THE FLYLEAF

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THE FLYLEAF

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FROM THE LIBRARIAN

The Librarian wishes to announce that Professor Edward Norbeck, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, has resigned as Editor of the FLYLEAF. Professor Norbeck served as Editor since June of 1961, and we wish to thank him for his interest in the Fondren Library and the work of the Friends' organization.

We have a new Editor: Dr. Hardin Craig, Jr., Professor of History, who resigned his post as Librarian at the end of June of this year after fifteen years of service and leadership. It is a matter of special pride and joy for all of us that Professor Craig is willing to continue his association with the Library he helped to shape through this editorship. Many of us in the Fondren and among the Friends of the Fondren will find our work easier because we are able in this way to keep Dr. Craig at our sides.

This is a good time, too, to recognize the long-term and continuing service of Raemond Craig as Publication Chief for the FLYLEAF. In every issue since that of February, 1955, Mrs. Craig's name has appeared with those of the several editors, and we know how much her careful and timely work has meant to the publication. So, we now have a husband and wife team with special qualifications indeed for the task we so confidently place in their hands.

Richard L. O'Keeffe,
Librarian, Fondren Library

THANKS FROM A FRIEND

The ex-Librarian wishes to take this opportunity of thanking the Friends of the Fondren Library for making his change-over of positions so pleasant.

Together with the members of the Library Staff, the Friends arranged a memorable party at Cohen House, complete with delicious refreshments, handsome gifts, and heart-warming expressions of friendship.

The ex-Librarian has been officially a full-time faculty member since last July, but the party of September 20 made this seem true. He has turned over the Library to the able management of Richard O'Keeffe, but he will always remember his library friends, with or without the capital "F". Nor will he be far away, in his office with the History Department on the fourth floor of the Fondren, and his new post as Editor of the FLYLEAF.

Hardin Craig, Jr.

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RESEARCH CENTER

The January, 1969, issue of the FLYLEAF will contain a feature article about the Fondren's new Research Center and its director, Richard H. Lytle, who is also the Rice University Archivist.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRIENDS

In the July, 1968, issue of the FLYLEAF we expressed the wish that the Friends help toward the purchase of a private library of Austro-Hungarian history, politics, fine arts, and literature.

From a Rice University news release of September 25, which appeared in the Houston Press, many of our Friends will already have learned that we were referring to the Swift Collection and that a gift from the William Stamps Farish Fund made possible its purchase by the University. We are delighted to have the strength of a local special collection added to the increasingly important Austro-Hungarian Collection of the Fondren Library through the generosity of Houston's William Stamps Farish Fund.

We should like to present a new opportunity to purchase a special bibliographic publication for the Fondren. This is the recently announced Catalog of the Latin-American Collection of the University of Texas Library, which the G. K. Hall Co. of Boston will publish sometime after April of 1969, in thirty-one volumes. Until April 30, 1969, the price for this set will be $1700; after that time it will be $2100. Since the Latin-American collection at the University of Texas is a distinguished one, and Rice has considerable and growing interest in Latin-American studies, it is a matter of considerable interest to the Fondren and to faculty members like Professor James A. Castaneda, Chairman of the Department of Classics, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, to have this set.

Friends of the Fondren Library are invited to contribute all or part of the necessary purchase price; such gifts are tax deductible, gratefully appreciated, and marked by appropriate book plates and other acknowledgments.

R.L.O.

THE MAN OF LETTERS IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

by

George Williams

Professor of English

A Rice Alumni Distinguished
Scholar Lecture presented
in Hamman Hall
October 20, 1965

"Man of Letters" is a slippery phrase. It may include the merest amateur enthusiast or collector, the professional scholar, the sharp critic, and the actual creator of literature. But since the last named, the literary artist, is the star around whom the whole show revolves, we might not lose too much if we focused on him, and glanced only occasionally at the others, just to assure them that they are still a part of the performance. That is what I am going to do in speaking here of the "Man of Letters."

