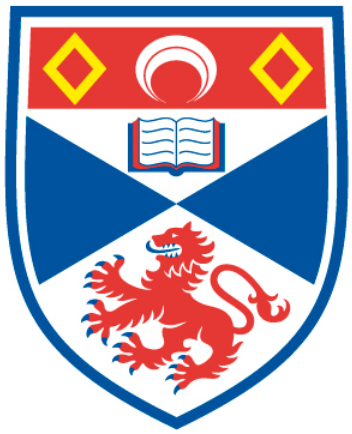
A “PROPER JOB”? ACTING AS WORK AND VOCATION IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DOROTHY L. SAYERS

Gwendolyn Aileen (Pacey) Starks

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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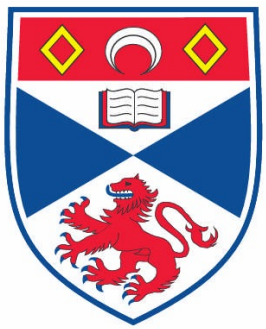

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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at the

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Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts

July 1, 2013

DEDICATED

IN LOVING MEMORY

TO

My Mother: Norah Caroline Pacey (Duggan)
April 28, 1924 - June 17, 2013

And

My Father: Thomas Ernest Pacey
April 28, 1916 - December 17, 1973

Creative, Imaginative, and Together at Last

Also To

My Loving Husband: Rick Starks

You are my Friend, my Spouse and my Guide.

And To

The Glory of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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until the Black Knight stepped into the picture.

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To the Creator of the Universe, at work forever,
Thank You for allowing me to step into the light for a moment.

Amen

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PREFACE

In this dissertation, I will be looking at the actor as a craftsperson and artist from both a secular and a theological standpoint in order to determine if the labour of acting can be considered both as work, a "proper job"; and as a calling from God, a vocation. The main questions prompting and shaping this dissertation have arisen out of my own personal experience as an actor struggling both in the performing arts business and with my Christian faith. So, the opening chapter will introduce a personal background approach to the dissertation. It will summarize the experiences that brought me to the place of asking these two questions. It will also serve as an introduction to the life of Dorothy L. Sayers, outlining her own life and demonstrating why she is important to our work as actors. Chapter Two will then cover historical data on Anti-Theatrical Prejudice, laying the foundation for the ongoing discomfort with and misunderstanding regarding the actor's craft. Chapters Three and Four will examine separately our notions of work (Three) and then of vocation (Four) in order to gain a broader view of these two terms. At this point, we will have laid the path to reintroduce Dorothy L. Sayers in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, both as a partner in conversation and as one who held this broader understanding of the terms work and vocation and applied them to creative activities, in particular acting. The final chapter will look at acting as connected to the basic features of life. It, among other things, will revisit some of the anti-theatre argument; pick up on ideas such as the imagination's ability to rehearse life; and will examine some uses of acting as a means of human exploration and social change. Finally, we will explore the artistry, technique, and craft of the actor, to firmly establish the place of acting in society as an important task, a "proper job," and a Christian vocation.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE THESIS BACK STORY AND AN INTRODUCTION TO DOROTHY L. SAYERS

The March 2009 issue of *Vanity Fair* highlighted the new American President, Barak Obama; it also contained an extensive article that delved into the preparation and production of the 1972 American movie epic *The Godfather*.[1] The film was a defining moment in cinematic history, marking the careers of most everyone involved, especially the actors portraying the roles of the Corleone family. While the film offered many of them the breakthrough role that would define their careers, it also marked some of them in a way that they had not foreseen. The public had difficulty separating the actors from the characters they portrayed, an attitude that, in some cases, would haunt them for decades after.

> The Actors would forever be identified by their roles – especially James Caan, who is constantly tested in public to see if he'll react like trigger-tempered Sonny Corleone. "I've been accused so many times," says Caan. "They called me a wiseguy. …I was denied in a country club once. Oh yeah, the guy sat in front of the board, and he says 'No, no, he's a wiseguy, been downtown. He's a made guy.' I thought, 'What? Are you out of your mind?"[2]

The definition of "wiseguy" and "made guy" refer to a person connected with the Mafia and organized crime. It seemed obvious to the individual at the country club that Caan was able to portray the character so precisely because some of Sonny's particular character traits and moral flaws were part of Caan's own personality. Ergo, Caan, the actor, is a man just as deadly and treacherous as Sonny Corleone, with connections to organized crime. Despite the evidence of prior acting credits, other roles portrayed in the decades after the movie's release and Caan's own private moral conduct, this label has stuck.

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[1] Mark Seal, "The Godfather Wars," *Vanity Fair:* March 2009.
[2] Ibid.

Caan's experience is not an isolated incident. There are countless other stories similar to this in biographies, news articles and interviews in which other actors have recounted incidents where they continue to be identified by roles they have played. While touring his one man show, *Conversations with Gregory Peck*, the actor was constantly asked questions regarding one role in particular: Aticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird.* The audience wanted him to be the man he portrayed in the film, and Peck, himself, even made a career choice based upon the persona that they had created. When offered the role of Kilgor Trout in *Breakfast of Champions* he was excited at the prospect of playing against character. He turned it down, however, for the sole reason: "'I'll be disappointing them if I say some of these off colour words.'"[3] The *them* were the thousands of people with whom he had had a conversation during his theatre tour; they had expectations that even he would not harm. Dennis Brown who accompanied him for four years points out, "He is not Abraham Lincoln, of course, he is not even Aticus Finch. He is only Gregory Peck."[4] The stigma of being identified with a certain role can be both helpful and damaging to an actor's career but it can also do the same to an actor's personal life, especially so for those who portray villains.

On a much smaller scale, I have had my own struggle trying to shake off the *Anne of Green Gables* role portrayed early in my career. Even more puzzling, than this insistence on seeing actors as certain characters, is the stereotyping of actors in society. For some reason, others approach the profession with either veneration or scorn. This particular job raises issues that are not associated with any other line of work. Something has caused this phenomenon and it touches the lives of both the famous, experienced actor and the young beginner.

On rare occasions, the idea for a doctoral dissertation comes from personal experience rather than from a purely academic pursuit; this is one such study. My own background as a professional actor in television and theatre in Canada and my struggles in the Christian faith are the roots from which it has grown. It may not be the outlook of everyone in the Church, but when I discuss the situation with other

[3] Dennis Brown, *Actors Talk* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1998). 99.
[4] Ibid. 101.

artists, actors in particular, a knowing look comes into their eyes, and they begin to share similar stories.

1. PERSONAL HISTORY

My career as an actor seemed laid out from birth: before I was two I stood on a restaurant table to sing The Beatles' "She Loves You," and bowed graciously to the customers' applause. It was no surprise after high school that I went on to study the theatre. Years later, in the midst of a successful career in "the business," I began to explore my Christian roots more seriously. As I grew in my faith, I began to notice a tension between the ideas of my church and its attitude concerning my profession, a division that presented itself in two ways: on the one side, a double set of standards regarding ethics and morality existed and, on the other, a misuse of the performing arts.

Questions regarding the moral state of acting were constant: "How can you do that and call yourself a Christian?" and "Acting is lying to people; How can you perpetrate and participate in something that tells a lie?" and others of a similar nature. When I was between roles, I was told, "Perhaps God does not want you to be an actor. Why don't you go get a real job?" To those outside, acting was, in their opinion, full of some kind of vice and corruption that I had never witnessed. It was suddenly a bad thing. Interestingly, in the Christian community, I met people who were caught up in many of the "Seven Deadly Sins" in ways that I had never seen in my theatre and film colleagues, but, unlike my business associates, the Church-goers did not seem to want to admit that such behaviours existed or that they had a problem.

In addition to this situation, there was an interesting turn of events in the 1980s and 90s in some churches in Toronto, that added to my bewilderment. There was a rediscovery of the Arts and with it an exploration of what they liked to call "Drama." In one instance, my church welcomed a Christian theatre troupe. For one who had trained professionally, acted in and attended world-renowned theatrical performances, the quality of performance was embarrassing. Why were my Christian

brothers and sisters so willing to accept such poor production value?[5] Over time, it became obvious that the underlying message was: use dramatic forms, but do not act. In other words, theatre was a tool, an incredibly effective tool; to be used occasionally, Christmas, and Easter for instance, for teaching purposes or at a special "seeker-sensitive" service but was not something to be taken seriously.[6]

Simultaneously, in my professional life, there were questions arising about my faith. I noticed there was a great acceptance of all kinds of opinions, beliefs and worldviews, but, when it came to Christianity, some people were negative almost to the point of hostility. As I probed deeper, I began to discover that there was a reliance on hearsay and that many were just naïve about or ignorant of what "Christian" meant. There was a rejection of Biblical values based upon cultural influences rather than first hand experience or deep searching.

I began to draw a parallel between the acting profession and the Christian faith. Many who are outside the profession do not understand the work of the actor; the technique, pursuit of truth in performance, and the point of serious research and rehearsal. Similarly, most individuals outside of the Christian faith, and even some within the Church, do not completely understand what being a Christian means. In order to come to terms with my profession and my faith, I realized that I needed to come to terms with this dilemma. Rather than reject my worldview, I needed to seek it out; to understand what it was that I believed and who I was as a creative, performative person. I set aside mainstream acting to pursue theological study at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia in Christianity and the Arts. While there I was introduced to theologians who spoke and wrote about God's creativity and imagination; and I met writers, artists, musicians and performers who pursued their faith with artistic integrity. The time away from the business, and the study of theology have revealed something of a battle for and with the arts in the Church. While many artists have noticed a more favourable atmosphere,[7] there is still a

[5] For a thorough treatment of this phenomenon see: Frankie Schaeffer, *Addicted to Mediocrity: Twentieth Century Christians and the Arts* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1981).
[6] Since my experiences in the 1980s, there has been an increase in the area of performance standards within the Church. The Church is gradually coming to see theatre as more than a pedagogical tool, and more as a means of exploring what it is to be human.
[7] And this atmosphere is continuing to be reformed.

discrepancy between the Church's use of the arts, and the understanding or acceptance of those whose profession resides in creative spheres.[8]

1.1. Unanswered Questions

Both religious and secular circles introduce ideas that propel us towards thinking more seriously about the acting profession and its place in the Kingdom of God. A myriad of questions arise regarding the scriptures and the actor, actors and their lifestyle, the historical evidence of the Church's attitudes towards the theatre, and more. What can we know about God that will speak to the actor in his or her work? Why do the church-going public struggle to embrace and nurture an actor in the congregation? Is there any place or time in the history of the Church where theatre was theologically acceptable? If actors are not the characters that they portray, then who are they? Is the actor a deceiver; hiding his true self and, if so, how can he be trusted in reality? Is it a viable profession for those who are morally upright or should the practice be avoided? How can it be considered work, when, like other art forms, you are paid little or have a long time between paying jobs? What do we know about work in particular that would include these as viable options for a real job? What are the theological implications of this form of art and how should we look at it through the lens of Biblical theology?

While there are many more questions to ask, we must narrow our focus. When we look over the scope of the conflict, the goal of this thesis does not become an effort to deal with every individual query, but rather a focus on the overall concern. This pursuit will focus on the two-pronged, secular, and religious, concerns of work and calling: is acting a proper career and is it a vocation for a Christian?

In the course of pursuing this study, the work of other Christian artists and the writings of certain people (in particular Sayers) will give a greater understanding of the place of the artist, the imagination and, in particular the actor, in the Kingdom of God. Predominantly the writings of Dorothy L. Sayers have informed our understanding of the artist, and the actor in particular, as Christian. Her unpublished

[8] This situation varies from denomination to denomination, and can even vary between congregations of one denomination.

lectures, essays, and even simple notes hold views on the Church, creativeness, and the theatre that are refreshing.[9] Sayers' life story reveals a woman in pursuit of what she has termed "the proper job," and the ways in which she has used her own artistry as a writer to speak about the creative imagination and the work of others in the arts. Her work in the theatre and the strength of her Christian faith, have combined to give her a unique perspective on both of the questions we are pursuing. Even more interesting is that we will discover in Sayers' own nature something about the histrionic personality that fits with the actor's mindset and worldview. We will deal with the main content of her thought in later chapters, but here, in a brief narrative of her life, we will see how her temperament and disposition develop and inform her outlook on the imagination and creativity and her pursuit of the "proper job" as a theological notion.

2. DOROTHY L. SAYERS: THE DRAMATIZATION OF SELF

2.1. Why Dorothy L. Sayers?

Some might challenge the choice of Dorothy L. Sayers as a conversation partner. When examining the theological notions of vocation and work, surely there could be a better choice of theologian? Furthermore, why examine the musings of a detective novelist as opposed to the work of another more recognizable theatre practitioner such as Peter Brooke, David Mamet, Brecht or even Shakespeare? But here we run into a dilemma. Very few theatre practitioners consistently enter into the realm of Christian theology; and, while there has been some excellent work devoted to the relationships between Theology and the Arts, there has not been any in depth study of the actor, in particular the actor as a worker, from a theological standpoint. Dorothy L. Sayers is still a beacon of hope in this much-neglected area.

When pursuing a theological line of discussion, the contemporary audience is more inclined to consider the religious writings of lay-theologian C.S. Lewis than those of Dorothy L. Sayers, even though, in their day, they were equally respected for

[9] Her insights and musings have begun to inform my own thoughts about acting as work and the vocation that God has given some to pursue this type of work as either a part time or a full time profession.

their ideas. Lewis was her friend and contemporary and held an extremely high opinion of Sayers. He read her *The Man Born To Be King*[10] annually as part of his Lenten ritual; touted her as one of the great letter writers of the twentieth century; and, even more to the point, owes the genesis of his own publication of *Mere Christianity*[11] to Dorothy's ground-breaking work with the BBC Religious Broadcasts.[12] When we look at publications on Lewis, we see shelves and shelves of writing devoted to a myriad of topics surrounding his life and works.[13] In comparison, Sayers, has had very few authors and academics show an interest in her.[14] One reason may well be that it has taken time for the Church to recognize the scholarship of women as having a contribution to make to theological discussion. Whatever the rationale for this neglect, Sayers is beginning to attract more attention, and her writing provides us with just the right mix to tackle our current thesis. Her focus on work and vocation, coupled with her interest in actors, the activity of the theatre and its relationship to the Church, have drawn together the two worlds of theatre and theology.

Just how did this unusual coupling occur? What transpired in the life of this extraordinary woman that gave her the authority to speak on both these matters? We will begin by examining her life in order to find clues.[15] It may seem a bit far-fetched to some that we should begin looking at Sayers' attitudes regarding vocation and anti-theatrical prejudice by digging into her childhood, but as her biographer James Brabazon has said regarding Dorothy, "the child is mother to the woman."[16] In the

[10] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Man Born to Be King* (London: Gollancz, 1943).
[11] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).
[12] See Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Christ of the Creeds and Other Broadcast Notes of World War II*, ed. Suzanne Bray (Hurspierpoint: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1941, 2008). Introduction by Suzanne Bray, 29-30.
[13] As of April 2011, the Wade Centre informed me that, currently, there were researchers actively working on publications regarding Lewis and Tolkien but, other than academic research, no one had been interested in Sayers for quite some time.
[14] See Laura K. Simmons, *Creed Without Chaos: Exploring Theology in the Writings of Dorothy L. Sayers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005). 12.
[15] This is not intended as a pun, given Sayers' fame as a writer of detective fiction.
[16] James Brabazon, *Dorothy L. Sayers: The Life of a Courageous Woman* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1981). 273.

case of this renowned detective novelist, playwright, and Christian apologist, we find a teleology revealed in the influences and experiences of her formative years.[17]

2.2. The Early Years

Dorothy L. Sayers was born in 1893 in Oxford to Mary and Henry Sayers. Her father, a Church of England clergyman, took a parish in the Fen countryside of Bluntisham, where Dorothy spent her childhood.[18] Her parents took an active part in her upbringing, with the aid of a governess and in a manner that was very similar to the Charlotte Mason approach to home education, a popular method of the period.[19] Dorothy had a vivid imagination and a strongly outgoing personality that were encouraged and became incorporated into her education through dramatized readings, performances, plays and theatre attendance. Biographer Barbara Reynolds describes this period of her life:

> Her childhood was active and varied, with plenty of space and opportunity for self-expression. Her creative imagination developed early. She told herself stories in bed at night, sometimes speaking the dialogue audibly, to the amusement of her elders.[20]

Sayers, in two attempts, in 1932 and 1934, to write her autobiography echoes these same observations. *My Edwardian Childhood*[21] was straight autobiography, while *Cat O'Mary*[22] used the same information but in the form of fiction: both were unfinished.[23] These two provide an excellent means of watching Sayers discover, and

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[17] When we move into our chapter on Vocation we will again see the importance of childhood development on the active life of the individual. Human nature and propensity often reveals clues and hints towards a person's capabilities and inclinations that influence the choice of activity in adult life.

[18] Her knowledge of the area came into use in *The Nine Tailors*.

[19] The method focuses on a living education using literature, poetry and the creative arts. French is taught by enacting the language; thus, the Sayers family use of Molière for French practice is understandable. For more details see Karen Andreola, *A Charlotte Mason Companion* (Quarryville: Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company, 1998). and Catherine Levison, *Charlotte Mason Education* (Beverly Hills: Champion Press, 2000).

[20] Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). 17.

[21] Dorothy L. Sayers, "My Edwardian Childhood," in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Child and Woman of her Time*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2002).

[22] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Cat O' Mary," in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Child and Woman of her Time*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2002).

