe, is not why things fell apart in the 1970s but why they *didn't* fall apart in the 1790s, or in the next crisis of the 1890s, or in the turmoil of the 1920s, when practically every contemporary observer worried that marriage was "on the rocks." And the answer is not that people were better partners in the past or better able to balance the search for individual self-fulfillment and the need for stability. The reason is that for the most part they could not yet afford to act on their aspirations for love and personal fulfillment.[8]

This book explains why the revolutionary implications of the love match took so long to play out and why, just when it seemed unassailable, the love-based, male breadwinner marriage began to crumble. The final chapters describe "the perfect storm" that swept over marriage and family life in the last three decades of the twentieth century and how it forever altered the role that marriage plays in society and in our daily lives.

For centuries, marriage did much of the work that markets and governments do today. It organized the production and distribution of goods and people. It set up political, economic, and military alliances. It coordinated the division of labor by gender and age. It orchestrated people's personal rights and obligations in everything from sexual relations to the inheritance of property. Most societies had very specific rules about how people should arrange their marriages to accomplish these tasks.

Of course there was always more to marriage than its institutional functions. At the end of the day—or at least in the middle of the night—marriage is also a face-to-face relationship between individuals. The actual experience of marriage for individuals or for particular couples seldom conforms exactly to the model of marriage codified in law, custom, and philosophy in any given period. In this book we shall meet many people who rebelled against the rules of marriage over the centuries and others who simply evaded or manipulated them for their own purposes.

But institutions do structure people's expectations, hopes, and constraints. For thousands of years, husbands had the right to beat their wives. Few men probably meted out anything more severe than a slap. But the law upheld the authority of husbands to punish their wives physically and to exercise forcibly their "marital right" to sex, and that structured the relations between men and women in *all* marriages, even loving ones.

For the thousands of years that marriage was more about property and politics than personal satisfaction, this reality also shaped people's expectations about love. People have always fallen in love and have suffered when their feelings have not been reciprocated. But for most of history the institutional norms of marriage required women to suffer in silence if their hopes for love inside marriage were thwarted and permitted men to seek love outside marriage. People have always loved a love story. But for most of the past our ancestors did not try to live in one. They understood that marriage was an economic and political institution with rigid rules.

Today most people expect to live their lives in a loving relationship, not a rigid institution. Although most people want socially sanctioned relationships, backed by institutional protections, few would sacrifice their goal of a loving, fair, and flexible relationship for those protections. This book traces how men and women achieved fairness and flexibility in marriage and the unanticipated consequences that accompanied their victory.

Can we learn anything from the history of marriage that can guide us in dealing with those unanticipated consequences? Can knowing where we came from help us figure out where we ought to go from here?

The study of history doesn't offer cut-and-dried answers to questions about the changes in modern marriage or the emergence of alternative ways to organize family life. Life is not a court of law, where precedent is key. No historical "logic" requires us to respond to change in a particular way.

In fact, precedent is a poor guide for the choices we face today in personal life and public policy. Throughout most of history a key function of marriage was to produce children and organize inheritance rights. Marriages were often nullified if a couple did not produce a child. But in our modern world no one suggests that couples who don't have children should not have access to the legal benefits of marriage.

Precedent doesn't help much on the controversial question of same-sex marriage either. Some people argue that because at various times in history same-sex marriages have been accepted in some societies, such marriages should therefore be legal now. But should precedent also apply to other alternatives to the heterosexual nuclear family? On the basis of historical precedent, dissident polygamous Mormons in the United States have an open-and-shut case. Polygyny, whereby a man can have multiple wives, is the marriage form found in more places and at more times than any other.[9] If precedent is our guide, shouldn't we legalize polygyny, bring back arranged marriages and child brides, and decriminalize wife beating?

But if history can't give us specific instructions, it can help us decide which precedents are relevant to contemporary situations and which are not. While I was working on this book, attorneys in Canada were preparing for the same-sex marriage case whose outcome led to recognition of gay and lesbian marriages in 2003. Both sides were soliciting affidavits for or against recognizing same-sex marriage. Although many of these drew on contemporary research about how children fare in gay or lesbian families, some also debated the historical precedent for such unions.[10]

I was particularly struck by one exchange in the depositions. One historian testified that same-sex marriage had been recognized in several historical periods and places, citing ancient Rome as an example. A second historian challenged the relevance of that precedent by pointing out that such marriages were exceptional in Roman times and were regarded unfavorable by contemporaries.

I happen to believe the evidence from Roman history supports the second interpretation. But the Romans made a very different argument against same-sex marriage than the one we hear in today's political debates. The ancient Romans had no problem with homosexuality, and they did not think that heterosexual marriage was sacred. The reason they found male-male marriage repugnant was that no real man would ever agree to play the subordinate role demanded of a Roman wife. Today, by contrast, many heterosexual couples aspire to achieve the loyal, egalitarian relationships that Greek and Roman philosophers believed could exist only in a friendship between two men.

If we can learn anything from the past, it is how few precedents are now relevant in the changed marital landscape in which we operate today. For thousands of years, people had little choice about whether and whom to marry and almost no choice in whether or not to have children. Death ended many marriages much sooner than divorce does today. A husband owned his wife's property, earnings, and sexuality and had the final word on all family decisions.

A man who fathered a child out of wedlock was seldom responsible for its support, and a woman who bore a child out of wedlock could often survive only by becoming a concubine, mistress, or prostitute. Kin, neighbors, and custom exerted far more control over people's choices and behaviors than is possible today. Most important, people's political rights, jobs, education, access to property, and obligations to others all were filtered through the institution of marriage.

Between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-twentieth century, the social functions and internal dynamics of traditional marriage were transformed. The older system of arranged, patriarchal marriage was replaced by the love-based male breadwinner marriage, with its ideal of lifelong monogamy and intimacy. New expectations came to structure marriage. Then, in just the last thirty years, all the precedents established by the love-based male breadwinner family were in turn thrown into question.

Today we are entering uncharted territory, and there is still no definitive guide to the new marital landscape. Most of what we used to take for granted about who marries and why, or how to make a marriage work, is in flux. But perhaps reading this book will do for you what researching it has done for me: help you understand how we got where we are today, how our choices have changed, what old options have fallen away, and what new ones have opened up.

PART ONE
In Search of Traditional Marriage

Chapter 1
The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love

George Bernard Shaw described marriage as an institution that brings together two people "under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions. They are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously until death do them part."[1]

Shaw's comment was amusing when he wrote it at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it still makes us smile today, because it pokes fun at the unrealistic expectations that spring from a dearly held cultural ideal—that marriage should be based on intense, profound love and a couple should maintain their ardor until death do them part. But for thousands of years the joke would have fallen flat.

For most of history it was inconceivable that people would choose their mates on the basis of something as fragile and irrational as love and then focus all their sexual, intimate, and altruistic desires on the resulting marriage. In fact, many historians, sociologists, and anthropologists used to think romantic love was a recent Western invention. This is not true. People have always fallen in love, and throughout the ages many couples have loved each other deeply.[2]

But only rarely in history has love been seen as the main reason for getting married. When someone did advocate such a strange belief, it was no laughing matter. Instead, it was considered a serious threat to social order.

In some cultures and times, true love was actually thought to be incompatible with marriage. Plato believed love was a wonderful emotion that led men to behave honorably. But the Greek philosopher was referring not to the love of women, "such as the meaner men feel," but to the love of one man for another.[3]

Other societies considered it good if love developed after marriage or thought love should be factored in along with the more serious considerations involved in choosing a mate. But even when past societies did welcome or encourage married love, they kept it on a short leash. Couples were not to put their feelings for each other above more important commitments, such as their ties to parents, siblings, cousins, neighbors, or God.

In ancient India, falling in love before marriage was seen as a disruptive, almost antisocial act. The Greeks thought lovesickness was a type of insanity, a view that was adopted by medieval commentators in Europe. In the Middle Ages the French defined love as a "derangement of the mind" that could be cured by sexual intercourse, either with the loved one or with a different partner.[4] This cure assumed, as Oscar Wilde once put it, that the quickest way to conquer yearning and temptation was to yield immediately and move on to more important matters.

In China, excessive love between husband and wife was seen as a threat to the solidarity of the extended family. Parents could force a son to divorce his wife if her behavior or work habits didn't please them, whether or not he loved her. They could also require him take a concubine if his wife did not produce a son. If a son's romantic attachment to his wife rivaled his parents' to claims on the couple's time and labor, the parents might even send her back to her parents. In the Chinese language the term *love* did not traditionally apply to feelings between husband and wife. It was used to describe an illicit, socially disapproved relationship. In the 1920s a group of intellectuals invented a new word for love between spouses because they thought such a radical new idea required its own special label.[5]

In Europe, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, adultery became idealized as the highest form of love among the aristocracy. According to the Countess of Champagne, it was impossible for true love to "exert its powers between two people who are married to each other."[6]

In twelfth-century France, Andreas Capellanus, chaplain to Countess Marie of Troyes, wrote a treatise on the principles of courtly love. The first rule was that "marriage is no real excuse for not loving." But he meant loving someone outside the marriage. As late as the sixteenth century the French essayist Montaigne wrote that any man who was in love with his wife was a man so dull that no one else could love him.[7]

Courtly love probably loomed larger in literature than in real life. But for centuries, noblemen and kings fell in love with courtesans rather than the wives they married for political reasons. Queens and noblewomen had to be more discreet than their husbands, but they too looked beyond marriage for love and intimacy.

This sharp distinction between love and marriage was common among the lower and middle classes as well. Many of the songs and stories popular among peasants in medieval Europe mocked married love.

The most famous love affair of the Middle Ages was that of Peter Abelard, a well-known theologian in France, and Héloíse, the brilliant niece of a fellow churchman at Notre Dame. The two eloped without marrying, and she bore him a child. In an attempt to save his career but still placate Héloíse's furious uncle, Abelard proposed they marry in secret. This would mean that Héloíse would not be living in sin, while Abelard could still pursue his church ambitions. But Héloíse resisted the idea, arguing that marriage would not only harm his career but also undermine their love.[8]

"Nothing Is More Impure Than to Love One's Wife as if She Were a Mistress"[9]

Even in societies that esteemed married love, couples were expected to keep it under strict control. In many cultures, public displays of love between husband and wife were considered unseemly. A Roman was expelled from the Senate because he had kissed his wife in front of his daughter. Plutarch conceded that the punishment was somewhat extreme but pointed out that everyone knew that it was "disgraceful" to kiss one's wife in front of others.[10]

Some Greek and Roman philosophers even said that a man who loved his wife with "excessive" ardor was "an adulterer." Many centuries later Catholic and Protestant theologians argued that husbands and wives who loved each other too much were committing the sin of idolatry. Theologians chided wives who used endearing nicknames for their husbands, because such familiarity on a wife's part undermined the husband's authority and the awe that his wife should feel for him. Although medieval Muslim thinkers were more approving of sexual passion between husband and wife than were Christian theologians, they also insisted that too much intimacy between husband and wife weakened a believer's devotion to God. And, like their European counterparts, secular writers in the Islamic world believed that love thrived best outside marriage.[11]

Many cultures still frown on placing love at the center of marriage. In Africa, the Fulbe people of northern Cameroon do not see love as a legitimate emotion, especially within marriage. One observer reports that in conversations with their neighbors, Fulbe women "vehemently deny emotional attachment to a husband." In many peasant and working-class communities, too much love between husband and wife is seen as disruptive because it encourages the couple to withdraw from the wider web of dependence that makes the society work.[12]

As a result, men and women often relate to each other in public, even after marriage, through the conventions of a war between the sexes, disguising the fondness they may really feel. They describe their marital behavior, no matter how exemplary it may actually be, in terms of convenience, compulsion, or self-interest rather than love or sentiment. In Cockney rhyming slang, the term for *wife is trouble and strife*.

Whether it is valued or not, love is rarely seen as the main ingredient for marital success. Among the Taita of Kenya, recognition and approval of married love are widespread. An eightyyear-old man recalled that his fourth wife "was the wife of my heart …. I could look at her and no words would pass, just a smile." In this society, where men often take several wives, women speak wistfully about how wonderful it is to be a "love wife." But only a small percentage of Taita women experience this luxury, because a Taita man normally marries a love wife only after he has accumulated a few more practical wives.[13]

In many cultures, love has been seen as a desirable outcome of marriage but not as a good reason for getting married in the first place. The Hindu tradition celebrates love and sexuality in marriage, but love and sexual attraction are not considered valid reasons for marriage. "First we marry, then we'll fall in love" is the formula. As recently as 1975, a survey of college students in the Indian state of Karnataka found that only 18 percent "strongly" approved of marriages made on the basis of love, while 32 percent completely disapproved.[14]

Similarly, in early modern Europe most people believed that love developed after marriage. Moralists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries argued that if a husband and wife each had a good character, they would probably come to love each other. But they insisted that youths be guided by their families in choosing spouses who were worth learning to love. It was up to parents and other relatives to make sure that the woman had a dowry or the man had a good yearly income. Such capital, it was thought, would certainly help love flower.[15]

"[I]t Made Me Really Sick, Just as I Have Formerly Been When in Love with My Wife"

I don't believe that people of the past had more control over their hearts than we do today or that they were incapable of the deep love so many individuals now hope to achieve in marriage. But love in marriage was seen as a bonus, not as a necessity. The great Roman statesman Cicero exchanged many loving letters with his wife, Terentia, during their thirty-year marriage. But that didn't stop him from divorcing her when she was no longer able to support him in the style to which he had become accustomed.[16]

Sometimes people didn't have to make such hard choices. In seventeenth-century America, Anne Bradstreet was the favorite child of an indulgent father who gave her the kind of education usually reserved for elite boys. He later arranged her marriage to a cherished childhood friend who eventually became the governor of Massachusetts. Combining love, duty, material security, and marriage was not the strain for her that it was for many men and women of that era. Anne wrote love poems to her husband that completely ignored the injunction of Puritan ministers not to place one's spouse too high in one's affections. "If ever two were one," she wrote him, "then surely we; if ever man were loved by wife, then thee .... I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold, or all the riches that the East doth hold; my love is such that rivers cannot quench, nor ought but love from thee, give recompense."[17]

The famous seventeenth-century English diarist Samuel Pepys chose to marry fro love rather than profit. But he was not as lucky as Anne. After hearing a particularly stirring piece of music, Pepys recorded that it "did wrap up my soul so that it made me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife."[18] Pepys would later disinherit a nephew for marrying under the influence of so strong yet transient an emotion.

There were always youngsters who resisted the pressures of parents, kin, and neighbors to marry for practical reasons rather than love, but most accepted or even welcomed the interference of parents and others in arranging their marriages. A common saying in early modern Europe was "He who marries for love has good nights and bad days." Nowadays a bitter wife or husband might ask, "Whatever possessed me to think I loved you enough to marry you?" Through most of the past, he or she was more likely to have asked, "Whatever possessed me to marry you just because I loved you?"

"Happily Ever After"

Through most of the past, individuals hoped to find love, or at least "tranquil affection," in marriage.[19] But nowhere did they have the same recipe for marital happiness that prevails in most contemporary Western countries. Today there is general agreement on what it takes for a couple to live "happily ever after." First, they must love each other deeply and choose each other unswayed by outside pressure. From then on, each must make the partner the top priority in life, putting that relationship above any and all competing ties. A husband and wife, we believe, owe their highest obligations and deepest loyalties to each other and the children they raise. Parents and in-laws should not be allowed to interfere in the marriage. Married couples should be best friends, sharing their most intimate feelings and secrets. They should express affection openly but also talk candidly about problems. And of course they should be sexually faithful to each other.

This package of expectations about love, marriage, and sex, however, is extremely rare. When we look at the historical record around the world, the customs of modern America and Western Europe appear exotic and exceptional.

Leo Tolstoy once remarked that all happy families are alike, while every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. But the more I study the history of marriage, the more I think the opposite if true. Most unhappy marriages in history share common patterns, leaving their tearstained—and sometimes bloodstained—records across the ages. But each happy, successful marriage seems to be happy in its own way. And for most of human history, successful marriages have not been happy in *our* way.

A woman in ancient China might bring one or more of her sisters to her husband's home as backup wives. Eskimo couples often had cospousal arrangements, in which each partner had sexual relations with the other's spouse. In Tibet and parts of India, Kashmir, and Nepal, a woman may be married to two or more brothers, all of whom share sexual access to her.[20]

In modern America, such practices are the stuff of trash TV: "I caught my sister in bed with my husband"; "My parents brought their lovers into our home"; "My wife slept with my brother"; "It broke my heart to share my husband with another woman." In other cultures, individuals often find such practices normal and comforting. The children of Eskimo cospouses felt that they shared a special bond, and society viewed them as siblings. Among Tibetan brothers who share the same wife, sexual jealousy is rare.[21]

In some cultures, cowives see one another as allies rather than rivals. In Botswana, women add an interesting wrinkle to the old European saying "Woman's work is never done." There they say: "Without cowives, a woman's work is never done." A researcher who worked with the Cheyenne Indians of the United States in the 1930s and 1940s told of a chief who tried to get rid of two of his three wives. All three women defied him, saying that if he sent two of them away, he would have to give away the third as well.[22]

Even when societies celebrated the love between husband and wife as a pleasant by-product of marriage, people rarely had high regard for marital intimacy. Chinese commentators on marriage discouraged a wife from confiding in her husband or telling him about her day. A good wife did not bother her husband with news of her own activities and feelings but treated him "like a guest," no matter how long they had been married. A husband who demonstrated open affection for his wife, even at home, was seen as having a weak character.[23]

In the early eighteenth century, American lovers often said they looked for "candor" in each other. But they were not talking about the soul-baring intimacy idealized by modern Americans, and they certainly did not believe that couples should talk frankly about their grievances. Instead candor meant fairness, kindliness, and good temper. People wanted a spouse who did not pry too deeply. The ideal mate, wrote U.S. President John Adams in his diary, was willing "to palliate faults and Mistakes, to put the best Construction upon Words and Action, and to forgive Injuries."[24]

Modern marital advice books invariable tell husbands and wives to put each other first. But in many societies, marriage ranks very low in the hierarchy of meaningful relationships. People's strongest loyalties and emotional connections may be reserved for members of their birth families. On the North American plains in the 1930s, a Kiowa Indian woman commented to a researcher that "a woman can always get another husband, but she has only one brother." In China it was said that "you have only one family, but you can always get another wife." In Christian texts prior to the seventeenth century, the word *love* usually referred to feelings toward God or neighbors rather than toward a spouse.[25]

In Confucian philosophy, the two strongest relationships in family life are between father and son and between elder brother and younger brother, not between husband and wife. In thirteenth-century China the bond between father and son was so much stronger than the bond between husband and wife that legal commentators insisted a couple do nothing if the patriarch of the household raped his son's wife. In one case, although the judge was sure that a woman's rape accusation against her father-in-law was true, he ordered the young man to give up his sentimental desire "to grow old together" with his wife. Loyalty to parents was paramount, and therefore the son should send his wife back to her own father, who could then marry her to someone else. Sons were sometimes ordered beaten for siding with their wives against their father. No wonder that for 1,700 years women in one Chinese province guarded a secret language that they used to commiserate with each other about the griefs of marriage.[26]

In many societies of the past, sexual loyalty was not a high priority. The expectation of mutual fidelity is a rather recent invention. Numerous cultures have allowed husbands to seek sexual gratification outside marriage. Less frequently, but often enough to challenge common preconceptions, wives have also been allowed to do this without threatening the marriage. In a study of 109 societies, anthropologists found that only 48 forbade extramarital sex to both husbands and wives.[27]

When a woman has sex with someone other than her husband and he doesn't object, anthropologists have traditionally called it wife loaning. When a man does it, they call it male privilege. But in some societies the choice to switch partners rests with the woman. Among the Dogon of West Africa, young married women publicly pursued extramarital relationships with the encouragement of their mothers. Among the Rukuba of Nigeria, a wife can take a lover at the time of her first marriage. This relationship is so embedded in accepted custom that the lover has the right, later in life, to ask his former mistress to marry her daughter to his son.[28]

Among the Eskimo of northern Alaska, as I noted earlier, husbands and wives, with mutual consent, established comarriages with other couples. Some anthropologists believe cospouse relationships were a more socially acceptable outlet for sexual attraction than was marriage itself. Expressing open jealousy about the sexual relationships involved was considered boorish.[29]

Such different notions of marital rights and obligations made divorce and remarriage less emotionally volatile for the Eskimo than it is for most modern Americans. In fact, the Eskimo believed that a remarried person's partner had an obligation to allow the former spouse, as well as any children of that union, the right to fish, hunt, and gather in the new spouse's territory.[30]

Several small-scale societies in South America have sexual and marital norms that are especially startling for Europeans and North Americans. In these groups, people believe that any man who has sex with a woman during her pregnancy contributes part of his biological substance to the child. The husband is recognized as the primary father, but the woman's lover or lovers also have paternal responsibilities, including the obligation to share food with the woman and her child in the future. During the 1990s researchers taking life histories of elderly Bari women in Venezuela found that most had taken lovers during at least one of their pregnancies. Their husbands were usually aware and did not object. When a woman gave birth, she would name all the men she had slept with since learning she was pregnant, and a woman attending the birth would tell each of these men: "You have a child."[31]

In Europe and the United States today such an arrangement would be a surefire recipe for jealousy, bitter breakups, and very mixed-up kids. But among the Bari people this practice was in the best interests of the child. The secondary fathers were expected to provide the child with fish and game, with the result that a child with a secondary father was twice as likely to live to the age of fifteen as a brother or sister without such a father.[32]

Few other societies have incorporated extramarital relationships so successfully into marriage and child rearing. But all these examples of differing marital and sexual norms make it difficult to claim there is some universal model for the success or happiness of a marriage.

About two centuries ago Western Europe and North America developed a whole set of new values about the way to organize marriage and sexuality, and many of these values are now spreading across the globe. In this Western model, people expect marriage to satisfy more of their psychological and social needs than ever before. Marriage is supposed to be free of the coercion, violence, and gender inequalities that were tolerated in the past. Individuals want marriage to meet most of their needs for intimacy and affection and all their needs for sex.

Never before in history had societies thought that such a set of high expectations about marriage was either realistic or desirable. Although many Europeans and Americans found tremendous joy in building their relationships around these values, the adoption of these unprecedented goals for marriage had unanticipated and revolutionary consequences that have since come to threaten the stability of the entire institution.

Notes

Introduction

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Chapter 1. The Radical Ida of Marrying for Love

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14

Pilgrimage to Nonviolence

From *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Often the question has arisen concerning my own intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence. In order to get at this question it is necessary to go back to my early teens in Atlanta. I had grown up abhorring not only segregation but also the oppressive and barbarous acts that grew out of it. I had passed spots where Negroes had been savagely lynched, and had watched the Ku Klux Klan on its rides at night. I had seen police brutality with my own eyes, and watched Negroes receive the most tragic injustice in the courts. All of these things had done something to my growing personality. I had come perilously close to resenting all white people.