The other part of my title, "the World of Science," is easier. I imagine that nobody can possibly doubt that we are living in the midst of a world of science. Right here in Hamman Hall we are almost completely surrounded, hemmed in, by science. Over there are three Engineering Buildings; over there is the Chemistry Building; over there and there, the Biology and Geology Buildings; over there, the Space Science Building; and directly in front of me, I understand, is to be the Mathematics and Computer Building. The only place left open is to the rear--a thoughtful gesture, no doubt, to help men of letters make a graceful exit when the time comes.

We are all surrounded by and immersed in science

every day. We participate in the scientific revolution when we flip a light switch, drive an automobile, look at television, swallow our vitamin pills, or talk into a microphone. Science touches us much more closely than nature does. How long has it been since any of us sucked a real orange instead of opening a can of frozen juice? Or saw a real live chicken, with feathers, instead of a pale and pimply glob of flesh that was killed by machine, plucked by machine, cut up by machine, and packaged by machine? Or since we drank milk not flavored with paraffine? (However, I did see, the other day, an advertisement for a specially featured toothbrush--one that required neither cord nor battery.)

Scientists from Huxley on down have not been loath to remind us of our almost total dependence on science. Typically, the editor of Science magazine wrote, very soundly and indisputably, not long ago:

> Take away science and technology from our civilization, and there would remain only chaos and starvation. We exist in complete dependence on an organizational and production complex which provides food, clothing, shelter, and the common defense.

Another writer in Science agrees: "Experimental science . . . has grown to dominate our society. Man has discovered that he can rarely think or act independently of the influence of Science." The poet Robert Graves was altogether right when he said that "The world now stands in far greater awe of [scientists] than of all living presidents, crowned heads, tycoons, scholars, and ecclesiasts." The degree of official respect that science enjoys in America may be judged by the fact that, of all the billions of dollars in federal funds allocated for research in this country, 96% goes to the physical sciences, 4% for psychology and social research--and what is left over, for the humanities.

In a world so overwhelmingly dedicated to science, you wold think that the men and women who create and are concerned with literature--the novelists, playwrights, poets, and even the critics and scholars--would likewise be dedicated to the cause of science. You would think that an age so pervaded by the scientific outlook, so aware of science's almost incredible achievements, so beholden to science for most of its material goods, and often for very life itself--would have produced a flood of novels, stories, dramas, and poems extolling science and glorifying scientists.

But no such thing has happened. Our major writers (not only in America but in the whole Western world) have remained profoundly silent about the obvious blessings of the scientific revolution. Faulkner and O'Neill, Hemingway and Tennessee Williams, Dos Passos and Arthur Miller, Lawrence Durrell and Sean O'Casey, Robert Frost and Dylan Thomas--you look in vain through their works for any genuflection toward science.

This does not mean that writers have invariably ignored science or its results. In particular, many modern writers--novelists, dramatists, and poets--have written about the most obvious and omnipresent results of the scientific revolution: the industrialization, the urbanization, and the commercialization of modern life--writers like Dreiser, D. H. Lawrence, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Arthur Miller, and so on, right up to Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti and Kerouac and Mailer. But though most modern writers have been intensely aware of what modern science has done to modern life, one examines their works in vain for any enthusiasm about the industrialization, urbanization, and commercialization that have resulted from the scientific revolution. Rather, the tone of these writers has been almost unfailingly satiric, or bitter, or resentful, or tragic.

So far as I know, only two American poets of any consequence in the twentieth century have welcomed

this new industrialized, urbanized, commercialized age. One was Carl Sandburg fifty years ago. But even Sandburg no longer celebrates Chicago, "hog butcher of the world." Instead, he has retired to his goat-farm in North Carolina, and now writes nostalgically about the days of Abraham Lincoln. And the other was Hart Crane--who committed suicide at the age of thirty-three.

If there has been any drama at all in America, in the present generation, dealing sympathetically with science, or with the industrialization, urbanization, and commercialization of modern life, I don't know it.

