

Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought

Author(s): CLIFFORD GEERTZ

Source: *The American Scholar*, Spring 1980, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 165-179

Published by: The Phi Beta Kappa Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41210607>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The Phi Beta Kappa Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The American Scholar*

JSTOR

Blurred=> not clear or distinct; hazy.
Genre=>a style or category of art, music, or literature.

Blurred Genres

The Refiguration of Social Thought

CLIFFORD GEERTZ

I

CERTAIN TRUTHS ABOUT THE SOCIAL SCIENCES today seem self-evident. One is that in recent years there has been an enormous amount of genre mixing in social science, as in intellectual life generally, and such blurring of kinds is continuing apace. Another is that many social scientists have turned away from a laws-and-instances ideal of explanation toward a cases-and-interpretations one, looking less for the sort of thing that connects planets and pendulums and more for the sort that connects chrysanthemums and swords. Yet another truth is that analogies drawn from the humanities are coming to play the kind of role in sociological understanding that analogies drawn from the crafts and technology have long played in physical understanding. I not only think these things are true, I think they are true together; and the culture shift that makes them so is the subject of this essay: the refiguration of social thought.

Analogy=>a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification

This genre blurring is more than just a matter of Harry Houdini or Richard Nixon turning up as characters in novels or of midwestern murder sprees described as though a gothic romancer had imagined them. It is philosophical inquiries looking like literary criticism (think of Stanley Cavell on Beckett or Thoreau, Sartre on Flaubert), scientific discussions looking like belles lettres morceaux (Lewis Thomas, Loren Eiseley), baroque fantasies presented as deadpan empirical observations (Borges, Barthelme), histories that consist of equations and tables or law court testimony (Fogel and Engerman, Le Roi Ladurie), documentaries that read like true confessions (Mailer), parables posing as ethnographies (Castenada), theoretical treatises set out as travelogues (Lévi-Strauss), ideological arguments cast as historiographical inquiries (Edward Said), epistemological studies constructed like political tracts (Paul Feyerabend),

Deadpan=>impassive or expressionless

Testimony=>evidence or proof of something.

Ethnography => a branch of anthropology and the systematic study of individual cultures.

● CLIFFORD GEERTZ is professor of social science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. His book *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* will be published this fall.

chrysanthemums=>a plant of the daisy family with brightly coloured ornamental flowers, existing in many cultivated varieties.

Belle=>a beautiful girl or woman, especially the most beautiful at a particular event.

Parables=>a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.

Epistemological=> relating to the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion:

Polemics=> the practice of engaging in controversial debate or dispute

methodological polemics got up as personal memoirs (James Watson). Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, that impossible object made of poetry and fiction, footnotes and images from the clinic, seems very much of the time; one waits only for quantum theory in verse or biography in algebra.

Of course, to a certain extent this sort of thing has always gone on—Lucretius, Mandeville, and Erasmus Darwin all made their theories rhyme. But the present jumbling of varieties of discourse has grown to the point where it is becoming difficult either to label authors (What is Foucault—historian, philosopher, political theorist? What Thomas Kuhn—historian, philosopher, sociologist of knowledge?) or to classify works (What is George Steiner's *After Babel*—linguistics, criticism, culture history? What William Gass's *On Being Blue*—treatise, causerie, apologetic?). And thus it is more than a matter of odd sports and occasional curiosities, or of the admitted fact that the innovative is, by definition, hard to categorize. It is a phenomenon general enough and distinctive enough to suggest that what we are seeing is not just another redrawing of the cultural map—the moving of a few disputed borders, the marking of some more picturesque mountain lakes—but an alteration of the principles of mapping. Something is happening to the way we think about the way we think.

We need not accept hermetic views of *écriture* as so many signs signing signs, or give ourselves so wholly to the pleasure of the text that its meaning disappears into our responses, to see that there has come into our view of what we read and what we write a distinctly democratical temper. The properties connecting texts with one another, that put them, ontologically anyway, on the same level, are coming to seem as important in characterizing them as those dividing them; and rather than face an array of natural kinds, fixed types divided by sharp qualitative differences, we more and more see ourselves surrounded by a vast, almost continuous field of variously intended and diversely constructed works we can order only practically, relationally, and as our purposes prompt us. It is not that we no longer have conventions of interpretation; we have more than ever, built—often enough jerry-built—to accommodate a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentered, and ineradicably untidy.

So far as the social sciences are concerned, all this means that their oft-lamented lack of character no longer sets them apart. It is even more difficult than it always has been to regard them as underdeveloped natural sciences, awaiting only time and aid from more advanced quarters to harden them, or as ignorant and pretentious usurpers of the mission of the humanities, promising certainties where none can be, or as comprising a clearly distinctive enterprise, a third culture between Snow's canonical two. But that is all to the good: freed from having to become

Discourse=> written or spoken communication or debate

Foucault=>A French person.

Treatise=>a written work dealing formally and systematically with a subject; Essay.

Causerie => a literary style of short informal essays mostly unknown in the English-speaking world.

Picturesque=>(of a place or building) visually attractive, especially in a quaint or charming way

Hermetic=>insulated or protected from outside influences

Ecriture=> Writing

Ontology=> In metaphysics, ontology is the philosophical study of being, as well as related concepts such as existence, becoming, and reality. Ontology addresses questions like how entities are grouped into categories and which of these entities exist on the most fundamental level.

Ineradicable=> unable to be destroyed or removed

Lamented=>a conventional way of describing someone who has died. "the late and much lamented Leonard Bernstein"

Pretentious=> attempting to impress by affecting greater importance or merit than is actually possessed:

Usurper=>a person who takes a position of power or importance illegally or by force.

Enterprise=>a business or company

Canonical=> If something's canonical, it follows a principle or rule,

taxonomically upstanding, because nobody else is, individuals thinking of themselves as social (or behavioral or human or cultural) scientists have become free to shape their work in terms of its necessities rather than received ideas as to what they ought or ought not to be doing. What Clyde Kluckhohn once said about anthropology—that it's an intellectual **poaching** license—not only seems more true now than when he said it, but true of a lot more than anthropology. Born **omniform**, the social sciences prosper as the condition I have been describing becomes general.