I had also learned that the inseparable twin of racial injustice was economic injustice. Although I came from a home of economic security and relative comfort, I could never get out of my mind the economic insecurity of many of my playmates and the tragic poverty of those living around me. During my late teens I worked two summers, against my father's wishes–he never wanted my brother and me to work around white people because of the oppressive conditions–in a plant that hired both Negroes and whites. Here I saw economic injustice firsthand, and realized that the poor white was exploited just as much as the Negro. Through these early experiences I grew up deeply conscious of the varieties of injustice in our society.

So when I went to Atlanta's Morehouse College as a freshman in 1944 my concern for racial and economic justice was already substantial. During my student days at Morehouse I read Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience* for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times. This was my first intellectual contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance.

Not until I entered Crozer Theological Seminary in 1948, however, did I begin a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil. Although my major interest was in the fields of theology and philosophy, I spent a great deal of time reading the works of the great social philosophers. I came early to Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, which left an indelible imprint on my thinking by giving me a theological basis for the social concern which had already grown up in me as a result of my early experiences. Of course there were points at which I differed with Rauschenbusch. I felt that he had fallen victim to the nineteenth century "cult of inevitable progress" which led him to a superficial optimism concerning man's nature. Moreover, he came perilously close to identifying the Kingdom of God with a particular social and economic system–a tendency which should never befall the Church. But in spite of these shortcomings Rauschenbusch had done a great service for the Christian Church by insisting that the gospel deals with the whole man, not only his soul but his body; not only his spiritual well-being but his material well-being. It has been my conviction ever since reading Rauschenbusch that any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried. It well has been said: "A religion that ends with the individual, ends."

After reading Rauschenbusch, I turned to a serious study of the social and ethical theories of the great philosophers, from Plato and Aristotle down to Rousseau, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill and Locke. All of these masters stimulated my thinking–such as it was–and, while finding things to question in each of them, I nevertheless learned a great deal from their study.

During the Christmas holidays of 1949 I decided to spend my spare time reading Karl Marx to try to understand the appeal of communism for many people. For the first time I carefully scrutinized *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto.* I also read some interpretive works on the thinking of Marx and Lenin. In reading such Communist writings I drew certain conclusions that have remained with me to this day.

First I rejected their materialistic interpretation of history. Communism, avowedly secularistic and materialistic, has no place for God. This I could never accept, for as a Christian I believe that there is a creative personal power in this universe who is the ground and essence of all reality–a power that cannot be explained in materialistic terms. History is ultimately guided by spirit, not matter.

Second, I strongly disagreed with communism's ethical relativism. Since for the Communist there is no divine government, no absolute moral order, there are no fixed, immutable principles; consequently almost anything–force, violence, murder, lying–is a justifiable means to the "millennial" end. This type of relativism was abhorrent to me. Constructive ends can never give absolute moral justification to destructive means, because in the final analysis the end is preexistent in the mean.

Third, I opposed communism's political totalitarianism. In communism the individual ends up in subjection to the state. True, the Marxist would argue that the state is an "interim" reality which is to be eliminated when the classless society emerges; but the state is the end while it lasts, and man only a means to that end. And if any man's so-called rights or liberties stand in the way of that end, they are simply swept aside. His liberties of expression, his freedom to vote, his freedom to listen to what news he likes or to choose his books are all restricted. Man becomes hardly more, in communism, than a depersonalized cog in the turning wheel of the state.

This deprecation of individual freedom was objectionable to me. I am convinced now, as I was then, that man is an end because he is a child of God. Man is not made for the state; the state is made for man. To deprive man of freedom is to relegate him to the status of a thing, rather than elevate him to the status of a person. Man must never be treated as a means to the end of the state, but always as an end within himself.

Yet, in spite of the fact that my response to communism was and is negative, and I considered it basically evil, there were points at which I found it challenging. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, referred to communism as a Christian heresy. By this he meant that communism had laid hold of certain truths which are essential parts of the Christian view of things, but that it had bound up with them concepts and practices which no Christian could ever accept or profess. Communism challenged the late Archbishop and it should challenge every Christian–as it challenged me–to a growing concern about social justice. With all of its false assumptions and evil methods, communism grew as a protest against the hardships of the underprivileged. Communism in theory emphasized a classless society, and a concern for social justice, though the world knows from sad experience that in practice it created new classes and a new lexicon of injustice. The Christian ought always to be challenged by any protest against unfair treatment of the poor, for Christianity is itself such a protest, nowhere expressed more eloquently than in Jesus' words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

I also sought systematic answers to Marx's critique of modern bourgeois culture. He presented capitalism as essentially a struggle between the owners of the productive resources and the workers, whom Marx regarded as the real producers. Marx interpreted economic forces as the dialectical process by which society moved from feudalism through capitalism to socialism, with the primary mechanism of this historical movement being the struggle between economic classes whose interests were irreconcilable. Obviously this theory left out of account the numerous and significant complexities—political, economic moral,

religious and psychological—which played a vital role in shaping the constellation of institutions and ideas known today as Western civilization. Moreover, it was dated in the sense that the capitalism Marx wrote about bore only a partial resemblance to the capitalism we know in this country today.

But in spite of the shortcomings of his analysis, Marx had raised some basic questions. I was deeply concerned from my early teen days about the gulf between superfluous wealth and abject poverty, and my reading of Marx made me ever more conscious of this gulf. Although modern American capitalism had greatly reduced the gap through social reforms, there was still need for a better distribution of wealth. Moreover, Marx had revealed the danger of the profit motive as the sole basis of an economic system; capitalism is always in danger of inspiring men to be more concerned about making a living than making a life. We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity—thus capitalism can lead to a practical materialism that is as pernicious as the materialism taught by communism.

In short, I read Marx as I read all of the influential historical thinkers–from a dialectical point of view, combining a partial "yes" and a partial "no." In so far as Marx posited a metaphysical materialism, an ethical relativism, and a strangulating totalitarianism, I responded with an unambiguous "no"; but in so far as he pointed to weaknesses of traditional capitalism, contributed to the growth of a definite self-consciousness in the masses, and challenged the social conscience of the Christian churches, I responded with a definite "yes."

My reading of Marx also convinced me that truth is found neither in Marxism nor in traditional capitalism. Each represents a partial truth. Historically capitalism failed to see the truth in collective enterprise, and Marxism failed to see the truth in individual enterprise. Nineteenth century capitalism failed to see that life is social and Marxism failed and still fails to see that life is individual and personal. The Kingdom of God is neither the thesis of individual enterprise nor the antithesis of collective enterprise, but a synthesis which reconciles the truths of both.

During my stay at Crozer, I was also exposed for the first time to the pacifist position in a lecture by A. J. Muste. I was deeply moved by Mr. Muste's talk, but far from convinced of the practicability of his position. Like most of the students of Crozer, I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and growth of an evil force. War, horrible as it is, might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system—Nazi, Fascist, or Communist.

During this period I had about despaired of the power of love in solving social problems. Perhaps my faith in love was temporarily shaken by the philosophy of Nietzsche. I had been reading parts of *The Genealogy of Morals* and the whole of *The Will to Power*. Nietzsche's glorification of power—in his theory all life expressed the will to power—was an outgrowth of his contempt for ordinary morals. He attacked the whole of the Hebraic-Christian morality—with its virtues of piety and humility, its otherworldliness and its attitude toward suffering—as the glorification of weakness, as making virtues out of necessity and impotence. He looked to the development of a superman who would surpass man as man surpassed the ape.

Then one Sunday afternoon I traveled to Philadelphia to hear a sermon by Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University. He was there to preach for the Fellowship House of Philadelphia. Dr. Johnson had just returned from a trip to India, and, to my great interest, he spoke of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half dozen books on Gandhi's life and works.

Like most people, I had heard of Gandhi, but I had never studied him seriously. As I read I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. I was particularly moved by the Salt March to the Sea and his numerous fasts. The whole concept of "Satyagraha" (*Satya* is truth which equals love, and *agraha* is force; "Satyagraha," therefore, means truth-force or loveforce) was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first rime its potency in the area of social reform. Prior to reading

Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationship. The "turn the other cheek" philosophy and the "love your enemies" philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was.

Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. Love, for Gandhi, was a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months. The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social-contracts theory of Hobbes, the "back to nature" optimism of Rousseau. the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.

But my intellectual odyssey to nonviolence did not end here. During my last year in theological school, I began to read the works of Reinhold Niebuhr. The prophetic and realistic elements in Niebuhr's passionate style and profound thought were appealing to me, and I became so enamored of his social ethics that I almost fell into the trap of accepting uncritically everything he wrote.

About this time I read Niebuhr's critique of the pacifist position. Niebuhr had himself once been a member of the pacifist ranks.

For several years, he had been national chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. His break with pacifism came in the early thirties, and the first full statement of his criticism of pacifism was in Moral Man and Immoral Society. Here he argued that there was no intrinsic moral difference between violent and nonviolent resistance. The social consequences of the two methods were different, he contended, but the differences were in degree rather than kind. Later Niebuhr began emphasizing the irresponsibility of relying on nonviolent resistance when there was no ground for believing that it would be successful in preventing the spread of totalitarian tyranny. It could only be successful, he argued, if the groups against whom the resistance was taking place had some degree of moral conscience, as was the case in Gandhi's struggle against the British. Niebuhr's ultimate rejection of pacifism was based primarily on the doctrine of man. He argued that pacifism failed to do justice to the reformation doctrine of justification by faith, substituting for it a sectarian perfectionism which believes "that divine grace actually lifts man out of the sinful contradictions of history and establishes him above the sins of the world."

At first, Niebuhr's critique of pacifism left me in a state of confusion. As I continued to read, however, I came to see more and more the shortcomings of his position. For instance, many of his statements revealed that he interpreted pacifism as a sort of passive nonresistance to evil expressing naive trust in the power of love. But this was a serious distortion. My study of Gandhi convinced me that true pacifism is not nonresistance to evil, but nonviolent resistance to evil. Between the two positions, there is a world of difference. Gandhi resisted evil with as much vigor and power as the violent resister, but he resisted with love instead of hate. True pacifism is not unrealistic submission to evil power, as Niebuhr contends. It is rather a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, in the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflicter of it, since the latter only multiplied the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent, and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart.

In spite of the fact that I found many things to be desired in Niebuhr's philosophy, there were several points at which he constructively influenced my thinking. Niebuhr's great contribution to contemporary theology is that he has refuted the false optimism characteristic of a great segment of Protestant liberalism, without falling into the anti-rationalism of the continental theologian Karl Barth, or the semi-fundamentalism of other dialectical theologians. Moreover, Niebuhr has extraordinary insight into human nature, especially the behavior of nations and social groups. He is keenly aware of the complexity of human motives and of the relation between morality and power. His theology is a persistent reminder of the reality of sin on

every level of humanity's existence. These elements in Niebuhr's thinking helped me to recognize the illusions of a superficial optimism concerning human nature and the dangers of a false idealism. While I still believed in the humanpotential for good, Niebuhr made me realize its potential for evil as well. Moreover Niebuhr helped me to recognize the complexity of people's social involvement and the glaring reality of collective evil.

Many pacifists, I felt, failed to see this. All too many had an unwarranted optimism concerning man and leaned unconsciously toward self-righteousness. It was my revolt against these attitudes under the influence of Niebuhr that accounts for the fact that in spite of my strong leaning toward pacifism, I never joined a pacifist organization. After reading Niebuhr, I tried to arrive at a realistic pacifism. In other words, I came to see the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in the circumstances. I felt then, and I feel now, that the pacifist would have a greater appeal if he did not claim to be free from the moral dilemmas that the Christian nonpacifist confronts.

The next stage of my intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence came during my doctoral studies at Boston University. Here I had the opportunity to talk to many exponents of nonviolence, both students and visitors to the campus. Boston University School of Theology under the influence of Dean Walter Muelder and Professor Allan Knight Chalmers, had a deep sympathy for pacifism. Both Dean Muelder and Dr. Chalmers had a passion for social justice that stemmed, not from a superficial optimism, but from a deep faith in the possibilities of human beings when they allowed themselves to become co-workers with God. It was at Boston University that I came to see that Niebuhr had overemphasized the corruption of human nature. His pessimism concerning human nature was not balanced by an optimism concerning divine nature. He was so involved in diagnosing man's sickness of sin that he overlooked the cure of grace.

I studied philosophy and theology at Boston University under Edgar S. Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. Both men greatly stimulated my thinking. It was mainly under these teachers that I studied personalistic philosophy—the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality. This personal idealism remains today my basic philosophical position. Personalism's insistence that only personality—finite and infinite—is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality.

Just before Dr. Brightman's death, I began studying the philosophy of Hegel with him. Although the course was mainly a study of Hegel's monumental work, *Phenomenology of Mind*, I spent my spare time reading his *Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Right.* There were points in Hegel's philosophy that I strongly disagreed with. For instance, his absolute idealism was rationally unsound to me because it tended to swallow up the many in the one. But there were other aspects of his thinking that I found stimulating. His contention that "truth is the whole" led me to a philosophical method of rational coherence. His analysis of the dialectical process, in spite of its shortcomings, helped me to see that growth comes through struggle.

In 1954 I ended my formal training with all of these relative divergent intellectual forces converging into a positive social philosophy. One of the main tenets of this philosophy was the conviction that nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice. At this time, however, I had merely an intellectual understanding and appreciation of the position, with no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation.

When I went to Montgomery as a pastor, I had not the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which nonviolent resistance would be applicable. I neither started the protest nor suggested it. I simply responded to the call of the people for a spokesman. When the protest began, my mind, consciously or unconsciously, was driven back to the Sermon on the Mount, with its sublime teachings on love, and the Gandhian method of nonviolent resistance. As the days unfolded, I came to see the power of nonviolence more and more. Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life. Many of the things that I had not cleared up intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action.

Since the philosophy of nonviolence played such a positive role in the Montgomery movement, it may be wise to turn to a brief discussion of some basic aspects of this philosophy.

First, it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight. He made this statement conscious of the fact that there is always another alternative: no individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need they use violence to right the wrong; there is the way of nonviolence resistance. This is ultimately the way of the strong man. It is not a method of stagnant passivity. The phrase "passive resistance" often gives the false impression that this is a sort of "do-nothing method" in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. But nothing is further from the truth. For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil; it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

A second basic fact that characterizes nonviolence is that it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

A third characteristic of this method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil. If he is opposing racial injustice, the nonviolent resister has the vision to see that the basic tension is not between races. As I like to say to the people in Montgomery: "The tension in this city is not between white people and Negro people. The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And if there is a victory, it will be a victory for justice and the forces of light. We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust."

A fourth point that characterizes nonviolent resistance is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood," Gandhi said to his countrymen. The nonviolent resister is willing to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it "as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber."

One may well ask: "What is the nonviolent resister's justification for this ordeal to which he invites men, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of turning the other cheek?" The answer is found in the realization that unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. "Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering," said Gandhi. He continues: "Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason."

A fifth point concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. The nonviolent resister would contend that in the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

In speaking of love at this point, we are not referring to some sentimental or affectionate emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. Love in this connection means understanding, redemptive good will. Here the Greek language comes to our aid. There are three words for love in the Greek New Testament. First, there is *eros*. In Platonic philosophy *eros* meant the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. It has come now to mean a sort of aesthetic or romantic love. Second, there is *philia* which means intimate affection between personal friends. *Philia* denotes a sort of reciprocal love; the person loves because he is loved. When we speak of loving those who oppose us, we refer to neither *eros* nor *philia;* we speak of a love which is expressed in the Greek word *agape*. *Agape* means understanding, redeeming good will for all men. It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart.

Agape is disinterested love. It is a love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor (I Cor. 10:24). *Agape* does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others *for their sakes.* It is an entirely "neighbor-regarding concern for others," which discovers the neighbor in every man it meets. Therefore, *agape* makes no distinction between friend and enemy; it is directed toward both. If one loves an individual merely on account of his friendliness, he loves him for the sake of the benefits to be gained from the friendship, rather than for the friend's own sake. Consequently, the best way to assure oneself that Love is disinterested is to have love for the enemy-neighbor from whom you can expect no good in return, but only hostility and persecution.

Another basic point about *agape* is that it springs from the need of the other person—his *need* for belonging to the best in the human family. The Samaritan who helped the Jew on the Jericho Road was "good" because he responded to the human need that he was presented with. God's love is eternal and fails not because man needs his love. St. Paul assures us that the loving act of redemption was done "while we were yet sinners"—that is, at the point of our greatest need for love. Since the white man's personality is greatly distorted by segregation, and his soul, and his soul is greatly scarred, he needs the love of the Negro. The Negro must love the white man, because the white man needs his love to remove his tensions, insecurities, and fears.

Agape is not a weak, passive love. It is love in action. *Agape* is love seeking to preserve and create community. It is insistence on community even when one seeks to break it. *Agape* is a willingness to sacrifice in the interest of mutuality. *Agape* is a willingness to go to any length to restore community. It doesn't stop at the first mile, but it goes the second mile to restore community. It is a willingness to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven to restore community. The cross is the eternal expression of the length to which God will go in order to restore broken community. The resurrection is a symbol of God's triumph over all the forces that seek to block community. The Holy Spirit is the continuing community creating reality that moves through history. He who works against community is working against the whole of creation. Therefore, if I respond to hate with a reciprocal hate I do nothing but intensify the cleavage in broken community. I can only close the gap in broken community by meeting hate with love. If I meet hate with hate, I become depersonalized, because creation is so designed that my personality can only be fulfilled in the context of community. Booker T. Washington was right: "Let no man pull you so low as to make you hate him." When he pulls you that low he brings you to the point of working against community; he drags you to the point of defying creation, and thereby becoming depersonalized.

In the final analysis, *agape* means a recognition of the fact that all life is interrelated. All humanity is involved in a single process, and all men are brothers. To the degree that I harm my brother, no matter what he is doing to me, to that extent I am harming myself. For example, white men often refuse federal aid to education in order to avoid giving the Negro his rights; but because all men are brothers they cannot deny Negro children without harming their own. They end, all efforts to the contrary, by hurting themselves. Why is this? Because men are brothers. If you harm me, you harm yourself.

Love, *agape*, is the only cement that can hold this broken community together. When I am commanded to love, I am commanded to restore community, to resist injustice, and to meet the needs of my brothers.

A sixth basic fact about nonviolent resistance is that it is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation; for he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship. It is true that there are devout believers in nonviolence who find it difficult to believe in a personal God. But even these persons believe in the existence of some creative force that works for universal wholeness. Whether we call it an unconscious process, an impersonal Brahman, or a Personal Being of matchless power and infinite love, there is a creative force in this universe that works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole.

15

In Search of Midnight

Nathalie Handal

He kissed my lips at midnight
I let him
He took my blouse off
I let him
Took my bra off
and touched my breast
I let him
He took my pants off
I let him
Took my underwear off
and looked at me standing
in this strange, dark
black and white room
…I let him
A small light dimmed
by the window
I took a glimpse of
the city we live in,
both do not know…

Then he pronounces
my name wrong
and I stop him…
Ask him if he has ever
been exiled or imprisoned
if he has ever mailed
letters to a woman he
once loved but would
never see again
if he thinks we can go back
to a lover even if
we might not love
the second time,
asked him if he ever
robbed a small grocery store
or stole a bread from a peasant,
if he has ever crossed
seas, coasts, and mountains
and still could
not arrive…

He answers:
I did not pronounce my name
correctly in my country
so I was tortured,
I did not pronounce my name
correctly at the enemy line
so I was exiled
I did not pronounce my name
correctly upon arrival
so I was given new papers…
You see. A heart in search of midnight
is only a heart, everything else is the same,
except what the other is expecting…

16

In January, *Amor y Lluvia*

Nathalie Handal

In January, *Amor y Lluvia*

¡*Oh vida! ¿me reservas por ventura alg*ún *don?*
—Amado Nervo, "The Gift"

This is how we met—
one evening, there was noise in the square,
books in our hands, a quiet lusting
(We really met at a bar)

There was light on both sides of our shadows;
we were lost in lucid dream
(We were drunk)

We sang, held hands, nothing like this
ever happened to us before,
we were alive in each other's voice
(We forgot what we spoke about)

We kissed at 1 a.m.:
it was a still night
(Until the bartender yelled, *Last call*)

We told each other, but not out loud:
The more we develop our own sensibility, the more ironically
we know ourselves
(Certainly, we agreed with Pessoa, even if we
never discussed it)

We left together that night not knowing that
we would lie on the bed, inseparable,
an open window, snow waiting to tell us
to love harder, because what we wanted most was each other
(He thought, *This is it or heartbreak*; I was thinking the
same)

We left together now knowing that weeks later
I would be looking at him standing on a wooden chair,
his jeans on, his red belt undone, his shirt off,
trying to hang a curtain on an uneven window frame

(He almost fell, and we laughed, laughed some more
when I said, *You are neither earth nor man.*)

Then by the dripping faucet we kissed
by the record player he described as magic we kissed
We wondered if God had a right hand
(Yes, we had those thoughts)

We spoke of what moves
bitter cherries on the floor and cried;
we spoke of the trumpet and the twilight,
of the ballad of the Irish horses—
yes, the love of horses runs through Irish blood
and he was an Irishman
(I thought I was too—who doesn't want to be in the
company of Beckett, Yeats, and Roddy Doyle, though
of course, I would never abandon Darwish)

We spoke of red white and blue, and our embrace,
of the walk we took on the beach,
the old bottle of wine we opened,
and I thought, wider than quiet or noise, is his voice

We saw each other at the edge of the ocean,
and the word, his eyes, our lips
the mystery he placed inside of me—
childlike and unfolding in my sleep—
is a gift—about belonging,
watching snowflakes cover our shoes

To my January 20th

17

Letter from Birmingham Jail

Martin Luther King, Jr.

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr.Boutwell is a much more gentle

person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons

to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some -such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle—have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers."

Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators."' But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feets is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Vocation

Frederick Buechner

Frederick Buechner is a contemporary novelist and theologian whose facility with the English language and whose ability to condense complex issues into memorable aphorisms have made many of his theological formulations especially quotable. Indeed, his special gift for verbal economy may have encouraged him to produce a kind of dictionary of Christian theological terms in the book from which the selection below has been taken, Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC. *The term that appeared under the letter V in that volume was, of course, "vocation."*

The conclusion of Buechner's short discussion of vocation is perhaps the most widely quoted formulation of vocation among contemporary American Christians. "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." By "deep gladness," do you suppose that Buechner means "contentment," or does he mean the kind of joy that can be present even in the midst of suffering? Which of those two understandings would be more consonant with the ideas of vocation set forth by the other writers in this anthology?