As for fiction, only one significant American novelist, since Sinclair Lewis wrote Arrowsmith in 1925, has written a serious novel about science. This was Pearl Buck, whose pot-boiler novel Commander the Morning (1959) was a fictionalized (and deeply disturbed) account of the development of the atomic bomb. Among the 30,000-odd novels published in America since World War II, I have been able to locate only 17 serious novels about science. Eleven of these were really stories of very human scientists (operating in a bureaucratic or university framework) undercutting or betraying one another, or betraying science itself, out of their material ambitions or personal jealousies; and the others turn out to be satires on science, or spy-stories, or tales of physicists dying of atomic radiation.

There seem to be only two classes of imaginative literature in which science appears with some regularity. One is a steadily diminishing trickle of so-called "science-fiction" (usually involving a "mad scientist"); and the other is a flood of dramatized television commercials demonstrating the scientific virtues of soaps, deodorants, and aspirin.

II

The failure of men of letters to hop aboard the world of science has been notorious for a long time, and has been very apparent since the beginning of the scientific revolution around the end of the eighteenth century. At first, there was a fumbling, half-literary half-philosophical conflict between champions of the "objective" world and of the "subjective" world--with writers like Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Carlyle opposing the objective realists and the utilitarians. At about the same time, rejection of science's most lusty offspring, industrialism, appeared in writers like Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, and any number of other romanticists who deliberately turned their backs on the "dark satanic mills," and found their ideas elsewhere than in the new industrial age. Later in the nineteenth century, the famous controversy between T. H. Huxley and Matthew Arnold re-emphasized the reality of the chasm lying between the world of letters and the world of science.

And in just the last three or four years, an acrimonious debate between the novelist-scientist C. P. Snow and the Cambridge scholar F. R. Leavis has again attracted attention to the mutual intransigence of what Snow calls the "Two Cultures." As Snow says, "The intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups . . . at one pole we have the literary intellectuals . . . at the other, scientists." Furthermore, he says, "this tendency of the two cultures [to withdraw from each other] appears to get stronger," rather than weaker. "Thirty years ago," Snow says, "the cultures had long ceased to speak to each other; but at least they managed a kind of frozen smile across the gulf. Now the politeness is gone, and they just make faces." A recent writer in Science magazine agrees: "Communication between the scientist and the humanist has broken down;" and the editor of Science complains that "the gap between scientists and other citizens is growing."

Many scientists have echoed these observations, and have deplored the gulf separating science and letters. As a matter of fact, it looks as if every time a scientist nowadays addresses the general public, he can be depended upon to make an earnest appeal for better understanding and communication between the two cultures. By "understanding and communication" the scientists imply, I suppose, sympathetic understanding and communication--compatibility, concordance, rapport, minds attuned to the same wave-lengths. To achieve this sympathetic understanding and communication, scientists advocate an educational system that would "give almost continuous exposure to science" from the cradle to the graduate school. And ever since World War I, educational philosophers, professional educators, and virtually all American universities have been striving heroically to produce graduates who will have one foot in the world of science, and the other foot in the world of letters. Students in the sciences have been required to take courses in the humanities; and students in the humanities have been required to take courses in science. But these requirements don't seem to have done much good in improving understanding and communication between the two worlds. The net result (so far as I have been able to observe) has been that far the greater part of these captive students (forced into courses they do not want) suffer through two or three years of boredom, resentment, impatience, and a sense of time wasted doing busy-work they don't like, don't want, and don't need. And their instructors suffer from having to deal with students who feel bored, resentful, impatient, and frustrated--students who, at best, acquire only a confused smattering of the subjects into which their noses have been rubbed so forcibly, and who (when they leave the required courses) make a special point of forgetting them as soon as possible.

Conceivably, any of us might profit from an intimate knowledge of anything--even say, medieval Bulgarian folk-poetry, or the nematode worms of British

Honduras, or the methods of dressing up in a space-suit. And certainly anyone who really wants to learn about any of those things should be encouraged. On the other hand, the expanse of even highly specialized areas of research has grown so enormous--and is widening so rapidly and immensely every day and hour--and life is so short--that forcing students to spend two or three years picking up a smattering of knowledge about subjects they don't like and (except by the most remote of chances) will never use, seems to be a waste of time that should be employed more profitably--or at least more agreeably.