[23] Sayers turned her attention to the creation of a love interest suitable for Wimsey. It is the common consensus that Harriet Vane's character is that of Dorothy. In *Gaudy Night*, she is able to use the character to speak with her own voice and muse through some of her thoughts on women, work and marriage. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970).

then comment upon, herself. The research and self-examination involved revealed a peculiar ability: at a very early age she was able to differentiate between reality and imagination in fiction,[24] an aptitude that would help her in later years.

The in-depth study of her own creative imagination produced a particular observation important to Sayers' approach to creativity in general. She concluded that the imagination could be divided into two categories: the "unselfconscious kind of imagination" and the "purely literary and creative." [25] The first, the unselfconscious, illustrated by a child imagining and believing in fairies or frightening things in the corner of the bedroom, makes the subject, in a sense, real. The second, the pure imagination, found in the enacted adventures or stories of fiction, recognizes and employs a temporary reality with the underlying knowledge that none of it is true. Sayers never had the unselfconscious childhood fears experienced by other children; although, in one humerous experiment, she unsuccessfully tried to scare herself at night to experience fear. She had the peculiar ability to be able to put herself into all kinds of imaginary situations, to indulge in play-acting and the creation of adventures without any of the adverse effects of nightmares or irrational terrors. This gave her the chance to explore all the nuances of the experience without actual firsthand knowledge; a talent that is key both to the writing of fiction and the art of the actor.

The child, Dorothy, was able to explore the self through two worlds: the dramatic and fictitious; the everyday and real; and then to incorporate the former into the latter. She blended play and the theatrical into her daily living, as in a 1907 letter with the salutation "Fair Cuz (as Shakespeare put it in plays)."[26] The French language was learned by experience through the theatrical adaptations of novels, and staged readings, which developed into a full-blown romp of continuous role-playing when she was in her early teens. She adopted the pseudonym of Athos from *The Three Musketeers* as a signatory alias and extended the use of pseudonyms from

[24] We will discuss this further when we examine the concept of the double consciousness of the actor.
[25] Dorothy L. Sayers, "My Edwardian Childhood," in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Child and Woman of her Time*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2002). 13.
[26] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers; 1899-1936: The Making of a Detective Novelist.*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (New York: Martins Press, 1995). 5.

character names in the book to the entire family and household. She addressed them as such in her correspondence and wrote her letters "in character."[27]

Play-acting, however, can be more than mere child's play, it can also be a means of finding personality and of establishing character. When she transferred her childhood memories into novel form in *Cat O' Mary,* Sayers had began to consider the notion that character creates itself not only in fiction but in the human trait of imitation and the exploration of self. She illustrates this in a discussion in the novel; Aunt Millicent complains about young Katherine's "changeable personality," and the following dialogue occurs:

> "Why shouldn't she be at her age?" Said the elder Mrs Warrick, gruffly. "Shows her brains. She's choosing a character for herself."
>
> "I like children to be natural", Objected Aunt Millicent.
>
> "Bosh!…You don't know what natural means. Nor do I. Man's an unnatural animal. Makes himself in his own image. The child's always acting – Quite right too. She'll have to try herself out in a lot of characters before she finds the one that suits her."[28]

In a later dialogue, Aunt Agatha also expresses her wisdom on the subject of self when Mrs. Lammas, Katherine's mother, complains that she wants her young daughter to "be herself." The Aunt replies:

> "Be herself indeed!"…"I suppose you think you are asking her to do something easy. My dear Margaret, the art of appearing natural is the last word in sophistication. It is natural to children to be as artificial as possible. The more brains they have, the more they act a part. And if one acts a part long enough, one becomes it. If you pretend hard to be a Saint you may end by being a Saint. Or contrariwise. But you won't turn into a Saint by being yourself."[29]

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[27] Her mother became Cardinal Richelieu; her father, King Louis XIII; and her cousin Ivy was addressed as Athos' love interest, the Duchess of Chevreuse.
[28] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Cat O' Mary," in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Child and Woman of her Time*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2002). 63.
[29] Ibid, 64.

2.3. From Child to Woman

At fifteen, the bright and scholarly Dorothy became a boarder at the Godolphin School in Salisbury. She continued to have the air of theatricality which, coupled with her keen academic mind, made it difficult to fit in very well with her peers. Her biographers agree that Godolphin was not a happy experience for her, although she hid much of this in her correspondence.[30] Miss Douglas, the headmistress, provided Dorothy with a means of escape by encouraging her passion for writing and performing. A great deal of her waking hours were spent writing new adaptations and scripts; even a school friend she invites home for Christmas is sought after because "…she is awfully keen on acting and we could do ripping things…"[31]. Finally, Dorothy, faced with the task of deciding what she was going to do once she had finished school, asked her teachers if she should pursue a career in acting. While Miss Bagnal encouraged her to attend Tree's School,[32] it is this part of Dorothy's correspondence that is intriguing, "Miss Douglas rather thinks I should probably be a greater success as a dramatist than as an actor".[33] Even at that early age, the playwright was recognized.

Dorothy was awarded a scholarship to Somerville College, Oxford. Amongst other scholarly women, she was able to indulge her performative nature more freely. She wrote, acted in and attended plays, and also performed as a violinist and singer in concerts at the University. It was at Oxford that she met Muriel St. Clare Byrne[34] an important later influence. Sayers finished with first class honours in modern languages and medieval literature. but was left with a bit of a void after Oxford. This was partially due to feeling a lack of closure; women were not yet awarded degrees, and partly due to the difficulty she had finding just what she was meant to "do".

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[30] See Brabazon. 33.
[31] Ibid, 49.
[32] The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) established by actor and theatre manager, Beerbohm Tree in 1904.
[33] Sayers, *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers; 1899-1936: The Making of a Detective Novelist.*16.
[34] Byrne later became a teacher at RADA in London and was Sayers' co-author for the play *Busman's Honeymoon*. It was Byrne's idea that Dorothy should write for theatre; possibly she remembered Dorothy's talent for dramatization in College.

2.4. Career Options

Her university years ended in 1915, when Britain was in the midst of World War 1. In this difficult time for the entire country, Sayers was having difficulty establishing herself. She seemed to float in limbo. She did a stint as a teacher and, after the war, as a secretary in France, but she knew these jobs were not quite right. Although she did manage to publish two books of poetry, no form of self-dramatization seemed to help her obtain the type of work that would stimulate her high-spirited imagination. She had reached an age when most women of her time would be married, but the war was devastating to the male population. She also had particular notions about a suitable partner, for "I want someone to fight with."[35]

Finally, Sayers landed a good job as a copywriter for Benson's Advertising Agency. Her life seemed full and her financial worries over, but the greatest trial was yet to come. As mentioned above, she recognized that she had the ability to step back from life and observe. This capacity came to her aid when her private life was falling apart. First, she experienced a devastating break-up of a relationship and then was forced to think through to a solution when, after another failed relationship, she took "sick leave" and gave birth to a son out of wedlock. She placed the baby, John Anthony, in foster care with her cousin Ivy and returned to the office without seeming to miss a step.[36] Her days in the office were professional and jovial, whilst her nights were spent broken-hearted and in tears. Even when her life seemed to sort itself out Sayers continued to exist in two spheres: in one, the celebrated author and playwright, animated, humorous and energetic and in the other, a very private woman with a secret son and, later, and difficult marriage and home life. This ability is important to note when we speak of actors later. It is possible that this peculiar character trait made it possible for Sayers to completely understand the mindset and worldview of the actor.

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[35] Brabazon. 63.

[36] Sayers put the notion of the double self to use in *Murder Must Advertise.* Lord Peter Wimsey, amateur sleuth, leads a double life as the fictitious Deathe Bredon, advertising copy editor, in order to solve the crime. Dorothy L. Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933).

2.5. Dramatization and Sayers' Writing

Crystal Downing's *Writing Performances*[37] finds Sayers' performative nature to be a direct link to who she was as a writer.

> Even in her professional life Sayers manifested a flair for the histrionic, with showy baubles dangling from her ears and, occasionally a Marie Antoinette wig covering her hair loss. It is as though Sayers recognized that the actions one performs become a type of advertising for the self…"[38]

Downing further finds that Sayers' ability to dramatize life and "perform" informed her search for identity and influenced her genre of writing. "Because the performance of identity is an effect of the performativity of style, whether strokes of paint on a canvas or ink on paper, the real Dorothy L. Sayers varies according to which theatre of representation stages her writing performances."[39] Even Sayers writes of herself: "I dramatized myself, and have at all periods of my life continued to dramatize myself, into a number of egotistical impersonations of a very common type, making myself the heroine (or more often the hero) of countless dramatic situations – but at all times with a perfect realization that I was the creator, not the subject of these fantasies."[40]

Her imaginative spirit and sense of fun were stimulated at Benson's, she was thereby free to use it to capacity. The agency provided her with the means to pay her bills, freeing her to pursue life as a writer of detective fiction. In the midst of using wordplay for slogans, she created Lord Peter Wimsey – her great detective and her ticket out of the everyday workforce. Sayers fully admits that she wrote detective novels to make money. The Wimsey novels gave her the exposure necessary to acquire a new circle of acquaintances. She became a member of the Detective Club with, amongst others, G.K. Chesterton and Agatha Christie; and began to write radio talks for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

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[37] Crystal Downing, *Writing Performances* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
[38] Ibid. 1.
[39] Ibid. 156.
[40] Reynolds. 18.

Her first book, *Whose Body?*, which introduced Wimsey, was a moderate success. It was followed by several others, eventually providing her with the means to leave the firm and devote herself to writing full time. Her time in advertising was further used when it became the background for one of her books, *Murder Must Advertise,* in which she found another means to explore the notion of character and imagination by giving Wimsey an alter ego: Deathe Brendon. Over the course of her novels and short stories, Sayers developed and transformed Lord Peter from a Bertie Wooster-style fop to a sympathetic and understanding man, able to marry. His future wife, novelist Harriet Vane, is agreed by many to be the fulfilment of Sayers own character revealed in *My Edwardian Childhood*, fictionalized in *Cat O' Mary* and introduced in *Strong Poison*. Once Vane and Wimsey were successfully married, Sayers was ready to re-define herself; moving into a new sphere.

2.6. In Her Element: Sayers' Rediscovery of Theatre

Long time Oxford friend, Muriel St. Clare Byrne, now taught at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; and she used her knowledge of drama to persuade Sayers to put Lord Peter Wimsey on the stage. They combined their talents to write the play, *Busman's Honeymoon*. It was successfully produced for the West End of London, prior to Sayers writing the novel version of the same story and was the experience that moved her back into her comfort zone. During the rehearsal of this play and that of her next, *Love All,*[41] Sayers received a request that was to solidify her playwriting career and establish her credibility as a lay-theologian. On the recommendation of Charles Williams, the Friends of the Festival at Canterbury invited her to be the author of their next Cathedral play.

The theme for the festival was Artistry and Craftsmanship. At this point in her career we can see her leave behind novel writing as her primary medium and devote herself to playwriting, the exploration of theological concepts, and Church dogma and doctrine. *The Zeal of Thy House* was successfully staged for the Canterbury Festival in 1937, and was followed by the *Devil To Pay* the following year. The head of BBC religious broadcasting, Dr. Walsh, approached her to write a nativity play; *He That*

[41] Alzina Stone Dale, ed., *Love All and the Busman's Honeymoon* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1984).

Should Come led to other commissions, which will be discussed below. The writing of plays and participating in the workings of theatre offered Sayers the opportunity to let go of the need to restrain her personality. She was amongst people who, like herself, had energy, vivacity and a flair for the dramatic. Reynolds describes this first step back into the theatrical world:

> Dorothy was now in her element. … She found herself in the uninhibited world of actors. "There was I" she once said to me, talking about this period in her life, "stiff in my way with strangers, suddenly plunged among people who called each other 'darling' at first sight and immediately embraced without the slightest embarrassment."[42]

2.7. Words Become Flesh: The Actors and Theology

Her observations of theatre and actors, in particular, informed ideas regarding work and calling. These were not fifth-form girls putting on a show for the rest of the school, nor was it children play-acting with mummy and daddy; acting was more than a lark or a means of self-discovery. Sayers was introduced for the first time to the inner, backstage workings of a professional theatre. These were people whose very being centres on the production of plays. The actors were just as serious about their work whether or not money was not involved, and they displayed a familial sort of camaraderie that Dorothy had heretofore not experienced.

There was a driving force within all of those involved in a play that Dorothy had found within herself, as a writer. These people focused on every detail of the production, from the correct type of buttons on a jacket to the placement of props. In addition, the actors displayed a fastidious attention to detail where their characters were concerned; coming in early to go through bits of dialogue for timing, getting a feel for props and costumes, giving every effort to portray the characters the author had envisioned. Something gripped her inner spirit when, here amongst actors, she saw this inward drive enfleshed. Sayers understood the burning desire to create something, but in the theatre she saw her own creations brought to life through

[42] Reynolds. *Dorothy L. Sayers*. 265.

another artist; the discipline and integrity required for true physical, vocal and emotional representation.

Her experience in theatre informed her thought processes becoming an analogy for her theological musings on transcendence, the sacramental, and, most importantly, the nature of the *imago*. She expanded upon these concepts in her BBC talks and in her thoughts about the vocation of the artist in *The Mind of the Maker*.[43] She began to ponder man as the *imago* in a new way; performers enflesh the word. No longer did the words she wrote enter only the mind of the reader, but in live performance the writing was seen and heard together; her words were uttered by an actor whose interpretation brought a living dimension to words on a page. Wimsey was no longer in the imagination; he was standing before her; her written description and the actor's power of interpretation combined to bring him forth.

The audience, too, would not then be an inactive receptor, but would respond to the onstage action with laughter and applause (and sometimes silence and coughing). Unlike the visual artist or writer who interacts with the work privately and then steps away, the performer, dancer, actor and musician rely on a live audience whose reaction adds to the performance. According to Downing, there is no legacy other than the response of the audience to the performance.[44] Sayers, however, could witness the immediate response from the audience in the performance; and then, once the curtain had come down, experience the aftermath of the play's effect on the individuals involved.

Working through the details of the Canterbury theme, Artistry and Craftsmanship, encouraged her to further ponder notions of God's own creativity and man's creative work in the world. She knew how the creative act worked in her own mind once she had an idea and then began putting her energy into writing. The *Imago Dei* first began to take form in a monologue in *The Zeal of Thy House*. God the Father was seen as "the Idea;" God the Son as "the Energy;" and the response and reaction witnessed in the coming together of actor and audience she would later equate with the movement of God the Holy Spirit in the world, calling it "the Power."

[43] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987).
[44] Downing. 99-100.

We will return to Sayers' development of the Trinity and the image of God outside of her plays in more detail later.

Sayers was able to produce works that could contain biblical truths and church dogma in a manner that would reach and be understood by the British public. The 1941 BBC production of *The Man Born to Be King* is one of her greatest achievements in this genre. The cycle of 12 plays on the life of Christ to be written by Sayers for *The Children's Hour* was the concept of Dr. Walsh. Considering its success, it is difficult to believe that the production was almost scrapped.

Sayers was not happy with the producer of choice, she preferred Val Gielgud but he was not with that department. *The Children's Hour* team were glowing in their review of the first script but the producer's assistant made some editing suggestions for a small portion of the script. Sayers took offence and responded in anger. She had been accustomed to calling the shots and had no experience working with a committee or group, who were, in fact, also experienced dramatists, writers and editors. She insisted that the creative worker should be allowed work without any governing authority, commentary or appraisal from outside sources.[45] Not herself from the BBC writing stable, she was not going to allow any other writer to interfere with her production. In the end, Brabazon's description of her behaviour over the incident shows another side of her character:

> … let it be said now, by someone who has been a professional in the theatrical business for almost thirty years, as actor, writer, editor, director and producer, that in this matter, whatever the outcome, it was the staff of the BBC who behaved like professionals, and Dorothy who behaved like a spoilt and hysterical amateur, reinforcing her tantrums by an extremely dubious application of religious doctrine.[46]

Once Walsh had smoothed over the problem by changing the production team and securing Gielgud, Sayers got back to work. The main cause of disagreement with *The Children's Hour* was that they wanted to focus the dialogue on its youthful audience. Sayers, however, had different intentions; she did not want the biblical

[45] An attitude different from that she insists on for the playwright in a lecture two years later in Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Living Theatre, MS 124," (Wheaton: The Marion E. Wade Centre, Date Unknown).
[46] Brabazon. 200.

narrative distanced from everyday living; she would not alter her intent either by talking down to children or by using the King James tone commonly heard in the Church. In order to touch the audience the characters of the story must sound like real people therefore Sayers used the vernacular. The use of the language of the common British man caused a problem for traditionalists who happened to hear a portion of dialogue read in an interview with Sayers. Matthew, a disciple of the Lord, had a cockney accent and used American slang. Two fundamentalist groups protested about the play, petitioning the BBC to stop the production. The BBC ignored the requests, and the airdate went ahead. The first of the twelve plays aired just before Christmas and the response from the British public was overwhelmingly positive. This confirmed Sayers' theories that the creative imagination could be used to inspire God's people to draw near to Him in a unique manner; in a way that preaching and Bible study do not.[47]

With the success of the radio dramas behind her, Sayers continued to work with Dr. Walsh but in a very different capacity. In *The Christ of the Creeds*,[48] Suzanne Bray has outlined Sayers' contribution to the BBC wartime religious broadcasts. Bray discovered that, unbeknownst to the British public, the BBC religious theology during wartime was the theology of Dorothy L. Sayers. Sayers edited every broadcast and Walsh read letters from her on air verbatim. She occasionally read some of the on-air talks but so did T. S. Eliot and other writers. The difference between these talks and the other work that she did for Walsh was that here Sayers had requested that she remain anonymous and that she receive no pay for any of the work. Bray contends that the reasoning behind this secrecy was that Sayers neither wanted her reputation as a detective novelist to diminish the work nor was she comfortable being known as a theologian. Yet, from the moment she made it clear that she was Christian she was constantly sought out as a lecturer on topics of theological importance. From the moment she used her playwriting skills towards the explanation of Christian doctrine, many Church of England officials took notice and

[47] I am certain that the public's positive reception validated her animosity towards the original production team; giving her a sense of personal triumph over adversity. However, I agree with Brabazon's earlier remarks that Dorothy's behaviour towards *The Children's Hour* team was inappropriate.