[Vocation] comes from the Latin *vocare*, to call, and means the work a person is called to by God.

There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of Society, say, or the Superego, or Self-Interest.

By and large a good rule for finding out is this: The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing cigarette ads, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you're bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a), but probably aren't helping your patients much either.

Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

From Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 95.

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Vocation as Grace

Will Campbell

Will Campbell, who lives on a farm in Tennessee, has been upsetting Christian complacencies for many years as a preacher, activist, essayist, and novelist. Like Bonhoeffer, Campbell believes that "when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." Campbell therefore has no patience for the idea of vocation as something that simply gives a spiritual gloss to what we have chosen to do for ourselves by ourselves in any case.

In the story that he recounts below, Campbell challenges the conventional Christian notion that vocation is a purely individual matter. He suggests that our callings are best negotiated in community with others, through a process that leads us to discern not only our own gifts but also our own needs and weaknesses, not only the rich potentials of the world but also its poverty. Do you agree with Campbell in thinking that we cannot rightly hear our own call unless and until we recognize both others' dependence on us and our dependence on them?

Long before the process of my vocational self-examination (justification) began, I once cornered and talked to a high wire artist in a small traveling circus. I asked him why he chose that particular way of making a living. The first few minutes were filled with circus romance—the thrill of hurling through space, feeling at the last instant that pasty flesh of two always welcomed hands pressing around the wrists, swinging you forward to the next set of pasty hands which in turn deliver you safely back to the starting platform; the joy of laughter and approval and applause in the eyes of "children of all ages," the clanking of train wheels moving you on to the next city; even the part about it being a comfortable life with good pay. But finally he said what I had not expected him to say. "Now you really want to know why I go up there on that damned thing night after night after night?" I said I did. "Man, I would have quit it a long time ago. But my sister is up there. And my wife is a devil-may-care nut and my old man is getting older. If I wasn't up there, some bad night, man ... smash!" His foot stomped the floor with a bone cracking thud.

"H'mmm."

He started to walk away, but I had one more question to ask and ran after him. "But why do they stay up there?" He looked like he didn't want to answer, wasn't going to answer. But then he did. Turning from the door of the boy's locker room in the county seat high school, with a brown craft cardboard box and heavy Crayola sign: MEN'S COSTUMES above it for the evening's performance, he looked me up and down and then, as he disappeared, blurted it out: "Because I drink too much!"

From William D. Campbell, "Vocation as Grace," in *Callings!* Ed. James Y. Holloway and Will D. Campbell (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), pp. 279-280.

20

Working

People Talk about What They Do All Day
and How They Feel about What They Do

Studs Terkel

PREFACE I

Who Built the Pyramids?

by Mike Lefevre

Who built the seven towers of Thebes?
The books are filled with the names of kings.
Was it kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone? . . .
In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished
Where did the masons go? . . .

—Bertolt Brecht

It is a two-flat dwelling, somewhere in Cicero, on the outskirts of Chicago. He is thirty-seven. He works in a steel mill. On occasion, his wife Carol works as a waitress in a neighborhood restaurant; otherwise, she is at home, caring for their two small children, a girl and a boy.

At the time of my first visit, a sculpted statuette of Mother and Child was on the floor, head severed from body. He laughed softly as he indicated his three-year-old daughter: "She Doctor Spock'd it."

I'm a dying breed. A laborer. Strictly muscle work ... pick it up, put it down, pick it up, put it down. We handle between forty and fifty thousand pounds of steel a day. (Laughs) I know this is hard to believe—from four hundred pounds to three- and four-pound pieces. It's dying.

You can't take pride any more. You remember when a guy could point to a house he built, how many logs he stacked. He built it and he was proud of it. I don't really think I could be proud if a contractor built a home for me. I would be tempted to get in there and kick the carpenter in the ass (laughs), and take the saw away from him. 'Cause I would have to be part of it, you know.

It's hard to take pride in a bridge you're never gonna cross, in a door you're never gonna open. You're mass-producing things and you never see the end results of it. (Muses) I worked for a trucker one time. And I got this tiny satisfaction when I loaded a truck. At least I could see the truck depart loaded. In a steel mill, forget it. You don't see where nothing goes.

I got chewed out by my foreman once. He said, "Mike, you're a good worker but you have a bad attitude." My attitude is that I don't get excited about my job. I do my work but I don't say whoopee-doo. The day I get excited about my job is the day I go to a head shrinker. How are you gonna get excited about pullin' steel? How are you gonna get excited when you're tired and want to sit down.

It's not just the work. Somebody built the pyramids. Somebody's going to build something. Pyramids, Empire State Building—these things just don't happen. There's hard work behind it. I would like to see a building, say, the Empire State, I would like to see on one side of it a foot-wide strip from top to bottom with the name of every bricklayer, the name of every electrician, with all the names. So when a guy walked by, he could take his son and say, "See, that's me over there on the forty-fifth floor. I put the steel beam in." Picasso can point to a painting. What can I point to? A writer can point to a book. Everybody should have something to point to.

It's the not-recognition by other people. To say a woman is *just* a housewife is degrading, right? Okay. *Just* a housewife. It's also degrading to say *just* a laborer. The difference is that a man goes out and maybe gets smashed.

When I was single, I could quit, just split. I wandered all over the country. You worked just enough to get a poke, money in your pocket. Now I'm married and I got two kids . . . (trails off). I worked on a truck dock one time and I was single. The foreman came over and he grabbed my shoulder, kind of gave me a shove. I punched him and knocked him off the dock. I said, "Leave me alone. I'm doing my work, just stay away from me, just don't give me the with-the-hands business."

Hell, if you whip a damn mule he might kick you. Stay out of my way, that's all. Working is bad enough, don't bug me. I would rather work my ass off for eight hours a day with nobody watching me than five minutes with a guy watching me. Who you gonna sock? You can't sock General Motors, you can't sock anybody in Washington, you can't sock a system.

A mule, an old mule, that's the way I feel. Oh, yeah. See. (Shows black and blue marks on arms and legs, burns.) You know what I heard from more than one guy at work? "If my kid wants to work in a factory, I am going to kick the hell out of him." I want my kid to be an effete snob. Yeah, mm-hmm. (Laughs.) I want him to be able to quote Walt Whitman, to be proud of it.

If you can't improve yourself, you improve your posterity. Otherwise life isn't worth nothing. You might as well go back to the cave and stay there. I'm sure the first caveman who went over the hill to see what was on the other side—I don't think he went there wholly out of curiosity. He went there because he wanted to get his son out of the cave. Just the same way I want to send my kid to college.

I work so damn hard and want to come home and sit down and lay around. *But I gotta get it out.* I want to be able to turn around to somebody and say, "Hey, fuck you." You know? (Laughs.) The guy sitting next to me on the bus too. 'Cause all day I wanted to tell my foreman to go fuck himself, but I can't.

So I find a guy in a tavern. To tell him that. And he tells me too. I've been in brawls. He's punching me and I'm punching him, because we actually want to punch somebody else. The most that'll happen is the bartender will bar us from the tavern. But at work, you lose your job.

This one foreman I've got, he's a kid. He's a college graduate. He thinks he's better than everybody else. He was chewing me out and I was saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." He said, "What do you mean, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, sir." I told him, "Who the hell are you, Hitler? What is this "Yes, *sir*" bullshit? I came here to work, I didn't come here to crawl. There's a fuckin' difference." One word led to another and I lost.

I got broke down to a lower grade and lost twenty-five cents an hour, which is a hell of a lot. It amounts to about ten dollars a week. He came over—after breaking me down. The guy comes over and smiles at me. I blew up. He didn't know it, but he was about two seconds and two feet away from a hospital. I said, "Stay the fuck away from me." He was just about to say something and was pointing his finger. I just reached my hand up and just grabbed his finger and I just put it back in his pocket. He walked away. I grabbed his finger because I'm married. If I'd a been single, I'd a grabbed his head. That's the difference.

You're doing this manual labor and you know that technology can do it. (Laughs.) Let's face it, a machine can do the work of a man; otherwise they wouldn't have space probes. Why can we send a rocket ship that's unmanned and yet send a man in a steel mill to do a mule's work?

Automation? Depends how it's applied. It frightens me if it puts me out on the street. It doesn't frighten me if it shortens my work week. You read that little thing: what are you going to do when this computer replaces you? Blow up computers. (Laughs.) Really. Blow up computers. I'll be goddamned if a computer is gonna eat before I do! I want milk for my kids and beer for me. Machines can either liberate man or enslave 'im, because they're pretty neutral. It's man who has the bias to put the thing one place or another.

If I had a twenty-hour workweek, I'd get to know my kids better, my wife better. Some kid invited me to go on a college campus. On a Saturday. It was summertime. Hell, if I have a choice of taking my wife and kids to a picnic or going to a college campus, it's gonna be the picnic. But if I worked a twenty-hour week, I could go do both. Don't you think with that extra twenty hours people could really expand? Who's to say? There are some people in factories just by force of circumstance. I'm just like the colored people. Potential Einsteins don't have to be white. They could be in cotton fields, they could be in factories.

The twenty-hour week is a possibility today. The intellectuals, they always say there are potential Lord Byrons, Walt Whitmans, Roosevelts, Picassos working in construction or steel mills or factories. But I don't think they believe it. I think what they're afraid of is the potential Hitlers and Stalins that are there too. The people in power fear the leisure man. Not just the United States. Russia's the same way.

What do you think would happen in this country if, for one year, they experimented and gave everybody a twenty-hour week? How do they know that the guy who digs Wallace today doesn't try to resurrect Hitler tomorrow? Or the guy who is mildly disturbed at pollution doesn't decide to go to General Motors and shit on the guy's desk? You can become a fanatic if you had the time. The whole thing is time. That is, I think one reason rich kids tend to be fanatic about politics: they have time. Time, that's the important thing.

It isn't that the average working guy is dumb. He's tired, that's all. I picked up a book on chess one time. That thing laid in the drawer for two or three weeks, you're too tired. During the weekends you want to take your kids out. You don't want to sit there and the kid comes up: "Daddy, can I go to the park?" You got your nose in a book? Forget it.

I know a guy fifty-seven years old. Know what he tells me? "Mike, I'm old and tired *all* the time." The first thing happens at work: when the arms start moving, the brain stops. I punch in about ten minutes to seven in the morning. I say hello to a couple of guys I like, I kid around with them. One guy says good morning to you and you say good morning. To another guy you say fuck you. The guy you say fuck you to is your friend.

I put on my hard hat, change into my safety shoes, put on my safety glasses, go to the bonderizer. It's the thing I work on. They rake the metal, they wash it, they dip it in a paint solution, and we take it off. Put it on, take if off, put it on, take it off, put it on, take if off ...

I say hello to everybody but my boss. At seven it starts. My arms get tired about the first half-hour. After that, they don't get tired any more until maybe the last half-hour at the end of the day. I work from seven to three thirty. My arms are tired at seven thirty and they're tired at three o'clock. I hope to God I never get broke in, because I always want my arms to be tired at seven thirty and three o'clock. (Laughs.) 'Cause that's when I know that there's a beginning and there's an end. That I'm not brainwashed. In between, I don't even try to think.

If I were to put you in front of a dock and I pulled up a skid in front of you with fifty hundred-pound sacks of potatoes and there are fifty more skids just like it, and this is what you're gonna do all day, what would you think about—potatoes? Unless a guy's a nut, he never thinks about work or talks about it. Maybe about baseball or about getting drunk the other night or he got laid or he didn't get laid. I'd say one out of a hundred will actually get excited about work.

Why is it that the communists always say they're for the workingman, and as soon as they set up a country, you got guys singing to tractors? They're singing about how they love the factory. That's where I couldn't buy communism. It's the intellectuals' utopia, not mine. I cannot picture myself singing to a tractor, I just can't. (Laughs.) Or singing to steel. (Singsongs.) Oh whoop-dee-doo, I'm at the bonderizer, oh how I love this heavy steel. No thanks. Never hoppen.

Oh yeah, I daydream. I fantasize about a sexy blond in Miami who's got my union dues. (Laughs.) I think of the head of the union the way I think of the head of my company. Living it up. I think of February in Miami. Warm weather, a place to lay in. When I hear a college kid say, "I'm oppressed," I don't believe him. You know what I'd like to do for one year? Live like a college kid. Just for one year. I'd love to. Wow! (Whispers) Wow! Sports car! Marijuana! (Laughs.) Wild, sexy broads. I'd love that, hell yes, I would.

Somebody has to do this work. If my kid ever goes to college, I just want him to have a little respect, to realize that his dad is one of those somebodies. This is why even on—(muses) yeah, I guess, sure—on the black thing ... (Sighs heavily.) I can't really hate the colored fella that's working with me all day. The black intellectual I got no respect for. The white intellectual I got no use for. I got no use for the black militant who's gonna scream three hundred years of slavery to me while I'm busting my ass. You know what I mean? (Laughs.) I have one answer for that guy: go see Rockefeller. See Harriman. Don't bother me. We're in the same cotton field. So just don't bug me. (Laughs.)

After work I usually stop off at a tavern. Cold beer. Cold beer right away. When I was single, I used to go into hillbilly bars, get in a lot of brawls. Just to explode. I got a thing on my arm here (indicates scar). I got slapped with a bicycle chain. Oh, wow! (Softly) Mmmm. I'm getting older. (Laughs.) I don't explode as much. You might say I'm broken in. (Quickly) No, I'll never be broken in. (Sighs.) When you get a little older, you exchange the words. When you're younger, you exchange the blows.

When I get home, I argue with my wife a little bit. Turn on TV, get mad at the news. (Laughs.) I don't even watch the news that much. I watch Jackie Gleason. I look for any alternative to the ten o'clock news. I don't want to go to bed angry. Don't hit a man with anything heavy at five o'clock. He just can't be bothered. This is his time to relax. The heaviest thing he wants is what his wife has to tell him.

When I come home, know what I do for the first twenty minutes? Fake it. I put on a smile. I got a kid three years old. Sometimes she says, "Daddy, where've you been?" I say, "Work." I could have told her I'd been in Disneyland. What's work to a three-year-old kid? If I feel bad, I can't take it out on my kids. Kids are born innocent of everything but birth. You can't take it out on your wife either. This is why you go to a tavern. You want to release it there rather than do it at home. What does an actor do when he's got a bad movie? I got a bad movie every day.

I don't even need the alarm clock to get up in the morning. I can go out drinking all night, fall asleep at four, and bam! I'm up at six—no matter what I do. (Laughs.) It's a pseudo-death, more or less. Your whole system is paralyzed and you give all the appearance of death. It's an ingrown clock. It's a thing you just get used to. The hours differ. It depends. Sometimes my wife wants to do something crazy like play five hundred rummy or put a puzzle together. It could be midnight, could be ten o'clock, could be nine thirty.

What do you do weekends?

Drink beer, read a book. See that one? *Violence in America.* It's one of them studies from Washington. One of them committees they're always appointing. A thing like that I read on a weekend. But during the weekdays, gee ... I just thought about it. I don't do that much reading from Monday through Friday. Unless it's a horny book. I'll read it a work and go home and do my homework. (Laughs.) That's what the guys at the plant call it—homework. (Laughs.) Sometimes my wife works on Saturday and I drink beer at the tavern.

I went out drinking with one guy, oh, a long time ago. A college boy. He was working where I work now. Always preaching to me about how you need violence to change the system and all that garbage.

We went into a hillbilly joint. Some guy there, I didn't know him from Adam, he said, "You think you're smart." I said, "What's your pleasure?" (Laughs.) He said, "My pleasure's to kick your ass." I told him I really can't be bothered. He said, "What're you, chicken?" I said, "No, I just don't want to be bothered." He came over and said something to me again. I said, "I don't beat women, drunks, or fools. Now leave me alone."

The guy called his brother over. This college boy that was with me, he came nudging my arm, "Mike, let's get out of here." I said, "What are you worried about?" (Laughs.) This isn't unusual. People will bug you. You fend it off as much as you can with your mouth and when you can't, you punch the guy out.

It was close to closing time and we stayed. We could have left, but when you go into a place to have a beer and a guy challenges you—if you expect to go in that place again, you don't leave. If you have to fight the guy, you fight.

I got just outside the door and one of these guys jumped on me and grabbed me around the neck. I grabbed his arm and flung him against the wall. I grabbed him here (indicates throat), and jiggled his head against the wall quite a few times. He kind of slid down a little bit. This guy who said he was his brother took a swing at me with a garrison belt. He just missed and hit the wall. I'm looking around for my junior Stalin (laughs), who loves violence and everything. He's gone. Split. (Laughs.) Next day I see him at work. I couldn't get mad at him, he's a baby.

He saw a book in my back pocket one time and he was amazed. He walked up to me and he said, "You read?" I said, "What do you mean, I read?" He said, "All these dummies read the sports pages around here. What are you doing with a book?" I got pissed off at the kid right away. I said, "What do you mean, all these dummies? Don't knock a man who's paying somebody else's way through college." He was a nineteen-year-old effete snob.

Yet you want your kid to be an effete snob?

Yes, I want my kid to look at me and say, "Dad, you're a nice guy, but you're a fuckin' dummy." Hell yes, I want my kid to tell me that he's not gonna be like me ...

If I were hiring people to work, I'd try naturally to pay them a decent wage. I'd try to find out their first names, their last names, keep the company as small as possible, so I could personalize the whole thing. All I would ask a man is a handshake, see you in the morning. No applications, nothing. I wouldn't be interested in the guy's past. Nobody ever checks the pedigree on a mule, do they? But they do on a man. Can you picture walking up to a mule and saying, "I'd like to know who his granddaddy was?"

I'd like to run a combination bookstore and tavern. (Laughs.) I would like to have a place where college kids came and a steelworker could sit down and talk. Where a workingman could not be ashamed of Walt Whitman and where a college professor could not be ashamed that he painted his house over the weekend.

If a carpenter built a cabin for poets, I think the least the poets owe the carpenter is just three or four one-liners on the wall. A little plaque: Though we labor with our minds, this place we can relax in was built by someone who can work with his hands. And his work is as noble as ours. I think the poet owes something to the guy who builds the cabin for him.

I don't think of Monday. You know what I'm thinking about on Sunday night? Next Sunday. If you work real hard, you think of a perpetual vacation. Not perpetual sleep ... What do I think of on a Sunday night? Lord, I wish the fuck I could do something else for a living.

I don't know who the guy is who said there is nothing sweeter than an unfinished symphony. Like an unfinished painting and an unfinished poem. If he creates this thing one day—let's say, Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. It took him a long time to do this, this beautiful work of art. But what if he had to create this Sistine Chapel a thousand times a year? Don't you think that would even dull Michelangelo's mind? Or if da Vinci had to draw his anatomical charts thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, eighty, ninety, a hundred times a day? Don't you think that would even bore da Vinci?

Way back, you spoke of the guys who built the pyramids, not the pharaohs, the unknowns. You put yourself in their category?

Yes. I want my signature on 'em, too. Sometimes, out of pure meanness, when I make something, I put a little dent in it. I like to do something to make it really unique. Hit it with a hammer. I deliberately fuck it up to see if it'll get by, just so I can say I did it. It could be anything. Let me put it this way: I think God invented the dodo bird so when we get up there we could tell Him, "Don't you ever make mistakes?" and He'd say, "Sure, look." (Laughs.) I'd like to make my imprint. My dodo bird. A mistake, *mine*. Let's say the whole building is nothing but red bricks. I'd like to have just the black one or the white one or the purple one. Deliberately fuck up.

This is gonna sound square, but my kid is my imprint. He's my freedom. There's a line in one of Hemingway's books. I think it's from *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. They're behind the enemy lines, somewhere in Spain, and she's pregnant. She wants to stay with him. He tells her no. He says, "if you die, I die," knowing he's gonna die. But if you go, I go. Know what I mean? The mystics call it the brass bowl. Continuum. You know what I mean? This is why I work. Every time I see a young guy walk by with a shirt and tie and dressed up real sharp, I'm lookin' at my kid, you know? That's it.

21

Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession

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Karl Marx

Nature herself has determined the sphere of activity in which the animal should move, and it peacefully moves within that sphere, without attempting to go beyond it, without even an inkling of any other. To man, too, the Deity gave a general aim, that of ennobling mankind and himself, but he left it to man to seek the means by which this aim can be achieved; he left it to him to choose the position in society most suited to him, from which he can best uplift himself and society.

This choice is a great privilege of man over the rest of creation, but at the same time it is an act which can destroy his whole life, frustrate all his plans, and make him unhappy. Serious consideration of this choice, therefore, is certainly the first duty of a young man who is beginning his career and does not want to leave his most important affairs to chance.

Everyone has an aim in view, which to him at least seems great, and actually is so if the deepest conviction, the innermost voice of the heart declares it so, for the Deity never leaves mortal man wholly without a guide; he speaks softly but with certainty.

But this voice can easily be drowned, and what we took for inspiration can be the product of the moment, which another moment can perhaps also destroy. Our imagination, perhaps, is set on fire, our emotions excited, phantoms flit before our eyes, and we plunge headlong into what impetuous instinct suggests, which we imagine the Deity himself has pointed out to us. But what we ardently embrace soon repels us and we see our whole existence in ruins.

We must therefore seriously examine whether we have really been inspired in our choice of a profession, whether an inner voice approves it, or whether this inspiration is a delusion, and what we took to be a call from the Deity was self-deception. But how can we recognise this except by tracing the source of the inspiration itself?

What is great glitters, its glitter arouses ambition, and ambition can easily have produced the inspiration, or what we took for inspiration; but reason can no longer restrain the man who is tempted by the demon of ambition, and he plunges headlong into what impetuous instinct suggests: he no longer chooses his position in life, instead it is determined by chance and illusion.

Nor are we called upon to adopt the position which offers us the most brilliant opportunities; that is not the one which, in the long series of years in which we may perhaps hold it, will never tire us, never dampen our zeal, never let our enthusiasm grow cold, but one in which we shall soon see our wishes unfulfilled, our ideas unsatisfied, and we shall inveigh against the Deity and curse mankind.

But it is not only ambition which can arouse sudden enthusiasm for a particular profession; we may perhaps have embellished it in our imagination, and embellished it so that it appears the highest that life can offer. We have not analysed it, not considered the whole burden, the great responsibility it imposes on us; we have seen it only from a distance, and distance is deceptive.

Our own reason cannot be counsellor here; for it is supported neither by experience nor by profound observation, being deceived by emotion and blinded by fantasy. To whom then should we turn our eyes? Who should support us where our reason forsakes us?

Our parents, who have already travelled life's road and experienced the severity of fate – our heart tells us.