Of course, if the system really worked--if sympathetic understanding and communication between the world of science and the world of letters were really achieved by this system--the system might be defended. But, by and large, all the efforts of American colleges, during the last two generations, to bridge the gap between the two worlds have proved futile. Indeed, as C. P. Snow said, and most people agree, the gulf between them is growing wider all the time.

On the one hand, science professors still suggest to their students that courses in literature aren't very important--"because you can read the books yourself, without having to take courses." And the editor of Science himself wrote casually not long age: "After the rigors of training in science, the subject content of the humanities seems hardly more difficult than a good novel." This must be true--there can be no doubt about it--for only last week a letter from the circulation department of Science assured me that "What you read in Science is authoritative because Science is written, edited, and owned by scientists." On the other hand, men of letters, in spite of all the pleadings of scientists for better understanding and communication, more sympathy and concordance, continue to give science the cold shoulder.

Why is this? Why is the gulf between the two

cultures as wide as ever--if not wider, as all the scientists say it is?

III

In trying to suggest answers to this question, I want to make it very clear that I am not speaking of either men of science or men of letters as individuals, but as representatives of their separate cultures, practicing their professions. What I am talking about is science and letters as two different disciplines, two different systems of values, two different ways of approaching the world, two different cultures. And I am asking why it is that they never can get together.

There are a lot of reasons--but they all add up to the fact that neither system can make any really significant approach to the other without denying something vital and essential within itself.

Let me illustrate. In science the struggle is always to include the concrete example within a generalized system which tends to move even farther, if it can, into an abstract mathematical formula. But in literature the struggle always moves in the opposite direction--toward expressing the general and the abstract in terms of the concrete. As a matter of fact, if the general and the abstract are not expressed in terms of concrete imagery, we don't have literature; we have philosophy, or moralizing. Furthermore, though literature may express general laws of nature or of man's life in concrete imagery, it doesn't need to--any more than music or painting needs to express such laws. It would be very difficult to discover laws of nature and of life in, say Alice in Wonderland or an Arabian Nights tale. More important, still, even when literature does busy itself with general laws, nobody cares very much whether the general laws illustrated are true and verifiable, or false and imaginary. Thus, nobody nowadays puts any stock in the general laws about the gods that Sophocles illus-

trated in Oedipus Rex; very few people think that the Book of Job presents a satisfactory theological system; not many people believe in the good-are-rewarded-and-the-evil-are-punished philosophy of the great Victorian novelists; and Pygmalion (My Fair Lady) is hardly the last word in scientific philology or even good sociology. But the situation is not like this in science. In science, it does make a difference whether the general law is true and verifiable. In literature, all that matters essentially is the expression of a personality in concrete imagery.

This, then, is one of the absolute and irreconcilable differences between science and literature. There are many others--as, for example, that science is concerned with types, literature with individuals. Science is interested in trees, clouds, rockets, schizophrenics, and so on--all within a framework of general law. But literature is interested in a tree, a cloud, a rocket, a schizophrenic--and not necessarily for the sake of anything but themselves. Another example of incompatibilities between science and literature: science is involved with situations and combinations that repeat themselves, or may be made to repeat themselves; but literature never repeats itself without loss of virtue. Science is concerned with the predictable; but who can predict what tomorrow's novel, or play, or poem, will be like? Science is continually growing and expanding on itself, so that the science of fifty years ago is not satisfactory today, and the science of today will not be satisfactory fifty years from now; but the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton and Keats are as satisfactory today as when they were written long ago. That is why we always want the last edition of a book of science, and the first edition of a book of literature.

Still another example of this same incompatibility between science and literature is that science aims at establishing a verifiable, and usually objective, reality over against unreality. But literature has

no such intent: its field is imagination, dream, and personal emotion--a field that science could not possibly enter without compromising its entire nature. Science is bound by principles of induction, logic, probability, verifiability--but literature is free to be as crazy as A Midsummer Night's Dream, as improbable as Tiny Alice, as illogical as Waiting for Godot, as unverifiable as the tale of the Sleeping Beauty. These things constitute a major part of reality--perhaps the most important part. A man of letters cannot turn his back on them. But how could a scientist ever accept them?