It has thus **dawned** on social scientists that they did not need to be mimic physicists or closet humanists or to invent some new **realm** of being to serve as the object of their investigations. Instead they could proceed with their **vocation**, trying to discover order in collective life, and decide how what they were doing was connected to related enterprises when they managed to get some of it done; and many of them have taken an essentially **hermeneutic**—or, if that word frightens, conjuring up images of **biblical zealots**, literary **humbugs**, and **Teutonic** professors, an “interpretive”—approach to their task. Given the new genre dispersion, many have taken other approaches: structuralism, neo-positivism, **neo-Marxism**, micro-micro descriptivism, macro-macro system building, and that curious combination of common sense and common nonsense, sociobiology. But the move toward conceiving of social life as organized in terms of symbols (signs, representations, *signifiants*, *Darstellungen* . . . the terminology varies), whose meaning (sense, import, *signification*, *Bedeutung* . . .) we must grasp if we are to understand that organization and formulate its principles, has grown by now to **formidable** proportions. The woods are full of eager interpreters.

Interpretive explanation—and it is a form of explanation, not just exalted **glossography**—trains its attention on what institutions, actions, images, utterances, events, customs, all the usual objects of social-scientific interest, mean to those whose institutions, actions, customs, and so on they are. As a result, it issues not in laws like Boyle's, or forces like Volta's, or mechanisms like Darwin's, but in constructions like Burckhardt's, Weber's, or Freud's: systematic unpackings of the conceptual world in which **condottiere**, Calvinists, or **paranoids** live.

The manner of these constructions itself varies: Burckhardt portrays, Weber models, Freud diagnoses. But they all represent attempts to formulate how this people or that, this period or that, this person or that, makes sense to itself and, understanding that, what we understand about social order, historical change, or **psychic** functioning in general. Inquiry is directed toward cases or sets of cases, and toward the particular features that mark them off; but its aims are as far-reaching as those of mechanics or physiology: to distinguish the materials of human experience.

With such aims and such a manner of pursuing them come as well

Omniform=> of all forms or appearances

Dawn=> come into existence; Begin.

Realm=> a field or domain of activity or interest

Hermeneutic=>concerning interpretation, especially of the Bible or literary texts.

Formidable=>inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense, or capable:
"a formidable opponent"

Psychic=> relating to or denoting faculties or phenomena that are apparently inexplicable by natural laws, especially involving telepathy or clairvoyance:

Condottiere=> a leader or member of a troop of mercenaries, especially in Italy.

Calvinist=> an adherent of the Protestant theological system of John Calvin and his successors

Adherent=>someone who supports a particular party, person, or set of ideas

Paranoid=> feeling extremely nervous and worried because you believe that other people do not like you or are trying to harm you:

Employee poaching => a legal practice that involves an employer contacting an employee at a competing company with the intention of convincing the employee to apply for a job at their organization.

Vocation=>a strong feeling of suitability for a particular career or occupation.

Neo-marxism=> 20th-century approaches to amend or extend Marxism and Marxist theory, typically by incorporating elements from other intellectual traditions such as critical theory, psychoanalysis, or existentialism.

Glossography=> The writing or compilation of glosses. The study of ancient words or languages.

Zealot=>a person who is fanatical (Excessively single-minded) and uncompromising in pursuit of their religious, political, or other ideals.

Humbug=>deceptive or false talk or behavior:
"his comments are sheer humbug"

Tenet=>a principle or belief, especially one of the main principles of a religion or philosophy:

Rhetoric=> the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques; Oratory.

Intramural=> situated or done within the walls of a building:

Cybernetics=>the science of communications and automatic control systems in both machines and living things.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

some novelties in analytical rhetoric, the tropes and imageries of explanation. As theory, scientific or otherwise, moves mainly by analogy, a “seeing-as” comprehension of the less intelligible by the more (the earth is a magnet, the heart is a pump, light is a wave, the brain is a computer, and space is a balloon), when its course shifts, the conceits in which it expresses itself shift with it. In the earlier stages of the natural sciences, before the analogies became so heavily intramural—and in those (cybernetics, neurology) in which they still have not—it has been the world of the crafts and, later, of industry that has for the most part provided the well-understood realities (well-understood because, *certum quod factum*, as Vico said, man had made them) with which the ill-understood ones (ill-understood because he had not) could be brought into the circle of the known. Science owes more to the steam engine than the steam engine owes to science; without the dyer’s art there would be no chemistry; metallurgy is mining theorized. In the social sciences, or at least in those that have abandoned a reductionist conception of what they are about, the analogies are coming more and more from the contrivances of cultural performance than from those of physical manipulation—from theater, painting, grammar, literature, law, play. What the lever did for physics, the chess move promises to do for sociology.

Promises are not always kept, of course, and when they are, they often turn out to have been threats; but the casting of social theory in terms more familiar to gamesters and aestheticians than to plumbers and engineers is clearly well under way. The recourse to the humanities for explanatory analogies in the social sciences is at once evidence of the destabilization of genres and of the rise of “the interpretive turn,” and their most visible outcome is a revised style of discourse in social studies. The instruments of reasoning are changing and society is less and less represented as an elaborate machine or a quasi-organism than as a serious game, a sidewalk drama, or a behavioral text.

Trope => a word used in a nonliteral sense to create a powerful image.

Conceit=>an ingenious or fanciful comparison or metaphor:“the idea of the wind’s singing is a prime romantic conceit”

Crafts=>a boat or ship.

Dyer=> a person whose trade is the dyeing of cloth or other material.

Contrivance=>the use of skill to create or bring about something, especially with a consequent effect of artificiality:

II

Fiddling=> annoyingly trivial or petty.
(Antonym: Important)

Obscurity=> the state of being unknown, inconspicuous, or unimportant:

All this fiddling around with the proprieties of composition, inquiry, and explanation represents, of course, a radical alteration in the sociological imagination, propelling it in directions both difficult and unfamiliar. And like all such changes in fashions of the mind, it is about as likely to lead to obscurity and illusion as it is to precision and truth. If the result is not to be elaborate chatter or the higher nonsense, a critical consciousness will have to be developed; and as so much more of the imagery, method, theory, and style is to be drawn from the humanities than previously, it will mostly have to come from humanists and their apologists rather than from natural scientists and theirs. That humanists, after

Propelling=> drive or push something forwards

Chatter=> talk informally about unimportant matters; Chat; Gossip.

*Certum Quod Factum: How Formal Models Contribute to the Theoretical and Empirical Robustness of Organization Theory.(I.T=> A Latin phrase)!!!!

years of regarding social scientists as technologists or interlopers, are ill equipped to do this is something of an understatement.