And if then our enthusiasm still persists, if we still continue to love a profession and believe ourselves called to it after we have examined it in cold blood, after we have perceived its burdens and become acquainted with its difficulties, then we ought to adopt it, then neither does our enthusiasm deceive us nor does overhastiness carry us away.

But we cannot always attain the position to which we believe we are called; our relations in society have to some extent already begun to be established before we are in a position to determine them.

Our physical constitution itself is often a threatening obstacle, and let no one scoff at its rights.

It is true that we can rise above it; but then our downfall is all the more rapid, for then we are venturing to build on crumbling ruins, then our whole life is an unhappy struggle between the mental and the bodily principle. But he who is unable to reconcile the warring elements within himself, how can he resist life's tempestuous stress, how can he act calmly? And it is from calm alone that great and fine deeds can arise; it is the only soil in which ripe fruits successfully develop.

Although we cannot work for long and seldom happily with a physical constitution which is not suited to our profession, the thought nevertheless continually arises of sacrificing our well-being to duty, of acting vigorously although we are weak. But if we have chosen a profession for which we do not possess the talent, we can never exercise it worthily, we shall soon realise with shame our own incapacity and tell ourselves that we are useless created beings, members of society who are incapable of fulfilling their vocation. Then the most natural consequence is self-contempt, and what feeling is more painful and less capable of being made up for by all that the outside world has to offer? Self-contempt is a serpent that ever gnaws at one's breast, sucking the life-blood from one's heart and mixing it with the poison of misanthropy and despair.

An illusion about our talents for a profession which we have closely examined is a fault which takes its revenge on us ourselves, and even if it does not meet with the censure of the outside world it gives rise to more terrible pain in our hearts than such censure could inflict. If we have considered all this, and if the conditions of our life permit us to choose any profession we like, we may adopt the one that assures us the greatest worth, one which is based on ideas of whose truth we are thoroughly convinced, which offers us the widest scope to work for mankind, and for ourselves to approach closer to the general aim for which every profession is but a means – perfection.

Worth is that which most of all uplifts a man, which imparts a higher nobility to his actions and all his endeavours, which makes him invulnerable, admired by the crowd and raised above it.

But worth can be assured only by a profession in which we are not servile tools, but in which we act independently in our own sphere. It can be assured only by a profession that does not demand reprehensible acts, even if reprehensible only in outward appearance, a profession which the best can follow with noble pride. A profession which assures this in the greatest degree is not always the highest, but is always the most to be preferred.

But just as a profession which gives us no assurance of worth degrades us, we shall as surely succumb under the burdens of one which is based on ideas that we later recognise to be false.

There we have no recourse but to self-deception, and what a desperate salvation is that which is obtained by self-betrayal!

Those professions which are not so much involved in life itself as concerned with abstract truths are the most dangerous for the young man whose principles are not yet firm and whose convictions are not yet strong and unshakeable. At the same time these professions may seem to be the most exalted if they have taken deep root in our hearts and if we are capable of sacrificing our lives and all endeavours for the ideas which prevail in them.

They can bestow happiness on the man who has a vocation for them, but they destroy him who adopts them rashly, without reflection, yielding to the impulse of the moment.

On the other hand, the high regard we have for the ideas on which our profession is based gives us a higher standing in society, enhances our own worth, and makes our actions un-challengeable.

One who chooses a profession he values highly will shudder at the idea of being unworthy of it; he will act nobly if only because his position in society is a noble one.

But the chief guide which must direct us in the choice of a profession is the welfare of mankind and our own perfection. It should not be thought that these two interests could be in conflict, that one would have to destroy the other; on the contrary, man's nature is so constituted that he can attain his own perfection only by working for the perfection, for the good, of his fellow men.

If he works only for himself, he may perhaps become a famous man of learning, a great sage, an excellent poet, but he can never be a perfect, truly great man.

History calls those men the greatest who have ennobled themselves by working for the common good; experience acclaims as happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy; religion itself teaches us that the ideal being whom all strive to copy sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, and who would dare to set at nought such judgments?

If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people.

Transcribed in 1998 for MEIA by srl@marx.org

22

Estranged Labour

Economic and Philosophical Manscripts of 1844

Karl Marx

We have started out from the premises of political economy. We have accepted its language and its laws. We presupposed private property; the separation of labour, capital, and land, and likewise of wages, profit, and capital; the division of labour; competition; the conception of exchange value, etc. From political economy itself, using its own words, we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity, and moreover the most wretched commodity of all; that the misery of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and volume of his production; that the necessary consequence of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands and hence the restoration of monopoly in a more terrible form; and that, finally, the distinction between capitalist and landlord, between agricultural worker and industrial worker, disappears and the whole of society must split into the two classes of property owners and propertyless workers.

We shall start out from a actual economic fact.

The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The devaluation of the human world grows in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour not only produces commodities; it also produces itself and the workers as a commodity and it does so in the same proportion in which it produces commodities in general.

This fact simply means that the object that labour produces, its product, stands opposed to it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour embodied and made material in an object, it is the objectification of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification. In the sphere of political economy, this realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker, objectification as loss of and bondage to the object, and appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.

So much does the realization of labour appear as loss of reality that the worker loses his reality to the point of dying of starvation. So much does objectification appear as loss of the object that the worker is robbed of the objects he needs most not only for life but also for work. Work itself becomes an object which he can only obtain through an enormous effort and with spasmodic interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as estrangement that the more objects the worker produces the fewer can he possess and the more he falls under the domination of his product, of capital.

All these consequences are contained in this characteristic, that the worker is related to the product of labour as to an alien object. For it is clear that, according to this premise, the more the worker exerts himself in his work, the more powerful the alien, objective world becomes which he brings into being over against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, and the less they belong to him. It is the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the less he retains within himself. The worker places his life in the object; but now it no longer belongs to him, but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the fewer objects the worker possesses. What the product of his labour is, he is not. Therefore, the greater this product, the less is he himself. The externalization of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, independently of him and

alien to him, and beings to confront him as an autonomous power; that the life which he has bestowed on the object confronts him as hostile and alien.

Let us now take a closer look at objectification, at the production of the worker, and the estrangement, the loss of the object, of his product, that this entails.

The workers can create nothing without nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material in which his labour realizes itself, in which it is active and from which, and by means of which, it produces.

But just as nature provides labour with the means of life, in the sense of labour cannot live without objects on which to exercise itself, so also it provides the means of life in the narrower sense, namely the means of physical subsistence of the worker.

The more the worker appropriates the external world, sensuous nature, through his labour, the more he deprives himself of the means of life in two respects: firstly, the sensuous external world becomes less and less an object belonging to his labour, a means of life of his labour; and, secondly, it becomes less and less a means of life in the immediate sense, a means for the physical subsistence of the worker.

In these two respects, then, the worker becomes a slave of his object; firstly, in that he receives an object of labour, i.e., he receives work, and, secondly, in that he receives means of subsistence. Firstly, then, so that he can exist as a worker, and secondly as a physical subject. The culmination of this slavery is that it is only as a worker that he can maintain himself as a physical subject and only as a physical subject that he is a worker.

The estrangement of the worker in his object is expressed according to the laws of political economy in the following way:

Political economy conceals the estrangement in the nature of labour by ignoring the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. It is true that labour produces marvels for the rich, but it produces privation for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labour by machines, but it casts some of the workers back into barbarous forms of labour and turns others into machines. It produces intelligence, but it produces idiocy and cretinism for the worker.

The direct relationship of labour to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production. The relationship of the rich man to the objects of production and to production itself is only a consequence of this first relationship, and confirms it. Later, we shall consider this second aspect. Therefore, when we ask what is the essential relationship of labour, we are asking about the relationship of the worker to production.

Up to now, we have considered the estrangement, the alienation of the worker, only from one aspect—i.e., the worker's relationship to the products of his labour. But estrangement manifests itself not only in the result, but also in the act of production, within the activity of production itself. How could the product of the worker's activity confront him as something alien if it were not for the fact that in the act of production he was estranging himself from himself? After all, the product is simply the resume of the activity, of the production. So if the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation. The estrangement of the object of labour merely summarizes the estrangement, the alienation in the activity of labour itself.

What constitutes the alienation of labour?

Firstly, the fact that labour is external to the worker—i.e., does not belong to his essential being; that he, therefore, does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind. Hence, the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working, he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working. His labour is, therefore, not voluntary but forced, it is forced labour. It is, therefore, not the satisfaction of a need but a mere means to satisfy needs outside itself. Its alien character is clearly demonstrated by the fact that as soon as no physical or other

compulsion exists, it is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Finally, the external character of labour for the worker is demonstrated by the fact that it belongs not to him but to another, and that in it he belongs not to himself but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, the human brain, and the human heart, detaches itself from the individual and reappears as the alien activity of a god or of a devil, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It belongs to another, it is a loss of his self.

The result is that man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions—eating, drinking, and procreating, or at most in his dwelling and adornment—while in his human functions, he is nothing more than animal.

It is true that eating, drinking, and procreating, etc., are also genuine human functions. However, when abstracted from other aspects of human activity, and turned into final and exclusive ends, they are animal.

We have considered the act of estrangement of practical human activity, of labour, from two aspects:

(1) the relationship of the worker to the product of labour as an alien object that has power over him. The relationship is, at the same time, the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien world confronting him, in hostile opposition.

(2) The relationship of labour to the act of production within labour. This relationship is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something which is alien and does not belong to him, activity as passivity, power as impotence, procreation as emasculation, the worker's own physical and mental energy, his personal life—for what is life but activity?—as an activity directed against himself, which is independent of him and does not belong to him. Self-estrangement, as compared with the estrangement of the object mentioned above.

[XXIV]

We now have to derive a third feature of estranged labour from the two we have already examined.

Man is a species-being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species—both his own and those of other things—his object, but also—and this is simply another way of saying the same thing—because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a universal and therefore free being.

Species-life, both for man and for animals, consists physically in the fact that man, like animals, lives from inorganic nature; and because man is more universal than animals, so too is the area of inorganic nature from which he lives more universal. Just as plants, animals, stones, air, light, etc., theoretically form a part of human consciousness, partly as objects of science and partly as objects of art—his spiritual inorganic nature, his spiritual means of life, which he must first prepare before he can enjoy and digest them—so, too, in practice they form a part of human life and human activity. In a physical sense, man lives only from these natural products, whether in the form of nourishment, heating, clothing, shelter, etc. The universality of man manifests itself in practice in that universality which makes the whole of nature his inorganic body, (1) as a direct means of life and (2) as the matter, the object, and the tool of his life activity. Nature is man's inorganic body—that is to say, nature insofar as it is not the human body. Man lives from nature—i.e., nature is his body—and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it is he is not to die. To say that man's physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.

Estranged labour not only (1) estranges nature from man and (2) estranges man from himself, from his own function, from his vital activity; because of this, it also estranges man from his species. It turns his species-life into a means for his individual life. Firstly, it estranges species-life and individual life, and, secondly, it turns the latter, in its abstract form, into the purpose of the former, also in its abstract and estranged form.

For in the first place labour, life activity, productive life itself, appears to man only as a means for the satisfaction of a need, the need to preserve physical existence. But productive life is species-life. It is life-producing life. The whole character of a species, its species-character, resides in the nature of its life activity, and free conscious activity constitutes the species-character of man. Life appears only as a means of life.

The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It is not distinct from that activity; it is that activity. Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life activity directly distinguishes man from animal life activity. Only because of that is he a species-being. Or, rather, he is a conscious being.

— i.e., his own life is an object for him, only because he is a species-being. Only because of that is his activity free activity. Estranged labour reverses the relationship so that man, just because he is a conscious being, makes his life activity, his essential being, a mere means for his existence.

The practical creation of an objective world, the fashioning of inorganic nature, is proof that man is a conscious species-being—i.e., a being which treats the species as its own essential being or itself as a species-being. It is true that animals also produce. They build nests and dwelling, like the bee, the beaver, the ant, etc. But they produce only their own immediate needs or those of their young; they produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so, while man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need; they produce only themselves, while man reproduces the whole of nature; their products belong immediately to their physical bodies, while man freely confronts his own product. Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard; hence, man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is, therefore, in his fashioning of the objective that man really proves himself to be a species-being. Such production is his active species-life. Through it, nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the objectification of the species-life of man: for man produces himself not only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually, and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself has created. In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life, his true species-objectivity, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.

In the same way as estranged labour reduces spontaneous and free activity to a means, it makes man's species-life a means of his physical existence.

Consciousness, which man has from his species, is transformed through estrangement so that species-life becomes a means for him.

(3) Estranged labour, therefore, turns man's species-being—both nature and his intellectual species-power—into a being alien to him and a means of his individual existence. It estranges man from his own body, from nature as it exists outside him, from his spiritual essence, his human existence.

(4) An immediate consequence of man's estrangement from the product of his labour, his life activity, his species-being, is the estrangement of man from man. When man confront himself, he also confronts other men. What is true of man's relationship to his labour, to the product of his labour, and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, and to the labour and the object of the labour of other men.

In general, the proposition that man is estranged from his species-being means that each man is estranged from the others and that all are estranged from man's essence.

Man's estrangement, like all relationships of man to himself, is realized and expressed only in man's relationship to other men.

In the relationship of estranged labour, each man therefore regards the other in accordance with the standard and the situation in which he as a worker finds himself.

23

Luther on Vocation

Karlfried Froehlich

From Luther, Lutherans have a doctrine on vocation. Remember the point about any job, every occupation being equal and precious in God's sight, no matter how unglamorous or menial it may be? The assembly-line welder's job or the custodian's work are just as valuable and important as the pastor's counseling session or the U.S. President's daily schedule. From Luther's Babylonian Captivity:

Therefore I advise no one to enter any religious order or the priesthood, indeed, I advise everyone against it-unless he is forearmed with this knowledge and understands that the works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they may be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but that all works are measured before God by faith alone.[1]

Vocation—is this really a doctrine? The Trinity, predestination, and the real presence of the entire Christ in the Lord's Supper are doctrines, but "vocation"? That is what the standard book on Luther's thought in this matter calls it: *Luthers Lära om Kalelsen.* It was written by the great Swedish theologian Gustav Wingren in 1942 and has been translated into many languages. The English translator of Wingren's book rendered the Swedish title without referring to doctrine: *The Christian's Calling: Lutheran Vocation.*[2] As George Lindbeck reminds us, however, "doctrine" is a linguistic phenomenon, a web of language which functions dynamically to express and develop the faith and self-understanding of the community in which it is operative by setting the parameters of acceptable speech for its members. So, perhaps Wingren's *Lära* (doctrine) may have a point. As Wingren says himself, he set out to describe "vocation" in the context of Luther's total theology; everything hangs together there. And this, of course, does have to do with a web of doctrine.

This essay presents Luther's teaching on vocation in four steps: To begin with, we will examine the word and its meaning; we will then, more briefly, look at its importance for the self-understanding of every Christian, the self-understanding of the pastor and minister, and finally the self-understanding of a seminary.

Vocatio

"Vocation" is a Latin word, *vocatio*, derived from the verb, *vocare*, to call. The English equivalent would be the noun "call" or more precisely, "calling." If you look at a dictionary for equivalents, you find terms such as "occupation, profession, trade, work," perhaps even "job." What the meaning is, seems therefore clear and unambiguous. Without being misunderstood, one could ask on a personnel questionnaire for a person's family name, and a person's occupation or trade. Could you ask for a person's name and "calling"? It would not sound right. If you think of it, it sounds religious. The English word, "calling," despite its clear secular meaning, has a definitely religious flavor! If I am describing my work or occupation as a "calling," then someone must have "called" me. But who? An inner voice? Perhaps God?

It is instructive to compare this odd situation with German, Luther's language. "Vocation" in German is *Beruf*—today a totally neutral word. There is no sense of religious overtones when it appears on a questionnaire: *Name*, *Vorname*, *Beruf*. It is the technical term for one's regular work or occupation, nothing more. Strangely enough, that this is so has to do especially with Martin Luther. Linguists agree that it was Luther who created this meaning of the term through his bold theological move of equalizing the value of all work before God: works have nothing to do with salvation. They belong to our human existence in this world, a world where neighbors need our works, not in the world beyond. Luther prepared the way for the total secularization of the term which is simply a fact today.

When he used the word with this new meaning, Luther thought he was translating a biblical term: *klesis* (Greek), from *kaleo*, to call. It occurs eleven times in the New Testament, almost exclusively in Paul and the Pastoral Epistles. "Consider your *klesis*, brothers and sisters; not many of you were wise by human standards ..." (I Cor. 1:26); or: "the gifts and the *klesis* of God are irrevocable ..." (Rom. 11:29). The meaning is quite clear: "*Klesis*," "calling," refers to the call from God which has made a person a child of God, a Christian. Paul connects it with God's election and the spiritual gifts, the charismata; klesis has to do with conversion and the transition from a false to the true, saving religion. The most interesting case is I Corinthians 7:20. In this chapter, Paul gives advice on questions of Christian living which were posed to him by the Corinthians. He does so in an eschatological framework, that is, under the expectation that Christ will return soon: "Let everyone remain in the *klesis* in which he or she was called." Paul gives this advice with an eye on several concrete issues: should one seek, or try to undo, circumcision now? should a slave seek freedom now? should a person marry now? Unfortunately, the sentence is ambiguous. One could read: "Let everyone remain in the calling (of God) by which he/she was called;" or "Let everyone remain in the calling (meaning the external condition) in which he/she was called." Luther translated *klesis* here, and only here, as *Beruf*; he read it in the second sense, understanding it as an external condition, and this is quite clear from his rendering of a parallel which he found in Sirach 11:20-21. He translates: "Remain in God's Word and stay in your *Beruf* ... Trust in God and stay in your *Beruf*," where the Greek has *ergon* (work) and *ponos* (toil). Luther may have pressed Paul too far, making I Cor. 7:20 a witness to *klesis* as *Beruf*, that is, as an external condition. But his term was a polemical one, coined with a contemporary edge to protest against the concept of higher and lower callings in the Roman church, the presupposition of all forms of monasticism. Luther's "doctrine" of vocation, if it was one, belonged in the context of his rejection of monasticism.

To help us situate Luther's teaching on vocation within the context of his critique of monasticism, a little history is in order. "Vocation" *(vocatio)* was the Latin equivalent for Paul's *klesis*, God's calling of people to become Christians. After Constantine, by the end of the fourth century, everyone was (or was supposed to be) a Christian by imperial decree and was baptized as an infant. How do you become a Christian when you and everyone else around you already is one—never mind that most people's Christianity did not go very deep when it was just the civil religion of the realm? It is no wonder that the fourth century saw not only the conversion of the Roman Empire but also the first flowering of monasticism, the movement of people who wanted to be serious Christians at a time of lowered standards. Their argument was clear: Christ challenged his disciples to be "perfect." He gave general commands for every Christian such as "love God and neighbor," but he also gave special "counsels" to those who wanted more: The counsel of absolute poverty ("Go sell what you own" Matt 19:21); the counsel of total renunciation of marriage ("there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" Matt 19:12); the counsel of obedience—obedience to the Sermon on the Mount which Christians understood as the marching orders of the true militia Christi. Now, this was the foundation of monasticism. Poverty, chastity, and obedience became the basic vows of monks and nuns upon entering the monastery. Monks and nuns followed a higher calling. They opted for a Christian way apart from and above the crowd.

Under these circumstances, basic terms which applied to all Christians originally underwent a decisive narrowing of their meaning. After the fourth century, "to convert" meant to leave the world and embrace the monastic "vocation;" the term "vocation" itself now referred exclusively to the divine call to the monastic "profession", and "profession" was now the word for the solemn act of taking the monastic vows. Most tellingly, "religion" no longer meant the totality of the Christian faith or other faiths but served simply as the technical term for monasticism. Hard to believe? When I was visiting St. John's Abbey at

Collegeville, Minnesota, a couple of years ago, the abbot reported that they had "a slight rise of vocations recently"; he meant candidates for the community. And when you don't want to say that an acquaintance is a "monk" or "nun," what do you say? You say: "He or she is a religious." Monasticism is religion.

This is what Luther reacted against. He rejected the idea of a better, holier, more God-pleasing way of salvation than that which applied to all. He rejected the double standard of commands and counsels. He himself had opted for the harder, "higher" way, but in pushing its promise to the limit, had learned not only that it did not deliver on the promise, but that it was a wrong idea. His insight into justification by faith alone taught him that there are not two levels of salvation or two classes of Christians.

The final clarification of his thought on monastic vocations came with his treatise, *On Monastic Vows* of October 1521. Luther wrote it during his time out at the Wartburg Castle when word reached him that colleagues at Wittenberg were getting married and confreres were leaving his monastery. The pastoral intention of instructing and strengthening the consciences of people like this appears in the title already. At issue was not the monastic lifestyle. Luther himself did not leave the monastery—quite literally. He continued to live in the Augustinian Friary on the east side of Wittenberg to the end of his life; his prince gave him the building as a gift after he got married. The Christian, he explained, justified and sinner at the same time, was perfectly free to choose a life in community, even a life of poverty and celibacy. The problem was the vows. Luther states the problem this way:

> No one can deny that the command to offer vows was instituted by divine authority. Scripture says, 'Make your vows and keep them' [Ps 76:11], so there is no point in disputing whether a vow may be offered. What we are trying to show is how to distinguish one vow from another and recognize which vows are godly, good, and pleasing to God. Only these must be considered as vows. They are named and demanded in Scripture. Further, we are trying to show how we may distinguish which vows are ungodly, evil, and displeasing to God, vows which would not otherwise be regarded as vows.[3]

Thus, the problem was not even "vows" as such—if vows are made before God, they must be kept. But they must be true vows, vows according to the will of God. Monastic vows, his own included, were not. They contradicted everything we know about God's will: the universality of God's promise of salvation, salvation by faith alone, Christian freedom, reason (monastic vows demanded what no young person could reasonably promise), and finally the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth: "Honor your father and mother." Luther dedicated the treatise to his father Hans Luther, who had strongly opposed young Martin's decision to become a monk; in the dedication letter he asked his father's forgiveness for his, the son's, willful violation of the commandment.