[48] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Christ of the Creeds and Other Broadcast Messages to the British People of World War II*, ed. Suzanne Bray (Hurstpierpoint: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2008).

her reputation was established.[49] Even when she focused her talents on translating Dante's *Commedia*, her desire to discuss theological notions and to find common ground between the church and the theatre continued. We find this in her lecture notes, but the most useful source for it is the hundreds of her letters available.

2.8. The Great Letter Writer

Sayers was a very devoted friend and letter writer. Her correspondence contains wonderful insight into those who helped to shape her ideas and her own theological convictions; and concerning theatrical endeavors. It reveals the importance of her circle of influence. She freely expressed her thoughts in her correspondence. Her audience were family, friends and colleagues; including some who were celebrated, Charles Williams, Chesterton, Lewis and Eliot. She also spent time answering women, men, and children who had written with questions; and the scholarly: doctors of the church and the academy who sought (and sometimes argued with) her opinion. Sayers was known, on the one hand, to write a long, careful letter explaining church dogma to a seeker of the faith. On the other hand, some clergy received sarcastic and short-tempered notes; they were educated doctors of the church, entrusted with teaching correct doctrine to the laity and should already understand Church dogma and biblical truth.

The relationships that Sayers established and maintained were of very high importance to her. They comforted her, were sources of humour, sharpened her wits, and challenged her to explain her faith clearly. Amongst these, Sayers kept a special place for actors. These particular letters, notes and cards give the impression that, in comparison to others, Sayers felt that these people needed a unique sort of care, support and encouragement. The tone of the correspondence to the actors was very different; she called them "darling" and "dearest" and took great care to be positive, acknowledge their work and inspire them. She treated the bit performer with the same status as the principal player, and often attended performances, much to their surprise and delight.

[49] She was the only female speaker invited to the theological conference in Malvern in 1941. Her paper was well received, and will be discussed in more detail later. Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Church's Responsibility," in *Malvern, 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, ed. Archbishop Temple of York (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941).

The amount of correspondence available is incredible. When we consider that, among other pursuits, Sayers was writing for the newspaper, radio and the theatre; editing for Walsh; giving frequent lectures to various societies; carrying out her duties as Church Warden, translating manuscripts: and participating in the ministry of St. Annes, Soho; she did this minor task with such avidity. Letter writing was common but Sayers made it an art.

2.9. The Final Chapter

Dorothy L. Sayers had almost finished translating Dante's *Paradiso* when, just before Christmas, she collapsed in her hall and died from heart failure. The power of her work, however, continues. Her translation of the *Commedia*, finished by Barbara Reynolds, is still the most widely used in the English language. Her works, notes and original collections are carefully archived at the Marion E. Wade Centre in Wheaton, Illinois. New releases of further Wimsey novels by Jill Paton Walsh are based on Sayers' notes. To the surprise and delight of many who have loved her for years, Sayers is slowly coming into the limelight as more than a friend of the great C. S. Lewis. Sayers is known as more than a detective novelist, but also as a scholar, playwright, translator and theologian.

3. SUMMARY

Looking back on the life of Dorothy L. Sayers, one biographer, James Brabazon ponders the notion of the creation of character:

> Her own life is a classic illustration of one of the deepest, least answerable questions of all – do we create the circumstances of our lives, or are we created by them? To what extent do we choose what we become?"[50]

We could add: at what point does God intervene in our lives, in the building of character? Are there points where He allows us to invent ourselves? Sayers believed God was involved in her daily living. She tried to remember the sacred value of everything that she did. Her ideas on the sacred shaped her views on ordinary work;

[50] Brabazon. 273.

strongly connecting it to vocation.[51] Sayers use of the term "proper job" has informed this thesis. For her it meant the things upon which she felt called or compelled to focus. Lewis argued that there were times that she used this terminology as an excuse to get out of doing something that she did not want to do. But her life was packed with research, writing, speaking, church and community activities,[52] and household duties; some of which she found interesting and others which were dull but necessary.[53]

We have seen here that for Sayers theatricality was a vital extension of her life. She fully understood and accepted the notion of dramatizing oneself, whereas most of us would hardly recognize this human trait, let alone admit it. Through this short biographical study, we can see how the imagination plays a great part in creating who we are as people. The performative aspect of Sayers (and my own) character informs this thesis, just as much as do her ideas on theatre and the attitude of the church toward it. She saw that theatre, as well as the other arts, were a manifestation of God's imagination. She recognized God's creative handiwork in theatre through its ability to speak to the human psyche in a manner that no other medium could. She took very seriously those people who, in her opinion, were called to the task of performing this art. Sayers saw in her day the same misunderstandings of the actor that became evident decades later in my own experience. It is, however, not just a trademark of the twentieth or twenty-first centuries; but there is something about dramatization, performance or imitative art that has troubled the minds of men and women for centuries. It is this very issue that is at the heart of the idea of the "proper job," which we will address as we study the theatre in general and work, vocation, and acting in particular.

[51] We will discuss Sayers' unique attitude towards the sacramental in Chapter Six.

[52] Sayers served as an air raid warden during the war and was actively involved in charitable work at St. Annes, Soho, directing plays and helping out.

[53] I must not neglect to say that her home life was one delightedly filled with animals; a practice that provided an endless source of amusement and enlivened her correspondence with illustrations and poetry. She cared for several cats and kittens, kept fowl, and even raised the occasional pig whose pet status did not save it from producing good bacon when the time came. She also adopted two porcupines in the London Zoo.

4. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ACTING?

Before moving on, it is important that we establish clear parameters for what we mean by "acting" in this thesis. The work of theatre can be separated into many genres or styles. There are avante-garde forms such as the Theatre of the Absurd; companies, such as the Commedia del Arte, that preserve an old style of portrayal; historically accurate productions of ancient Greek, Medieval or Baroque plays; and theatre, such as that of Brecht, that challenges the audience to be involved. Although these styles have their place in the world of theatre, the type acting that we will constantly refer to is that which Mark Twain called "acting naturally"[54] and what Stanislavski would have defined as performing the human soul or spirit.[55]

An actor may be called upon to work in many of the aforementioned genres and in many styles in the course of his career. Whilst some actors even focus the bulk of their work on a particular style, the natural or realistic portrayal is the manner of representation that is most accepted by the average audience member today. It is a form of acting used internationally, by television and film artists; and is the dominant approach taught in theatre schools. Every aspect of the training is meant to prepare the actor to meet the demands of any given role and to portray it with truth and honesty, whatever the chosen style. Thus, the techniques discussed in this dissertation can be applied to a variety of types of acting. There will be particular aspects of performance addressed as they arise, but we will leave the final development of our picture of acting to our discussion in the final chapters. We will continue now to Chapter Two and introduce the problems that have arisen historically, with the theatre in general and with actors in particular, in order to establish the question of its status as a "proper job".

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[54] Randall Knoper, *Acting Naturally: Mark Twain in the Culture of Performance* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

[55] Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, trans. Elizabeth R. Hapgood (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1983). 15.

CHAPTER TWO:

ANTI-THEATRICAL PREJUDICE AND SOME DEFENCES OF THEATRE

This thesis asks if acting is a "proper job" and, if so, whether it could possibly be considered a calling, a vocation suitable for a Christian. Given the proliferation of theatre schools, acting classes on offer, and the number of professional and non-professional theatre companies, today's mindset might think that these questions are absurd. The function of this chapter, therefore, is to reveal the ways in which the problem has manifested itself, and locate some of the roots. Our best approach, therefore, is to take a selective look at the history of theatre in Western societies, and chronicle some of the anti-theatrical attitudes, utterances and actions and understand why they have come about. This is not a detailed analysis of theatre history, nor is it a comprehensive look at anti-theatrical prejudice; its purpose is to show that the challenges with acting are complex and deep-rooted, and go back for centuries. While some of the material here is not central to the thesis, its general pattern affects the overall development of theatre and our argument. In some cases, the discussion will balance negative attitudes and opinions by presenting pro-theatre reasoning, and the conscious effort made by some to address the accusations against the theatre and its actors. We will be highlighting some points in history and leaving out others, seeking some of the main criticisms of theatre, in order to move on to our positive explorations of acting. In the process, we will also discover that the challenges to, and prejudices against, acting are not only theological but also occur in the secular mindset. But we will see that criticism of, and even antipathy and opposition to, acting has been widespread and long lasting in the Church.

With the exception of the Greek and Roman theatre, the focus will gradually centre on the English speaking stage. Although this may seem to narrow the field somewhat, it can safely be said that similar arguments have arisen throughout the European continent and some reference will be made to other contributions when applicable. Some of the information may surprise and even amuse, but some will

disturb and annoy. What may amaze the reader is that our exploration of the place of the actor in today's society still shows some social attitudes riddled with ancient misconceptions and, in some instances, blind prejudice.

Consider one line of criticism and questioning. In the *Prolegomena* for his *Theo-Drama,*[56] Hans Urs Von Balthazar has stated, "Perhaps the actor does embody a dangerous temptation for all of us—that is, the possibility of not being ourselves, the temptation of having more than one 'I'."[57] Indeed, the actor's ability to portray the Other has often baffled those outside the acting profession. Whether from the perspective of the churched or of the un-churched, there seems to be something that is disquieting about the idea of a person flawlessly portraying an Other than himself. We will find increasingly, as our exploration of acting as a "proper job" develops in the course of the thesis, that there is more and more to this job than being proper. Acting will involve, for instance, an understanding of ethical behaviour, truth and trust; deep ideas on what it is to be human; and much more. Yet in the midst of this, the actor has been given many different monikers that have little to do with his job.

1. ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

1.1. The Actor as Liar

There is evidence of a misinterpretation of the actor's job from the earliest theatrical sources. The following anecdote from ancient Greece describes a meeting between the aging Legislator, Solon, and the Actor, Thespis.

> Solon…went to see Thespis himself act: and after the play was done, he addressed him and asked him if he was not ashamed to tell so many lies before such a number of people; and Thespis replying that it was no harm to do so in a play, Solon vehemently struck his staff against the ground: "Ah," said he, "if we honour and commend such play as this, we will find it some day in our business."[58]

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[56] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: Vol I: Prolegomena* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).
[57] Ibid. 105.
[58] Plutarch, "Thespis Meets a Critic," in *A Source Book of Theatrical History*, ed. A.M. Nagler (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1952).

Solon could not wrap his mind around this type of narrative activity; for him it was all lies. Solon's concern was one of morality, but the enactment of a story in this manner represented a much deeper ethical problem. If the actor could counterfeit someone else in public for entertainment then how can we trust his private, everyday dealings? If this was entertainment then what prevents any of us from play-acting when we do business? Just what was it that Thespis was doing?

The performances of Thespis were far removed from that of today's natural style. They were a ritualistic enactments, in which the poetic utterance was accompanied by physical action to tell the story. Dance and poetry were intrinsically intertwined; the poets of ancient Greece were renowned for their use of dance and of masks to heighten the dramatic action of the telling.[59] If we use our imaginations, we can see Homer rendering his *Odyssey,* not in the forms to which we are accustomed today (a silent fireside read or at the lectern, with a static plummy intonation), but as a living infusion of fluid movement, masks and vocal modulation. These pantomimes were so adept that one performer with various masks could enact an entire story involving several characters.[60] Larger presentations gradually changed from a narrative, danced and spoken only by a chorus, to a mimetic portrayal of characters by three actors, with choral narration between the scenes. This is the Theatre discussed by Plato and Aristotle in which the terms actor, poet and dancer were synonymous; so far removed from real human interaction that the difference between actor and character was obvious. One may wonder at Solon's objections, but even Plato had reasons for rejecting the theatre in his *Republic*.

Plato's objection was a metaphysical and epistemological one that bordered on the religious. His ideology rested on the belief in perfect forms; every object in our reality is based on its prototype in the eternal realm. This notion becomes problematic where the imitative arts were concerned. In his opinion, imitative artistic expression was a mere copy, of a copy, of the true form of the object, and therefore, at best

[59] A.M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1952). 6-7.
[60] The medium of physical theatre is an exploration of the physical body and its use for dramatic presentation, that can use vocal or poetic utterance; but, for the most part, the art of the pantomime dancer faded into obscurity in eighth century Byzantium. The modern equivalent of transformational movement is still evident in the mime of Marcel Marceau, the mask and physical work of the Swiss pantomime troupe *Mummenschanz,* and the work of the Canadian *Cirque de Soleil*; these, however, do not utilize the actor as narrator in the same manner as did Greek theatre.

inaccurate, or at worst a deliberate deception. Theatre fell under his scrutiny for the very nature of the actor's technique. The actor, as a man, was already only a reflection of the true form of Man; as a character, he distanced both himself and the viewer yet further from the true form of Man, confusing the viewer's perception of the truth. "Hence, since the tragedian is an imitator, we may predicate of him likewise, that he, along with all the other imitators, is the third in descent from the sovereign and therefore the truth…"[61] Again we have the accusation that the actor deals in un-truth, counterfeiting or lies, but here it is in connection with metaphysical/theological dogma. Plato, however, is not the only person to use his religious ideology to judge the craft of acting.

Moving quickly ahead to the Roman Empire, we see again the accusation of un-truth now arising from the early Christian Church in Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*.[62]

> And then all this business of masks, I ask if God can be pleased with it, who forbids the likeness of anything to be made, how much more of his own image? The author of truth loves no falsehood; all that is feigned is adultery in his sight. The man who counterfeits voice, sex or age, who makes a show of false love and hate, false sighs and tears, he will not approve, for he condemns all hypocrisy.[63]

Tertullian now sees the actor as one who tampers not only with the true form of man, but also with the truth of the Image of God. By Christian understanding, Man is already the image or reflection of God. An actor forsakes his own uniqueness as that image by portraying a fictitious character with no true life; he obscures or forfeits the *imago,* rendering the self imageless. In doing so he has chosen, from the Church's angle, to reject God's order.

Other Church Fathers, especially Chrysostom and Augustine, also had similar objections when it came to the theatre, although their arguments were sometimes different. Chrysostom's dislike of the theatre stems from his desire to find pleasure only in Christ and not in worldly things. "He gave thee land, not that, cutting off the chief portions of it you could spend the good gifts of God upon harlots and dancers

[61] Plato, "Book X," in *The Republic of Plato* (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1904). 339.
[62] Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* (London: William Heinemann Ltd. , 1931).
[63] Ibid. 287.

and actors…"[64] In the theatre itself, "There, indeed is unchaste pleasure, loose laughing and drunkenness, buffoonery, filthy language…"[65] He promoted a solitary focus on the things of God in the fruits of the Spirit. The pious should avoid distractions to have a clear understanding of the consequences of damnation; it might be difficult to disentangle one's thoughts from the pleasures of the world. The theatre, to him, caused confusion.

> For when you go up to the theatre and sit feasting your eyes with the naked limbs of women… through figures, yea and even through old men, (for many there put masks upon themselves and play the parts of women) tell me how will you begin to remain chaste afterwards, these narratives, these spectacles, these songs occupying your soul, and dreams of this sort henceforth succeeding. For it is the nature of the soul for the most part to raise visions of such things as it wishes for and desires in the daytime.[66]

Chrysostom compared the actor with *eutrapelai,* a type of jesting that has a double meaning, adjusting itself to its hearer; it is so mobile that it can revolve in many directions. Ergo, actors, were two-faced and not trustworthy.

In contrast, Augustine, does not reject theatre immediately. He lays out the pros and cons of the craft before finally opposing the theatre and its participants. In his *Soliloquies*, he uses a conversation between himself and Reason to examine the nature of falsity. Reason separates falsehood into two categories, the fallacious and the fabulous, of which actors are in the latter category:

> That is correctly called fallacious which includes the desire to deceive someone …On the other hand, what I call the fabulous kind of falsehood is the kind which is committed by those who tell fables. The difference between deceivers and fabulists is this: every deceiver wants to deceive, but not everyone who tells a fable has the desire to deceive. For farces and comedies and many poems are full of fables whose purpose it is to give pleasure rather than to deceive, and almost everyone who tells a joke tells a fable. [67]

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[64] Chrysostom, "Homilies on Philippians," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1979). 233.
[65] Chrysostom, "Homilies on Colossians," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979). 262.
[66] Chrysostom, "Homilies on Thessalonians," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979). 347.
[67] Augustine, "Soliloquies," in *The Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine*, ed. Thomas F. Gilligan (New York: CIMA Publishing Co., Inc., 1948). 399.

Regarding the actor in particular, Reason says that the nature of his art and the art of others requires that he use falsehood in order to render truth, just as a mirror must show a reverse or false image in order to be a true mirror.