Social scientists, having just freed themselves, and then only partially, from dreams of social physics—covering laws, **unified** science, operationalism, and all that—are hardly any better equipped. For them, the general **muddling** of vocational identities could not have come at a better time. If they are going to develop systems of analysis in which such **conceptions as following a rule, constructing a representation, expressing an attitude, or forming an intention are going to play central roles—rather than such conceptions as isolating a cause, determining a variable, measuring a force, or defining a function—they are going to need all the help they can get from people who are more at home among such notions than they are. It is not interdisciplinary brotherhood that is needed, nor even less **highbrow eclecticism**. It is recognition on all sides that the lines grouping scholars together into intellectual communities, or (what is the same thing) sorting them out into different ones, are these days running at some highly eccentric angles.**

The point at which the reflections of humanists on the practices of social scientists seems most urgent is with respect to the deployment in social analysis of models drawn from humanist domains—that “**wary reasoning from analogy**,” as Locke called it, that “leads us often into the discovery of truths and useful productions, which would otherwise lie **concealed**.” (Locke was talking about rubbing two sticks together to produce fire and the atomic-friction theory of heat, though business partnership and the social contract would have served him as well.) Keeping the reasoning wary, thus useful, thus true, is, as we say, the name of the game.

The game analogy is both increasingly popular in **contemporary** social theory and increasingly in need of critical examination. The **impetus** for seeing one or another sort of social behavior as one or another sort of game has come from a number of sources (not excluding, perhaps, the prominence of **spectator sports** in mass society). But the most important are Wittgenstein’s conception of forms of life as language games, Huizinga’s ludic view of culture, and the new strategies of von Neumann’s and Morgenstern’s **Theory of Games and Economic Behavior**. From Wittgenstein has come the notion of intentional action as “following a rule”; from Huizinga, of play as the **paradigm** form of collective life; from von Neumann and Morgenstern, of **social behavior as a reciprocal maneuvering toward distributive payoffs**. Taken together they conduce to a nervous and nervous-making style of interpretation in the social sciences that mixes a strong sense of the formal orderliness of things with an equally strong sense of the **radical** arbitrariness of that order: chessboard inevitability that could as well have worked out otherwise.

Unified=> made uniform or whole; united; merged.

Eclecticism=> the practice of deriving ideas, style, or taste from a broad and diverse range of sources

Wary=> feeling or showing caution about possible dangers or problems; Cautious; Careful.

Impetus=> something that makes a process or activity happen or happen more quickly; motivation; Stimulus. "the ending of the Cold War gave new impetus to idealism"

Radical arbitrariness=> Extreme arbitrariness.

Ingenious => Creative, insightful.

Dramaturgy (noun) => the theory and practice of dramatic composition.

Respecter => a person who has a high regard for Someone or something.

Banter(verb)=> exchange remarks in a good-humoured teasing way.

Mazy=> confused or dizzy..

Dissemble=> conceal or disguise one's true feelings or beliefs

Deliberation => discussion or thinking about something in detail

Poke=> to push somebody/something with a finger, stick or other long, thin object.

Outright=>in an open and direct way.

Impostures (noun)=> an instance of pretending to be someone else in order to deceive others.

Bleakly=>in a way that suggests a lack of hope.

Grim=> (used about a person) very serious.

The writings of Erving Goffman—perhaps the most celebrated American sociologist right now, and certainly the most ingenious—rest, for example, almost entirely on the game analogy. (Goffman also employs the language of the stage quite extensively, but as his view of the theater is that it is an oddly mannered kind of interaction game—Ping-Pong in masks—his work is not, at base, really **dramaturgical**.) Goffman applies game imagery to just about everything he can lay his hands on, which, as he is no **respector** of property rights, is a very great deal. The **to-and-fro** of lies, meta-lies, unbelievable truths, threats, tortures, **bribes**, and **black-mail** that comprises the world of **espionage** is construed as an “expression game”; a carnival of deceptions rather like life in general, because, in a phrase that could have come from Conrad or Le Carré, “agents [are] a little like us all and all of us [are] a little like agents.” **Etiquette**, diplomacy, crime, finance, advertising, law, seduction, and the everyday “realm of **bantering decorum**” are seen as “information games”—**mazy** structures of players, teams, moves, positions, signals, information states, **gambles**, and outcomes, in which only the “game-worthy”—those willing and able “to **dissemble** about anything”—prosper. **Gamble**=> play games of chance for money; bet

What goes on in a **psychiatric** hospital, or any hospital or prison or even a boarding school in Goffman's work is a “ritual game of having a self,” where the staff holds most of the face cards and all of the **trumps**. A tête-à-tête, a jury **deliberation**, “a task jointly pursued by persons physically close to one another,” a couple dancing, lovemaking, or boxing—indeed all face-to-face encounters—are games in which, “as every psychotic and comic ought to know, any accurately improper move can **poke** through the thin sleeve of immediate reality.” Social conflict, **deviance**, **entrepreneurship**, sex roles, religious rites, status ranking, and the simple need for human acceptance get the same treatment. Life is just a bowl of strategies.

Or, perhaps better, as Damon Runyon once remarked, it is three-to-two against. For the image of society that emerges from Goffman's work, and from that of the swarm of scholars who in one way or another follow or depend on him, is of an unbroken stream of **gambits**,¹ **loys**,² **artifices**,³ **bluffs**,⁴ disguises, conspiracies, and **outright impostures** as individuals and coalitions of individuals struggle—sometimes cleverly, more often comically—to play **enigmatical** games whose structure is clear but whose point is not. Goffman's is a radically unromantic vision of things, **acrid** and **bleakly** knowing, and one which sits rather poorly with traditional humanistic **pieties**.⁵ But it is no less powerful for that. Nor, with its uncomplaining play-it-as-it-lays ethic, is it all that **inhumane**.

However that may be, not all gamelike conceptions of social life are quite so **grim**, and some are positively **frollicsome**. What connects them

To and fro (adverb) => in a constant movement backwards and forwards or from side to side.

Etiquette => the customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group; Protocol; Decorum; Manners.

Psychiatric=> involving mental illness.

Trumps => is the suit which is chosen to have the highest value in one particular game.