IV

There are two areas, however, in which science and literature differ even more irreconcilably, and even more critically. It is in these areas that, somehow or another, the human race has to make up its mind pretty soon.

First, we must understand clearly that science is, and must be, impartial and impersonal; unless it is impartial and impersonal, it is not good science. Furthermore, its overriding dedication is to truth, mostly objective, but always impartial and impersonal--free of personal prejudice, personal desire, even merely personal judgment or evaluation. A medical scientist may be shocked when he discovers that his best friend has cancer; but he is no scientist unless, in spite of his personal desires, he faces up to the objective truth. In the world of letters, however, the ultimate values are all personal. This does not mean (I hasten to say) that there are no other values in the world of literature--but the ones without which literature would not be literature are all personal. Every creative artist (whether in literature or not) knows this. Henry Moore, the sculptor, said; "The basis of all art is the human relationship"; Faulkner said that the essence of literature is "the human heart in conflict with itself"; George Bernard Shaw,

that literature shows "the conflict between man's will and his environment"; James T. Farrell, that literature is "a re-creation of social relationships of human beings"; Henry James, that it is "the human scene," the "dramatic side of human situations." Human beings, persons (or personified things) are always involved in literature.

Critics and scholars sometimes forget the essentially personal quality of literature--simply because it is so obvious. But literature always concerns persons, or is a person expressing his uniquely personal reactions. In science, on the other hand, there is always a deliberate effort to reduce the personal factor, the personal equation, the strictly personal element, to zero.

As a matter of fact, science, in recent years, has eaten away at the whole concept of the dignity of persons. Science has not intended to do this; it has not been deliberate. But it is a fact. Science has shown human beings moulded by hereditary glandular traits, environmental influences, and Freudian complexes; descendants of unpleasant ape-like ancestors, lately arrived in the world; and probably only temporary inhabitants of a minor conglomeration of dirt and water in an out-of-the-way corner of a minor galaxy in an infinite universe. Even writers have accepted this view of man. They no longer write about kingly men and princely characters--because, as Joseph Wood Krutch says, "we do not believe that any man is worthy to be" a king or a prince.

At the same time, however, the writers seem to have taken an almost perverse delight in showing that even the sorriest specimens of persons are, as Rupert Brooke said, "splendid and immortal and desirable," of "extraordinary value and importance." Why else did Steinbeck, for example, make the Joads so animal-like--if not to suggest that even such creatures are worth while, extraordinarily valuable and important? Why

else did Eugene O'Neill write his great plays about derelicts, prostitutes, dope-addicts, failures in life? Why else did Faulkner create a world of decadent characters except to show that man "alone among creatures . . . has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance"? Why else did Arthur Miller write a play about a washed-out traveling salesman? Or Tennessee Williams a play about a psychopathic prostitute? Or Norman Mailer a novel about a psychopathic murderer? Authors today deliberately stack all the cards against their characters, and still maintain (by the very act of writing about them) that these characters are worth writing about. The salesman's wife in Death of a Salesman expresses the idea perfectly, even though she is talking about a man who has failed in his work, failed as a husband, failed as a father, failed as a man: "He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being . . . He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog."

What the man of letters keeps telling the world of science is that you can't treat a man like an old dog--or as an impersonal "case," or a social problem, or a population statistic, or an item in any other system of classification. You can't be impersonal about persons; you can't be impartial about a human being. However valuable objective, impartial, impersonal truth may be, the individual human being is more valuable. The man of letters has a grave suspicion that science doesn't recognize this fact.

Of course, every man of letters who is not a complete idiot knows the immeasurable good that science has done humanity in prolonging life, alleviating pain, eliminating much burdensome work, and so on. At the same time, however, it is pretty obvious to everyone that the growth of science has not been an unmixed blessing for humanity. The hydrogen bomb, for example, is hardly an unmixed blessing; nor the intercontinental missile; nor the spy-in-the-sky satellite; nor the

chemical pollution of our air and streams; nor our scientific despoilation of nature; nor the modern industrial system that, for all the material good it has accomplished, has been a continuing threat to man's freedom ever since it began; nor the advertising and publicity devices created by science that have resulted in the universal commercialization and cheapening of public taste; nor the very real probability that some spectacular scientific break-through in the future may fall into the hands of some dictator, or dictator nation, who will use the discovery to enslave us.