It was in the sermons of this period that Luther spelled out his new notion of *Beruf*. One's *Beruf* was not something special, but something down-to-earth, something exercised right in the world of everyday work and toil. It was the word for the Christian's calling, wherever exercised, as an act of faith active in the love of God and neighbor. In a Christmas sermon, he reflected on the shepherds:

> Christian liberty is not tied to any specific work. On the contrary, all works are the same to a Christian, no matter what they are. These shepherds do not run away into the desert, they do not don monk's garb, they do not shave their heads, neither do they change their clothing, schedule, food, drink, nor any external work. They return to their place in the fields to serve God there.[4]

He made the same point in his interpretation of Jesus' curt answer to Peter's question about the Beloved Disciple after the Resurrection (John 21:21f.). Peter had asked: "Lord, what about him?" and Jesus answered: "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" Luther paraphrased:

> Do you think, Peter, that I want the same from you as I want from him? No, it is not this way. You keep to your own task and wait for what I tell you. He will find out about his task as well. I desire many different servants, and they will not all have the same work to do.[5]

The Vocation of Every Christian

It is easy to see how strongly this exegesis is influenced by Luther's conviction about the priesthood of all believers, or of all the baptized, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America prefers to say these days. With this, we are in the middle of point two already: the importance of vocation for the self-understanding of every Christian. Luther regarded the priesthood of all the baptized as a thoroughly biblical doctrine, taught in the New Testament as well as in the Old: "Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," as the baptismal homily in I Peter 2:5 puts it. With his new definition of "vocation," Luther calls us back behind a two-tiered Christianity of monastics and nonmonastics, perfect and less perfect, spiritual and secular Christians, and back to the early Christian klesis, the understanding that all have a calling from God, regardless of their station and condition in society. The distinction of a higher, spiritual sphere from a secular was the first wall of Romanism which had to be torn down according to his *Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality*, one of the three great Reformation tracts of 1520. Grounding his argument in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Luther writes:

> It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual state while princes, lords, artisans and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in I Corinthians 12[:12-13] that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people.[6]

But note well: In tearing down this wall, Luther did not eliminate priests or do away with the priesthood. Instead he eliminated the laity! All are holy, all are spiritual and have a special call from God to faith and witness, the call to do whatever they do in church and society as priests of the Most High:

> Therefore, just as those who are now called "spiritual," that is, priests, bishops, or popes, are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them, except that they are charged with the administration of the word of God and the sacraments, which is their work and office, so it is with the temporal authorities. They bear the sword and rod in their hand to punish the wicked and protect the good. A cobbler, a smith, a peasant—each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops. Further, everyone must benefit and serve every other by means of his own work or office so that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, just as all the members of the body serve one another [ICor. :14-26].[7]

However, Luther fought on two fronts. Many people took his message of Christian freedom under God's call to radical consequences in political and societal life, to which he reacted with fear and apprehension. He called them *Schwärmer*, Enthusiasts, and developed against them his doctrine of the *Zwei Reiche*, the two kingdoms or realms, one of the most embattled pieces of the Lutheran heritage. Yes, there is one God, Lord and Ruler of all, but in this world, where saints are still sinners, the divine rule is not experienced in one way only. For humans, God's wrath is as real as God's mercy. God rules differently as creator and redeemer; he governs people in two ways—his "proper" way of giving freely, and his "strange" way of demanding

sternly: gospel and law, distinct but never separated. Apply this tension to our self-understanding of being called by God regardless of our station or occupation, and the importance of "vocation" becomes clear: The "two kingdoms or realms" cut right through every Christian's heart and experience. As sinners, we experience our secular occupations negatively as a self-inflicted discipline (Luther calls it "mortification"), a burden that must be endured. As justified children of God, we experience them as transformed into divine vocations in the service of neighbor. And this existential dialectic is a reality, not a choice.

The Vocation of the Pastor

This brings us to our third point, the importance of "vocation" for the pastor and minister. Pastors would not blink at the questionnaire asking for their "name, given name, and calling." Yes, they have a calling in the true sense of the English word. Theirs is not just an "occupation, trade, or profession." They are not in it for worldly gain: not for money (have you looked at salary scales recently?); not for status (the clergy sign behind your windshield will hardly spare you that parking ticket); and certainly not for power (has your clergy association's protest had much effect?). Rather, they know that God has called them in one way or another. Many pastors and probably many who are seeking ordination have a vivid sense of your personal call to this ministry which you tend to compare to the biblical call of prophets and disciples. God told you: This is what I want you to do, and you are doing it. I think this personal conviction is a precious gift, not only to yourself, but to the church, and must not be taken lightly.

Luther understood the pastoral ministry as the ministry of Word and sacrament, God's external means of grace. As such, they are not at our personal disposal. From this angle, he had a natural distrust of claims that a person had God's immediate call to this vocation. He always exhorted future pastors to test their calling. This may still be a good idea in our time. Luther would suggest to start where he started: with the troubled conscience. Do you know this phenomenon? Have you ever asked the question whether you really should inflict yourself with all your foibles and wrinkles on an unsuspecting congregation? If this is a serious question for you, there is only one solution apart from sustained prayer: stop applying just your own discernment process. Ask others. Seek out the discernment of your brothers and sisters in the smaller and larger context of your church.

This side of the test is stressed by the Augsburg Confession. Article 5 does not speak of pastors being personally called by God to preach the Word and administer the sacraments. Without any reference to persons, it speaks of God having "instituted the office of Ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments." And when Article 14 finally does come around to mentioning the persons in this ministry, it insists only that "nobody should preach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless he or she is regularly called." "Called" here does not mean "called by God" but by human authority, and "regularly" means that certain set procedures of communal discernment apply. For the Augsburg Confession as for Luther, the "vocation" of pastors like any *Beruf* is first of all work in this world for others, and in this case on behalf of others who also are called to be priests in their various occupations and, because they cannot hold two *Berufe*, must call a suitable person to do this central work of God for and among them and so that it may be done for all people everywhere. What Luther says of every Christian applies quite poignantly to the pastor:

> "We have a double vocation, a spiritual and an external. The spiritual vocation is that we have all been called through the Gospel to baptism and the Christian faith .... this calling is common and similar for all ... The other contains a differentiation: It is earthly, though also divine."[8]

The Vocation of a Seminary

There is not much time left to address the fourth point at any length: The importance of vocation for the self-understanding of the seminary. Seminaries are a peculiarly American phenomenon. Under the

circumstances of life in the colonies and the early years of the United States, seminaries were founded by churches for the purpose of training the much needed pastors and ministers for pastoral vocations in the new congregations. In this sense, seminaries are clearly "vocational schools." We do not like this label. In today's hierarchy of educational institutions, vocational schools do not rank high. They are the places where one learns the practical skills necessary to ply a trade or engage in a specific occupation, and learning in such institutions is largely by doing. A student once reported a remark which a simple soul in his hometown made to him only half-jokingly. It illustrates this kind of perception with regard to seminaries: "Oh, you are attending seminary! Isn't that the place where you compose and memorize the five hundred sermons you will have to preach?"

Seminaries are surely more than that. Many seminaries like to think of themselves as "professional" schools. During the late 1960's there was much discussion in the American Association of Theological Schools of a proposed "Curriculum for the Seventies." Those were the heydays of the "Pastoral Theology Movement," and the curriculum was designed to transform theological education into professional education like medicine and law, complete with hands-on training and a D.Min. as the first professional degree. After all, ministry is a "helping profession," is it not? The initiative failed, fortunately. It built on the sheer hope of change in practice at the expense of solid heritage in theology.

I think it is time that seminaries, especially in the Lutheran orbit, reaffirm their identity as vocational schools in the proper sense. There will have to be training in practical skills for the Beruf of a pastor. Much of this is already in place as a result of the experiments in the 1970s. But since, in Luther's understanding, vocation involves God's call in every work we do, this training must involve an "academic" component, the concern for "God-speech," theology, the study and the science of God. In the Middle Ages, theology was launched as an intellectual discipline in and with the "academy," the world of new schools and universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its booster rocket was the Bible as the foundational document of the Christian faith and the questions this motley collection of writings was bound to raise in curious, and even not so curious, minds. Enthusiasm for a theology nourished by the Bible as an integral part of all vocational training of pastors and ministers never diminished after those beginnings, from the efforts of Dominican and Franciscan teachers instructing Friar Preachers in their study halls to the apprenticeships of pastoral candidates in the parsonages of colonial New England, and the makeshift training schools of pastors in the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany. Where ministry is ministry of the Word, its biblical basis requires theological learning. Seminaries must be centers of such learning.

This necessary emphasis on theology and learning, including the study of biblical languages, the details of history, and the material of the doctrinal heritage is an important asset for another task of seminaries as vocational schools: helping future pastors and ministers to test their vocation. By seriously tackling these routines, students will find out whether they are really up to the kinds of demands which will be imposed on them by the calling which they have perceived. If they realize that these exercises are not for them, there is nothing wrong with leaving seminary. In his critique of monasticism, Luther fought for the freedom to leave, not the freedom to enter the monastery. The concept of vocation as an expression of the priesthood of all the baptized allows anyone to serve God's call with his or her specific charism elsewhere in a full-time ministry of the church or even in a different kind of occupation.

Finally, seminaries in the Lutheran orbit have an inherent obligation to invite all members of the universal priesthood into their preoccupation with theology which is part of any Christian's work considered as vocation. Different from Luther's time, one of the greatest problems of the pastoral vocation today is the immense overload of expectation. The pastor of a congregation is supposed to be an expert in too many things; the job description requires too many different activities, and the list is still growing. Our church has tried to deal with this problem by redefining ministry more broadly and getting the tasks shared more widely. We have now multiple rostered ministries which can indeed relieve the burden placed on what should be the one ministry of Word and sacrament. For the seminaries this cannot mean that they multiply professional tracks ad infinitum and only dissipate their energies. Clustering may be one of the ways to cope. But seminaries will have to strengthen even more their theological involvement because under these circumstances theology will have to be offered to so many more participants in church work as members of the shared priesthood of the baptized. Without this indispensable "academic" element in which every

Christian has a right and duty to be vocationally trained, a Christian's work would cease to be "vocation," "calling," and revert to what the dictionary calls an "occupation," a "trade," a "job"—nothing more.

Like other Lutheran churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has wrestled and continues to wrestle with these issues. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly adopted a substantial document on ministry, "Together for Ministry," which had been several years in the making. Its most conspicuous feature was the establishment of a diaconal ministry which is now in place. But this was only part of the content of a rich harvest of serious discussion. It seems regrettable to me to observe how fast the fruits of such intense and valid labors are forgotten. "Together for Ministry" did not give a central place to the topic of vocation. It focused on mission and service. There is, however, a section in which "vocation" plays a role. It occurs in the section on the pastoral call and ordination where the wider context is sketched out:

> God calls all Christians to a life of vocation. To have a vocation means to live out one's call. For Christians that call is answered in the structures of daily life—family, work, state, service to neighbor, care of creation—as the setting in which to live out their identity in the Gospel.[9]

These are clear and good words. They do not formulate a doctrine of vocation, but they reformulate in contemporary language a venerable tradition of Lutheran thinking about vocation, beginning with Luther.

Endnotes

[1] *Luther's Works*, *American Edition*, 55 vols. Eds. Pelikan and Lehmann (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress,1955ff), 36:78. (Hereafter cited as LW.)

[2] Gustaf Wingren, *The Christian's Calling: Luther on Vocation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958).

[3] LW 44:252

[4] LW 52:37

[5] *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 69 vols. Eds. J. F. K. Knaake et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff.), 10 I/1:307.9-12. (Hereafter cited as WA.)

[6] LW 44:127

[7] LW 44:130

[8] WA 34 II:300,306.

[9] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Division for Ministry, *Together for Ministry: Final Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry 1988-1993* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1993), p.16, para. 111.

24

"Introduction: Adam II" and Chapter 4 ("Struggle") from *The Road to Character*

David Brooks

INTRODUCTION: ADAM II

Recently I've been thinking about the difference between the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the ones you list on your résumé, the skills that you bring to the job market and that contribute to external success. The eulogy virtues are deeper. They're the virtues that get talked about at your funeral, the ones that exist at the core of your being—whether you are kind, brave, honest or faithful; what kind of relationships you formed.

Most of us would say that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé virtues, but I confess that for long stretches of my life I've spent more time thinking about the latter than the former. Our education system is certainly oriented around the résumé virtues more than the eulogy ones. Public conversation is, too—the self-help tips in magazines, the nonfiction bestsellers. Most of us have clearer strategies for how to achieve career success than we do for how to develop a profound character.

One book that has helped me think about these two sets of virtues is *Lonely Man of Faith*, which was written by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in 1965. Soloveitchik noted that there are two accounts of creation in Genesis and argued that these represent the two opposing sides of our nature, which he called Adam I and Adam II.

Modernizing Soloveitchik's categories a bit, we could say that Adam I is the career-oriented, ambitious side of our nature. Adam I is the external, résumé Adam. Adam I wants to build, create, produce, and discover things. He wants to have high status and win victories.

Adam II is the internal Adam. Adam II wants to embody certain moral qualities. Adam II wants to have a serene inner character, a quiet but solid sense of right and wrong—not only to do good, but to be good. Adam II wants to love intimately, to sacrifice self in the service of others, to live in obedience to some transcendent truth, to have a cohesive inner soul that honors creation and one's own possibilities.

While Adam I wants to conquer the world, Adam II wants to obey a calling to serve the world. While Adam I is creative and savors his own accomplishments, Adam II sometimes renounces worldly success and status for the sake of some sacred purpose. While Adam I asks how things work, Adam II asks why things exist, and what ultimately we are here for. While Adam I wants to venture forth, Adam II wants to return to his roots and savor the warmth of a family meal. While Adam I's motto is "Success," Adam II experiences life as a moral drama. His motto is "Charity, love, and redemption."

Soloveitchik argued that we live in the contradiction between these two Adams. The outer, majestic Adam and the inner, humble Adam are not fully reconcilable. We are forever caught in self-confrontation. We are called to fulfill both personae, and must master the art of living forever within the tension between these two natures.

The hard part of this confrontation, I'd add, is that Adams I and II live by different logics. Adam I—the creating, building, and discovering Adam—lives by a straightforward utilitarian logic. It's the logic of economics. Input leads to output. Effort leads to reward. Practice makes perfect. Pursue self-interest. Maximize your utility. Impress the world.

Adam II lives by an inverse logic. It's a moral logic, not an economic one. You have to give to receive. You have to surrender to something outside yourself to gain strength within yourself. You have to conquer your desire to get what you crave. Success leads to the greatest failure, which is pride. Failure leads to the greatest success, which is humility and learning. In order to fulfill yourself, you have to forget yourself. In order to find yourself, you have to lose yourself.

To nurture your Adam I career, it makes sense to cultivate your strengths. To nurture your Adam II moral core, it is necessary to confront your weaknesses.

The Shrewd Animal

We live in a culture that nurtures Adam I, the external Adam, and neglects Adam II. We live in a society that encourages us to think about how to have a great career but leaves many of us inarticulate about how to cultivate the inner life. The competition to succeed and with admiration is so fierce that it becomes all-consuming. The consumer marketplace encourages us to live by a utilitarian calculus, to satisfy our desires and lose sight of the moral stakes involved in everyday decisions. The noise of fast and shallow communications makes it harder to hear the quieter sounds that emanate from the depths. We live in a culture that teaches us to promote and advertise ourselves and to master the skills required for success, but that gives little encouragement to humility, sympathy, and honest self-confrontation, which are necessary for building character.

If you are only Adam I, you turn into a shrewd animal, a crafty, self-preserving creature who is adept at playing the game and who turns everything into a game. If that's all you have, you spend a lot of time cultivating professional skills, but you don't have a clear idea of the sources of meaning in life, so you don't know where you should devote your skills, which career path will be the highest and best. Years pass and the deepest parts of yourself go unexplored and unstructured. You are busy, but you have a vague anxiety that your life has not achieved its ultimate meaning and significance. You live with an unconscious boredom, not really long, not really attached to the moral purposes that give life its worth. You lack the internal criteria to make unshakable commitments. You never develop inner constancy, the integrity that can withstand popular disapproval or a serious blow. You find yourself doing things that other people approve of, whether these things are right for you or not. You foolishly judge other people by their abilities, not by their worth. You do not have a strategy to build character, and without that, not only your inner life but also your external life will eventually fall to pieces.

This book is about Adam II. It's about how some people have cultivated strong character. It's about one mindset that people through the centuries have adopted to put iron in their core and to cultivate a wise heart. I wrote it, to be honest, to save my own soul.

I was born with a natural disposition toward shallowness. I now work as a pundit and columnist. I'm paid to be a narcissistic blowhard, to volley my opinions, to appear more confident about them than I really am, to appear smarter than I really am, to appear better and more authoritative than I really am. I have to work harder than most people to avoid a life of smug superficiality. I've also become more aware that, like many people these days, I have lived a life of vague moral aspiration—vaguely wanting to be good, vaguely wanting to serve some larger purpose, while lacking a concrete moral vocabulary, a clear understanding of how to live a rich inner life, or even a clear knowledge of how character is developed and depth is achieved.

I've discovered that without a rigorous focus on the Adam II side of our nature, it is easy to slip into a self-satisfied moral mediocrity. You grade yourself on a forgiving curve. You follow your desires wherever they take you, and you approve of yourself so long as you are not obviously hurting anyone else. You figure that if the people around you seem to like you, you must be good enough. In the process you end up slowly turning yourself into something a little less impressive than you had originally hoped. A humiliating gap opens up between your actual self and your desired self. You realize that the voice of your Adam I is loud but the voice of your Adam II is muffled; the life plan of Adam I is clear, but the life plan of Adam II is fuzzy; Adam I is alert, Adam II is sleepwalking.

I wrote this book not sure I could follow the road to character, but I wanted at least to know what the road looks like and how other people have trodden it.

The Plan

The plan of this book is simple. In the next chapter I will describe an older moral ecology. It was a cultural and intellectual tradition, the "crooked timber" tradition, that emphasized our own brokenness. It was a tradition that demanded humility in the face of our own limitations. But it was also a tradition that held that each of us has the power to confront our own weaknesses, tackle our own sins, and that in the course of this confrontation with ourselves we build character. By successfully confronting sin and weakness we have the chance to play our role in a great moral drama. We can shoot for something higher than happiness. We have a chance to take advantage of everyday occasions to build virtue in ourselves and be of service to the world.

Then I will describe what this character-building method looks like in real life. I'm going to do this through biographical essays, which are also moral essays. Since Plutarch, moralists have tried to communicate standards by holding up exemplars. You can't build rich Adam II lives simply by reading sermons or following abstract rules. Example is the best teacher. Moral improvement occurs most reliably when the heart is warmed, when we come into contact with people we admire and love and we consciously and unconsciously bend our lives to mimic theirs.

This truth was hammered home to me after I wrote a column expressing frustration with how hard it is to use the classroom experience to learn how to be good. A veterinarian named Dave Jolly sent me an email that cut to the chase:

> The heart cannot be taught in a classroom intellectually, to students mechanically taking notes. . . . Good, wise hearts are obtained through lifetimes of diligent effort to dig deeply within and heal lifetimes of scars. . . . You can't teach it or email it or tweet it. It has to be discovered within the depths of one's own heart when a person is finally ready to go looking for it, and not before.
>
> The job of the wise person is to swallow the frustration and just go on setting an example of caring and digging and diligence in their own lives. What a wise person teaches is the smallest part of what they give. The totality of their life, of the way they go about it in the smallest details, is what gets transmitted.
>
> Never forget that. The message is the person, perfected over lifetimes of effort that was set in motion by yet another wise person now hidden from the recipient by the dim mists of time. Life is much bigger than we think, cause and effect intertwined in a vast moral structure that keeps pushing us to do better, become better, even when we dwell in the most painful confused darkness.

Those words explain the methodology of this book. The subjects of the portraits that follow in chapters 2 through 10 are a diverse set, white and black, male and female, religious and secular, literary and nonliterary. None of them is even close to perfect. But they practiced a mode of living that is less common now. They were acutely aware of their own weaknesses. They waged an internal struggle against their sins and emerged with some measure of self-respect. And when we think of them, it is not primarily what they accomplished that we remember—great though that may have been—it is who they were. I'm hoping their examples will fire this fearful longing we all have to be better, to follow their course.

In the final chapter I wrap these themes up. I describe how our culture has made it harder to be good, and I summarize this "crooked timber" approach to life in a series of specific points. If you're impatient for the condensed message of this book, skip to the end.

Occasionally, even today, you come across certain people who seem to possess an impressive inner cohesion. They are not leading fragmented, scattershot lives. They have achieved inner integration. They are calm, settled, and rooted. They are not blown off course by storms. They don't crumble in adversity. Their minds are consistent and their hearts are dependable. Their virtues are not the blooming virtues you see in smart college students; they are the ripening virtues you see in people who have lived a little and have learned from joy and pain.

Sometimes you don't even notice these people, because while they seem kind and cheerful, they are also reserved. They possess the self-effacing virtues of people who are inclined to be useful but don't need to prove anything to the world: humility, restraint, reticence, temperance, respect, and soft self-discipline.

They radiate a sort of moral joy. They answer softly when challenged harshly. They are silent when unfairly abused. They are dignified when others try to humiliate them, restrained when others try to provoke them. But they get things done. They perform acts of sacrificial service with the same modest everyday spirit they would display if they were just getting the groceries. They are not thinking about what impressive work they are doing. They are not thinking about themselves at all. They just seem delighted by the flawed people around them. They just recognize what needs doing and they do it.

They make you feel funnier and smarter when you speak with them. They move through different social classes not even aware, it seems, that they are doing so. After you've known them for a while it occurs to you that you've never heard them boast, you've never seen them self-righteous or doggedly certain. They aren't dropping little hints of their own distinctiveness and accomplishments.

They have not led lives of conflict-free tranquillity, but have struggled toward maturity. They have gone some way toward solving life's essential problem, which is that, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn put it, "the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart."

These are the people who have built a strong inner character, who have achieved a certain depth. In these people, at the end of this struggle, the climb to success has surrendered to the struggle to deepen the soul. After a life of seeking balance, Adam I bows down before Adam II. These are the people we are looking for.

Chapter 4

STRUGGLE

On the night of April 18, 1906, when she was eight years old, Dorothy Day was living in Oakland, California.

She had, as usual, said her prayers at bedtime. She was the only religiously observant member of her household and had become, as she wrote later, "disgustingly, proudly pious."[1] She had always had a sense, she wrote in her diary decades later, of an immanent spiritual world.

The earth began shaking. When the rumbling began, her father rushed into the children's bedroom, snatched her two brothers, and rushed for the front door. Her mother grabbed her baby sister from Dorothy's arms. Her parents apparently figured Dorothy could take care of herself. She was left alone in her brass bed as it rolled back and forth across the polished floor. The night of the San Francisco earthquake, she felt that God was visiting her. "The earth became a sea which rocked our house in a most tumultuous manner," she recalled.[2] She could hear the water in the rooftop tank splashing above her head. These sensations "were linked up with my idea of God as a tremendous Force, a frightening impersonal God, a Hand stretched out to seize me, His child, and not in love."[3]

When the earth settled, the house was a mess. There were broken dishes all over the floor, along with books, chandeliers, and pieces of the ceiling and chimney. The city was in ruins, too, temporarily reduced to poverty and need. But in the days after, Bay Area residents pulled together. "While the crisis lasted, people loved each other," she wrote in her memoir decades later. "It was as though they were united in Christian solidarity. It makes one think of how people could, if they would, care for each other in times of stress, unjudgingly in pity and love."