Deviance=> the quality of not being usual

Entrepreneurship=> the ability and readiness to develop, organize and run a business enterprise, along with any of its uncertainties in order to make a profit.

Enigmatical=complicate

Acrid (adjective)=> having a strong and bitter smell or taste that is unpleasant.

Frollicsome=> lively and playful.

*Bribes=> dishonestly persuade (someone) to act in one's favour by a gift of money or other inducement.

**Espionage => the practice of spying or of using spies, typically by governments to obtain political and military information

Deceive=> to try to make somebody believe something that is not true.

1. Gambit=> an act or remark that is calculated to gain an advantage, especially at the outset of a situation.

2.Ploy=>a clever plan that helps you get what you want.

3.Artifice=>the use of clever methods to trick somebody

4. Bluff => to try to make people believe that something is true when it is not, usually by appearing very confident.

5. Piety(noun)=> the quality of being religious or reverent (showing respect). "acts of piety and charity"

all is the view that human beings are less driven by forces than **sub-****missive** to rules, that the rules are such as to suggest strategies, the strategies are such as to inspire actions, and the actions are such as to be self-rewarding—*pour le sport*. As literal games—baseball or poker or Parcheesi—create little universes of meaning, in which some things can be done and some cannot (you can't castle in **dominoes**), so too do the analogical ones of worship, government, or sexual **courtship** (you can't **mutiny** in a bank). Seeing society as a collection of games means seeing it as a grand plurality of accepted conventions and appropriate procedures—tight, airless worlds of move and countermove, life *en règle*, “I wonder,” Prince Metternich is supposed to have said when an aide whispered into his ear at a royal ball that the czar of all the Russians was dead, “I wonder what his motive could have been.”

The game analogy is not a view of things that is likely to commend itself to humanists, who like to think of people not as obeying the rules and **angling** for advantage but as acting freely and realizing their finer capacities. But that it seems to explain a great deal about a great many aspects of modern life, and in many ways to catch its tone, is hardly deniable. (“If you can't stand the Machiavellianism,” as a recent *New Yorker* cartoon said, “get out of the **cabal**.”) Thus if it is to be countered it cannot be by **mere disdain**, refusing to look through the telescope, or by passionate restatements of hallowed truths, quoting **scripture**¹ against the sun. It is necessary to get down to the details of the matter, to examine the studies and to critique the interpretations—whether Goffman's of crime as character **gambling**, Harold Garfinkel's of sex change as identity play, Gregory Bateson's of **schizophrenia**² as rule confusion, or my own of the complicated goings-on in a mideastern bazaar as an information contest. As social theory turns from **propulsive metaphors** (the language of pistons) toward **ludic** ones (the language of pastimes), the humanities are connected to its arguments not in the fashion of **skeptical bystanders** but, as the source of its imagery, chargeable accomplices.

III

Skeptical=>doubting
that something is true
or useful.

The drama analogy for social life has of course been around in a casual sort of way—all the world's a stage and we but poor players who **strut** and so on—for a very long time. And terms from the stage, most notably “role,” have been staples of sociological discourse since at least the 1930s. What is relatively new—new, not unprecedented—are two things. First, the full weight of the analogy is coming to be applied extensively and systematically, rather than being deployed **piecemeal** fashion—a few **allusions** here, a few tropes there. And second, it is coming to be applied less in the **depreciatory** “mere show,” masks and **mummery**

"Pour le Sport" => is a French expression meaning "merely for the pleasure of performing it (like self-rewarding), and that no practical object is involved".

Mutiny=> an act of a group of people, especially sailors or soldiers, refusing to obey the person who is in command.

Mere=>used for emphasizing how small or unimportant something is.

Disdain(noun.)=> lack of respect accompanied by a feeling of intense dislike.

Metaphors=>figurative language compare simile. E.g., "Life is a highway."

Ludic=>(adjective) showing spontaneous and undirected playfulness.

Piecemeal(adjective) =>done or happening a little at a time.

Depreciatory => tending to decrease or cause a decrease in value.

Mummery=> a performance by mummery(an actor in a traditional masked).

1.Scripture=> books of religious importance for particular religions.

2.Schizophrenia=>a type of mental illness in which a person can't tell what's real from what's imagined.

mode that has tended to characterize its general use, and more in a constructional, genuinely dramaturgical one—making, not faking, as the anthropologist Victor Turner has put it.

The two developments are linked, of course. A **constructionalist** view of what theater is—that is, **poiesis**—implies that a dramatistic perspective in the social sciences needs to involve more than pointing out that we all have our entrances and exits, we all play parts, miss **cues**, and love **pretense**. It may or may not be a Barnum and Bailey world and we may or may not be walking shadows, but to take the drama analogy seriously is to **probe** behind such familiar ironies to the expressive devices that make collective life seem anything at all. The trouble with **analogies**—it is also their glory—is that they connect what they compare in both directions. Having **trifled**¹ with theater's idiom, some social scientists find themselves drawn into the rather **tangled**² coils of its aesthetic.

Such a more **thoroughgoing**³ exploitation of the drama analogy in social theory—as an analogy, not an incidental metaphor—has grown out of sources in the humanities not altogether **commensurable**. On the one hand, there has been the so-called ritual theory of drama associated with such diverse figures as Jane Harrison, Francis Fergusson, T. S. Eliot, and Antonin Artaud. On the other, there is the symbolic action—"dramatism," as he calls it—of the American literary theorist and philosopher Kenneth Burke, whose influence is, in the United States anyway, at once enormous and—because almost no one actually uses his **baroque** vocabulary, with its reductions, ratios, and so on—**elusive**. The trouble is, these approaches pull in rather opposite directions: the **ritual theory**⁴ toward the **affinities** of theater and religion—drama as **communion**, the temple as stage; the symbolic action theory toward those of theater and **rhetoric**—drama as **persuasion**, the platform as stage. And this leaves the basis of the analogy—just what in the theatron is like what in the agora—hard to focus. That **liturgy** and ideology are histrionic is obvious enough, as it is that **etiquette** and advertising are. But just what that means is a good deal less so.

Probably the foremost **proponent** of the ritual theory approach in the social sciences right now is Victor Turner. A British formed, American re-formed anthropologist, Turner, in a remarkable series of works trained on the ceremonial life of a Central African tribe, has developed a conception of "**social drama**" as a regenerative process that, rather like Goffman's of "**social gaming**" as strategic interaction, has drawn to it such a large number of able researchers as to produce a distinct and powerful interpretive school.