> Because it is one thing to want to be false; it is quite different to be unable to be true. So, we can group the works of men like comedies, tragedies and farces and other things of that type with the works of painters and sculptors…. Such things do not choose to be false nor are they false, through their own desire to be so, but they are compelled by a kind of necessity to conform as much as they are able to the artist's will. On the other hand, the actor Roscius was by choice a false Hecuba on stage, though by nature a true man; he was by choice a true tragedian in that he fulfilled his purpose… To establish their truth, the only thing in their favour is that they are false in some other regard.[68]

Barish finds that "Augustine allows the activity in question—acting—its own integrity, its own consistency, and its own mode of reality. He discovers a rationale for it rather than invidiously classifying it with lies and delusions."[69] Although Augustine does provide a good argument against such accusations of hypocrisy and lies, it is through Reason's voice that we are told we should not be self-contradictory but in all things consistent. The actor is not on the straight path that Augustine would have us all follow and, whether for pleasure or truth, the actor is dabbling in falsehood. Augustine, however, implies that the Christian should not participate in any imitative arts, especially acting. Interestingly, Augustine has employed dramatic conventions; for instance, using the voice of another, in this case Reason, to present his arguments, thereby doing precisely that of which he accuses the actor.

The labels of falsifier, liar and hypocrite[70] have shaped the thinking about the actor in other directions. If the actor does this as his daily work then, as Solon's rhetoric led him to ask, how moral or trustworthy is the person performing this act? The rhetorical arguments of the Church Fathers did damage to the actor's reputation once Christian morality began to be the norm, but Roman secular law had gone

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[68] Ibid. 401.
[69] Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981). 56.
[70] The term *hypocratus* from which we get our word hypocrite comes from the performers' use of these other faces in theatre; thus, hypocrite, outside of the theatre, refers to one who is untrustworthy because he changes face (or *persona*) in an instant as does the actor. We can see where this is going with regard to the acting profession's link to truth or untruth.

through many changes that altered the actor's status from an accepted member of society to an outcast.

1.2. The Actor as Low Class[71]

Brockett's *History of the Theatre* mentions that the most popular actors were the tragedians and the mimes[72] or pantomime dancers. The mime's artistic focus was to reproduce the human character in order to tell a story. As mentioned above, both tragic and comedic tales were told by one dancer/actor using several masks to represent a wide variety of characters. This style of performance was in such demand that a school for mimes existed in Rome in the first century. Significant to our study, Brockett outlines a class distinction between some kinds of actors and others; some tragedians obtained star status while others, mainly comedians, were contemptible. It seems that the reputation of the artist depended upon the material presented and the subject to which the artist put his skills. To the populace in the early empire, the tragic actors and most mimes were people with proper work and acceptable reputations.

In contrast, there were the street performers, circus entertainers and actors in shows whose focus was bawdy or sexual in nature. Although these people were highly trained and skilled entertainers, the choice of subject matter put them into the lower class. Over time, however, the spectacle style of entertainment gained in popularity. The mimetic comedian's ability to parody had such popularity that they acquired a form of protection from legal ramifications; without a governing body, anyone, with the exception of the emperor, could be the subject of a caricature. Eventually, many performances deteriorated to predominantly burlesque or slapstick, and the audience responded with similar raucous behaviour. The situation drastically altered the reputation of every actor and, although the public esteemed the playwright's poetic works, the actors and their theatre began to decline in status. The

[71] This section relies heavily on the research of Barish. 42-43, Oscar G. Brockett, *History of the Theatre*, 9th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Ltd., 2003). 54–55 and Cesare Molinari, *Theatre Through the Ages* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1975). 64-65.
[72] See also B Hunninger, *The Origin of the Theatre* (Amsterdam: E.M. Querido, 1955). 72.

performer, no matter their skill, style or subject matter, came to be considered low class.[73]

Barish contributes to our understanding of the performer's position by explaining that something of a caste system developed. By the 3rd and 4th century, spoken theatre was competing with dozens of other entertainments. The entertainers, gladiators, charioteers and actors, were treated like the Dhalit of India. Actors were designated to do a "dirty" job, work that was beneath the average person's dignity. As a slave class, they had a purpose, but due to the nature of their work, they were almost considered less than human. Emperor Diocletian, responsible for some of the most brutal attacks on Christians, contributed to the final stage of theatrical depravity. Diocletian, no longer comfortable with the dramatic arts just play-acting, ordered everything to be real; if it was to be performed on stage, then it must be genuine.[74] Sword fights drew blood, and love scenes displayed pornography, enticing the crowd to manner-less, bawdy behaviour. In mime and comedy, nothing was left untouched, any deed could be reproduced and all people, beliefs and races mocked or parodied. Nothing protected the rituals and practices of any cult; therefore, actors mocked and warped the newly emerging Christian rites of baptism and the Eucharist.

It is no wonder the Christian faith immediately developed a negative attitude towards the theatre, but the pagan priests did not appreciate the mocking of their gods, and there were Roman citizens who avoided public entertainments. Some forms of traditional theatre remained, but the actors, though admired for their ability, were esteemed as lower class when offstage. Regarding those who performed in the higher-class entertainment little is written, but it is probably safe to assume that, because of the existence of the plays, they were still read or performed privately.

[73] The birth of the theatrical family could possibly see its genesis in the Roman Empire. Troupes included circus-style performers, animal trainers, actors and dancers. Everyone in the troupe was quite capable of acting the spoken word in order to provide a comedy or tragedy. Actors were type cast and responsible for certain roles, e.g., ingénue, old man, young lover, villain, wise old woman. The children were trained by their elders and passed on their skills to the next generation: a tradition that we still see today.

[74] One wonders if this decision came, not from Diocletian's depravity, but from a misunderstanding of or discomfort with, the actor's art of imitation.

The whole entertainment industry was symptomatic of the cultural deterioration of the Roman Empire. Further, if anyone associated with entertainers, it would taint their reputation; therefore, actors were often shunned and ostracized from mainstream society. With the gradual shift from the pagan Roman rule into a predominantly Christian social structure, the actor's craft was so morally condemned that it was likened to prostitution.

1.3. The Actor as Immoral

After the fall of Rome, actors continued to work their trade but, due to a lack of source material, it is a difficult point in theatre history to chronicle. While written evidence of the actor's actual training is limited for the Post-Roman era, we cannot assume that, from inside this profession, the training did not continue and in doing so, take on integrity of its own. It is suggested by Benedetti that acting itself may have lost some of the technique of the orator, and could have become more of a heightened imitation of human behaviour.[75] Like the circus entertainers, the training relied on an apprenticeship approach, the next generation learning skills from the previous. Elders carefully handed down the skill of gesture and vocal inflection, and adapted it to the needs of location or the audience.[76]

As we approach the first millennium, evidence of liturgical script-style notation demonstrates a clear sense of craft and technique. The *Epitaph of Vitalis the Mime*, circa 800 gives evidence: "Using movements and words, I gave pleasure to everyone in adopting a tragic voice, bring happiness to sad hearts by divers means. [And] I used to counterfeit the face, manner and speech of those talking, so that you would have believed that many people were speaking out of one mouth."[77] The spectacles and other shows still sought to entertain and the comedy retained much of its mimicry and some bawdiness.[78] But the actors explored a craft and technique: the portrayal of an Other who was believable, could hold the attention of, and emotionally move, the audience of the period.

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[75] Jean Benedetti, *The Art of The Actor* (London: A. and C. Black, 2005). 29.
[76] Molinari. 69.
[77] As cited in Richard Beedle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 28.
[78] Barish. 67. and Molinari. 75.

The Western Roman Church's attitude continued to accept the authority of the Fathers.[79] No entertainer could attend Christian services, receive the Eucharist or be given Christian rites of burial. In order to embrace the Christian faith, an actor must give up this filthy line of work and learn another means of support.[80] The fifth century actress, Theodora, was one such example; when she converted, she gave up her profession and is said to have been a weaver. When her husband, Justinian, became emperor, however, she was instrumental in establishing theatrical entertainments at court.[81] The Eastern Byzantine Empire maintained that pantomime was a form of high art and its practice continued well into the eighth century.[82]

2. MEDIEVAL THEATRE

We have already begun to consider the Medieval theatre, we will continue here to look at certain features of it.

2.1. The Actor As Outcast

The actors themselves traveled from town to town for the opportunity to perform; they had learned to bond together for survival with a devotion to training and a family style of communal living.[83] The transitory nature of the players lives left them vulnerable to continuous misunderstanding.[84] Political instability and barbarous conditions left the commoner with a suspicion and mistrust of any stranger. We have established that, whether justifiable or not, the players had a reputation for falsifying and immorality, and they were now migrant. The only others to live without a home were the brigands, vagabonds and thieves.[85] Thus, a paradox occurred; the actor was welcomed for diversion and entertainment, but was still mistrusted and held at arm's length. The Roman Church authorities perpetuated this negative attitude by

[79] See William Tydeman, ed., *The Medieval European Stage 500-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[80] This state of affairs continued for centuries as witnessed in the sad case of the death of actor/playwright Molière. See Alfred Bates, "Death of Molière," (TheatreHistory.com 1906). Accessed July 2010, http://www.theatrehistory.com/french/moliere003.html
[81] Procopius, *The Secret History*, trans. Richard Atwater (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1961).
[82] Molinari. 75.
[83] See Brockett. 71.
[84] Molinari. 75.
[85] Brockett. 89.

publishing prohibitions against the players. Although certain noblemen, and many commoners, chose to ignore these tracts, some opposition arose from economic motives rather than religious sentiment. The troupes crossed the borders from one baron's jurisdiction to another's, owing loyalty to no one but their own group; the actor was, therefore, difficult to tax. If efforts were made to rectify the situation, they would raise another problem: giving actors a permanent place in society would legitimize the profession. There was no other choice but to continue with the current arrangement.[86]

Without personal writings from actors, there is no inside record as to their belief system or morality. However, given that the actor was moving in an environment heavily steeped in Christian doctrine, it is difficult to believe that they could be completely pagan. According to Patrick S. Diehl:

> Temporally and spatially, the medieval universe was bound and closed; its contents were elaborately interconnected, but the principle of their organization reposed in the vertical relationship of each entity, event, or object to the Creator …[87]

Thus, although the mainstream church banned the actor, the performer himself would have a Christian worldview. For the most part, the actor was left to form his own opinion about God, but his performances would have echoed the Christian doctrine of his audience. Again, while the mainstream authorities sought to eradicate them, there were individuals even within the church, who embraced the players, thus teaching them the doctrines of the faith.

2.2. The Actor in the Church

Interestingly enough, it is through the very church that fought against these players that the theatre found a way to be restored and to flourished. Speaight notes certain elements of the theatre found in the liturgy and its enactment: "The primary constituents of drama are dialogue and representation. Both are present in the liturgy,

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[86] Barish. 114. Economic difficulties with the acceptance of the actor continue into other eras, as described by Barish. 235-243.
[87] Patrick S. Diehl, *The Medieval European Religious Lyric* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985). 7.

as they were present in the happenings which the liturgy records."[88] He goes on to say: "The Central elements in the Christian economy of redemption were both narrative and act; and the sacred ministers, day by day, retold from Scripture and, where necessary, underlined in homily the things they were representing."[89] He then brings forth evidence of guidelines for gestures and vocal inflection for the priest and his acolytes written into the text of the Christian liturgy, just as an actor would note directions in a script.

This performative parallel is not lost on other scholars of Medieval Theatre.[90] Hunninger's *Origins of the Theatre,* asserts the importance of the development of the *Quem Quaeritus* found in the liturgical narrative.[91] While Hunniger's theory argues that this development points to a ritual origin for Western theatre, Eli Rozik's the *Ritual Origin of the Theatre – A Scientific Theory or Theatrical Ideology*[92] does much to refute these claims. It is not, however, the purpose of this chapter to get involved in the particulars of the origination argument, but to point up the church's involvement in or criticisms of, the theatre.

Hunninger is, however, useful for his explanation of the communal workings of the Medieval society. He explains that churches and monasteries were set in a community that extended beyond their own walls. The great cathedrals drew people towards them, creating a thriving, interactive and interdependent culture. The Church employed artisans of the highest quality for the architectural design and construction of such buildings.

Sayers' first Cathedral play *The Zeal of Thy House*[93] provides an excellent illustration of this common practice, outlining the connection between the monastic

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[88] Robert Speaight, *Christian Theatre* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960). 9.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Lynette Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003). 1. William Tydeman, "An introduction to medieval English theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. Richard Beedle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 4-9.
[91] Hunninger. Chapter 2.
[92] Eli Rozik, "The Ritual Origin of Theatre - A Scientific Theory or Theatrical Ideology," *The Journal of Religion and Theatre* Vol. 2, no. 1 (2003).
[93] In this play the Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral chooses an architect from outside their jurisdiction to oversee the Choir restoration. The ensuing scenes depict the construction integrating both the monks and the laypeople contributing to the work.

community and the secular designer and his team of workers from both ecclesiastical and lay society. This relationship extended beyond the physical structure of the building to include, among other things, craftsmen for the ornamentation and decoration of the building and musicians to collaborate on the music and lyrical arrangements.

Diehl, when discussing medieval lyrics, has recognized a symbiotic relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical community that supports Hunninger's collaborative theories regarding other performative arts:

> "The lack of formal and musical distinctions between secular and religious song…favoured their interaction, and the activity of many poets in both areas, either concurrently or successively, made interaction of various sorts even more likely. So it is not surprising that the poetry concerning secular love or friendship (the *chanson d'amour* or the Latin *amica* poem) played a major role in the shaping of the language and motifs of devotional and mystical poetry, indeed, in shaping the piety that lies behind both."[94]

The interaction between individual churches and the mimetic performers is confirmed by a number of condemnations directed at the use of the actual performers, mimes, jongleurs or histriones, during the liturgy.[95] Further, Hunninger cites a trope book that contains illuminations in which he avers that the illuminator depicted what he actually witnessed in the church for "he immortalized neither priests nor clerics, but mimes in his troparium; would he have done so, if they had not been the trope's performers?"[96] It does not depict a static chant by clergy but instead a form of worship that incorporated movement by a secular artist along with the liturgical vocalization. This form of rhetorical display, however, was not the only theatre to arise from the church.

> What is surprising is that, despite a lowering background of Antitheatrical prejudice and highly articulate opposition, dramatic ventures were not only tolerated but often actively encouraged by the establishment. Generally speaking, the material chronicling stage

[94] Diehl. 133.
[95] See Tydeman, ed., *The Medieval European Stage 500-1550*. 27. Note: This is an excellent sourcebook of medieval documentation, with a glossary of terms, useful illustrations, and a timeline pertinent to theatre.
[96] Hunninger. 83.

> activity during the middle ages offers ample testimony to the apparent indestructibility of humanity's desire to perform and to witness performances.[97]

2.3. The Actor as Educator

One of the strengths of the religious community was the opportunity for scholarship and learning. As well as a biblical and theological focus, the monastics supplemented their study of languages, Greek, Hebrew and Latin, and rhetorical delivery by reading classical literature. They were familiar with Aristotle's opinion on comedy in the *Poetics* and Plato's arguments in *The Republic,* as well as the Greek and Roman poet/playwrights. Although it was an accepted form of education, the church was not completely comfortable with the application of the pagan philosophical dialectic to the interpretation of the scriptures.[98] The influence of material is evident in other areas of Christian development but of particular interest is the adoption of dramatic forms to teach doctrine.

Among those uncomfortable with the pagan literature was the canoness of a 9th century Abbey in Gandersheim. She was so disturbed by the content of Terence's plays that she desired to edify the church and provide it with sources for study that were outside of the pagan influence. Hrotsvit of Gandersheim[99] is noted for, amongst other writings and poetry, 6 plays in the style of Terence that focus on Christian virtues and values. Although she is attributed with being the first Western dramatist since antiquity, it is unknown if these works, precursors to the form later known as the morality play, were used just for study or were performed. Hrotsvit's use of playwriting skills did not remain an isolated incident; other theatrical presentations developed in line with the liturgical calendar and the celebration of feast days, primarily: the Mystery cycles, Miracle Plays and Moralities.

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[97] Beedle, ed.
[98] Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, ed., *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). 91.
[99] For more on Hrotsvit see: Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, "Holy Women and the Christianizing of Europe: Huberc of Hildesheim, St. Loeba and Hrotsvit of Gandersheim," in *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

2.3.1. The Mysteries

The Mystery cycles focused upon Christ's redemptive work.[100] Clerics enacted scenes from the Old and New Testament narrative as part of the liturgy of the day. The *Quem Quaeritus* of the Shepherds approaching the manger, or the women at the tomb, initially provided a central focus for the script. Later additions of other characters such as the innkeeper and his wife, or the soldiers at the tomb, influenced the use of the vernacular in the dialogue. These small scenes became elaborate narratives, and they included such scenes as Michael's expulsion of Lucifer from Heaven, or a comical Joseph figure. The grand nature of this new theatre became a spectacle that then moved out of the physical confines of the cathedral. The performances took place outside the monastery walls, on huge stages constructed specifically for the festival, or as part of the *Corpus Christi* procession on pageant wagons that moved like buses between designated stations, each wagon's group presented the same scene at every stop.

Just as the building could no longer contain the size of the production, the clerics gradually surrendered their ecclesiastical hold over the script to various artisans or guilds. Each guild took a portion of the narrative, which then became a competitive effort one guild over another. Paintings and sketches of these processions, pageants and festivals demonstrate elaborate shows with musical performers, dancers and acrobats; those staging them became adept at using tricks such as fire shooting from a Hell mouth and a *Deus ex machina*, a machine that would lower God from the clouds.[101] These performances had a firm hold on European culture, and a wide variety of examples still exist; the cycles of York, Coventry, Wakefield and Chester are performed on a regular basis.