But even more subtle and paradoxical is the pessimism engendered by every new spectacular achievement of science that seems wholly for the good of man--for each such achievement is another victory for the impartial and impersonal methods of science. For example, who can be anything but joyful over an achievement such as the victory over polio? Yet even here the victory was achieved through depersonalized experiments on human beings who were numbered "subjects" and "controls"; and all who received the vaccine received it as impersonal members of impersonal queues taking impersonal lumps of sugar from impersonal hands, and dropping impersonal quarters into a box impersonally provided. I freely admit that it is utterly absurd for anybody to complain about depersonalization in the face of this enormous and universal good. But the very fact that it is absurd (with a kind of ironic existential absurdity) is itself tragic. It is what Aldous Huxley was driving at in his Brave New World--where science has succeeded in bringing every material blessing to mankind, yet has reduced human personality to letters of the alphabet. The man of letters cannot be happy when he is caught in this dilemma where he must approve what he disapproves. That is one reason why, in these days of all-triumphant science, men of letters are producing the most pessimistic body of literature ever written. As a reviewer in a local newspaper said recently: "Today it seems nearly impossible to find a book that does not leave the reader distressed, dis-

turbed, and appalled." There is a direct relation, I think, between the triumphs of impersonal science and the growth of literary pessimism.

The second area in which the world of science and the world of literature are conspicuously irreconcilable is in their attitudes toward order and organization. Order and organization lie at the very heart of science and the scientific process. Science is at perpetual war with chaos--trying to bring order and organization out of nature's heedless confusion and anarchy. This is not only an intellectual principle of science; it has become a way of life for the modern scientist. Every modern scientist has become more and more dependent on organization for carrying out his work. Unlike the man of letters, he cannot work at home, or in his private study. He must have a laboratory provided by some organization, and staffed by an organized personnel. To discover almost anything about nature nowadays, the scientist must have the organized assistance of an army of engineers, mathematicians, physicists, chemists, operators of computers, and many other specialists. Without a harmonious organization of numbers of skilled people--there would be little modern science. Furthermore, modern science cannot operate, or be effective, except in a well-ordered, well-organized society. Thousands of people have to work harmoniously together in order for us to see one television program, or for us to ride in an automobile, or for us to get the benefit of the polio vaccine.

Order and organization among people are civilization. Civilization, however (as Freud pointed out), rests on repressions of personal impulses and instincts; and it exists only by the control of individuals in the interest of the larger organization. The man of letters would accept this situation with some grace, I imagine, except that, as Chesterton said, "We never do anything without overdoing it." As science grows more and more prominent and powerful, both demanding and creating a

still better ordered and organized society--it does seem likely that the human being, as an individual personality, will be more and more controlled, obscured, and absorbed. We saw this happen in the most scientifically advanced and well-ordered nation of our time--Germany. We see it happening every day among ourselves. Most of us have become Organization Men (or Women). We have learned to drop neatly into our designated slot in the traffic organization, the company organization where we work, the educational organization where we teach or go to school, the public health organization, the tax organization, the Western economic organization, the American political organization, and the dozens of sub-organizations, and sub-sub-organizations, in our community, our church, our working environment. Each of us has become a faceless member of the anonymous millions washing along the freeways twice a day, in and out of the great buildings four times a day, clicking on the same television show at the same moment from one end of a time zone to the other, tens of millions of us hanging simultaneously on the words of Messrs. Huntley and Brinkley, all talking the next morning about the same headline--all fitting neatly into the most scientific and best-organized society the world has ever seen, and all melting together into impersonal anonimity.