For Turner, social dramas occur "**on all levels of social organization from state to family.**" They arise out of conflict situations—a village falls into **factions**, a husband beats a wife, a region rises against the state—

Poiesis=> indicating the act of making or producing something specified |

Cue=>a signal for someone to do something.

Probe (verb)=>to search into and explore very thoroughly.

Commensurable=>able to be judged by the same measure or standard.

Baroque=>able to be judged by the same measure or standard.

Rhetoric=>noun; the art of speaking or writing effectively.

Etiquette (noun)=> the rules of polite and correct behavior.

1. Trifled=> treat without seriousness or respect.

2. Tangled=> twisted into an untidy mass.

3. Thoroughgoing=>doing things thoroughly. carried out to the full extent.

4. Ritual theory=> Ritual theories assert that focused interaction, which these theories refer to as ritual, is at the heart of all social dynamics. Rituals generate group emotions that are linked to symbols, forming the basis for beliefs, thinking, morality, and culture.

Factions=> organized group of people within a larger group (generally in politics).

Denouements=>the end of a story, in which everything is explained.

Moorings=>(noun) a place where a boat is tied.

Breach(noun)=>a break in friendly relations between people, groups, etc.

Schema=>structured framework or plan : outline

Upheaval=>a big change which causes a lot of trouble, confusion, and worry.

Vividly=>in a way that is very clear, powerful, and detailed in your mind: I vividly remember my first day at school.

Inherently(adverb)=>according to the basic nature of somebody/something

Persuasion(noun)=>the act of persuading somebody to do something or to believe something.

Incognizant(adjective) =>lacking knowledge or awareness; unaware; unconscious; ignorant.

and proceed to their **denouements** through publicly performed conventionalized behavior. As the conflict **swells** to crisis and the excited fluidity of heightened emotion, where people feel at once more enclosed in a common mood and loosened from their social **moorings**, ritualized forms of authority—**litigation**¹, **feud**², sacrifice, prayer—are **invoked** to contain it and **render**³ it orderly. If they succeed, the **breach** is healed and the status **quo**⁴, or something resembling it, is restored; if they do not, it is accepted as incapable of remedy and things fall apart into various sorts of unhappy endings: migrations, divorces, or murders in the cathedral. With differing degrees of strictness and detail, Turner and his followers have applied this **schema** to tribal passage rites, curing ceremonies, and judicial processes; to Mexican **insurrections**, Icelandic **sagas**⁵, and Thomas Becket's difficulties with Henry II; to **picaresque**⁶ narrative, millenarian movements, Caribbean carnivals, and Indian **peyote**⁷ hunts; and to the political **upheaval** of the sixties. A form for all seasons.

This hospitableness in the face of cases is at once the major strength of the ritual theory version of the drama analogy and its most prominent weakness. It can expose some of the **profoundest** features of social process, but at the expense of making **vividly** disparate matters look **drably**⁸ homogeneous.

Rooted as it is in the repetitive performance dimensions of social action—the **reenactment** and thus the reexperiencing of known form—the ritual theory not only brings out the temporal and collective dimensions of such action and its **inherently** public nature with particular sharpness; it brings out also its power to **transmute** not just opinions, but, as the British critic Charles Morgan has said with respect to drama proper, the people who hold them. "The great impact [of the theater]," Morgan writes, "is neither a **persuasion** of the **intellect** nor a **beguiling**⁹ of the senses. . . . It is the enveloping movement of the whole drama on the soul of man. We surrender and are changed." Or at least we are when the magic works. What Morgan, in another fine phrase, calls "the suspense of form . . . the incompleteness of a known completion," is the source of the power of this "enveloping movement," a power, as the ritual theorists have shown, that is hardly less forceful (and hardly less likely to be seen as otherworldly) when the movement appears in a female initiation rite, a peasant revolution, a national epic, or a star chamber.

Yet these formally similar processes have different content. They say, as we might put it, rather different things, and thus have rather different implications for social life. And though ritual theorists are hardly **incognizant** of that fact, they are, precisely because they are so concerned with the general movement of things, ill-equipped to deal with it. The great dramatic rhythms, the commanding forms of theater, are perceived in social processes of all sorts, shapes, and significances (though ritual

To swell=> is to expand or grow larger.

Invoke(verb)=>to cause something to be used; bring into effect.

Insurrection=> (noun) an act or instance of revolting against civil authority or an established government.

Profoundest(adjective) =>superlative form of profound; penetrating deeply into subjects or ideas.

Re-enactment=>the action of performing a new version of an old event.

Transmute(verb)=>to change or alter in form, appearance, or nature and especially to a higher form.

Intellect(noun)=> the ability to understand and to think in an intelligent way.

1. Litigation=>the process of taking an argument between people or groups to a court of law.

2. Feud=> a long and angry fight or quarrel between two people or two groups.

3. Render(verb)=>to cause somebody/something to be in a certain condition.

4. Status quo=>to defend/restore the status.

5. Saga=>a long, detailed story of connected events.

6. Picaresque=>relating to an episodic style of fiction dealing with the adventures of a rough and dishonest but appealing hero.

PEYOTE => a hallucinogenic drug containing mescaline that is derived from the dried discoid tops of a cactus.

8. Drab=> lacking variety and interest; dull.

9. Beguiling=>interesting or attractive, but perhaps not to be trusted: "That's a beguiling argument, but I'm not convinced by it." Synonyms=alluring, enticing

Misfire=>to fail to have the intended result or effect.

Empiricism=>the idea that all learning comes from only experience and observations.

Catalogue=>noun; a complete enumeration of items arranged systematically with descriptive details.

Sermon=> church ceremony in which a priest gives a talk on a religious or moral subject.

Dialectical(adjective) =>discovering the truth of ideas by discussion and logical argument and by considering ideas that are opposed to each other.

Beholder=>a person who is observing or seeing something.

Burgundian=> an East Germanic tribe.

Mimesis=>the act of representing or imitating reality in art.

theorists in fact do much better with the cyclical, restorative periodicities of comedy than the linear, consuming progressions of tragedy, whose ends tend to be seen as **misfires** rather than fulfillments). Yet the individuating details, the sort of thing that makes *A Winter's Tale* different from *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth* from *Hamlet*, are left to **encyclopedic empiricism**: massive documentation of a single proposition—*plus ça change, plus c'est le même changement*.¹ If dramas are, to adapt a phrase of Susanne Langer's, poems in the mode of action, something is being missed: what exactly, socially, the poems say.