2.3.2. Miracle Plays[102]

According to Speaight, "The Miracle play, which was the dramatization of a legend setting for the life, miracles or martyrdom of a saint, must be distinguished

[100] This section relies heavily on Speaight's thorough presentation of the medieval Church's use of theatre. 15-20.
[101] See, for example, illustrations in Brockett. 63, 86, and 89. and Molinari Chapters 8 and 9.
[102] Speaight again remains the primary source.

from the liturgical drama, although the two developed side by side."[103] The source for the Miracles was primarily extra-biblical material, from apocryphal writings or legend, but embellished by the playwright, director and players.[104] As with the Mysteries, these plays used the vernacular. By dramatizing the life of a Saint or Holy person it was hoped that the people would learn, not only the stories, but also an example of holiness and Godly living to emulate.[105]

The scripts dealt with a realistic telling of the life; a realism that should not be confused with our natural acting style, but with an effort to depict the Christian's works, miracles or struggles in detail, especially when focusing upon the scenes of martyrdom. The earliest records are a number of extant scripts depicting the life and works of St. Nicholas, but other subjects were also popular such as St. George, and St. Dorothea, or biblical characters like the Virgin Mary. It is understandable that the legendary nature and heroics of other, secular persons, like Robin Hood, developed into dramas. Obviously, the church was not happy with the non-biblical nature of these dramas but neither could they stop their popularity.

2.3.3. Moralities

Like the Miracles, the Moralities sought to guide and educate the public; but rather than through realism, allegory was the chosen medium for presentation. Such characters as Mercy, Covetousness, Perseverance, Good Deeds, and the Flesh gave the audience a tangible embodiment of an internal struggle or idea. Death and the Devil were real, physical beings, ready to pounce upon the heedless soul. According to Speaight:

> Mankind is shown desiring his temporal at the expense of his eternal good, and all the plays show, with varying eloquence or crudity, the gradual rectification of his will under the influence of

[103] Speaight.17.
[104] A wonderful visual representation of the staging of a Miracle play is Jean Fouquet's *The Martyrdom of St Apollonia* from the fifteenth-century 'Heures d'Etienne Chevalier'. The Saint is stretched upon a rack and in the background the audience and other players, including the director holding the script, are clearly visible.
[105] Enders gives a clear idea of how the staging of some of these dramas affected the audience both clerical and lay in her compilation of occurrences in: Jody Enders, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

> divine grace. Where the Mysteries and Miracle Plays had told a story, the Moralities preached a sermon.[106]

Of the Moralities, the most popular and well known is *Everyman* in which the title character is confronted by Death. Everyman, seeing that his book of reckoning has very little to show, asks for the time to gather together his accounts. He travels through his life but finds only a very weak Good Deeds will accompany him to the Heavenly realm, whereupon his own repentance grants him God's grace and salvation.

2.4. Theatre Outside of the Church

Theatre played a large part in presenting the Christian ideals, stories and principles to the medieval public, making the biblical and historical characters human and accessible. The public saw human behaviour, and recognized it as the same human behaviour that they experienced daily; and applauded a truthful rendering of a character.[107] The faithfulness with which the characters were portrayed, though not as natural in style as our modern performance, brought out the realities of life with its comic moments, struggles, schemes, triumphs and sorrow. The church's patronage, however, though still influential, was no longer necessary for the writing and performance of the dramas or pageants. Church officials were not pleased when truthful rendering included a lecherous priest or drunken nun or when the spectacle encouraged any unseemly behaviour in the audience.

> Herrad of Landsberg, abbess of Hohenburg in the twelfth century, complained that the liturgical dramas were being irreligiously and extravagantly transformed. The church was no place for priests dressed up as soldiers, *gros mots*, and prostitutes in the audience. Similar complaints came from Hereford in 1348, and certain

[106] Speaight. 35.

[107] For Medieval scholar Dorothy L. Sayers, this style of presenting was very important. She employed these same tactics with her *The Man Born to be King,* touching the ordinary British public with the Gospel message; they were tuned in to hear a simple radio play but received something altogether different: a vision of a human Jesus and the ordinariness of his followers. This was a Gospel with which they could identify. It was entertaining, yes, but it brought them the Church's message in a way that was accessible and understandable. We will discuss this point further, but it is ironic that this very style of theatre would play such an important role in Sayers' life centuries later.

> Wycliffites, anticipating the Puritan Reformers, held that the mere act of dramatic representation was a sin.[108]

With regard to proper work and vocation,[109] the medieval age is a pivotal point. While the church frowned upon some of the spectacle and the grandness of the festivals and presentations, and the lewdness of some of the script content and the behaviour of some audience members was highly questionable, it could not avoid the overarching message of the plays themselves. The didactic properties of the theatre changed the situation for some actors. They were called to a purpose, and their traits, talents, and training could be used to serve God; in our sense of the term, actors had a "proper job" in the social order.

Over time, an established tradition of church involvement in theatre caused a paradigm shift for the European actor. The Church had contributed to the establishment of theatre companies, which saw stages built in some of the major cities all over the continent. As we move from the Medieval period we see a great deal happening all across Europe. Outside of the theatre other influences occurred that had a great effect on the content of plays and the manner in which they were produced; among other incidents, the printed word, the Protestant Reformation and the broadening of horizons through the exploration of new continents. The Christian influence dominated the thought process of the West and remained present in the script on the English stage, though not as blatantly represented as through the Mysteries, Moralities and Miracle Plays. In Spain the religious dramas continued to dominate the theatre with elaborate festivals and pageants for *Corpus Christi* through to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, culminating in the *auto sacramental* of Lope de Vega and Calderón.[110] Following Speaght's account, in France Jesuit theatre competed with the popular entertainments of those like Molière and Talma; but elsewhere, in India, Japan and amongst the indigenous populations of the New World, the Jesuit theatre was prominent. Italy developed the *Commedia del Arte*; and in England, Marlow, Shakespeare and Jonson were followed by Bhen, Sherridan and Shaw.[111] For the most part, however, the religious genre gave way to new forms of

[108] Speaight.. 23.
[109] Vocation in the sense used in this thesis, not in the sense of the church office.
[110] See Speaight. 94.
[111] See Molinari. Chapters 11 onward.

theatre all over Europe, with each culture developing its own theatrical identity. The post-Reformation English moved very quickly from the dominance of the biblical and religious subjects to explore other ideas as is evident in the variety of settings and topics in Shakespeare's theatre. Thus, we can follow the development of a long tradition of Western dramatic form. Resurgence was instigated by the Christian church; the same Faith community that continuously questioned the theatre's practices and persecuted its artists.

3. RENAISSANCE, RESTORATION AND ROMANTICISM

This section is very selective, it takes a few items from a very large and complex picture to illustrate that similar arguments still occur. The theatre was evolving, moulding and reinventing itself but, over the next few centuries, very little change seemed to happen regarding the social position of the actor. Even some of the general populace, and a great majority of the nobility, flocked to the theatre, demanding new plays from the poets, establishing it as the most popular entertainment. Church opinion, however, still held actors at arm's length; in some regions, they continued to deny them the Eucharist and refuse Christian burial. In England, however, we see a tolerance for the actor, but there were still some strongly negative opinions.

3.1. The Actor and Morality[112]

The raucous atmosphere of the playhouses did little to help the actor's reputation. The public demand for sexual innuendo overshadowed piety; and the atmosphere of the theatre was one in which the audience was not only there to see but to be seen, or, in some cases, to heckle, comment and draw attention to itself. The audience's behaviour aided the anti-theatre argument but the primary concern was still the intangibility of the actor's mastery of appearing as other than the self; falsehood, immorality, and untrustworthiness continued to be a primary concern.

[112] We are relying on Barish and Brockett in this section, others will be cited when necessary.

Much of the anti-theatre sentiment held that the actor's own being and private life were keenly connected with what he did on stage. According to Gossen, "he that goes to sea must smel of the ship, and that which sayles into ports wil savour of pitch."[113] Ergo, the actor who portrays a thief must entertain those thoughts in reality, so too a murderer and an adulterer. Oddly, we do not see the same argument for the actor who played the pious preacher or the good housewife, the negative was, and still is, always the focus of anti-theatre rhetoric. Again, we find Tertullian's views on imitation, as Barish notes; "Players are evil because they try to substitute a self of their own contriving for one given them by God.… Plays like players, threaten God's primacy by challenging his uniqueness; they attempt to wrest from him his most inimitable attribute, his demiurgy."[114] Actors were hypocrites (liars) inventing and participating in hypocrisies in the guise of entertainment, inciting the audience to follow their own bad example.

3.2. Northbrooke, Gosson and Heywood

Curiously, like Augustine, the authors of the anti-theatrical invectives do not hesitate to use dramatic dialogue in order to present their arguments. Northbrooke's *A Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays and Interludes*, is an excellent example: he presents his argument in the same method that a playwright notes the dialogue in a script. Citing the Church Fathers, Northbrooke's argument leaned heavily against theatre's Greek origins. Theatre's originator, or father, was not Christ therefore; it was the devil.

> "Chrysostome sayth, the deville founde oute stage-players first, and were invented by his crafte and policie; for that they conteyne the wicked actes and whoredomes of the goddess…and therefore the divell builded stages in cities."[115]

For Northbrooke, the fault lies first with the stage players themselves giving their bodies over to the goddess. He not only focuses his attention on the actors but,

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[113] Stephen Gosson, "The School of Abuse, Containing a Pleasant Invective Against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c.," in *Gosson's School of Abuse and Heywood's Apology*, ed. The Shakespeare Society (London: F. Shoberl, 1841). 13.
[114] Barish. 93.
[115] John Northbrooke, *A Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays and Interludes*, ed. The Shakespeare Society (London: F. Shoberl, 1843). 99.

like Tertullian, also admonishes the crowd who attend the theatre. It encourages idleness and lewd behaviour both in its practitioners and its patrons; and it discourages Sunday church attendance by rivaling itself with the pulpit on the Sabbath. Further, a crowd draws the attention of those with loose morals who intermingle with the decent folk

According to Northbrooke, watching plays encourages people to sin with their minds; when the actor portrays an evil action, the audience entertains the thought in the heart and thus endanger themselves. "Those filthie and unhonest gestures and movings of enterlude players, what other thing do they teach than wanton pleasure and stirring of fleshly unlawful appetites and desires, with their bawdie and filthie sayings and counterfyt doings?"[116] The notion of portraying, as a profession, someone or something that you are not is, in his mind, the stuff of sorcerers and witches, and should be avoided by all honest folk. Thus saying, Northbrooke then changes his tune regarding the didactic usage of plays and acting. He allows that play-acting can be useful for educational purposes, leaving the reader with the impression that the art is not in itself evil, but the practitioners on the public stage are.[117]

Northbrooke's rhetoric appears again in Gosson's *School of Abuse*.[118] Two things should be noted about Gosson; first, although he had unsuccessfully dabbled in the theatre earlier in his life, he counts it as the folly of his youth; and second, that while Gosson is often considered "Puritan" in his outlook, he himself was not Puritan in his belief as witnessed in his anti-Puritan publication *Trumpet of Warre*.[119] Gosson seems to waver back and forth in his anti-theatrical argument. He repeats Northbrooke's concern for the audience, adding that when the individual is distracted from the realities of life by watching a play, they are open to the possibility of someone taking advantage. More importantly, however, he also displays difficulty in separating the performer from the character, and again suggests that they could

[116] Ibid, 92.
[117] Northbrooke. 102.
[118] Stephen Gosson, "The School of Abuse, Containing a Pleasant Invective Against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c.," in *Glosson's School of Abuse and Heywood's Apology*, ed. The Shakespeare Society (London: F. Shoberl, 1841).
[119] For a discussion of Gosson's anti-Puritan publication see William Ringler, "The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558-1579," *The Huntington Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1942). 418.

possibly consider themselves murderers because they have played murderers. The actor uses his mind to contemplate the deed therefore the deed is part of his mental state.[120] Yet, within these observations he too finds something positive to say. A play has the ability to reveal truth and thereby has the power to teach morality: "Now are the abuses of the world revealed: every man in a play may see his own faultes, and learne by this glass to amend his manners."[121] He recognizes the possibilities of theatre as a tool for education though he admits that it cannot reach this potential if an audience is only there to show off and be seen.

It would be wrong to think that the actors remained silent while these abuses continued. The actor Thomas Heywood published his *Apology for Actors,*[122] addressing the claim that actors are able to portray man in his fallen state because actors themselves have questionable morals.

> I also could wish that such as are condemned for their licentiousnesse, might by a general consent bee quite excluded from our society, for, as we are men who stand in the broad eye of the world, so should our manners, gestures, and behaviours, savour of such government and modesty, to deserve the good thoughts and reports of all men, and to abide the sharpest censures even of those that are the greatest opposites to the quality. Many among us I know to be of substance, of government, of sober lives, and temperate carriages, housekeepers, and contributory to all duties enjoyned them, … And, if any amongst so many of sort, there bee any few degenerate from the rest in that good demeanor which is both requisite and expected at their hands, let me entreat you not to censure hardly of all for the misdeeds of some,…[123]

Although Heywood addresses the slander towards the actor's personal life, it still does not take up the accusation of counterfeiting or lying.

It was the question of the double self that continued to challenge those not in the profession. Here we have seen a differing set of standards: on the one hand, those using dramatic form for education or amusement - as long as the amusement is not

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[120] Ibid, 23.
[121] Gosson, "The School of Abuse, Containing a Pleasant Invective Against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, &c.." 21.
[122] Thomas Heywood, "An Apology for Actors," in *Gosson's Shool of Abuse and Heywood's Apology*, ed. The Shakespeare Society (London: F. Shobel, 1841).
[123] Ibid, 43.

indecent; and on the other, those who choose to pursue acting as a career. It seems that there is some room for plays and enactment, but neither as a profession nor performance in public spaces.

3.3. The French Opposition

The anti-theatrical opinion does not just contain itself to the English speaking stage but can be witnessed elsewhere. According to Barish, the French found their voice through Jansenism:

> And just as, in England, to justify their regressive onslaught, the Puritans could point to the statutes which classify masterless actors as rogues and vagabonds, so the Janesites and their cohorts could allege such even more terrible precedents as the sixteenth-century Ritual of Paris, still in force in the seventeenth century, which lumped actors in with usurers, magicians, blasphemers, whoremasters, and women of ill life as public sinners forbidden to receive communion during their lives or Christian burial after their deaths."[124]

France's introduction of women to the stage did little to alleviate this view; the actress was given the designation of courtesan or prostitute for putting herself on public display. Camus in the *Myth of Sysiphus*[125] makes an interesting observation regarding this dilemma: "The actors of the era knew they were excommunicated. Entering the profession amounted to choosing Hell. And the Church discerned in them her worst enemies."[126] The French actors endured the invectives of those who, like Rouseau, had once participated in the theatre, but upon conversion to Christianity became its most acidic attacker.[127] Even so French theatre continued to thrive, and was the first to eliminate the notion of the all-male cast; women played women's roles.

It was not until the Restoration that, by decree of Charles II, the English stage followed the example of the French by lifting the ban on female performers. Although this new development removed accusations of transvestism towards the

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[124] Barish.193.
[125] Albert Camus, "Drama," in *Camus: The Myth of Sisyphus* (London: Penguin Books, 1955).
[126] Ibid. 78.
[127] See Barish, Chapter IX.

young man in female dress, it opened up a new category of abuse from those who did not feel that a woman should put herself on public display. The skill of such notable figures as David Garrick in England, and Francois-Joseph Talma in France, did much to raise the acceptance of actors amongst the nobility.[128] For the most part, however, the predominantly Protestant clergy and middleclass did not alter their view, especially when the subject matter of many of the comedies, such as Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, focused on sexual immorality and adultery.[129] It took a concerted effort during the Victorian era to change these pious opinions in England.

4. VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THE ACTOR'S REPUTATION

In this period, the Romantic movement is, of course, still prominent; but we are concerned with some other selected things relating the criticism and defense of theatre. There is a common assumption that labeling something "Victorian" implies that it possesses a closed-minded prudishness. Indeed, Kenneth Pickering's *Drama in the Cathedral*[130] has noted that, in regard to the theatre; "… there were elements of almost incurable prejudice in some Church circles and that attitudes were still based on tradition rather than on evidence."[131] The nineteenth century playhouses did little to help change this perspective; audiences, especially at a comedy, were rowdy, and venues with large crowds were vulnerable to the solicitation of prostitutes and pickpockets.

By mid-century the atmosphere had greatly improved with the patronage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who instituted a sense of public decency and appropriate moral behaviour. According to Pickering, the actor Henry Irving and the Reverend Stuart Headlam initiated a strategy that wore down and finally broke through the prevailing assumptions that actors were liars and tools of the devil. Irving published articles that introduced the public to the craft of the actor, explaining how it was that an actor could portray someone else and yet maintain his own personal moral integrity.

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[128] Brockett 210 and 289.
[129] Kenneth Pickering, *Drama in the Cathedral* (Colwall: J. Garnet Miller, 2001). See a thorough discussion of this era in his Introduction and Chapter 1.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid. 7.

In Pickering's opinion, the two-pronged assault on anti-theatrical prejudice, although highly successful, has been "seriously underrated and overlooked"[132] by theatre scholars. The Reverend Headlam's efforts emerge from inside the church, while Henry Irving's came from within the theatre. Headlam's publication of his lecture *Theatres and Music Halls* caused great controversy and finally led to his dismissal from his curacy. Headlam continued to target the attitude of the clergy in a deliberate attempt to alter the prevailing attitudes of the period towards the players. His positive attitude not only influenced his fellow clergymen, but also began to filter down to the congregations. Headlam's lectures and sermons voiced the conviction that practitioners of the dance, music hall and theatre had long been forced to live in squalor due to the uncharitable attitude of the Church. "Headlam's conviction that people had only to meet for prejudices to gradually disappear, was probably not unfounded."[133] He successfully established monthly meetings between clergy and performers in the foyer of the Drury Lane Theatre; these were known as *The Church and Stage Guild*.