But there are two groups who refuse to participate in this almost universal organization that has come with the growth of modern science. Both groups are composed of desperate people struggling against the organized dehumanization practiced by our society. We call one group delinquents. It is not an accident that, as science has exercised a stronger and stronger influence toward an ordered society--alcoholism and drug-addiction are increasing; the crime rate is growing many times faster than the population; mental illness has reached epidemic proportions; homosexuality and sexual irregularities in general are increasing astronomically; school drop-outs have become a national danger; students are no longer happy in their school

and college experiences; young people by the millions are taking to the streets in protest against a social organization that wants them to react mechanically, instead of as human beings.

The other group, the companions of the delinquents, are the men of letters. Even with the beginnings of modern science and the industrial organization that resulted from it, men of letters began to rebel. First there were Blake, Byron, and Shelley; then Baudelaire, Swinburne, and Thoreau; then Ibsen, Shaw, and Dreiser; then Sinclair Lewis, Scott Fitzgerald, and Eugene O'Neill. And now, when the dominance of science and the accompanying pressures for order and organization are more powerful than they have ever been before--there exists, among men of letters, an unprecedented disaffection with our society, a deliberate and determined attack on the established order--an attack that carries all the way to chaos and nihilism. We see it in writers like Samuel Beckett, William Burroughs, Jean Genet, Ionesco, the whole Theatre of the Absurd, the Beats, Henry Miller, Tennessee Williams, Norman Mailer, and countless others. Kenneth Rexroth summed it all up: "One of the most important indications that something is wrong is the complete rejection of our civilization by its creative, growing, and intellectual community . . . there is total rejection."

What is wrong seems obvious. For the man of letters, the individual, unique, and independent human personality represents the final value. But science, and the civilization that science has created, place order and organization first; for the sake of order and organization, individuals and personalities must be shaped to pattern, or suppressed. Neither side can give up its position without sacrificing something of its essential nature. And neither side <u>will</u> give up.

And this is where we came in: the failure of "understanding and communication" between the two

cultures. The failure has always been inevitable. Sympathy and compatibility between them as disciplines, or systems, or methods of approaching the world, are out of the question. It seems to me that the best we can hope for in "understanding and communication" is mutual tolerance on the strictly personal level. For example, I haven't the faintest glimmer of understanding about what my colleagues in organic chemistry, physics, and space-science are doing here on the campus; and when we get together we certainly don't talk about colloids, neutrinos, and medieval English poetics. I don't understand or communicate with them as scientists, and they don't understand or communicate with me as a man of letters. We don't want to bore one another to death. But, on a simple act of personal faith, and no more, I fugure that they know what they are doing, and have as much integrity in their work as I hope I have in mine. And that, I think, is about as near to "understanding and communication" as the two cultures can come just now.

But what about the future? Is there any hope that the two cultures will ever get together sometime? Will they eventually reach a state of "understanding and communication"? Or will one of them replace the other? Or will both disappear? It would be hazardous to predict. Maybe both sides will be atomized . . . which would be a kind of victory for science, after all. Or maybe Faulkner had the answer in his Nobel Prize speech: "Man will not merely endure; he will prevail." Or maybe Aldous Huxley had the answer in Brave New World, and George Orwell in 1984.

I confess that I myself lean slightly toward the Huxley-Orwell answer. It is only nineteen years till 1984--but, with science moving along at its present clip, a lot can be accomplished toward transforming human beings into Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta types in nineteen years.

Early in this lecture I said that we are here

virtually surrounded by science--with Engineering over there, Chemistry over there, Biology over there, Geology over there, Space Science over there, and Mathematics to be over there. Only to the rear is space open for retreat. I have a kind of vision about this that I should like to share with you. I see the non-scientists battling valiantly for survival against all these odds, for the survivial of the individual personality. But I see a losing battle, a lost battle. I see the non-scientists, still struggling, backed across the parking lot, through the hedges, out across the street, and on, as a final refuge, into Pat Quinn's garage, where they will be stored away with his plastic reindeer, his Santa Claus, and his Seven Dwarfs. There the non-scientists will remain in perpetual seclusion, not even exhibited at Christmas or at Alumni meetings, and enjoying only an occasional bootleg visit from a few delinquents who have escaped the scientific organization, and persist in the vain old delusion of still wanting to be persons.

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