As the writer Paul Elie has put it, "A whole life is prefigured in that episode"—the crisis, the sense of God's nearness, the awareness of poverty, the feeling of loneliness and abandonment, but also the sense that that loneliness can be filled by love and community, especially through solidarity with those in deepest need.[4]

Day was born with a passionate, ideal nature. Like Dorothea, the main character in George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*, her nature demanded that she live an ideal life. She was unable to be satisfied with mere happiness, being in a good mood, enjoying the normal pleasures that friendships and accomplishments bring. As Eliot put it, "Her flame quickly burned up that light fuel; and, fed from

within, soared after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self." Day needed spiritual heroism, some transcendent purpose for which she could sacrifice.

Children's Crusade

Dorothy's father had been a journalist, but the newspaper printing plant burned down in the quake and his job was gone. The family possessions lay in ruins. Day experienced the family's humiliating descent into poverty. Her father moved them to Chicago, where he set out to write a novel that was never published. A distant, distrustful man, he forbade his children to leave the house without permission or to invite friends in. Day remembered Sunday dinners marked by gloomy silence but for the sound of everybody chewing. Her mother did her best, but she suffered four miscarriages, and one night she fell into hysterics, smashing every dish in the home. The next day she was back to normal. "I lost my nerve," she explained to her children.

In Chicago, Day noticed that her own family was much less affectionate than the families around her. "We were never hand holders. We were always withdrawn and alone, unlike Italians, Poles, Jews and other friends who I had who were fresh and spontaneous in their affections." She went to church and sang hymns with neighboring families. In the evenings she got on her knees and inflicted her piety on her sister: "I used to plague my sister with my long prayers. I would kneel until my knees ached and I was cold and stiff. She would beg me to come to bed and tell her a story." One day she had a conversation with her best friend, Mary Harrington, about a certain saint. Later in life, writing her memoirs, Day couldn't remember exactly which saint they were talking about, but she remembered "my feeling of lofty enthusiasm, and how my heart almost burst with desire to take part in such high endeavor. One verse of the Psalms often comes to mind, 'Enlarge Thou my heart, O Lord, that Thou mayst enter in.' . . . I was filled with a natural striving, a thrilling recognition of the possibilities of spiritual adventure."[5]

Parents in those days did not feel it necessary to entertain their children. Day remembered spending happy hours on the beach with her friends, fishing in creeks for eels, running away to an abandoned shack at the edge of a swamp, setting up a fantasy world and pretending that they would live there alone forever. Day also remembered long days of intolerable boredom, especially over the summer break. She tried to ease the tedium by doing household chores and reading. She read Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, among other books.

With adolescence came a fascination with sex. She knew right away that she was thrilled by it, but she also had been taught that it was dangerous and evil. One afternoon, when she was fifteen, Day was out in a park with her baby brother. The weather was perfect. The world was full of life, and there must have been boys around. In a letter she wrote at the time to her best friend, she describes a "wicked thrilling feeling at my heart." In the next passage, she remonstrates herself priggishly, "It is wrong to think so much about human love. All those feelings and cravings that come to us are sexual desires. We are prone to have them at this age, I suppose, but I think they are impure. It is sensual and God is spiritual."

In her superb memoir *The Long Loneliness*, she reprints long passages from this letter. Her fifteen-year-old self continued, "How weak I am. My pride forbids me to write this and to put it down on paper makes me blush, but all the old love comes back to me. It is a lust of the flesh and I know that unless I forsake all sin, I will not gain the kingdom of heaven."

The letter has all the self-involvement and paint-by-numbers self-righteousness that you'd expect in a precocious teenager. She's got the basic concept of her religion down, but not the humanity and the grace. But there's also an arduous spiritual ambition at work. "Maybe if I stayed away from books more this restlessness would pass. I am reading Dostoyevsky." She resolves to fight her desires: "Only after a hard bitter struggle with sin and only after we have overcome it, do we experience blessed joy and peace. . . . I have so much work to do to overcome my sins. I am working always, always on guard, praying without ceasing to overcome all physical sensations to be purely spiritual."

Reflecting on that letter in *The Long Loneliness*, which was published when she was in her fifties, Day confessed that it "was filled with pomp and vanity and piety. I was writing of what interested me most, the conflict of flesh and spirit, but I was writing self-consciously and trying to pretend to myself I was being literary."[6] But that letter displays some of the features that would eventually make Day one of

the most inspiring religious figures and social workers of the twentieth century: her hunger to be pure, her capacity for intense self-criticism, her desire to dedicate herself to something lofty, her tendency to focus on hardship and not fully enjoy the simple pleasures available to her, her conviction that fail as she might, and struggle as she would, God would ultimately redeem her from her failings.

Bohemia

Day was one of three students in her high school to win a college scholarship, thanks to her excellence in Latin and Greek. She went to the University of Illinois, where she cleaned and ironed to pay for room and board and was an indifferent student. She threw herself, willy-nilly, into activities that she hoped would lead to an epic life. She joined the writers' club, accepted for an essay in which she described what it was like to go without food for three days. She also joined the Socialist Party, broke from religion, and began doing what she could to offend the churchgoers. She decided the sweetness of girlhood was gone. It was time to be at war with society.

At age eighteen, after a couple of years at Illinois, she decided that college life was unsatisfying. She moved to New York to become a writer. She wandered the city for months, desperately lonely: "In all that great city of seven millions, I found no friends; I had no work, I was separated from my fellow. Silence in the midst of city noises oppressed me. My own silence, the feeling that I had no one to talk to overwhelmed me so that my very throat was constricted; my heart was heavy with unuttered thoughts; I wanted to weep my loneliness away."[7]

During this lonely period she became indignant at the poverty she saw in New York, its different smell from the poverty she had seen in Chicago. "Everyone must go through something analogous to a conversion," she would later write, "conversion to an idea, a thought, a desire, a dream, a vision—without vision the people perish. In my teens I read Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Jack London's *The Road* and became converted to the poor, to a love for and desire to be always with the poor and suffering—the workers of the world. I was converted to the idea of the Messianic mission of the proletariat." Russia was very much on people's minds then. Russian writers defined the spiritual imagination. The Russian Revolution inflamed young radicals' visions for the future. Dorothy's closest college friend, Rayna Simons, moved to Moscow to be part of that future, and died of illness after a few months there. In 1917, Day attended a rally celebrating the Russian Revolution. She felt a sense of exaltation; the victory of the masses was at hand.

Dorothy finally found work at a radical paper, *The Call*, for five dollars a week. There she covered labor unrest and the lives of factory workers. She interviewed Leon Trotsky one day and a millionaire's butler the next. Newspaper life was intense. She was carried along by events, not reflecting on them, just letting them sweep over her.

Although more an activist than an aesthete, she fell in with a bohemian crowd, with the critic Malcolm Cowley, the poet Allen Tate, and the novelist John Dos Passos. She formed a deep friendship with the radical writer Michael Gold. They would walk along the East River for hours, happily talking about their reading and their dreams. Occasionally, Gold would break into joyful song, in Hebrew or Yiddish. She had a close though apparently platonic relationship with the playwright Eugene O'Neill, who shared her obsessions with loneliness, religion, and death. Day's biographer Jim Forest writes that Dorothy would sometimes put O'Neill to bed, drunk and shaking with the terrors, and hold him until he fell asleep. He asked her to have sex with him, but she refused.

She protested on behalf of the working classes. But the most vital dramas of her life were going on inside. She had become an even more avid reader, especially of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

It's hard now to recapture how seriously people took novel reading then, or at least how seriously Day and others took it—reading important works as wisdom literature, believing that supreme artists possessed insights that could be handed down as revelation, trying to mold one's life around the heroic and deep souls one found in books. Day read as if her whole life depended upon it.

Fewer people today see artists as oracles and novels as a form of revelation. The cognitive sciences have replaced literature as the way many people attempt to understand their own minds. But Day was "moved to the depths of my being" by Dostoyevsky. "The scene in *Crime and Punishment* where the young prostitute reads from the New Testament to Raskolnikov, sensing sin more profound than her own; that story, 'The Honest Thief'; those passages in *The Brothers Karamazov*; Mitya's conversion in jail,

the very legend of the Grand Inquisitor, all this helped to lead me on." She was especially drawn to the scene in which "Father Zossima spoke glowingly of that love for God which resulted in a love for one's brother. The story of his conversion to love is moving, and that book, with its picture of religion, had a lot to do with my later life."[8]

She didn't just read Russian novels, she seemed to live them out. She was a heavy drinker and barfly. Malcolm Cowley wrote that gangsters loved her because she could drink them under the table, though that is hard to believe, given her rail-thin frame. The tragedies of her raucous life were there, too. A friend named Louis Holladay took an overdose of heroin and died in her arms.[9] In her memoir, she describes her moves from one rancid and airless apartment to another, but even she, self-critical as she was, leaves out some of the messiness. She leaves out her promiscuity, calling it "a time of searching" and referring vaguely to "the sadness of sin, the unspeakable dreariness of sin."[10]

In the spring of 1918, she volunteered as a nurse at King's County Hospital as a deadly flu epidemic swept through the city and the world. (More than 50 million people died of it between March 1918 and June 1920.)[11] She began work at six each morning and worked twelve-hour days, changing linens, emptying bedpans, administering shots, enemas, and douches. The hospital was run like a military unit. When the head nurse entered the ward, the junior nurses stood at attention. "I liked the order of life and the discipline. By contrast the life that I had been leading seemed disorderly and futile," she recalled. "One of the things that this year in the hospital made me realize is that one of the hardest things in the world is to organize ourselves and discipline ourselves."[12]

She met a newspaperman named Lionel Moise at the hospital. They had a tumultuous physical relationship. "You are hard," she wrote to him lustfully. "I fell in love with you because you are hard." She got pregnant. He told her to get an abortion, which she did (also neglecting to mention it in her memoirs). One night, after he dumped her, she unhooked the gas pipe from the heater in her apartment and attempted suicide. A neighbor found her in time.

In her memoirs she writes that she left the hospital job because it eventually made her numb to suffering, and it left her no time to write. She neglected to mention that she had also agreed to marry a man twice her age named Berkeley Tobey, a rich man from the Northwest. They traveled to Europe together, and after the trip was over, she left him. In her memoirs she describes it as a solo trip, embarrassed that she had used Tobey for a chance to go to Europe. "I didn't want to write what I was ashamed of," she would later tell the journalist Dwight MacDonald. "I felt I had used him and was ashamed."[13]

She also, crucially, was arrested twice, first in 1917 at age twenty and then in 1922 at age twenty-five. The first time, it was in the name of political activism. She had become active in advocating for the rights of women; she was arrested for taking part in a suffragist protest in front of the White House and sentenced, with the rest of the protesters, to thirty days in jail. The prisoners began a hunger strike, but Day, sitting there gnawed by hunger, soon slipped into a deep depression. She flipped from feeling solidarity with the hunger strikers to feeling that it was all somehow wrong and meaningless. "I lost all consciousness of any cause. I had no sense of being a radical. I could only feel darkness and desolation all around me. . . . I had an ugly sense of the futility of human effort, man's helpless misery, the triumph of might. . . . Evil triumphed. I was a petty creature, filled with self-deception, self-importance, unreal, false, and rightly scorned and punished."[14]

In jail she asked for a Bible and read it intensely. Other prisoners told her stories of the solitary confinement cells where prisoners would be locked up for six months at a time. "Never would I recover from this wound, this ugly knowledge I had gained of what men were capable of in their treatment of each other."[15]

Day was taking a stand against injustice, but she was doing it without organizing transcendent framework. She seems to have felt, unconsciously and even then, that for her, activism without faith would fail.

Her second imprisonment was even more emotionally devastating. She had gone to stay with a friend, a drug addict, in her apartment on Skid Row, in a building that served as both a whorehouse and a residence for members of the IWW, the radical union. The police raided the place, looking for subversives. The cops assumed that Day and her friends were prostitutes. They were forced to stand out on the street, semiclad, before they were hauled off to jail.

She was a victim of the Red hysteria of the time. But she also felt she was a victim of her own imprudence and lack of integrity. She took the arrest as an indictment of her scattered life. "I do not

think that ever again, no matter of what I am accused, can I suffer more than I did then of shame and regret, and self-contempt. Not only because I had been caught, found out, branded, publicly humiliated, but because of my own consciousness that I deserved it."[16]

There are episodes of extraordinary self-scrutiny and self-criticism. Looking back years later, Day took a dim view of her own rowdy life. She saw it as a form of pride, as an attempt to define what was good and bad for herself, without reference to anything larger. "The life of the flesh called to me as a good and wholesome life, regardless of man's laws, which I felt rebelliously were made for the repression of others. The strong could make their own law, live their own lives; in fact they were beyond good and evil. What was good and what was evil? It is easy enough to stifle conscience for a time. The satisfied flesh has its own law."

But Day was not just lost in a world of shallow infatuations, tumultuous affairs, fleshly satisfaction, and selfishness. Her extreme self-criticism flowed from a deep spiritual hunger. She used the word "loneliness" to describe this hunger. For many of us, that word brings to mind solitude. And Day was indeed solitary, and she did suffer from it. But Day also used the word "loneliness" to describe spiritual isolation. She had a sense that there was some transcendent cause or entity or activity out there and that she would be restless until she found it. She was incapable of living life on the surface only—for pleasures, success, even for service—but needed a deep and total commitment to something holy.

Childbirth

Day had spent her twenties throwing herself down different avenues, looking for a vocation. She tried politics. She took part in protests and marches. But they didn't satisfy. Unlike Frances Perkins, she was unfit for the life of politics, with its compromises, self-seeking, shades of gray, and dirty hands. She needed a venue that would involve internal surrender, renunciation of self, commitment to something pure. She looked back on her early activism with disquiet and self-criticism. "I do not know how sincere I was in my love of the poor and my desire to serve them. . . . I wanted to go on picket lines, to go to jail, to write, to influence others and so make my mark on the world. How much ambition and how much self-seeking there was in all of this."[17]

Then Day went the literary route. She wrote a novel about her disordered early life called *The Eleventh Virgin*, which was accepted by a New York publisher and optioned for $5,000 by a Hollywood studio.[18] But this sort of literature did not cure the longing, either, and the book would eventually make her feel ashamed—she later thought of buying up every existing copy.

She thought that romantic love might satisfy her longing. She fell in love with a man named Forster Batterham, and they lived together, unmarried, in a house on Staten Island that Day bought with the proceeds of her novel. She describes Forster romantically in *The Long Loneliness* as an anarchist, an Englishman by descent, and a biologist. In fact, the truth is more prosaic. He made gauges in a factory; he had grown up in North Carolina and gone to Georgia Tech. He had an interest in radical politics.[19] But Day's love for him was real. She loved him for his convictions, for his stubborn attachment to them, for his love of nature. She would, after their disagreements about fundamental things had become clear, still beg him to marry her. Day was still a passionate, sexual woman, and her lust for him was real, too. "My desire for you is a painful rather than pleasurable emotion," she wrote in a letter that was released after her death. "It is a ravishing hunger which makes me want you more than anything in the world. And makes me feel as though I could barely exist until I saw you again." On September 21, 1925, during one of their separations, she wrote to him, "I made myself a beautiful new nightie, all lacie and exotic, also several new pairs of panties which you will interested in I am sure. I think of you much and dream of you every night and if my dreams could affect you over long distance, I am sure they would keep you awake."

When you read of Day and Batterham living their secluded life in Staten Island, reading, talking, making love, you get the impression that they, like many young couples newly in love, were trying to build what Sheldon Vanauken would call a "Shining Barrier," a walled garden, cut off from the world, in which their love would be pure. Ultimately, Day's longing could not be contained within the Shining Barrier. Living with Batterham, taking long walks with him on the beach, she felt a desire for something more. Among other things, she wanted a child. She felt her house was empty without one. In 1925, at age twenty-eight, she was thrilled when she learned she was pregnant. Batterham did not share her

feelings. A self-styled radical, a modern man, he did not believe in bringing more human beings into the world. He certainly did not believe in the bourgeois institution of marriage, and he would never consent to marry her.

While she was pregnant, it occurred to Day that most of the descriptions of childbirth had been written by men. She set out to rectify this. Shortly after giving birth, she wrote an essay on the experience, which eventually appeared in the *New Masses.* Day vividly described the physical struggle of the birth itself:

> Earthquake and fire swept my body. My spirit was a battleground on which thousands were butchered in a most horrible manner. Through the rush and roar of the cataclysm which was all about me I heard the murmur of the doctor and answered the murmur of the nurse in my head. In a white blaze of thankfulness I knew that ether was forthcoming.

When her daughter Tamar arrived, she was overwhelmed by gratitude: "If I had written the greatest book, composed the greatest symphony, painted the most beautiful painting or carved the most exquisite figure, I could not have felt the more exalted creator than I did when they placed my child in my arms." She felt the need for someone to thank. "No human creature could receive or contain so vast a flood of love and joy as I often felt after the birth of my child. With this came the need to worship, to adore."[20]

But whom to thank? Whom to worship? A sense of God's reality and immanence came upon her, particularly on her long walks, when she found herself praying. She had trouble praying on her knees, but while she was walking, words of gratitude, praise, and obedience seemed to leap from her. A walk that began in misery could end in exultation.

Day was not answering the question of whether God exists. She was simply made aware of a presence beyond herself. She was surrendering to the belief that independent of one's own will, there is something significant that gives shape to life. If the life of a radical was a life of assertion and agency, a desire to steer history, she was turning to a life of obedience. God was in charge. As she later put it, she came to see that "worship, adoration, thanksgiving, supplication—these were the noblest acts of which men were capable in this life."[21] The birth of her child began her transformation from a scattered person to a centered one, from an unhappy bohemian to a woman who had found her calling.

Day had no obvious outlet for her faith. She was a member of no church. She was not comfortable with theology or traditional religious doctrines. But she felt hunted by God. "How can there be no God," she asked Forster, "when there are all these beautiful things?"

Her attention turned to the Catholic Church. It was not church history that drew her, or papal authority, or even the political and social positions taken by the church. She knew nothing about Catholic theology and only knew the Church itself as a backward and politically reactionary force. It was the people, not theology. It was the Catholic immigrants she had covered and served—their poverty, their dignity, their communal spirit, and their generosity toward those who were down and out. Day's friends told her that she didn't need a religious institution to worship God, certainly not one as retrograde as the Catholic Church, but Day's experience as a radical taught her to associate herself as closely as possible with those who were suffering, to join in their walk, which meant joining their church.

She observed that Catholicism already organized the lives of many poor urban families. It had won their allegiance. They poured into its churches on Sundays and holy days and in moments of joy and mourning. In the same way, the Catholic faith would provide structure for her life, and she hoped it would provide structure for her daughter. "We all crave order, and in the book of Job, hell is described as a place where no order is. I felt that 'belonging' to a church would bring order into [Tamar's] life, which I felt was lacking in my own."[22]

Day's adult faith was warmer and more joyful than the faith she'd experienced as a teenager. Day was particularly attracted to Saint Teresa of Avila, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic and nun whose experiences closely paralleled Day's own: the deeply spiritual childhood, the terror in the face of her own sinfulness, the occasional moments of what could be described as sexual ecstasy in His presence, the intense ambition to reform human institutions and serve the poor.

Teresa lived a life of renunciation. She slept under a single woolen blanket. There was no heat in her convent except for a stove in one room. Her days were filled with prayer and penance. But she

also possessed a lightness of spirit. Day said she loved the fact that Saint Teresa wore a bright red dress the day she entered the convent. She loved the fact that one day Teresa shocked her fellow nuns by taking out castanets and dancing. When she was the Mother Superior and the nuns under her became melancholy, she had the kitchen serve them steak. Teresa said that life is like a "night spent in an uncomfortable inn," so you might as well do what you can to make it more pleasant.

Day was becoming a Catholic, but she wasn't close to any practicing Catholics. But she encountered a nun walking down a street and asked her for instruction. The nun was shocked by Day's ignorance of Catholic teaching and berated her for it, but she welcomed her in. Day began attending services weekly, even when she didn't feel like it. She asked herself, "Do I prefer the Church or my own will?" She decided that even though she would have found it more pleasant to spend Sunday mornings reading the papers, she preferred the church to her own will.

The path to God eventually meant breaking with Forster. He was scientific, skeptical, and empirical. He bet his life on a material universe, clinging to his conviction as fiercely as Day ultimately would to her view of a divinely created one.

Their separation took some time and required much tearing. One day, over a meal, Forster asked the questions many of Day's radical friends were asking: Had she lost her mind? Who was pushing her to an archaic and backward institution like the Church? Who was the secret person in her life corrupting her in this way?

Day was surprised by the passion and power behind his questions. Finally she quietly said, "It is Jesus. I guess it is Jesus Christ who is the one who is pushing me to the Catholics."[23]

Forster turned white and went silent. He didn't move. He just sat there glaring at her. She asked if they could talk some more about religion. He didn't answer her at all, or nod, or shake his head. Then he clasped his hands together on the table in a gesture that reminded Day of the way schoolboys act when they want their teachers to think they are good. He sat for several seconds in this posture, then raised his clasped hands and brought them smashing down on the table, rattling the cups and dishes. Day was terrified that he would lose control and start striking her with his clasped hands. But he didn't. He got up and told Day that she was mentally disturbed. Then he walked around the table once and went out of the house.[24]

These scenes did not end their love, or their lust, for each other. Day still pleaded with Forster to marry her and to give Tamar a real father. Even after she had effectively renounced him for the Church, she wrote to him, "I dream of you every night—that I am lying in your arms and can feel your kisses and it is torture to me, but so sweet too. I do love you more than anything else in the world, but I cannot help my religious sense, which tortures me unless I do as I believe right."[25]

Dorothy's love for Forster paradoxically opened her up to faith. Her love for him broke through her shell and exposed the soft and most vulnerable regions of the heart to other loves. It provided her with a model. As Day put it, "It was through a whole love, both physical and spiritual, I came to know God."[26] This is a more mature understanding than her tendency, as a teenager, to divide the world between flesh on one side and spirit on the other.

Conversion

The conversion process was a dreary, joyless affair. Day, being Day, made it hard on herself. She criticized herself at each moment, doubting her own motives and practices. She was divided between the radicalism of her former self and the devotion to the Church that her new life required. One day, walking to the post office, she was enveloped with scorn for her own faith. "Here you are in a stupor of content. You are biological. Like a cow. Prayer for you is like the opiate of the people." She kept repeating that phrase in her head: "The opiate of the people." But, she reasoned as she continued her walk, she wasn't praying to escape pain. She was praying because she was happy, because she wanted to thank God for her happiness.[27]

She had Tamar baptized in July 1927. There was a party afterward, and Forster brought some lobsters he had caught. But then he quarreled with Day, telling her again that it was all just so much mumbo-jumbo, and then he left.