This unpacking of performed meaning is what the symbolic action approaches are designed to accomplish. Here there is no single name to cite, just a growing **catalogue** of particular studies, some dependent on Kenneth Burke, some on Ernst Cassirer, Northrop Frye, Michel Foucault, or Emile Durkheim, concerned to say what some bit of acted saying—a coronation, a **sermon**, a riot, an execution—says. If **ritual theorists**, their eye on experience, tend to be **hedgehogs**, symbolic action theorists, their eye on expression, tend to be foxes.

Given the **dialectical** nature of things, we all need our opponents, and both sorts of approach are essential. What we are most in want of right now is some way of synthesizing them. In my own about-to-be-published analysis of the traditional Indic polity in Bali as a **"theater state"**²—cited here not because it is exemplary, but because it is mine—I have tried to address this problem. In this analysis I am concerned, on the one hand (the Burkean one), to show how everything from **kin group** organization, trade, customary law, and water control, to mythology, architecture, iconography, and **cremation** combines to a dramatized statement of a distinct form of political theory, a particular conception of what status, power, authority, and government are and should be: namely, a replication of the world of the gods that is at the same time a template for that of men. The state enacts an image of order that—a model for its **beholders**, in and of itself—orders society. On the other hand (the Turner one), as the populace at large does not merely view the state's expressions as so many **gaping spectators** but is caught up bodily in them, and especially in the great, mass ceremonies—**political operas** of **Burgundian** dimensions—which form their heart, the sort of "we surrender and are changed" power of drama to shape experience is the strong force that holds the polity together. Reiterated form, staged and acted by its own audience, makes (to a degree, for no theater ever wholly works) theory fact.

But my point is that some of those fit to judge work of this kind ought to be humanists who reputedly know something about what theater and **mimesis** and **rhetoric** are, and not just with respect to my work but to that of the whole steadily broadening stream of social analyses in which

Encyclopedic(adjective) =>covering a large range of knowledge, often in great detail.

Hedgehog=>a small, brown mammal with a covering of sharp spines on its back; Unsociable person. (see more)

Kin=>A person's relatives.

Cremation=>the act of burning a dead body.

Rhetoric=>speech or writing that is intended to influence people, but that is not completely honest.

1. French, from *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* 'the more it changes, the more it stays the same'. Used to express resigned acknowledgement of the fundamental immutability of human nature and institutions.

2. Theatre state=>In political anthropology, a theatre state is a political state directed towards the performance of drama and ritual rather than towards more conventional ends such as warfare and welfare.

Chatter=>to talk quickly or for a long time about something unimportant.

Puritan=>(noun) A person who has high moral standards and who thinks that it is wrong to enjoy yourself.

Venturesome (adjective)=>used to describe a person who is willing to take risks.

Wrench (noun)=>A sudden, violent pull or turn.

Pitfall (noun)=>A danger or difficulty, especially one that is hidden or not obvious.

Dubious (adjective)=>not sure or certain

Discourse=>A long and serious treatment or discussion of a subject in speech or writing.

Evanescent=>(adjective) lasting for only a short time, then disappearing quickly and being forgotten.

the drama analogy is, in one form or another, governing. At a time when social scientists are **chattering** about actors, scenes, plots, performances, and personae, and humanists are **mumbling** about motives, authority, persuasion, exchange, and hierarchy, the line between the two, however comforting to the **puritan** on the one side and the **cavalier** on the other, seems uncertain indeed.

Mumble=>to speak quietly or in an unclear way so that the words are difficult to understand.

Cavalier(noun)=> person not considering other people's feelings or safety

IV

The **text analogy**¹ now taken up by social scientists is, in some ways, the broadest of the recent refigurations of social theory, the most **venturesome**, and the least well developed. Even more than "game" or "drama," "text" is a dangerously unfocused term, and its application to social action, to people's behavior toward other people, involves a thoroughgoing conceptual **wrench**, a particularly **outlandish** bit of "seeing-as." Describing human conduct in the analogy of player and counter-player, or of actor and audience, seems, whatever the **pitfalls**, rather more natural than describing it in that of writer and reader. **Prima facie**,² the suggestion that the activities of spies, lovers, witch doctors, kings, or mental patients are moves or performances is surely a good deal more **plausible** than the notion that they are sentences.

Outlandish=>(adjective) very strange or unusual

Plausible=>(adjective) seeming likely to be true.

But *prima facie* is a **dubious** guide when it comes to analogizing; were it not, we should still be thinking of the heart as a furnace and the lungs as bellows. The text analogy has some unapparent advantages still insufficiently exploited, and the surface dissimilarity of the **here-we-are-and-there-we-are of social interaction** to the solid composure of lines on a page is what gives it—or can when the disaccordance is rightly aligned—its interpretive force.

The key to the transition from text to text analogue, from writing as **discourse** to action as discourse, is, as Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, the concept of "**inscription**": the fixation of meaning. When we speak, our utterances fly by as events like any other behavior; unless what we say is inscribed in writing (or some other established recording process), it is as **evanescent** as what we do. If it is so inscribed, it of course passes, like Dorian Gray's youth, anyway; but at least its meaning—the *said*, not the *saying*—to a degree and for a while remains. This too is not different for action in general: its meaning can persist in a way its actuality cannot.

Inscriptions => the writings engraved on hard surfaces (woods, metals).

The great virtue of the extension of the notion of text beyond things written on paper or **carved** into stone is that it trains attention on precisely this phenomenon: on how the inscription of action is brought about, what its vehicles are and how they work, and on what the fixation of meaning from the flow of events—history from what happened, thought from thinking, culture from behavior—implies for sociological

Carve (verb)=>To make an object or pattern by cutting a piece of wood or stone.

1. Analogy =>A comparison that aims to explain a thing or idea by likening it to something else.

2. *Prima facie*(adjective)=> based on what appears to be true at first, even though it may be proved false later.

Exegete=>a person skilled in exegesis (especially of religious texts).

Pollster=>one that conducts a poll or compiles data obtained by a poll.

Philology=>the study of language, especially its history and development.

Gloss (verb)=>To apply a smooth, shiny appearance on the surface of something.

Transcriptions=>a written record of words or music.