These meetings had a profound impact on one of the dominant actor-managers of the period, Ben Greet. Headlam's own connections with the London School Board, together with Greet's in the theatre, led to the foundation of professional school tours of Shakespeare. According to Pickering, Headlam's position garnered favourable support from a long list of both clergy and laymen, including Archbishop Tait of Canterbury, G. K. Chesterton and playwright George Bernard Shaw. His ideas sparked an interest in the writing and performance of religious dramas and had a long-term impact on the English church-stage relations. Pickering is convinced that Headlam's efforts led to the eventual reintroduction of performance within the confines of the Church itself. His work heralded the development of "a new type of audience, who went to the theatre expecting the drama to deal with serious issues."[134]

Henry Irving's own moral conduct and the integrity with which he led his theatre company was an asset to Headlam's work. Irving, noted for his gentlemanly deportment, respectability and strong Christian belief, elicited change by

[132] Ibid. 5.
[133] Ibid.18.
[134] Ibid. 29.

demonstrating how the theatre could be a valuable ally for the spreading of Church doctrines. As an actor, his portrayals of characters in Shakespeare's plays were attended by both Anglican and Catholic clergymen. "The particular magnetism that Irving exerted over his audience was responsible for a complete reversal in the attitudes of many leading figures in the Anglican Church. He was regarded with a veneration, which seems almost incredible today…"[135] While poets, artists, musicians, architects and painters had received the accolade centuries earlier, Irving's triumphant elevation of the English stage resulted in the first knighthood for an actor in 1898.

It is important that we pause for a moment to discuss Irving's contribution when we wish to consider acting as a proper job. As we have suggested, one of the main dilemmas for the non-actor is the double self; the difficulty in differentiating between actor and character. It is presumed that somehow the actor must either be lying about himself or else he must have elements of the character within his own psyche. In Irving's preface to Diderot's *The Paradox of Acting,*[136] we find a clear explanation that finally begins to answer the puzzling notion of the actor having another "I." He introduces the concept of the double consciousness, a capacity and technique whereby the actor utilizes "the intelligence which accompanies sensibility".[137] Sensibility is a heightened awareness of emotion and feeling, but through rehearsal and careful consideration, the actor keeps a constant check on the character. In other words, the actor must be conscious of what he is doing, keeping his head regarding how to use his technique in order to portray the characteristics and emotions of another clearly to the audience, without getting caught up in the adrenaline of the moment. Thus, the actor is very aware of the details of the character, or other "I" while keeping intact, or even separate, he is own moral being.

> Untrained actors, yielding to excitement on stage, have been known to stumble against the wings in an impassioned exit. But it is quite possible to feel all the excitement of the situation and yet be perfectly self-controlled. This is the art which the actor who loses his head has not mastered. It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were, a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the

[135] Ibid. 8.
[136] Henry Irving, "Preface," in *The Paradox of Acting* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883).
[137] Ibid. ii.

> occasion may have full sway, while the actor is all the time alert for every detail of his method.[138]

The rehearsal is the place in which the actor explores the humanity of a given character and works out the action and subtleties of the playing of that person. He then uses his technique to hold onto these discoveries in order to maintain a consistent portrayal for the duration of a performance and then the entire run of the play. He is aware of the set, stage, audience and other actors, all while keeping in control of his vocal inflections, gestures, lines, props, cues and entrances.

Irving, Headlam and Greet's efforts gradually educated and changed the attitude of the British public. The playhouse audiences were attentive, ready not only to be entertained, but also wanting well-acted plays that could challenge the intellect. The English speaking theatre had respectability; it established itself in Europe as a place of serious work. In North America, however, it took another type of effort to breach the obstacles unique to the New World.

5. RURAL AMERICA: THE ACTOR VERSUS THE PREACHER

The importance of clergy attitudes, recognized by Headlam in Victorian England, was also the challenge in the same period in rural America, where the pulpit held sway over the people. Author Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) addressed this situation in a scathing letter. In 1871, a Rev. William A. Sabine publicly refused to conduct a funeral service for George Holland. His only reason: Holland was an actor. Twain's verbose and eloquent response in the publication *The Galaxy* included the observation "This creature has violated the letter of the Gospel, and judged George Holland—not George Holland, either, but his profession through him."[139] Twain goes on to compare the effectiveness of the theatre with that of the pulpit in its ability to portray and teach moral virtues. But Twain's was just one voice, and the traditional values from the predominantly Protestant pulpit reached back to the Puritan worldview of its pioneering settlers.

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[138] Ibid. xv.

[139] Albert Bigelow Pain, "Apendix J: The Indignity put upon the Remains of George Holland by the Reverend J. Sabine," in *Mark Twain: A Biography*, ed. Steve Thomas (University of Adelaide Library Electronic Texts Collection, 2003).

The lack of theatre in small-town America created a phenomenon not witnessed in European circles. In her nineteenth century visit to the Americas, Mrs. Frances Trollope noted that the same women who disdained the playhouses for their frivolousness and theatrics, thought nothing of putting on their finest to see and be seen at another type of performance: the histrionic display of the Sunday morning preacher.[140] The elocutionary style of the period was still dominated by thunderous recitation accompanied by elaborate gestures. Gilbert Austin's eighteenth century publication *Chironomia or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*,[141] a book whose intended audience, funnily enough, were lawyers, ministers and actors, gives detailed drawings and description for the gestures needed to convey emotion in these professions. The itinerant preacher's platform put these gestures to good use. Barish notes that, although Trollope's intention was wit, her own observation revealed a disturbing truth: "… if you do not have a theatre, or if you have one but do not or cannot make use of it, you run the risk that your church will become the theatre."[142] Did this mean then that the church would be full of "hypocrites," those who put on a performance of morality, but whose personal life revealed a counterfeit?

When we ponder this situation, we realize that when church becomes a "theatre" of this sort, which is not to be confused with a dramatic performance in the service, the individual is not focused upon the main reason for attendance. The community of "believers" would not provide the sanctuary for imagination that is the very nature of the stage; there would be no willing suspension of disbelief, no fourth wall separation of the real from fiction, no protection of audience from the actor/preacher's opinion, words and action. The fact that the theatre creates a space for an experience separate from reality is one of its strengths. The audience is free to ponder the theatrical event separate from daily living. In my opinion, theatricality within the Sunday service, performed by congregation and minister, leaves no room for this "safe place."[143]

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[140] Barish. 379.
[141] Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia or a Treatise on Rhetorical Deliver* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966).
[142] Barish. 379. Trollope's observation has a much deeper connection than that of mere witticism. It brings to the surface the notion that man has an innate inclination towards the mimetic.
[143] When we look at Sayers, we will find that this sort of preaching performance links with her views on propaganda.

Further to this, Mrs. Trollope's statement highlights the notion that there was a distinct and notable difference between the development of culture and moral expectations in the "Colonies" and in the British Empire. The nineteenth and twentieth century North American theatre experienced an anti-theatrical sentiment that, in some ways, seemed to be buried into the very fibre of the people as a nation. It was only four years after the death of Shakespeare that the Puritan Pilgrims embarked on the *Mayflower* to establish their colony in the Americas. According to some theatrical scholars, the development of a distinctly American theatre was somewhat obstructed by the lingering Puritanical opinions of these founders.[144] The geographical vastness of America created only pockets of urban areas that displayed a more favourable atmosphere for the establishment of the theatre. In contrast, the rural population were guided by the voice of the pulpit, and the anti-theatrical attitude of the local preacher, who ruled the hearts and minds of the people. This situation continued to prevail, as long as that particular platform dictated the values and opinions of the congregant.

Charlotte Canning, in her paper "The Platform Versus the Stage: The Circuit Chautauqua's Anti-theatrical Theatre" focuses on a development in early twentieth-century American theatre that has largely been ignored by theatre studies: itinerant companies. These touring shows, modelled on the tent meetings, originally held in Chautauqua, New York State, recognized that the rural audience held the misconception that theatrical shows, and especially the actors in them, were untrustworthy, morally bankrupt and void of any good Christian content.

The mindset of the average congregant of rural Mid-western America is demonstrated in Canning's quotation from the diary of Arthur Row, "These people are God-fearing, God-living, and know their Bible and their Shakespeare--in short the greatest literature, the purest, most explicit English".[145] The now predominantly Methodist rural community, however well versed in Shakespeare, still maintained the

[144] See Arthur Hornblow, ed., *The American Dramatist: 1690-1890*, A History of the Theatre in America, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1919). In my opinion, the kind of event described by Mrs. Trollope, and the deeply ingrained attitude has spilled over into the everyday living of the American psyche to such an extent that it is often cultural norms and values that are adhered to, rather than biblical truths

[145] Charlotte Canning, "The Platform Versus the Stage: The Circuit Chautauqua's Antitheatrical Theatre " *Theatre Journal* 50.3 (1998). 313.

Puritan values of their forebears; the Scriptures were clear regarding lying, "painting yourself up", cross dressing and lewd behaviour. The irony that these people venerated the words of the playwright Shakespeare is not lost. Canning notes:

> Nowhere was inconsistency more evident than in the attitude toward theatre and all its works. Many people wanted the thrill of the drama, the fun of make-believe, but none of the trappings of the play. They wanted performers who for a rapturous hour could transport them out of a drab, mud-bound world into fictional far places and other, better times, but they did not want actors. They had seen what they called "actors" in that disreputable free medicine show last year and all the other tawdry outfits that straggled into town to corrupt impressionable youth.[146]

In this rural mindset, the theatre was an establishment of the urban centre, and the city was a place of vice and corruption. From the beginning of the Chatauqua expeditions was the paradoxical dilemma: how to present dramatic, professional shows without a hint of the label "theatre" or the use of the term "actors"? The managers realized that the ideology of this particular audience needed to gradually alter before anything resembling theatre could be introduced. It would be necessary to redefine theatre "by separating out reputable dramatic literature from the material attributes of theatrical illusion - costumes, scenery, and particularly make-up – that its audiences regarded as signs of corruption and immorality."[147] The dramatic readings must be of the best quality; therefore, the managers hired those trained and well practiced in the profession of elocution. The "readers" were actually New York actors, in plain clothes, on hiatus from the regular theatre season.

Canning describes how it took a decade to transform the bare platform into a theatrical stage. The early readings, presented without makeup or costume, initially used subtle vocal emphasis, but each year they became more dramatic in quality. Subtle changes were introduced until the audience was ready to receive the full production of an actual play. Wisely, the managers invited actor-manager Ben Greet to oversee the production.[148] Greet understood the situation and gave the Chautauqua Circuit a drastically edited version of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors,* without sets

[146] Ibid. 303.
[147] Ibid. 303.
[148] See the section on Irving and Headlam above.

or elaborate costume or anything that could possibly suggest mainstream theatre. The performance met with huge success. The audience watched their own ministers and their wives applaud, and they followed that example. The Chautauqua performances continued until the American entrance into World War II. By then moving pictures had taken over, and the public had become comfortable with seeing actors on the "big screen".

We might expect, then, that the way had now been paved for the actor's work to be embraced as a job along with other areas of work such as lawyer, plumber, banker, salesperson or doctor. The theatre had shaken off its link to its pagan predecessors, performance had its pedagogical virtues, and the audience had changed its demeanor from raucous spectator to silent observer. The theatre as a whole had been salvaged from the trappings of tradition and negative opinion; but what of the player, the actor who pretends to be someone other than himself? Barish maintains, "Mimicry—the power to become, or pretend to become, what one is not - …arouses and has always aroused, a nearly universal distrust. Somewhere in a corner of all of us lodges the conviction (as Iago puts it) "Men should be what they seem." – *Othello III.iii.126"*[149] This ability remained a mystery, and a mystery must be solved or it has the possibility of creating suspicion and distrust. In the mid-twentieth century U.S., the actor's ability to become Other, his study of human behaviour in his technique and training, became the central issue.

6. COLD WAR U.S. POLICIES: THE ACTOR AS SUBVERSIVE

In the 1940s a new, predominantly American acting technique emerged, loosely based on the teachings of the Russian actor/teacher Constantin Stanislavski.[150] Theatre coaches such as Lee Strasberg guided students in The Method or Method Acting, encouraging them to seek the character's psyche and internal dialogue. This in-depth probing often took place before, and sometimes without, developing the voice or body for character development, stamina, and emotional soundness. The focus of this training was for the actor to examine his own personal neuroses and

[149] Barish. 96.
[150] We will return to these developments in Chapter Eight.

experiences; these emotional responses and memories became fodder for performance.

The nature of Method training began to blur the lines between the role the actor played on stage and his personal life. He could no longer claim to be a completely separate entity from the character, as he, the actor, contained within the self the same human nature that possessed the propensity both towards good or evil, and every shade of grey in between. Actors would go to great lengths in order to become or "be" the character; running all night to experience and portray exhaustion, exaggerating intense childhood memories or remaining "in character" while off stage. This approach drew a great deal of ridicule from many in the industry, predominantly those in the British schools. Use of this technique, however, has produced some of the most fascinating, and famous performers, among them James Dean, Gregory Peck, Marlon Brando and more recently, Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep.

Bruce McConachie's *Method Acting and the Cold War*[151] outlines how the essence of this technique drew the attention of the American governing authorities during its early development in the Actor's Studio in New York. There were severe repercussions for the performer trained under its system. The following is a long quotation, but it explains very clearly exactly what occurred.

> In the fall of 1947, nearly simultaneous with the opening of the Actor's Studio, the House Committee on Un-American Activities launched investigations into the purported communist activities of Hollywood actors, writers, and directors…
>
> An actor's claim that his character on stage or in a film expressed an essential part of his identity could get him in trouble at a HUAC hearing. HUAC investigators believed that the relationship between actors and their roles might provide evidence about their patriotism or disloyalty. During the hearings, the congressmen pressed their actor-witnesses to explain how it was that they could have played characters who affirmed and acted on radical political ideas when the actors did not believe in those ideas themselves. Like many of their constituents in the hinterlands, HUAC members confused the actor with the characters he or she had played, and the actors could not always explain the difference. Not surprisingly, a reporter found that many

[151] Bruce McConachie, "Method Acting and the Cold War," *Theatre Survey* Vol. 41.1 (2000).

> Hollywood actors after the 1947 hearings were "afraid that the public might have received a very wrong impression about them, because of having seen them portray, say, a legendary hero who stole from the rich to give to the poor, or an honest, crusading district attorney, or a lonely, poetic antisocial gangster." Authenticity, the key to good "method" acting and the guarantor to the public of the unity of actor and character, could be politically incorrect.[152]

As stated in this case, “the actors could not always explain the difference” between the private, internal self and the self of the character. By pursuing solely the internal workings of human character, these actors had no understanding of Irving’s “double consciousness” that enabled him to clearly explain how his technique worked and how he could remain separate from his characters. While searching for their own humanness, these actors, who had given some amazing performances, often displayed their own psyche and self rather than the completely Other. Their truth resided in their own dark and light corners rather than those of the character.

7. SUMMARY

The Roman playwright Terence’s play *Heauton Timorumenos* expressed a notion that encompasses this work, “Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto”, "I am a human being, so nothing human is strange to me."[153] Acting gets at the very nature of what it is to be human using the body, the voice and the emotions, speech and characteristics of one person to imitate and to seemingly become another. While certain individuals within the Method were unable to describe the workings of the craft, there is a fundamental difference between the actor as himself and human, and the character, also human, he portrays. From ancient times to the present, we have had acting seen as unacceptable behaviour for a number of reasons: for instance and importantly, it uses falsehood, causes the actor to pretend to be someone other than himself and puts him in the precarious position of using his own body to displaying immorality.

It is understandable that the Church would struggle with these issues, especially when audience members adopt a false impression of the actor and the lines

[152] Bruce McConachie, "Method Acting and the Cold War," *Theatre Survey* 41:1 (2000). 33.
[153] Plubius Terence, "Heauton Timorumenos " (Boston: J.S. Cushing and Co, 1890). 10.

are blurred between actor and character. The lovely woman who happened to play the villainess from the previous night's performance, is surprised when audience members shy away from her. A similar assumption happens for the handsome young lover, he must be the romantic, gentle, heterosexual man seen on the stage minutes earlier. We want to identify these people by their roles, as in the two cases of Gregory Peck and James Caan mentioned in Chapter One;[154] and if asked to think of Meryl Streep, we do not picture her as herself, but see primarily one of the many roles she has portrayed. Many people are disappointed when the hero does not live up to the standards of the character in a play and it is easy to dislike individuals because they portray the slut, the pedophile, or the drug addict. The scrutiny or lack of privacy that is common for the individual who is an actor is not found so much in other professions. For example, when our dentist struggles in his marriage and gets a divorce, we feel sympathy, but when an actress does the same, we think that it is because of her profession and gleefully seek out the "news" for every sordid detail of her private heartache. Try as we may to rid ourselves of them, the old standards regarding this profession still exist: the actor is Other than everyone else.

8. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to look at some of the critical opposition to the positive conclusions of the thesis. Prior to this task, it may have seemed somewhat peculiar to ask if acting could be seen as a "proper job" or vocation. The centuries of evidence presented here have shown that there have been some very serious questions asked about the profession. Some of these have to do with all of the imitative arts, but the performing arts have received more than their due share of the prejudice and slander. Many of the protests are symptomatic of the average person trying to come to grips with the mimetic in society. Is it proper to copy, counterfeit or imitate another person? Can those who make a job of it be trusted? Is the darkness in that character lurking somewhere in that particular person? Is it childish or could there be more to acting and the theatre?