She officially joined the church on December 28, 1927. The moment brought her no consolation. "I had not sense of peace, no joy, no conviction that what I was doing was doing right. It

was just something that I had to do, a task to be gotten through."[28] As she performed the sacraments, the Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist, she felt herself a hypocrite. She went through the motions, getting down on her knees, coldly. She was afraid somebody might see her. She was afraid she was betraying the poor and going over to the losing side of history, to an institution lined up on the side of property, of the powerful and the elites. "Are you sure of yourself?" she asked herself. "What kind of affectation is this? What act is this you are going through?"

Self-critical as always, Day questioned herself over the following months and years, wondering whether her faith was deep or practical enough: "How little, how puny my work had been since becoming a Catholic, I thought. How self-centered, how ingrown, how lacking in a sense of community! My summer of quiet reading and prayer, my self-absorption seemed sinful as I watched my brothers in their struggle, not for themselves but for others."[29]

In choosing religion, she chose an arduous path. It is often said that religion makes life easier for people, provides them with the comforting presence of a loving and all-knowing father. That is certainly not how Day experienced it. She experienced it as difficult self-conflict, the sort of self-conflict that Joseph Soloveitchik described in a famous footnote in his book *Halakhic Man.* Here is an abridged version of that footnote:

> This popular ideology contends that the religious experience is tranquil and neatly ordered, tender and delicate; it is an enchanted stream for embittered souls and still waters for troubled spirits. The person "who comes in from the field, weary" (Gen. 25:29), from the battlefield and campaigns of life, from the secular domain which is filled with doubts and fears, contradictions and refutations, clings to religion as does a baby to its mother and finds in her lap "a shelter for his head, the nest of his forsaken prayers" and there is comforted for his disappointments and tribulations. This Rousseauian ideology left its stamp on the entire Romantic movement from the beginning of its growth until its final (tragic!) manifestations in the consciousness of contemporary man. Therefore, the representatives of religious communities are inclined to portray religion, in a wealth of colors that dazzle the eye, as a poetic Arcadia, a realm of simplicity, wholeness, and tranquility. This ideology is intrinsically false and deceptive. That religious consciousness in man's experience, which is most profound and most elevated, which penetrates to the very depths and ascends to the very heights, is not that simple and comfortable.
>
> On the contrary, it is exceptionally complex, rigorous, and tortuous. Where you find its complexity, there you find its greatness. The consciousness of *homo religiosis* flings bitter accusations against itself and immediately is filled with regret, judges its desire and yearnings with excessive severity, and at the same time steeps itself in them, casts derogatory aspersions on its own attributes, flails away at them, but also subjugates itself to them. It is in a condition of spiritual crisis, of psychic ascent and descent, of contradiction arising from affirmation and negation, self-abnegation and self-appreciation. Religion is not, at the outset, a refuge of grace and mercy for the despondent and desperate, an enchanted stream for crushed spirits, but a raging clamorous torrent of man's consciousness with all its cries, pangs, and torments.

Early in her religious journey, Day met three women who were in love but weren't sleeping with the men they intended to marry, even though it was obvious how much they wanted to. Day looked at their self-denial and began to feel "that Catholicism was something rich and real and fascinating. . . . I saw them wrestling with moral problems, with the principles by which they lived, and this made them noble in my eyes."[30]

Day attended mass daily, which meant rising at dawn. She prayed according to the monastic rhythms through the day. She dedicated time each day to the religious disciplines, reading the scripture, saying the rosary. She fasted and went to confession.

These rituals could become routine, like playing the scales for a musician, but Day found the routine, even when it was dull, necessary: "Without the sacraments of the church, primarily the Eucharist, the Lord's supper, as it is called, I certainly do not think that I could go on. . . . I do not always approach it from need, or with joy and thanksgiving. After 28 years of almost daily communion, one can confess to a routine, but it is like the routine of taking daily food."[31]

These routines created a spiritual center for her life. From the fragmentation of her early life she moved toward integration.

Living Out the Gospel

Day was now in her early thirties. The Great Depression was biting with full force. In 1933 she started a newspaper called *The Catholic Worker* to mobilize the proletariat and apply Catholic social teaching toward the goal of creating a society in which it is easier for people to be good. It wasn't only a newspaper; it was a movement, located in ramshackle offices in Lower Manhattan, with everybody working for free. Within three years it had a circulation of 150,000, with distribution in five hundred parishes across the country.[32]

The newspaper hosted a soup kitchen, feeding as many as fifteen hundred each morning. It sponsored a series of hospitality houses for the indigent, providing nearly fifty thousand nights of lodging between 1935 and 1938. Day and her colleagues also organized and inspired more than thirty other hospitality houses across the United States and in England. They eventually opened and inspired agrarian communes from California to Michigan to New Jersey. They organized marches and events. These were, in part, efforts to build community, to heal the loneliness that marks human existence.

To Day, separation was sin: separation from God, separation from one another. Unity was holiness: the fusion between people and spirits. *The Catholic Worker* fused a lot of things together. It was a newspaper but also an activist aid organization. It was a religious publication, but it also advocated for economic change. It was about inner life, but also political radicalism. It brought the rich and poor into contact. It joined theology and economics, material concerns and spiritual ones, body and soul.

Day insisted on being radical, to get down to the roots of social problems. The paper was Catholic, but she embraced a philosophy of personalism, which is an affirmation of the dignity of each person, created in the image of God. Being a personalist, Day had a suspicion of bigness, whether it was big government or big corporations. Day even had a suspicion of big philanthropy. She was constantly urging her co-workers to "stay small": Start your work from where you live, with the small concrete needs right around you. Help ease tension in your workplace. Help feed the person right in front of you. Personalism holds that we each have a deep personal obligation to live simply, to look after the needs of our brothers and sisters, and to share in the happiness and misery they are suffering. The personalist brings his whole person to serve another whole person. This can only be done by means of intimate contact within small communities.

Day spent the rest of her life, until her death on November 29, 1980, as a Catholic worker, working on the newspaper and serving bread and soup to the poor and mentally disabled. She wrote eleven books and more than a thousand articles. The service work was prosaic. This was before computers and copiers. Each month the staff had to type out tens of thousands of address labels in order to send the paper out to subscribers. The reporters sold the paper themselves on the street. Day felt that it was not enough to just care for the poor, "one must live with them, share with them their suffering too. Give up one's privacy, and mental and spiritual comforts as well as physical."[33] She didn't just visit the shelters and hospitality houses from the comfort of her own home. She lived in the hospitality houses herself, with those she was serving.

The work was relentless—endlessly serving coffee and soup, raising money, writing articles for the paper. "Breakfast a thick slice of day bread," Day wrote in her diary one day, "and some very bad coffee. I dictate a dozen letters. My brain is a fog. I am too weak to climb stairs. I have prescribed for myself this day in bed but I keep thinking it is my spirit that is all wrong. I am surrounded by repellent disorder, noise, people, and have no spirit of inner solitude or poverty."[34]

We sometimes think of saints, or of people who are living like saints, as being ethereal, living in a higher spiritual realm. But often enough they live in an even less ethereal way than the rest of us. They are more fully of this earth, more fully engaged in the dirty, practical problems of the people around them. Day and her colleagues slept in cold rooms. They wore donated clothes. They did not receive salaries. Day's mind was not engaged by theology most of the time, but by how to avoid this or that financial crisis, or arrange for this person to get that treatment. In a 1934 journal entry she described the activities of a single day, a mixture of the sacred and the profane: she woke up, got to mass, made breakfast for the staff, answered mail, did the bookkeeping, read some literature, wrote an inspirational message to be mimeographed and handed out. Then a relief worker came in looking for a confirmation outfit for a twelve-year-old girl, then a convert came in to share his religious writings, then a Fascist came by to whip up hatred among the residents, then an art student arrived with some drawings of Saint Catherine of Siena, and so on and so on.

The atmosphere was similar to the one Albert Schweitzer, the German medical missionary, described at his hospital in the African jungle. He did not hire idealists for that hospital, nor did he hire people who had a righteous sense of how much they were giving to the world. He certainly did not hire people who set out "to do something special." He only wanted people who would perform constant acts of service with the no-nonsense attitude that they will simply do what needs doing. "Only a person who feels his preference to be a matter of course, not something out of the ordinary, and who has no thought of heroism but only of a duty undertaken with sober enthusiasm, is capable of being the sort of spiritual pioneer the world needs."[35]

Day was not a naturally social creature. She had a writer's personality, somewhat aloof and often craving solitude. But she forced herself to be with people, almost all day, every day. Many of those she served had mental disabilities, or suffered from alcoholism. Bickering was constant. The guests could be rude, nasty, and foul-mouthed. Yet she forced herself to sit at the table and focus on the specific person in front of her. That person might be drink and incoherent, but Day would sit, showing respect and listening.

She would carry notebooks with her and use spare moments to write, journal entries for herself and a constant string of columns, essays, and reports for others. Other people's sins became an occasion to reflect on her own greater ones. As she wrote one day in her journal: "Drunkenness and all the sins which follow in its wake are so obviously ugly and monstrous, and mean such unhappiness for the poor sinner that it is all the more important that we do not judge or condemn. In the eyes of God the hidden subtle sings must be far worse. We must make every effort of will to love more and more—to hang on to each other with love. They should serve to show us the hideousness of our own sins so that we truly repent and abhor them."[36]

She guarded against spiritual pride, against the feeling of self-righteousness that might come over her because she was doing good works. "I have to stop myself sometimes," she wrote. "I have found myself rushing from one person to another—soup bowls and more soup bowls, plates of bread and more plates of bread, with the gratitude of the hungry booming a loud din in my ears. The hunger of my ears can be as severe as someone else's stomach hunger; the joy of hearing those expressions of gratitude."[37] The sin of pride is around every corner, Day believed, and there are many corners even in a charity house. To serve others is to live under a great temptation.

Suffering

As a young woman, Day followed the mode of Dostoyevsky—her life was filled with drinking and disorder even while she was God-haunted. But, as Paul Elie notes, internally she was not a Dostoyevskyan; she was a Tolstoyan. She was not a trapped animal compelled to suffer by circumstance; she ardently chose suffering. At each step along the way, when most people would have sought out comfort and ease—what economists call self-interest or what psychologists call happiness—she chose a different route, seeking discomfort and difficulty in order to satisfy her longing for holiness. She wasn't just choosing to work at a nonprofit institution in order to have a big impact; she was seeking to live in accord with the Gospels, even if it meant sacrifice and suffering.

When most people think about the future, they dream up ways they might live happier lives. But notice this phenomenon. When people remember the crucial events that formed them, they don't usually talk about happiness. It is usually the ordeals that seem most significant. Most people shoot for happiness but feel formed through suffering.

Day was unusual, maybe even perverse, in that she sometimes seemed to seek out suffering as a road to depth. She probably observed, as we all do, that people we call deep have almost always endured a season of suffering, or several such reasons. But she seemed to seek out those seasons, and to avoid some of the normal pleasures of life that would have brought simple earthly happiness. She often sought out occasions for moral heroism, occasions to serve others in acts of enduring hardship.

For most of us, there is nothing intrinsically noble about suffering. Just as failure is sometimes just failure (and not your path to becoming the next Steve Jobs), suffering is sometimes just destructive, to be exited or medicated as quickly as possible. When it is not connected to some larger purpose beyond itself, suffering shrinks or annihilates people. When it is not understood as a piece of a larger process, it leads to doubt, nihilism, and despair.

But some people can connect their suffering to some greater design. They place their suffering in solidarity with all the others who have suffered. These people are clearly ennobled by it. It is not the suffering itself that makes all the difference, but the way it is experienced. Think of the way Franklin Roosevelt came back deeper and more empathetic after being struck by polio. Often, physical or social suffering can give people an outsider's perspective, an attuned awareness of what others are enduring.

The first big thing suffering does is it drags you deeper into yourself. The theologian Paul Tillich wrote that people who endure suffering are taken beneath the routine busyness of life and find they are not who they believed themselves to be. The pain involved in, say, composing a great piece of music or the grief of having lost a loved one smashes through a floor they thought was the bottom floor of their soul, revealing a cavity below, and then it smashes through that floor, revealing another cavity, and so on and so on. The person in pain descends to unknown ground.

Suffering opens up ancient places of pain that had been hidden. It exposes frightening experiences that had been repressed, shameful wrongs that had been committed. It spurs some people to painfully and carefully examine the basement of their own soul. But it also presents the pleasurable sensation that one is getting closer to the truth. The pleasure in suffering is that you feel you are getting beneath the superficial and approaching the fundamental. It creates what modern psychologists call "depressive realism," an ability to see things exactly the way they are. It shatters the comforting rationalizations and pat narratives we tell about ourselves as part of our way of simplifying ourselves for the world.

Then, too, suffering gives people a more accurate sense of their own limitations, of what they can control and not control. When people are thrust down into these deeper zones, thrust into lonely self-scrutiny, they are forced to confront the fact that they can't determine what goes on there.

Suffering, like love, shatters the illusion of self-mastery. Those who suffer can't tell themselves to stop feeling pain, or to stop missing the one who has died or gone. And even when tranquillity begins to come back, or in those moments when grief eases, it is not clear where that relief comes from. The healing process, too, feels as though it's part of some natural or divine process beyond individual control. For people in this striving culture, in this Adam I world where everything is won by effort, exertion, and control, suffering teaches dependence. It teaches that life is unpredictable and that the meritocrat's efforts at total control are an illusion.

Suffering, oddly, also teaches gratitude. In normal times we treat the love we receive as a reason for self-satisfaction (I deserve to be loved), but in seasons of suffering we realize how undeserved this love is and how it should in fact be a cause for thanks. In proud moments we refuse to feel indebted, but in humble moments, people know they don't deserve the affection and concern they receive.

People in this circumstance also have a sense that they are swept up in some larger providence. Abraham Lincoln suffered through depression through his life and then suffered through the pain of conducting a civil war, and emerged with the sense that Providence had taken control of his life, that he was a small instrument in a transcendent task.

It's at this point that people in the midst of difficulty begin to feel a call. They are not masters of the situation, but neither are they helpless. They can't determine the course of their pain, but they can participate in responding to it. They often feel an overwhelming moral responsibility to respond well to it. They may start their suffering asking "Why me?" or "Why evil?" But they soon realize the proper question is "What am I supposed to do if I am confronted with suffering, if I am the victim of evil?"

People who seek this proper response to their ordeal sense that they are at a deeper level than the level of personal happiness. They don't say, "Well, I'm fighting a lot of pain over the loss of my child. I should try to balance my hedonic account by going to a lot of parties and whooping it up."

The right response to this sort of pain is not pleasure. It's holiness. I don't mean that in a purely religious sense. I mean seeing the pain as part of a moral narrative and trying to redeem something bad by turning it into something sacred, some act of sacrificial service that will put oneself in fraternity with the wider community and with eternal moral demands. Parents who have lost a child start foundations; their dead child touches the lives of people they never met. Suffering simultaneously reminds us of our finitude and pushes us to see life in the widest possible connections, which is where holiness dwells.

Recovering from suffering is not like recovering from a disease. Many people don't come out healed; they come out different. They crash through the logic of individual utility and behave paradoxically. Instead of recoiling from the sorts of loving commitments that often lead to suffering, they throw themselves more deeply into them. Even while experiencing the worst and most lacerating

consequences, some people double down on vulnerability and become available to healing love. They hurl themselves deeper and more gratefully into their art, loved ones, and commitments.

This way, suffering becomes a fearful gift, very different form that other gift, happiness, conventionally defined. The latter brings pleasure, but the former cultivates character.

Service

As the decades wore on, news of Dorothy Day's example spread. She has inspired generations of young Catholics because she wasn't merely a champion of Catholic social teaching, but a concrete living example. Catholic social teaching is based, in part, on the idea that each life has equal dignity, that the soul of a drug-addled homeless person is just as invaluable as the most laudable high achiever. It is based on the conviction that God has a special love for the poor. As it says in Isaiah, "True worship is to work for justice and care for the poor and oppressed." This teaching emphasizes that we are one human family. God's servants are therefore called upon to live in solidarity with one another, in community. Day formed her organization around these principles.

The Long Loneliness was published in 1952. It sold well and has been in print ever since. As her work became famous, her houses attracted flocks of admirers, and that, too, presented its own spiritual challenges. "I get tired of hearing people say how wonderful it is, what we do. Lots of times it's not as wonderful as they think. We are overworked, or feel tired and irritable, and we have heard some rude remark from someone in the line and our patience is exhausted and we're ready to explode."[38] Still, she was afraid she and her flock would be corrupted by this admiration. It also made her feel lonely.

Surrounded by people almost all the time, Day was often isolated from those she loved. Her family was estranged from her, mystified by her Catholicism. After Forster, she never loved another man and remained celibate the rest of her life. "It was years before I awakened without longing for a face pressed against my breast, an arm about my shoulder. The sense of loss was there. It was a price I had paid."[39] It's not clear why she felt she had to pay this price, to bear this loneliness and this chastity, but she did.

Living in the hospitality houses, going on long lecture tours, even meant being away from her daughter, Tamar. "It took me hours to get to sleep," she wrote in her diary in 1940. "I miss Tamar terribly, unhappily at night, but in the day not sadly. My nights are always sadness and desolation and it seems as soon as I lie down, I am on a rack of bitterness and pain. Then in the day I am again strong enough to make an act of faith and love and go on in peace and joy."[40]

She was a single mother leading a diverse and demanding social movement. She traveled often, while a parade of others looked after Tamar. She often felt she was failing as a mother. Tamar grew up within the Catholic Worker family when she was young, and then went to boarding school when she got older. While she was sixteen, Tamar fell in love with a volunteer at *The Catholic Worker* named David Hennessy. Dorothy told Tamar she was too young to marry. She ordered her not to write to David for a year and to return his letters unopened. She wrote to David urging him to leave her daughter alone, but David returned those letters without reading them.

The couple persevered, finally marrying, with Dorothy's blessing, when Tamar was eighteen, on April 19, 1944. They moved to a farm in Easton, Pennsylvania, where Tamar gave birth to the first of the nine grandchildren she was to present to her mother. The marriage between Tamar and David lasted until the end of 1961, when they divorced. David was unemployed for long periods and struggled with mental illness. Tamar eventually moved back near a Catholic Worker farm on Staten Island. People described her as a gentle, hospitable person, without the propulsive spiritual longing her mother wrestled with. She accepted people as they were and loved them unconditionally. She died in 2008, at the age of eight-two, in New Hampshire. Tamar remained wedded to the Social Worker movement, but she had precious little time to spend with her mother.

Impact

Torn between competing demands and vocations, Day was restless through much of her adult life. At times she even thought of leaving the newspaper. "The world is too much with me in the Catholic

Worker. The world is suffering and dying. I am not suffering and dying in the CW. I am writing and talking about it."[41] She also thought about becoming invisible, about getting a job in a hospital as a maid, about finding a room to live in somewhere, preferably next door to a church: "There is the solitude of the city, living and working with the poor, to learn to pray, to work, to suffer, to be silent."

In then end, she decided not to leave. She built a series of communities, around the newspaper, the hospitality houses, the rural communes. The communities provided her with families and joy.

"Writing," she wrote in one column in 1950, "is an act of community. It is a letter, it is comforting, consoling, helping, advising on our part as well as asking for it on yours. It is part of our human association with each other. It is an expression of our love and concern for each other."[42]

She returned to this theme again and again, wrestling with her divided self: her solitary nature and also her craving for others. "The only answer in this life, to the loneliness we are all bound to feel, is community," she wrote. "The living together, working together, sharing together, loving God and loving our brother, and living close to him in community so we can show our love for Him."[43] At the end of *The Long Loneliness* she cries out, in one of her great bursts of gratitude,

> I found myself, a barren woman, the joyful mother of children. It is not easy always to be joyful, to keep in mind the duty to delight. The most significant thing about The Catholic Worker is poverty, some say. The most significant thing about The Catholic Worker is community, others say. We are not alone anymore. But the final word is love. At times it has been, in the words of Father Zossima, a harsh and dreadful thing, and our very faith in love has been tried through fire.
>
> We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.[44]

It may seem from the outside as if Day was doing the sort of community service that young people are called upon to do these days—serving soup, providing shelter. But in fact, her life rested on very different foundations and pointed in very different directions than the lives of many do-gooders today.

The Catholic Worker movement was meant to ease the suffering of the poor, but that was not its main purpose or organizing principle. The main idea was to provide a model of what the world would look like if Christians really did lead the lives that the Gospels command and love. It was not only to help the poor, but to address their own brokenness, that people served. "Going to bed at night with the foul smell of unwashed bodies. Lack of privacy," Day wrote in her diary. "But Christ was born in a [manger] and a stable is apt to be unclean and odorous. If the Blessed Mother could endure it, why not I."[45]

As the journalist Yishai Schwartz has written, for Day, "every significant action only attains its significance because of its relation to the Divine." Every time she found somebody a piece of clothing, that was an act of prayer. Day was revolted by "the idea of doled-out charity," which denigrates and disrespects the poor. For her, each act of service was a gesture upward to the poor and toward God, and the fulfillment of an internal need. Day felt it was necessary, Schwartz writes, to "internalize poverty as a private virtue," to embrace poverty as a way to achieve communion with others and come closer to God. To separate community service from prayer would have been to separate it from its life-altering purpose.

The loneliness, suffering, and pain Dorothy Day endured have a sobering effect on anybody who reads her diaries. Does God really call for this much hardship? Did not she renounce too many of the simple pleasures that the world provides? In some sense she did. But in some sense this is a false impression left by overreliance on her diaries and her own writing. Like many people, Day's mood was darker in her journals than it was in her daily life. She didn't write when happy; she was engaged in the activities that made her happy. She wrote when she was brooding about something and used her diaries to contemplate the sources of her pain.