Obsolescent (adjective) =>becoming obsolete (no longer useful because something better has been invented).

Ethnographer=>a person who studies different peoples and cultures, with their customs, habits and differences

Apache (noun)=>a member of a Native American people of the southwestern U.S.

interpretation. To see social institutions, social customs, social changes as in some sense "readable" is to alter our whole sense of what such interpretation is toward modes of thought rather more familiar to the translator, the **exegete**, or the **iconographer** than to the test giver, the factor analyst, or the **pollster**.

All this comes out with exemplary vividness in the work of Alton Becker, a comparative linguist, on Javanese shadow **puppetry**, or the **wayang**¹ as it is called. Wayang-ing (there is no other suitable verb) is, Becker says, a mode of text building, a way of putting symbols together to construct an expression. To construe it, to understand not just what it means but how it does so, one needs, he says, a new **philology**.

Philology, the text-centered study of language, as contrasted to **linguistics**, which is speech centered, has of course traditionally been concerned with making ancient or foreign or **esoteric** documents accessible to those for whom they are ancient or foreign or esoteric. Terms are **glossed**, notes **appended**², commentaries written, and, where necessary, **transcriptions** made and translations effected—all toward the end of producing an annotated edition as readable as the philologist can make it. Meaning is fixed at a **meta-level**; essentially what a philologist, a kind of secondary author, does is re-inscribe: interpret a text with a text.

Left at this, matters are straightforward enough, however difficult they may turn out to be in practice. But when philological concern goes beyond routinized craft procedures (authentication, reconstruction, annotation) to address itself to conceptual questions concerning the nature of texts as such—that is, to questions about their principles of construction—simplicity flees. The result, Becker notes, has been the **shattering** of philology, itself by now a near **obsolescent** term, into **disjunct**³ and **rivalrous** specialties, and most particularly the growth of a division between those who study individual texts (historians, editors, critics—who like to call themselves humanists), and those who study the activity of creating texts in general (linguists, psychologists, **ethnographers**—who like to call themselves scientists). The study of inscriptions is severed from the study of inscribing, the study of fixed meaning is severed from the study of the social processes that fix it. The result is a double narrowness. Not only is the extension of text analysis to non-written materials blocked, but so is the application of sociological analysis to written ones.

The repair of this split and the integration of the study of how texts are built, how the said is rescued from its saying, into the study of social phenomena—**Apache** jokes, English meals, African **cult sermons**, American high schools, Indian caste, or Balinese widow burning, to mention some recent attempts aside from Becker's—is what the "new philology," or whatever else it eventually comes to be called, is all about. "In a multicultured world," Becker writes, "a world of multiple **epistemologies**,

Iconographer => a maker of figures or drawings especially of a conventional/religious type.

Puppetry=>a form of theatre or performance that involves the manipulation of puppets.

Esoteric(adjective) =>very unusual and understood or liked by only a small number of people.

Meta-level=>a higher level.

Shattering (noun)=>. the act of breaking something into small pieces.

Rivalrous=>(adjective) Characterized by or given to rivalry or competition.

Cult=> a small religious group that is not part of a larger and more accepted religion.

Sermon=>a discourse for the purpose of religious instruction.

Epistemology=> the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge.

1.Wayang=>an Indonesian and especially Javanese dramatic representation of mythological events in a puppet shadow play or by human dancers.

2. Append=>add (something) to the end of a written document. I.T--> came from 'appendix'.

3.Disjunct (adjective) =>disjoined and distinct from one another.

Contextual= (adjective) depending on or relating to the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea.

Philology=>the study of language in oral and written historical sources.

Profound (adjective) =>very great; that you feel very strongly.

Coherence(noun) =>When something has coherence, all of its parts fit together well.

Wavering (Present participle or gerund) =>losing strength, determination, or purpose.

Gravitate (verb)=> move towards or be attracted to a person or thing.

Insurrection (noun)=>a situation in which a large group of people try to take political control of their own country with violence.

Explicate=>to explain something in detail.

Apologist (noun)=>a person who offers an argument in defense of something controversial.

there is need for a new philologist—a specialist in **contextual** relations—in all areas of knowledge in which text-building . . . is a central activity: literature, history, law, music, politics, psychology, trade, even war and peace.”

Becker sees four main orders of **semiotic** connection in a social text for his new **philologist** to investigate: the relation of its parts to one another; the relation of it to others culturally or historically associated with it; the relation of it to those who in some sense construct it; and the relation of it to realities **conceived** as lying outside of it. Certainly there are others—its relation to its *materia*, for one; and, more certainly yet, even these raise **profound** methodological issues so far only hesitantly addressed. “**Coherence**,” “**inter-textuality**,” “intention,” and “reference”—which are what Becker’s four relations more or less come down to—all become most **elusive** notions when one leaves the paragraph or page for the act or institution. Indeed, as Nelson Goodman has shown, they are not all that well-defined for the paragraph or page, to say nothing of the picture, the melody, the statue, or the dance. **Insofar** as the theory of meaning implied by this multiple contextualization of cultural phenomena (some sort of symbolic constructivism) exists at all, it does so as a catalogue of **wavering intimations** and half-joined ideas.

How far this sort of analysis can go beyond such specifically expressive matters as puppetry, and what adjustments it will have to make in doing so, is, of course, quite unclear. As “life is a game” **proponents**² tend to **gravitate** toward face-to-face interaction, **courtship** and cocktail parties, as the most fertile ground for their sort of analysis, and “life is a stage” proponents are attracted toward collective intensities, carnivals and **insurrections**, for the same reason, so “life is a text” proponents incline toward the examination of imaginative forms: jokes, **proverbs**,³ popular arts. There is nothing either surprising or **reprehensible** in this; one naturally tries one’s analogies out where they seem most likely to work. But their long-run fates surely rest on their capacity to move beyond their easier initial successes to harder and less predictable ones—of the game idea to make sense of worship, the drama idea to **explicate** humor, or the text idea to clarify war. Most of these triumphs, if they are to occur at all, are, in the text case even more than the others, still to come. For the moment, all the **apologist** can do is what I have done here: offer up some instances of application, some symptoms of trouble, and some **pleas** for help.

Semiotic=>the theory and study of signs and symbols.

Conceive(verb)=>to think of a new idea or plan.

Elusive=>(adjective) difficult to describe, find, achieve, or remember.