[154] James Caan as Sonny Corleone and Gregory Peck as Aticus Finch.

Along with the negative, there were also some interesting points made about acting that suggest there is something more to the profession. Perhaps it is not our notions about actors but our attitudes towards work and our ideas on vocation that influence our need to classify one job as right and another as wrong, one line of work as a calling and another as an occupation, hobby or even an activity unworthy of our attention. A separate look at work and at vocation may help us to see how the actor's portrayal of the human has a place as both a "proper job" and a calling suitable for a Christian.

CHAPTER THREE:

TOWARDS A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF WORK

Every individual has his or her own opinion on what constitutes work. In order to determine if acting is a "proper job," we must first decide what we mean by "job." When we try to define work we could put it simply as Karl Barth does: "Work simply means man's active affirmation of his existence as a human creature."[155] Would this mean, then, that every activity to which man puts his hand could be called work? If so then our work here is done. As we move through this Chapter, we will find that work is a many-faceted subject with so much more to add to our primary discussion.

Often, the idea is that a job or work should provide a service or have an end product, this product or service then provides the worker with some kind of remuneration. The attachment of the utility and economics to the idea of work is so strong that it becomes difficult to categorize the creative arts where most of the activity or "work" is unseen, misunderstood or performed for very little financial gain. Indeed, the idea of remuneration so overshadows our notions on work that it has become the primary goal for most tasks. For a very few this remuneration could simply be the satisfaction of a job well done, but for many it is to be paid fairly for their efforts, and for yet others, it is to be paid well for as little physical output as possible. Sadly, the latter aim is becoming more prevalent. Author Wendell Berry, when criticized for allowing his wife to type his writing, observed, "Another decent possibility my critics implicitly deny is that of work as a gift…They assume – and this is the orthodox assumption of the industrial economy – that the only help worth giving is not given at all, but sold."[156] We have moved from the notion of work as a service to others and towards work as an economic commodity. Unemployment is measured by statistics rather than realizing that each number represents a human being whose potential has not been realized. How is it possible that we have come so far away from viewing work as a means of fulfilling a need, even if that need is private and personal, rather than a means of filling our pockets?

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[155] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978). 518.
[156] Wendell Berry, "Feminism, the Body and the Machine," in *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002). 71.

Perhaps the answer is that our attitude towards work has exchanged its foundation in the Divine for a centre that serves only man. We will look at work, then, through the lens of theology in order to see whether a theological approach can provide a way of seeing work from a new perspective. However, we must have a broad open-minded idea of work that is secular as much as it is religious; for it is in both the secular and religious context that there are struggles regarding the notion of acting as work. The objective here is to broaden our view of work to such an extent that we will see how the craftsman and the artist, and actors in particular, have "proper jobs;" and then we will apply that notion to the theological concept of vocation in our next Chapter. We will find, however, that as we discuss the theological, the secular is not easily avoided. We will also have a more solid foundation and a like-minded approach for Sayers' discussion in later chapters.

1. WORK AND THEOLOGY

Perhaps it is best to begin by trying to formulate an idea of work when defined in a theological context. Pope John Paul II, in the Papal Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, gives this definition:

> "work means any activity by man, whether manual or intellectual, whatever its nature or circumstances; it means any human activity that can and must be recognized as work, in the midst of all the many activities of which man is capable and to which he is predisposed by his very nature, by virtue of humanity itself."[157]

With his notion that work is "…any human activity that can and must be recognized as work…" immediately we run into the same problem as we did with Barth: it needs further clarification, especially when we ask: recognized by whom? Miroslav Volf comments that John Paul's definition gives the impression that "work is finally whatever one thinks work is."[158] We would have to agree with Volf; but the inadequacy of the definition shows, *not* that it is a poor definition, but that work is difficult to define. Volf goes on to say "Work is so close to us that nothing seems easier than to grasp what it is, yet our conceptual nets never quite manage to catch it."[159] Even so Volf strives to formulate a concise description:

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[157] Pope John Paul II, "Laborem Exercens: Encyclical Letter," (Catholic Library, 1981). 1.
[158] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001). 7.
[159] Ibid. It must be noted that, in my experience, where the arts, especially acting, are concerned, there can be very definite opinions as to its fitting the template of 'proper job'. For some the notion of

> Work is honest, purposeful and methodologically specified social activity whose primary goal is the creation of products or states of affairs that can satisfy the needs of working individuals or their co-creatures, or (if primarily an end in itself) activity that is necessary for acting individuals to satisfy their needs apart from the need for the activity itself.[160]

Brian Brock in his *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age* suggests the vastness of this subject: "Work is human action directed at reshaping the social and material fabric of the universe."[161] Yet, here too Brock falls short. What if the work shapes only the individual? What about mental work that has no material product? We could continue to seek out precise definitions but the many and varied ideas of what constitutes work are deep-seated, having sources that are often so difficult to articulate that it makes it very hard to be precise. We will therefore look at a number of sources to begin to grasp at the overarching concept of work and all of its numerous, intriguing aspects.

1.1. Volf

Volf's approach to his subject leans heavily on the involvement of the Holy Spirit. His pneumatological approach reveals a God who has never left the universe; He is constantly shaping the created order towards the new Kingdom. Volf begins with Genesis, but his narrative has its main telos in the *eschaton*, the Kingdom to come. We can see Volf's teleological understanding of work play out scripturally. God invited His image, man, to join Him in this activity. The nation of Israel was then chosen to be a people who recognized God's Presence, modeled His care for the creation and witnessed His being to the other nations. As time moved on, more and more specific instructions were given to guide them towards right behaviour but they constantly failed to live up to their calling as image bearers. God, therefore, stepped into creation as the man Jesus. In the synoptic Gospels and the beginning of the Book of Acts Jesus fulfills his role as the final sacrifice; his resurrection and ascension bear witness to God's grace and mercy towards all of creation. He commissions his followers and hands over the work to them, they are to be the hands, feet and voice of the narrative through the empowerment of the

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putting the arts on the same level as that of manual labor was a questionable, more precisely, humorous and ridiculous, notion.

[160] Ibid. 11.

[161] Brian Brock, *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 2010). 302.

Holy Spirit. Jesus is allowing this ill equipped, ragtag group of people, and others like them, with character faults and emotional problems, to participate in the Kingdom work for centuries afterward. In Volf's account mankind's fleshly humanness has always been a part of God's plan as humans contribute the physical to tasks of creation work. But how does it apply to everyday work in our own time?

Volf's primary emphasis is on the Holy Spirit's presence in human activity. He advocates an avoidance of the dominant understanding of work as economically driven, instead pointing towards a notion of *charisms,* gifts or attributes, that aid the human in the choice and production of a type of work. When we recognize *charisms* given to us as individuals, we are thereby equipped to fulfill the challenge of any work. "The gifts of the Spirit are related to the specific tasks or functions to which God calls and fits each Christian."[162] From Volf's point of view, we have a primary call to be Christian and then the opportunity for an even more Spirit-driven and specific activity. These *charisms* are not an elitist, ecclesiastical designation but function to facilitate fellowship within the world.

> We can determine the relationship between calling and charisma in the following way: The general calling to enter the kingdom of God and to live through the preaching of the gospel becomes for the believer a call to bear the fruit of the Spirit, which should characterize all Christians, and as they are placed in various situations, the calling to live in accordance with the kingdom branches out in the multiple gifts of the Spirit to each individual.[163]

According to Volf, man was not designed to be self serving but to engage with the world and the best means to do so is through work. The *charisms* are not only spiritual but physical, mental and, to a certain degree, dispositional. These aid the choice of work and the means of doing any task, giving humans a renewed focus on the shaping of the Kingdom. By reflecting on God's love for his creation and His activity, there can be joy in any job, it potentially serves a further, future ideal. Volf's *Work in the Spirit* has a focus on work carried out with an attitude of spiritual awareness and teleological significance. Volf makes the connection between man and God through his notions of

[162] Volf. 111.
[163] Ibid. 113.

teleology, *charisms* and co-creation, which adds to the understanding of "proper job". Cosden then engages with Volf to flesh out even more.

1.2. Cosden

Cosden dissects the idea of work by dividing it into three aspects. The first two, instrumental and relational, have long been accepted as integral features of work; it is instrumental through the wide variety of services or commodities that it produces and relational by its human-to-human interconnection. While these two aspects should be seen as equal in importance, Cosden observes that more often one aspect begins to outweigh the other, creating problems in our view of the purpose of work. Cosden wants us to see work as much more than just these two, however; by asking us to see it in a threefold balance, introducing a new aspect: ontological. As we unpack Cosden's study of this ontological aspect, however, we find that we must consider more than just characterizing work by designated aspects.

1.2.1. Cosden's Three Aspects

That work is instrumental is almost a given; work is done to complete a task that often results in a product or service. It is easy to see how this focus can, in many cases, shift from being task oriented to product driven. Cosden finds that there is a weakness when we think of instrumentality as work's primary function for "… the focus is not on work, but rather its product used directly or indirectly as a way of securing more of life's necessities or wants."[164] Most often, the product of work is seen in economic terms by those in charge, thus pushing the agenda of over-producing, sacrificing quality for financial gain.

The narrowness of this focus has developed an attitude towards work in which the instrumental view has become self-centred. Rather than approaching a job from the standpoint of serving the needs of the Other[165] by providing high-quality goods or adding fulfilment to our lives, the worker and employer look for the easiest way to make the

[164] Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work* (Bletchly: Paternoster, 2004). 11.
[165] When using the word 'other' in reference to something or someone outside of the individual or the self, I will follow John MacMurray's example of using the uppercase 'O' in order to distinguish that particular Other; most especially when the term refers to the Divine Holy Other.

most money. The danger here is that the workers themselves become a means to financial gain. This product-driven view, whether by product we mean the result of the labour or the paycheque for the work, when raised above the human producer, isolates the worker and dehumanizes the work.[166] Cosden rightly concludes that instrumentality cannot be the primary aspect as it leads to the idea that work is merely the means to an end, "I will in my hypothesis however suggest that work 'is' both an instrumental activity and an end in itself. It is not simply that work 'is' an instrumental activity which we can somehow experience 'as if it were' really an end in itself."[167]

Cosden then points to another way to view work. It brings humans together, causing us to interact and develop social relationships. Work involves not only a current relationship with co-workers or clients, but also in the broader sense (similar to Volf's eschatological standpoint) work encompasses humanity as a species. "Herein lies the existential aspect of work; a person finds, or contributes to who they are and will be (as well as what the earth is and will be) in the process of working."[168] Through the process of work, and the interaction with others, we construct our understanding of self; we question our identity, accepting and rejecting other people's ideas. By viewing work through the relational lens, however, Cosden again finds work to be defined as the means to an end; the development of relationships, the shaping of the self and/or the furtherance of culture are its products. While he concludes that this devalues the relational almost to a secondary place behind the instrumental, we will argue later that relationship has a much deeper function than just a means to an end, and work's part in this function is more significant than instrumental.

Cosden's true agenda now unfolds as he introduces the idea of a third way of viewing work: the ontological aspect. Even so, he agrees: "Admittedly, the ontological

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[166] An example of this isolation is found in Dheil's book *Thank God It's Monday.* A metal drop worker stays in a job he hates for twenty years because he "needs the money for the family." When asked about the nature of his work his answer echoes the situation of many factory workers.

> The shop is always hot and dirty. It is so noisy that OSHA makes us wear ear protectors. So you can't even talk to anyone. All day long I take forty-pound bars from a furnace, hold them under the drop hammer until they are forged into shape, and then drop them into a big tote box."
> "What kind of product do you make?"
> "I dunno," he replied.

Clearly the economic value of the job has overtaken the human element, disconnecting the man from the work. William E. Diehl, *Thank God It's Monday* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). 8.

[167] Cosden.9.

[168] Ibid. 12.

aspect of work being developed in this project is rather more difficult to envision than the other two aspects."[169] It is the main function of his thesis to unpack this aspect of work by drawing partially on Marx and partially on what he says theology has already begun to consider. Cosden gains from Marx the idea that "[w]ork is not simply an activity undertaken by man out of necessity. Rather, it is an activity without which he could not be human."[170] While Marx sees it as a natural development to define man as a species by way of understanding the inner inclinations of mankind, it is important for Cosden that the grounding for the activity is found not in nature but in God. It is a theological matter, not an evolutionary conclusion.

Further, Cosden understands work neither within the framework of a stewardship model nor as a thing built into man by God in order that man might copy or even imitate God and thereby display the *imago.* Work is something more complex; it is elemental to man in order that he might define himself as an individual and as a species. The work done by an individual, when seen ontologically by Cosden, is specific to the nature of that particular person; we do not replicate God's work but generate our own in a manner that fits in with what He is doing. We potter in the garden, tinker with a hobby, or craft words with pencil and paper because we must, we are drawn to be active, to be doing, making, shaping. Without this we lose focus and are unable to function as the creature God designed. Indeed, we could add that all of creation was designed by God to have a function and a purpose in order to grow and be fruitful. Its reason for being is not fulfilled when its purpose is not reached. So it is with mankind, that our purpose or function has thus far been in part defined by work.

1.2.2. Concerns with Cosden's View

Initially it is easy to see where Cosden is taking us regarding work's ontological aspect; however, upon further reading things begin to unravel. The first point of concern, when striving to understand Cosden, is to be seen in the following statement:

> Rather, work is understood to be more fundamental to created existence, an ontological reality, built by God into the very structures of human

[169] Ibid. 13.
[170] Ibid. 16.

> nature and as a result, the natural order. Work in as much as it is fundamental to humanness, 'is' an end in itself. It is ontological.[171]

His theory of "an end in itself" looks to an ontology that, like Volf's, orients toward an eschatological mode of thinking. Work, according to Cosden, when it is grounded in the creation story remains static but its very essence is a forward moving action having a *telos* located both in the present and in what is still to come. Thus, in his opinion, work becomes more than a part of man; in and of itself, it feeds into the creation, shapes culture and society and builds upon what is already there. Cosden finds its ontology is locked into teleology; the very nature of work is that it is a never-ending cycle, built on its own into the created order.

It is at this point that Cosden's views cause us to ask more questions than even he can answer. Firstly, does Cosden refer to work as a verb or a noun? As a verb it is active, as a noun it seems static. Is man the essential subject of the verb - the doer of work? Where is the human component in work as a noun? Does the work stand by itself, almost waiting as it were for someone or something to add to it? Or is it the instrumental aspect, the product or service that stands by itself? Is work an internal thing that one feels compelled to do or is it something apart from man, added onto him? And what of leisure, hobby, ritual, sport, grief, entertainment, lamentation, celebration or festivity; Cosden does little to address any of these concepts when discussing how work figures in these human activities. Furthermore, is the wilful destruction of the work of another - the burning of crops; the smashing of sculpture; and the demolition of a building, considered to be work? It can wipe away the toil of hundreds of people, rendering their work obsolete and forgotten. Is that ontological?

Instead of trying to focus on all of these and many other challenges that arise from Cosden's ontological approach, we will look at two points that clash with my own thesis. First, with regard to the relational aspect of work. Cosden explains his idea of ontology based on a teleological view, and, in doing so, the separation of the ontological from the relational becomes muddied. The importance of the relational aspect of work is so significant that we could say that Cosden's ontology is a relational ontology.

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[171] Ibid. 18.

Secondly, in his attempt to define work as relational, instrumental and ontological, he has not examined the process of human work (noun) itself. It is critical to this thesis that the mental process, more pointedly imaginative work, be examined. For instance, both Cosden and Volf concur with Marx that when work has as its drive economic gain it begins to dehumanize, but only Volf truly attempts to heal this situation by refocusing the reader on a pneumatological approach. Volf and Cosden have drawn from Moltmann's notions on the importance of the Sabbath and play or joy, but they have not seen the value of the creative imagination's contribution to the possibility of healing our attitudes towards the job, thus possibly re-humanizing work. Our focus here is mainly on Cosden, but as we consider these two challenges, relationship and imagination, we will recognize how they can add to Volf's ideas on pneumatological *charisms*, and, more importantly, we can reflect on how they contribute to our own hypothesis regarding the "proper job". Because the second point will arise continuously throughout the thesis, we will briefly introduce the creative element of work here and then return to the further possibilities of relationship.

1.2.3. The Creative Imagination

In Cosden's brief focus on Marx, he includes an intriguing quote from Marx, "But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, the architect raises his structure in his *imagination* before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour process, we get a result that already existed in the *imagination* of the labourer at its commencement."[172] While Cosden's desire is to show Marx's differentiation between the human and nonhuman, he passes over the internal process of the imagination, the spark that sets off the work. Cosden dismisses the reflective part of work, but I would argue that the importance of the creative imagination is an intrinsic part of who we are as humans and our work. Indeed, for some, mental processing, scholarly thinking or creatively envisioning *is* their work.

As humans we cognitively create scenarios in which we interact with others, build, design and puzzle out some of the very things that later generate physical work. I would contend that it is not only when the work is reduced to economics that it becomes

[172] As cited in Ibid. 15. Italics mine.

dehumanizing, but also when this creative element is removed from the job, when humans are no longer mentally invested in their work on some level.[173] When the human cannot participate in the imaginative element of the work, it is no longer, dare I use this term, fun. Without inventiveness, vision or inspiration, there is no joy, fulfilment or purpose to the activity and we will therefore begin to look for these elsewhere. Yes, there is work that is dirty and tedious, but it is more so when the worker is forced to mentally disengage in order to perform. Dangling a golden carrot is one way that we draw people into such situations; basic survival and enslavement are others.