The diaries give the impression of someone in torment, but the oral histories give the impression of someone who was constantly surrounded by children, by dear friends, by admiration and a close community. As one admirer, Mary Lathrop, put it, "She had an enormous capacity for close friendships. Really quite extraordinary. Each friendship was unique, and she had many, many of them—people who loved her, and people that she loved."[46]

Other remembered her intense love of music and the sensual things of the world. As Kathleen Jordan put it, "there was Dorothy's deep sense of beauty. . . . I'd interrupt her during the opera time [while she was listening to the Metropolitan Opera on the radio]. I'd walk in and see her almost in ecstasy. That taught me a great deal about what proper prayer meant to her. . . . She used to say, 'Remember what Dostoyevsky said: "Beauty will save the world."' We would see that in her. She didn't separate the natural and supernatural."[47]

Nanette

By 1960, more than three decades had passed since she had left Forster Batterham. He had spent almost all of those years living with an innocent and charming woman named Nanette. When cancer struck Nanette, Forster called on Dorothy once again, to minister to her as she died. Of course Day responded without a second thought. For several months she spent much of each day with Nanette on Staten Island. "Nanette has been having a very hard time," Day recounted in the diary, "not only pressure but pain all through her. She lay there and cried pitifully today. There is so little one can do, except just be there and say nothing. I told her how hard it was to comfort her, one could only keep the silence in the face of suffering, and she said bitterly, 'Yes, the silence of death.' I told her I would say a rosary."[48]

Day did what sensitive people do when other people are in trauma. We are all called at certain moments to comfort people who are enduring some trauma. Many of us don't know how to react in such situations, but others do. In the first place, they just show up. They provide a ministry of presence. Next, they don't compare. The sensitive person understands that each person's ordeal is unique and should not be compared to anyone else's. Next, they do the practical things—making lunch, dusting the room, washing the towels. Finally, they don't try to minimize what is going on. They don't attempt to reassure with false, saccharine sentiments. They don't say that the pain is all for the best. They don't search for silver linings. They do what wise souls do in the presence of tragedy and trauma. They practice a passive activism. They don't bustle about trying to solve something that cannot be solved. The sensitive person grants the sufferer the dignity of her own process. She lets the sufferer define the meaning of what is going on. She just sits simply through the nights of pain and darkness, being practical, human, simple, and direct.

Forster, on the other hand, behaved terribly through the ordeal. He kept running away, leaving Nanette with Dorothy and the other caregivers. "Forster in a sad state," Day wrote in her diary, "resolutely refusing to spend time with Nanette. Nanette in a sad state all day, legs swelling badly, also stomach. Later in the evening she cried out she was losing her mind and screamed continually."[49]

Day found herself suffering with Nanette and fighting off anger toward Forster. "I get so impatient at him and his constant feeling from her, his self-pity and his weeping that I feel hard and must fight to overcome it. Such fear of sickness and death."

On January 7, 1960, Nanette asked to be baptized. The next day she died. Day remembered her final hours: "This morning at 8:45 Nanette died after an agony of two days. The Cross was not as hard as this, she said. People in concentration camps suffered like this, she said, showing her arms. She died peacefully after a slight hemorrhage. She had a slight smile, calm and peaceful."

Apotheosis

When the radicalism of the late 1960s came along, Day became active in the peace movement, and in many of the other political activities of the era, but she couldn't have been more different from those radicals in her fundamental approach to life. They preached liberation, freedom, and autonomy. She preached obedience, servitude, and self-surrender. She had not patience for the celebration of open sexuality and the lax morality. She was repelled when some young people wanted to use a Dixie cup to serve the sacramental wine. She was out of step with the spirit of the counterculture and complained about all the rebellious young people: "All this rebellion makes me long for obedience—hunger and thirst for it."

In 1969 she wrote a journal entry disagreeing with those who sought to build community outside the permanent disciplines of the Church. Day had always understood the flaws in the Catholic

Church, but she also understood the necessity of the structure. The radicals around her saw only the flaws and wanted to throw everything away. "It is as though the adolescents had just discovered their parents were fallible and they are so shocked they want to throw out the institutions of the home and go in for 'community.' . . . They call them 'young adults' but it seems to me they are belated adolescents with all the romanticism that goes with it."

The years confronting genuine dysfunction in the shelters had made Day realistic. "I can't bear romantics," she told one interviewer. "I want a religious realist." Much of the activism she saw around her was far too easy and self-forgiving. She had paid a terrible price to perform community service to practice her faith—the breakup of her relationship with Forster, the estrangement from her family. "For me, Christ was not bought for thirty pieces of silver, but with my heart's blood. We buy not cheap on this market."

All around her people were celebrating nature and natural man, but Day believed that natural man is corrupt and is only saved by repressing natural urges. "We must be pruned to grow," she wrote, "and cutting hurts the natural man. But if this corruption is to put on incorruption, if one is to *put on Christ*, the new man, pain of one kind or another is inevitable. And how joyful a thought that in spite of one's dullness and lethargy one is indeed growing in the spiritual life."

The word "counterculture" was used a lot in the late 1960s, but Day was living according to a true counterculture, a culture that stood athwart not only the values of the mainstream culture of the day—the commercialism, the worship of success—but also against the values of the Woodstock counterculture the media was prone to celebrate—the antinomianism, the intense focus on the liberated individual and "doing your own thing." The Woodstock counterculture seemed, superficially, to rebel against mainstream values, but as the ensuing decades have demonstrated, it was just a flipside version of the culture of the Big Me. Both capitalism and Woodstock were about the liberation of self, the expression of self. In commercial society you expressed self by casting off restraint and celebrating yourself. The bourgeois culture of commerce could merge with the bohemian culture of the 1960s precisely because both favored individual liberation, both encouraged people to measure their lives by how they were able to achieve self-gratification.

Day's life, by contrast, was about the surrender of self and ultimately the transcendence of self. Toward the end of her life she would occasionally appear on television talk shows. There is a simplicity and directness to her presence on these shows, and great self-possession. Through *The Long Loneliness* and her other writings she practiced a sort of public confession, which has attracted people ever since. She was open about her interior life, as Frances Perkins and Dwight Eisenhower never were. She was the opposite of reticent. The premise behind her confession was not mere self-revelation, though. It was the idea that in the long run our problems are all the same. As Yishai Schwartz writes, "Confessions are meant to reveal universal truths through specific examples. Through introspection and engagement with the priest, the penitent uses her experiences to transcend her own life. Confession is thus a private moral act with a public moral purpose. For in reflecting on private decisions, we better understand the problems and struggles of humanity—itself composed of billions of individuals struggling with their own decisions." Day's confessions were theological, too. Her attempts to understand herself and humanity were really efforts to understand God.

She certainly never achieved complete spiritual tranquillity and self-satisfaction. On the day she died, there was a card inserted into the final page of her journal, inscribed with a prayer of penance from Saint Ephraim the Syrian that begins, "O Lord and master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power and idle talk. But give to thy servant rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love."

But over the course of her life, she built a steady inner structure. Her work for others yielded a certain steadiness in herself, which was so absent in the early years. And at the end there was gratitude. For her tombstone inscription she simply chose the words DEO GRATIAS. Toward the close of her life she met with Robert Coles, a Harvard child psychiatrist, who had become a friend and confidant. "It will soon be over," she told him. And then she described a moment when she tried to make a literary summation of her life. She had been writing all those years and it would have been natural to write a memoir. She sat down one day to compose something like that. She told Coles what happened:

> I try to think back; I try to remember this life that the Lord gave me; the other day I wrote down the words "a life remembered," and I was going to try to make a summary for

> myself, write what mattered most—but I couldn't do it. I just sat there and thought of our Lord, and His visit to us all those centuries ago, and I said to myself that my great luck was to have had Him on my mind for so long in my life!

Coles wrote, "I heard the catch in her voice as she spoke, and soon her eyes were a little moist, but she quickly started talking of her great love for Tolstoy, as if, thereby, she had changed the subject."[50] That moment represents a calm apotheosis, a moment when after all the work and all the sacrifice and all the efforts to write and change the world, the storm finally abates and a great calm comes over. Adam I lies down before Adam II. The loneliness ends. At the culmination of that lifetime of self-criticism and struggle there was thankfulness.

CHAPTER 4 STRUGGLE

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Love and Knowledge

PBS Newshour

JIM LEHRER: The second in our conversations with this year's winners of the Pulitzer Prize. It's with Margaret Edson, who won the drama award for her play "W;t," which is about a poetry professor's fight against cancer. This is her first play. And in the interest of full disclosure, I have known Margaret for many years, since she was a junior high school classmate of one of my daughters. She joins us tonight from Atlanta, where she works as an elementary school teacher.

JIM LEHRER: Margaret, congratulations.

MARGARET EDSON, Pulitzer Prize, Drama: Thank you, Mr. Lehrer. It's nice to see you again.

JIM LEHRER: It's good to see you. Tell us, how would you describe your play?

MARGARET EDSON: It's a play about love and knowledge. And it's about a person who has built up a lot of skills during her life who finds herself in a new situation where those skills and those great capacities don't serve her very well. So she has to disarm, and then she has to become a student. She has to become someone who learns new things.

JIM LEHRER: And she was a very strong teacher of 17th century poetry, correct, a professor?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: And why that? Why did you choose your main character to be a poetry professor?

MARGARET EDSON: I wanted her to be someone very powerful and I thought she could be a senator or a judge or a doctor even. But then I wanted her to be someone who was skilled in the use of words and skilled in the acquisition of knowledge but very inept and very clumsy in her relations with people on a more simple level. So the play is about simplicity and complications.

JIM LEHRER: And of course wit comes from of course she's an expert on the poetry of John Donne. Now, where did you get that? Where did that come from? Is that an interest you've had that you brought to the play, or something that you adapted for this play?

MARGARET EDSON: No, it's something I learned about as I was writing the play. I

remembered my college classmates saying that they thought John Donne was the most difficult poet that they had to study so I made a point of not taking any classes that involved John Donne in any way.

JIM LEHRER: I see.

MARGARET EDSON: I slithered to the History Department at that point.

JIM LEHRER: Sure.

MARGARET EDSON: And I studied about John Donne for this play.

JIM LEHRER: And you did that because you wanted to make your point that this professor had taken on something very tough and she was very strong so when she got — she gets into this situation, obviously, where she has ovarian cancer. Now, where did that come from — based on an experience of yours, correct?

MARGARET EDSON: Mr. Lehrer, we haven't spoken in about 20 years -

JIM LEHRER: Right. Exactly.

MARGARET EDSON: So I want to fill you in.

JIM LEHRER: All right. Tell me about your life and how it relates to this play.

MARGARET EDSON: I'm keeping up with you better than you're keeping up with me.

JIM LEHRER: Okay. All right.

MARGARET EDSON: I worked on the cancer and AIDS inpatient unit of a research hospital. And so that's where the medical part comes from.

JIM LEHRER: And what did do you there?

MARGARET EDSON: I was the unit clerk, which is a very low-level job in a hospital. But for anyone who spent time in the hospital, you know that that's the center of the action. My job was like a stage manager. It was the most like Radar on "Mash" -

JIM LEHRER: I see.

MARGARET EDSON: — to keep everything going and to keep things moving smoothly on the unit. But since it was such a low level job, I was able to really see a lot of things first hand. I was sort of unnoticed because I was so insignificant. And so I was able to witness a lot, both the actions of the care givers and reactions of the patients.

JIM LEHRER: Now, when did you start working on this play, Margaret?

MARGARET EDSON: In the summer of 1991.

JIM LEHRER: Why? How did it happen?

MARGARET EDSON: I really wanted to write this play. It sounds strange, I know, but I just felt like doing it.

JIM LEHRER: I remember from high school that you were always interested in drama. Did you study it in college?

MARGARET EDSON: No. I didn't, and the director of the play, who's also a classmate of ours, Derek Jones -

JIM LEHRER: Right. Derek Jones.

MARGARET EDSON: — continued in drama. But I didn't.

JIM LEHRER: Yes. Okay. You first wrote it in '91. Now, when did you first hear people actually speak your words? When was that and how did that happen?

MARGARET EDSON: The first time I heard people speak my words was around my mother's dining room table. I organized a reading of the play.

JIM LEHRER: It was in Washington?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes. So Derek was Vivian Bearing; he played Vivian Bearing for the first time – at that very first reading.

JIM LEHRER: And Dr. Bearing is the lead character?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: Okay.

MARGARET EDSON: And my mom played the older professor and my brother played the young doctor and his wife played the young nurse. And another friend of ours from high school, Calvin, you remember him.

JIM LEHRER: I remember Calvin.

MARGARET EDSON: Played the role of the doctor.

JIM LEHRER: Okay.

MARGARET EDSON: That was the first time I heard it. Then I sent it to every theater in the country and they all rejected it, except one theater, and that was South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California. And they did the world premiere in '95 and then it was performed at Longworth Theater in '97, and now -

JIM LEHRER: That's up in Connecticut, right?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: Now it's off Broadway in New York.

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: All right. For those who don't understand about play writing, the play that you first read around your mother's table, how similar is that to the one that people can go see now off Broadway in New York? What changed?

MARGARET EDSON: That play cost 50 cents more to mail than the final play. I had to cut it a lot. And that was the most difficult part but that was mainly my work over the next couple of years was just to agree to cut syllable by syllable until it got down to about 90 minutes. At the very first reading it was two and a half hours.

JIM LEHRER: Wow! Now, it's 90 minutes?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: And it's produced without an intermission, correct?

MARGARET EDSON: That's right, because we feel if there were an intermission, people would leave and we want them to stay till the end.

JIM LEHRER: Why did you think they would leave?

MARGARET EDSON: Well, in the middle it's very hard to take. It's — it has a lot of talk about language and punctuation and complicated words, and then the medical parts are very graphic also, very realistically presented.

JIM LEHRER: I have not seen it but I read it today. I would agree with you. Margaret, you're teaching school there in Atlanta. What grade do you teach and where do you teach?

MARGARET EDSON: I'm teaching kindergarten this year at Centennial Place Elementary School.

JIM LEHRER: Why are you teaching?

MARGARET EDSON: I love teaching. I love teaching. This is my seventh year at teaching. I taught first grade last year and then English as a second language for five years before that. And I like everything about teaching. So, if my students are watching, turn off the TV and go read a book.

JIM LEHRER: Did you tell them you're going to be on TV tonight?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes. I said, I'm going to be on the news part of the same channel that has "Sesame Street".

JIM LEHRER: Okay. Now, what are you going to do now? You've won the Pulitzer Prize. Are you working on another play? Are you going to write another play?

MARGARET EDSON: No. No. I wanted to write this play. And this is the play that I wanted

to write and I'm committed to teaching now. This is what I'm doing. And if there's something else I want to say in ten years, then I'll think about it, but I'm not interested in leaving teaching for anything.

JIM LEHRER: And has this — you know how few people win the Pulitzer Prize, it's a really big deal Margaret, if you didn't know that, let me tell.

MARGARET EDSON: I appreciate that insight. I count on you for this.

JIM LEHRER: Okay. This is not going to change your life at all?

MARGARET EDSON: Once the day starts in the classroom, the affairs of the outside world really do not come into it at all. The day in the class has its own momentum. And New Yorkers find this very hard to believe, but the intricacies of New York theater are not part of what we're doing down in kindergarten.

JIM LEHRER: Describe a day. Tell me about a day. What did you do today, for instance, in your kindergarten class?

MARGARET EDSON: Well, today we had a great time counting by twos to the tune of "I Feel Good," a James Brown song. Then I've been receiving several bouquets of flowers, and we're studying about insects; we're doing a big project on insects called Six Legs over Georgia.

JIM LEHRER: Six Legs over Georgia.

MARGARET EDSON: There are bouquets of flowers all around the room. So, I took that opportunity to teach about the bee dance and how bees communicate with each other about the source of different types of nectar by flying around and then doing the dance to communicate to the other bees about where the good nectar is. So we had a very experiential lesson thanks to all the flowers that people have been sending.

JIM LEHRER: Do your student know you won the Pulitzer Prize?

MARGARET EDSON: Yes.

JIM LEHRER: Do they care?

MARGARET EDSON: Well, we talk a lot about manners and feelings and courtesy and thoughtful gestures. So, they all came up to me and said congratulations. And I said thank you. They said you're welcome.

JIM LEHRER: Okay. Well, Margaret, let me say congratulations to you again. And as somebody who has known you for a long time, I think I speak for everybody who has known you for a long time, nobody is surprised you'd do something like this. We might not have predicted this prize for this particular play, but nobody is surprised. And, congratulations to you, my friend.

MARGARET EDSON: Well, thank you very much and give my regards to your daughter.

JIM LEHRER: I'll do it.

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Changing Gears but Retaining Dramatic Effect

Charles McGrath

Margaret Edson is the Harper Lee of playwrights. She has had just one play produced—"Wit," which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1999 and has been revived on Broadway in a Manhattan Theater Club production starring Cynthia Nixon—and having said what she had to say, she doesn't feel any need to try playwriting again. She occupies herself these days with projects like learning the piano and setting the multiplication table to opera choruses. She used to read Dante in Italian, a canto or so every day, and once made a scale model of Paradise with the Sun-Maid raisin lady holding a basket of souls.

But Ms. Edson hasn't entirely abandoned the theater. Her current stage—where she is the dramatist, cast, stage manager, lighting director, prop master, usher and supply clerk—is a second-floor classroom at the Inman Middle School in the Virginia Highland neighborhood here, where she teaches sixth-grade social studies.

Except for the eyes in the back of her head, which miss nothing—not even secret fiddling with a broken zipper—Ms. Edson is the kind of teacher who makes you wish you could go back and repeat middle school. In a commencement address she gave at Smith College in 2008 she called teaching a "physical, breath-based event, eye to eye," which is another way of saying it's a performance. She is a very tall, slender, loose-limbed woman with a wide expressive mouth, and she works the classroom like a tummler. She mugs, does voices, makes big arm gestures and frequently pauses for dramatic effect.

Recently the class was studying the history of Canada, and over the course of 80 minutes she spoke with both French and British accents, stood at attention like a grenadier and demonstrated that when Queen Elizabeth is seated at public occasions she keeps both ankles absolutely together. Explaining the 1867 act that made Canada a self-governing entity within the British Empire, she encouraged the students to turn to a partner across the aisle and engage in the following dialogue, spoken in the snootiest possible tones:

"Here's a dollop of independence."

"Thank you so much"

"Not at all."

A little later she showed a video clip of Prince William's recent visit to Canada and deplored his French pronunciation. "That was horrible," she said. "But we should give him credit for trying," she added, and led the class in a chorus of finger snaps.

Ms. Edson is 50 and lives with her partner, Linda Merrill, an art historian at Emory. They have two sons, 9 and 11. Sitting after class recently at one of the students' desks, whose metal legs she has outfitted with feet made from sliced-open tennis balls to keep them from skidding around, Ms. Edson said that until two years ago she taught kindergarten. Then Ms. Merrill turned to her one evening and said, "We're not going to have 14 more years of the letter 'M' in our dinner table conversations." Middle school social studies meant a lot of homework and catching up, she went on, explaining, "I don't know when I was

ever so avid for learning, but it was for an ignoble motive: I didn't want to embarrass myself." She chose social studies, she said, because it fits so neatly with the students' experience. "Who's on top and who's on the bottom, who gets what and who decides—the 12-year-old mind thinks of nothing else."

It can't be a coincidence that "Wit" is about a teacher—Vivian Bearing, a renowned expert in 17th-century poetry, the work of John Donne especially, who is in a hospital dying of ovarian cancer—and that one of its most memorable scenes is a classroom lecture. Ms. Edson believes that she and Professor Bearing have a lot in common. "We both argue with ourselves all the time," she said. "The only difference is that I've figured myself out. I'm on to myself."

Yet Ms. Edson herself had never taught before writing "Wit." After graduating from Smith in 1983 with a degree in history, and doing various menial jobs, she began writing the play in 1991 while working in a bike shop in Washington, where she grew up.

Much of "Wit" was based on her experience as a unit clerk on a cancer floor in a Washington research hospital. "It was the lowest job in the entire hospital," she recalled. "It was like being a stage manager in a play, keeping track of the supply cabinet, the patients' schedules." She paused and added: "That was a very weighty time. I don't mean heavy. It was just very meaningful to me. I loved that job. I felt so useful."

The Donne expertise in "Wit" is second hand, the product of hours in the library. Ms. Edson said she had not read much Donne herself but recalled a college dorm mate saying he was the hardest poet on the syllabus, and only the hardest seemed right for Professor Bearing (whose middle name, if she had one, would be Over). Ms. Edson did so much research that she got carried away and the original version of "Wit" was an hour longer than it is now. "It was so long that its sophistications were less visible," she said, laughing, and added that she initially resisted suggested cuts. "I found so much stuff that was so interesting that I couldn't imagine living without it, or the audience either."

Ms. Edson had never written a play before, and wrote "Wit" with no particular expectation that it would ever get staged. "That was why I felt free to write my play, not a play like the plays we already had," she said. And when for years "Wit" didn't get produced—rejected almost everywhere before the South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, Calif., took it on in 1995—Ms. Edson studied English literature in graduate school and, while volunteering as a tutor, fell in love with the idea of teaching not college students but young children.

"Wit" was revived at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven in 1997, and the following year moved to New York, first to the tiny MCC Theater and then to the Union Square Theater, where it won a slew of awards, including the Pulitzer. In 2001 Mike Nichols adapted it into an Emmy-winning HBO movie.

Lynne Meadow, the artistic director of the Manhattan Theater Club and the director of the current production, was one of those who passed on "Wit" in the '90s. "It was for personal reasons," she said the other day, explaining that at the time she had just undergone cancer treatment herself. A year ago her colleagues asked her to reread it, and this time around, she said, "I felt the play chose me."

She began talking with Ms. Edson on the phone and then met her for the first time in December, when Ms. Edson came to New York to see a rehearsal. "Maggie is one of the most extraordinary people I've ever met," she said. "She's enormously intelligent and articulate, but intelligence alone doesn't write a play like this, which is so emotionally accessible as well as intellectually fulfilling." She added that she wished Ms. Edson would write another, and quoting a line from "Wit," spoken by a young doctor who is a bit of a know-it-all, she said, " ' I have a few ideas.' There are some thoughts I'd like to share with her. But it will only happen when she's ready."

Explaining why she had no urge to repeat her success, Ms. Edson said, "If it had happened right away—if I'd written the play in '91 and then won the Pulitzer in '92—that might have created a different trajectory."

"There was just something I wanted to say," she continued, "and the play seemed like the best way to say it. But the contribution I want to make now I want to make in the classroom. The difference between teaching and play-writing is not incomprehensible to me, they're not so different. They both create a public event that leads to understanding. They both —— "

She laughed and put on a professorial voice. "I could go on, but I won't."

Teaching—for Ms. Edson at least—is a full-time occupation. She needs the summers, she said, to do nothing, because that makes you a more interesting person in the classroom, and writing on the side is too distracting. "The presence of fictional characters in your head, especially ones who talk, is extremely preoccupying," she said. "And the nonfictional characters in my life are abundant."

Writing itself, on the other hand, is something to which she is deeply committed, and she usually ends each class quietly, with a writing assignment. "Sitting by yourself, forcing the swirl of thoughts into a linear, systematic journey forward—it makes you smarter," she said. "It's like a pastry bag, literacy is. It presses you into one clear line."

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