Insofar as (phrase) => to the extent that.

Intimation=>(noun) the act of stating something or of making it known, especially in an indirect way

Courtship=>a period in a romantic couple's relationship when they are dating (before marrying).

Reprehensible=> showing anger and disapproval about something someone has done: "He shook a reprehensible head".

Plea (plural form-> pleas) => an important and emotional request.

V

So much, anyway, for examples. Not only do these particular three analogies obviously spill over into one another as individual writers **tack**

Tack (noun) => a way of dealing with a particular situation.

1. Inter-textuality=>Intertextuality refers to the phenomenon of one text referencing, quoting, or alluding to another text. It is the interplay and interconnectedness between different texts, where the meaning of one text is shaped or influenced by its relationship with other texts.

2. Proponent(noun)=>one who argues in favor of something.

3. Proverb=>. a short, traditional saying that expresses some obvious truth or familiar experience.

Ludic=>lively
and full of fun.

Competence (noun) =>
the ability to do
something well.

cryptology (noun) =>
the study of codes, or
the art of writing and
solving them.

Rhetorician=>a speaker
whose words are
primarily intended to
impress or persuade.

Tribune => the title of
various elected officials
in ancient Rome.

Ferment=> excitement
and trouble caused by
change or uncertainty.

Brute=>a man who
treats people in an
unkind, cruel way.

Postulate(verb)
(gerund or present
participle: postulating)
=> to suggest or
accept that something
is true so that it can
be used as the basis
for a theory, etc.

Enterprise=>
a new plan, project,
business, etc.

back and forth between **ludic**, dramatistic, and **textualist** idioms, but there are other humanistic analogies on the social science scene at least as prominent as they: speech act analyses following Austin and Searle; discourse models as different as those of Habermas's "communicative **competence**" and Foucault's "**archaeology** of knowledge"; representationalist approaches taking their lead from the **cognitive**¹ aesthetics of Cassirer, Langer, Gombrich, or Goodman; and of course Lévi-Strauss's higher **cryptology**. Nor are they as yet internally settled and homogeneous: the divisions between the play-minded and the strategy-minded to which I **alluded** in connection with the game approach, and between the ritualists and the **rhetoricians** in connection with the drama approach, are more than matched in the text approach by the collisions between the against-interpretation mandarins of deconstructionism and the symbolic-domination **tribunes** of neo-Marxism. Matters are neither stable nor **consensual**, and they are not likely soon to become so. The interesting question is not how all this **muddle**² is going to come magnificently together, but what does all this **ferment** mean.

One thing it means is that, however **raggedly**, a challenge is being mounted to some of the central assumptions of mainstream social science. The strict separation of theory and data, the "**brute fact**" idea; the effort to create a formal vocabulary of analysis **purged** of all subjective reference, the "ideal language" idea; and the claim to moral neutrality and the Olympian view, the "God's truth" idea—none of these can prosper when explanation comes to be regarded as a matter of connecting action to its sense rather than behavior to its **determinants**. The refiguration of social theory represents, or will if it continues, a sea change in our notion not so much of what knowledge is, but of what it is we want to know. Social events do have causes and social institutions effects; but it just may be that the road to discovering what we assert in asserting this lies less through **postulating** forces and measuring them than through noting expressions and inspecting them.

The turn taken by an important segment of social scientists, from physical process analogies to symbolic form ones, has introduced a fundamental debate into the social science community concerning not just its methods but its aims. It is a debate that grows daily in intensity. The golden age (or perhaps it was only the **brass**) of the social sciences when, whatever the differences in theoretical positions and empirical claims, the basic goal of the **enterprise** was universally agreed upon—to find out the dynamics of collective life and alter them in desired directions—has clearly passed. There are too many social scientists at work today for whom the **anatomization** of thought is wanted, not the manipulation of behavior.

But it is not only for the social sciences that this alteration in how we

Textualist=> a person
who adheres closely
to a text, esp. of the
Scriptures.

Archaeology=>the
study of the past,
based on objects or
parts of buildings
that are found in the
ground.

Allude=>to speak
about somebody/
something in an
indirect way.

Consensual=>
existing or made by
mutual consent
without an act of
writing. "a consensual
contract".

Raggedly=>in a way
that is not very good,
because of not being
organized.

Purged=>to get rid of
something unwanted,
harmful, or evil:

Determinants=>a
factor which decisively
affects the nature or
outcome of something.

Anatomization (noun)
=> very detailed
analysis of something.

1. Cognitive=> relating to the mental processes of
perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as
contrasted with emotional and volitional processes.

2. Muddle(verb)=> to confuse somebody.

Disequilibrating (verb)
=> to put out of
equilibrium; unbalance.

think about how we think has **disequilibrating** implications. The rising interest of sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, political scientists, and even now and then a **rogue** economist in the analysis of symbol systems poses—implicitly anyway, explicitly sometimes—the question of the relationship of such systems to what goes on in the world; and it does so in a way both rather different from what humanists are used to and rather less **evadable**—with **homilies** about spiritual values and the examined life—than many of them, so it seems, would at all like.

Rogue (adjective)=> behaving differently from other similar people or things, often causing damage

Homily (plural: Homilies) => a speech or piece of writing in which someone tells people how they ought to behave.

Nostrum=>a usually questionable remedy or scheme; a medicine sold with false or exaggerated claims and with no demonstrable value.

If the social technologist notion of what a social scientist is is brought into question by all this concern with sense and signification, even more so is the cultural **watchdog** notion of what a humanist is. The specialist without spirit **dispensing policy nostrums** goes, but the **lectern**¹ **sage**² dispensing approved judgments does as well. The relation between thought and action in social life can no more be conceived of in terms of wisdom than it can in terms of expertise. How it is to be **conceived**³, how the games, dramas, or texts which we do not just invent or witness but live, have the consequence they do remains very far from clear. It will take the wariest of **wary** reasonings, on all sides of all divides, to get it clearer.

Evadable (adjective)
=>Something which can be avoided by speed or agility (the power of moving quickly and easily).

Dispense (verb)
=>to give or provide people with something.

Wary (adjective) =>not completely trusting or certain about something or someone.

1.Lectern=>a high sloping desk on which someone puts their notes when they are standing up and giving a lecture.

2.Sage=>a profoundly wise person; a person famed for wisdom.

3.Conceive=>to think of a new idea or plan.