This is what often separates the artist from the other worker. The artist's task begins in the creative imagination, and the work springs forth from that. The whole body is engaged in the fulfilment of the envisioned concept. There is still tedium in the perfecting of technique and in the course of completing a book, painting or poem or rehearsing for a performance, but with the mind engaged with the telos of the task or its relational potential, the difficult parts of the process are endured. It is in this reflective activity, I would argue, that we find a further part of the ontological aspect of work introduced. Cosden has used the terms Creator and the creation as connected to work but does not necessarily see that the progenitor of created work resides elsewhere. Observe the following passage:

> By defining it as ontological, I speak of work as a thing in itself with its own intrinsic value apart from but of course related to these functions. Rather than simply seeing work's combined practical uses as constituent of its essence, I understand work's essential nature to be derived ontologically from its having been built into the fabric of creation by God. The person is a worker, not as an accident of nature but because God first is a worker and persons are created in his image. Humanity's work however, is not identical to God's but is specific to our created essence. Thus, to best understand humanity's work it is essential to look at theological anthropology and not just to God's work.[174]

Cosden sees God first as "a worker" and this is, in my opinion, a key to where his ontological aspect is insufficient. He does not see God in Trinitarian relationship, nor God's activity as springing from a source prior to the work of creation. Cosden's analysis of varying views of the *imago Dei* in his chapter 5 is shaped by this; he is

[173] Barth, 547, takes up this notion in his section 55 when he gives his criteria for good work. Brock follows this in greater length in Chapter 7.
[174] Cosden. 17.

respectful of, but rejects, Gunton's relational interpretation, choosing instead to glean from a theological anthropology that leans towards a functional ontology. I suggest that in order to understand work, the creative mind and relationality need further consideration than Cosden allows. As indicated above, we will return to a more thorough treatment of the creative imagination later, especially when we look at Sayers. Further, within Cosden's explanation of ontology, there is a fascinating study of relationship and personhood.

1.2.4. Ontological or Relational?

In Cosden's approach to ontology, he first establishes a thing's teleological functionality, saying "[t]his means that it is essential to establish at the outset the possibility of a thing as having purposes or ends and that it is appropriate to reason from this to determine a moral ought."[175] He then compares the work of McIntyre with that of O'Donovan to clarify his point. In McIntyre he finds the view that the very nature of a thing (including the *is* and the *ought*) is bound to the individual, while O'Donovan's approach is grounded in the Gospel, which focuses individuality "to, for and alongside the Other and the like."[176] In other words, Macintyre sees personhood as individual, while O'Donovan suggests that individuality itself is relational; we become more defined as particular persons as we relate to others. Cosden also extends relationship not only to beings both human and animal, but also to God in a particular relationship that shapes and defines all others.

The next step that Cosden takes is to locate ontology in a teleology that, in his view, has functionality as its central feature. But he wants a different conception of functionality than that used in views of utility and instrumentality, and it is here that we see Cosden's freestanding ontological aspect begin to break down. Rather than assessing functionality as something narrowly linked to the utile, Cosden argues for a broader view that operates in a *relational* mode:

> The notion of function in fact binds together the things/persons that utility pulls apart. Function likewise guarantees that connectedness and

[175] Ibid. 83.
[176] Ibid. 87.

> interdependence are integral to a thing/person's essence in a way that Foundationalism and Existentialism cannot, beginning as they do with individual existence. As the key category of function, *relationship* rather than either utility or solitary existence safeguards a person's value and corresponding dignity by showing them to be a valuable part of an integral whole: rather than in an individualist way making their essence prior to and thus detached from and incidental to that whole.[177]

Thus Cosden concludes:

> (The sick, old, handicapped, preborn and unemployed) are enmeshed in a matrix of directing and functional *relationships*, which shapes who they are (their essence) positively in a way that utility and mere existence cannot.[178]

At the core of Cosden's explanation of work's function, we find an ontology driven by relationship. Further, he finds teleology's instrumental function is in the shaping and defining of humanity as persons by the development of character. The primary source of this shaping occurs through a uniquely Christian relationship with God. At every turn Cosden's study of work is punctuated with the human in relationship; but he goes so far as to state, "Work cannot simply be made subordinate to the human as if it were only ordered to humanity."[179] Yet we have already seen that work is so inescapably tied to creaturely life and living that it is hard to fathom how it can have a solitary existence as a thing that does not relate to its progenitor. We cannot see it as something that does not connect to other people. Work has its source in the human; it relies on the human, serves the human, and represents the human past, present and future. It is a feature of human life, and of the human in relationship with an active God. Cosden wishes to convince us that work has an ontological aspect that, in and of itself, stands alone, but the work that he is examining is human work. He disregards the idea that comes up in his own examination of ontology: that human ontology is relational ontology.

Finally, if human work is both relational and instrumental, how can it not be ontological? Work's relational aspect is rooted in the fact that man is, ontologically, a relational and a functionally active being. Not all of our relationships are caused by the

[177] Ibid. 93. Italics mine.
[178] Ibid. Italics mine.
[179] Ibid. 184.

activity of work. The activity of work does place us into relationship with one another, but work can also spring forth from relationship. For example, the mother-child relationship includes the activities of bearing and then caring for her child. This particular work flows from the relationship and cannot stand out on its own.

1.2.5. Where Do We Go From Here?

Cosden has contributed to the theology of work by encouraging us to consider an ontological aspect of work. I have argued, however, that work is ontological but not in the way that Cosden would have it. This being the case, what can we take away from this study of Cosden that will help us to understand the idea of a "proper job"? He has heightened our awareness of the ontological in work. Even more than that, it has become obvious that the notion of relationality is integral to our humanness, just as it is to our work. We are created in connection with God and we are also invited into relationship with the human and nonhuman creation. In Volf we found that, by relying on each other, and through a relationship with the Holy Spirit we are shaped by and shape the created Other. Therefore, the important factor that we have noted, thus far, about work is that the focus on relationship bears further attention.

2. RELATIONALITY: A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF HUMANNESS

As stated above, relationality has so much to do with the human that we need to take some time to look at it more closely in order to have a firm grasp on how it applies to work. Volf's and Cosden's theological reflections were influenced early on by Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann has made very thought-provoking statements about man as a relational image. In *Man: Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*,[180] Moltmann takes his cue from some of the fundamental questions of existence. We ask such questions as: Why am I here? Who am I? What makes me human? What is the nature of humanity? By returning to the point of creation and looking at the image of God, Moltmann finds a view of God that addresses these basic questions.

[180] Jürgen Moltmann, *Man: Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present*, trans. John Sturdy (London: S.C.P.K., 1971).

2.1. Moltmann

According to *God in Creation,*[181] it is within the plurality and relationality of the Godhead that we find some interesting ideas concerning the nature of man and who we are. God is a being in relationship; therefore, man as *imago* should reflect this primary aspect of God's being.[182]

> The human being's likeness to God is a theological term before it becomes an anthropological one. It first of all says something about the God who creates his image for himself, and who enters into a particular relationship with that image, before it says anything about the human being who is created in this form. Likeness to God means God's relationship to human beings first of all, and only then, as a consequence of that, the human being's relationship to God. God puts himself in a particular relationship to human beings – a relationship in which human beings become his image and his glory on earth. The nature of human beings springs from their relationship to God. It is this relationship that gives human nature its definition ...[183]

When we see the creation of humanity from Moltmann's point of view, then relationality has primary, ontological significance. Moltmann posits that Man was able to be and become a true self by being in communion with the Other: primarily with God, then with the creation.[184] The distinction of people as male and female also places humanity in yet another relationship: one to an Other. According to Moltmann, rather than woman completing man by providing him with a partnership for work, woman completes man by creating relationship with the Other. It is in Eve's Otherness and relatedness to Adam that humanity, as a whole, images God.

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[181] Jurgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1985).

[182] Regarding the *Imago Dei* as relational see also: Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press., 1998).

[183] Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*. 217. Gunton argues even more firmly that it is problematic to look for that which separates man from the creation when trying to define the *imago*. See Gunton. 193.

[184] Barth is in agreement with this notion, in that "Humanity, the characteristic and essential mode of man's being, is in its root fellow-humanity. Humanity, which is not fellow-humanity, is inhumanity. For it cannot reflect but only contradict the determination of man to be God's covenant-partner, nor can the God who is no *Deus solitarius* but *Deus triunus*, God in relationship, be mirrored in a *homo solitarius."* Barth also makes a great deal of gender. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961). 116-7. Following Barth, Brock too makes much of the relational character of people and work, under the heading of communality, which will be discussed in detail below.

> If we start from God's relationship to human beings, then what makes the human being God's image is not his possession of any particular characteristic or other – something that distinguishes him above other creatures: it is *his whole existence.* The whole person, not merely his soul; the true human community, not the individual; humanity as it is bound up with nature, not simply human beings in their confrontation with nature – it is these which are the image of God and his glory.[185]

This interconnectedness includes God, people and nature, as representative of man's true being as *imago.* The work we do in the world is, therefore, an expression of this nature and cannot stand on its own without a relational involvement.[186] It is a beautiful picture, but what does it mean to the individual, and how does that feed into our notions of the proper job? Man is both relational and individual, an interesting paradox. Does he function in his job as an individual who then has relationships? We must look elsewhere, outside of this Moltmann/Volf/Cosden trio to see how the relational shapes our ideas on work. We will turn then to the work of John D. Zizioulas and John MacMurray for a discussion on personhood, individuality and relationship.

3. RELATIONSHIP, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE PERSON

Thus far we have determined that work cannot have an ontology outside its human component. Unlike Cosden, John D. Zizioulas in *Being as Communion*[187] finds that a person's true ontology can only be found in relationship; thus, work follows suit. Even though he does have a special, even idiosyncratic, way of using the terms *ontology*, *individual*, and *person,* Zizioulas is able to enlighten our discussion with some very interesting ideas. According to Zizioulas *ontology* is what concerns being as something that has "permanent and enduring existence."[188] Therefore, to have ontological content and ontological being, according to Zizioulas, a human must have some kind of permanent being and not merely temporary and mortal existence. As to *person*, he posits that for many centuries, the Greeks could not properly form the concept, and it remained

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[185] Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*. 221.

[186] Dal Schindell, Director of Publications, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, makes a thorough examination of the result of the rejection of this relationship with God in his lectures on "Art Into the Twentieth Century". Schindell surveys works of visual art from the Enlightenment onward, noting a disturbing turn, a decline in subject matter and product, when Man finds a relationship with God unnecessary.

[187] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1985).

[188] Ibid. 35. This also seems to be the case with Cosden's use of ontology when trying to find teleological permanence for the existence of work.

undeveloped until the Greek worldview came into contact and combined with Christianity and its perception of eschatology.[189] The term *individual* has a very restricted use for Zizioulas: an individual is something autonomous and totally separate. So, in his way of thinking, a person cannot be an individual. (Though they can and must be a particular and have an identity.) I would argue, however, that the words *ontological*, *individual* and *person* do not have to be used in this restrictive manner. Today's common usage does not necessarily hold the words person or individual to designate a totally self-contained entity, separate or outside the community, and ontology is commonly taken to include much more than questions of the being and permanence of things.[190] Things can have ontological significance even when they change or no longer exist, simply by the imprint or impact that they have made upon a point or specific person in human history.[191] This being said, Zizioulas does contribute a very interesting discussion on the development of man as person that can be incorporated into the way we view our job.

3.1. Zizioulas

His study of the Greek idea of *person* uncovers its origins, funnily enough, in the Greek theatrical term – *prosopon.* *Prosopon* can refer to the masked actor in character on stage in a particular role or to the mask itself. "In the ancient Greek world to be a person means that he has something added to his being; the 'person' is not his true 'hypostasis [true being]'."[192] The actor, therefore, by adding the mask, temporarily centres himself out; he becomes the "person" for the sake of the audience to enact the play. According to Zizioulas, this action separates the actor from the community for the duration of the play, and the actor is not an individual until he performs this act. The true nature of tragedy, as Zizioulas sees it, occurs when a human being (an actor) centres himself out, taking a position other than that which he was made to be. The actor temporarily takes on the

[189] Ibid. 35. I question Zizioulas' notion that the concept of the person is a predominantly Christian development. The Old Testament is riddled with God's own recognition and calling of individual people as persons. Abram is called from his specific community, separated out into a life as Abraham, wandering towards an unforeseen promise. Lot is saved as an individual person; Samuel and Samson and Ruth, Esther and Rahab are set apart for a purpose. And the list could continue in order to show how the Old Testament highlights the individual as person either in relationship or out of relationship with God and always in relationship to other people. One wonders if an overemphasis on the Greek is at the base of Zizioulas' idea and, if we were able to look at other early cultures, whether the notion also existed amongst them.

[190] This will be developed later when we talk of Sayers' notions in *The Mind of the Maker.*

[191] This may sound like Cosden's argument, but we must remember Cosden wants work's ontology to be separate from the human. See Footnote 17 above.

[192] Zizioulas. 33.

prosopon, the individual Other, when he dons the mask. The mask represented him removing himself from the community in order to spotlight the individual.[193] It was the actor's particular place within the community to perform this act for others.

According to Zizioulas, the Romans (using the word *persona*) developed this understanding of *person* in another direction, taking it as the role that one plays in the social context. A man has identity only as far as it pertains to a relationship.

> Roman thought, which is fundamentally organizational and social, concerns itself not with ontology, with the *being* of man, but with his relationship with others, with his ability to form relationships with others, with his ability to form associations, enter into contract, to set up *collegia*, to organize human life in a state. Thus personhood, once again, does not have any ontological content.[194]

Zizioulas' ontology here is still centred on permanent being, but the Roman notion of *persona*, as he sees it, is not: it is in social relationships that the person has an identity. The Roman understanding of person was still linked closely with the actor's portrayal of a role, but since the role had no permanence, Zizioulas concludes that the word "person" had no ontological significance. In Zizioulas' opinion, something deeply significant had to happen in order to give the terms *prosopon* and *persona* ontological meaning and he concludes that this occurred when a Greek cosmological view met "Christianity with its biblical outlook",[195] the notion of person and individual took on new meaning.

Zizioulas explains that Christianity's focus on God as the author of creation, shifted man's ontological centre from an ontology within the world to one that found its being in Him. As the early Christian Fathers developed their understanding of the three-personhood of the Trinity, they began to see God's existence as far more complex. God has manifested Himself as three separate persons constantly intertwined in relation. The

[193] I would be interested to hear what Zizioulas would say about the comedic actor who also wore a mask but for a completely different type of enactment, or about the Japanese for whom the use of mask is integral in signifying character.
[194] Zizioulas. 34.
[195] Ibid. 35.

concept of Man, therefore, evolved into notions of a person as individual, yet necessarily in relationship: "*To be* and *to be in relation* become identical."[196]

At this point, his view seems similar to that of Moltmann, but Zizioulas posits further that the person or individual achieved permanence as *imago dei,* they are a being in constant relation. Christ is central to this occurrence as He draws and holds the individual in community. A mode of being with no permanence is left behind when the individual is born again into a community, achieving permanence through the act of baptism. We then reaffirm this new hypostasis in further community through the corporate celebration of the Eucharist. The communion service is not just the remembrance of an individual within an historic event; it is an actual communal experience of the resurrected, living Christ. Christ is bound to this new individual, the new person in community, and the *imago Dei* resides in the flesh of man.

Let us look at this from another angle. Zizioulas explains that, to the Church Fathers, there were two modes of existence or hypostasis: biological and ecclesial. The biological mode of existence represents man's "is", as a being unto himself, living and mortal and, therefore, perishable not permanent. Man strives through the material existence to become a person. He remains separate from other individuals, needing them and yet not completely bonding with them. "The tragedy of the biological constitution of man's hypostasis does not lie in his not being a person because of it; it lies in his tending towards becoming a person through it and failing."[197] There is no pivotal or central point upon which man, in this state, can pin his "ought." When Christ is accepted, the act of baptism affirms and adopts a new hypostasis: ecclesial. He transcends from a mere biological individual, enters into a relationship with God and identifies with the Church in true relationship with God's Triune nature. He now exists with a knowledge of both his "is" and his "ought".

> In fact, the encounter between the ecclesial and the biological hypostasis creates a paradoxical relationship in human existence. Man appears to exist in his ecclesial identity not as that which he is but as that which he *will* be; the ecclesial identity is linked with eschatology, that is, with the final outcome of his existence.[198]

[196] Ibid. 88.
[197] Ibid. 51.
[198] Ibid. 59.

The new community invites him into the act of the celebration of the Eucharist - an act that in Zizioulas's understanding has two essential parts: assembly and movement. Man in his ecclesial hypostasis joins the community to perform an action. Through Christ "[t]he Church has therefore no other reality or experience of truth as communion so perfect as the Eucharist. In the Eucharistic assembly, God's Word reaches man and creation not from outside, as in the Old Testament, but as "flesh" - from inside our own existence, as part of creation."[199] When we consider what Zizioulas is saying, man has not abandoned completely his biological state of being but has added to that state an external relationship, for he has bonded himself within a community that is both biological or fleshly, and spiritual, with a teleology that connects him to something far beyond just himself and his own survival. For Zizioulas then, a person's true ontology can only be found in this relationship.

Relationality is what makes us human and persons and individuals; this is what Zizioulas is getting at, and when we look at the idea of work, we find that relationality is an essential feature to its performance. Without a sense of true relationship in our lives, and this includes our work, we become isolated and distanced from the purpose of our job. When we look at our modern understanding of work, we see that a number of circumstances exist. Identity, for some, is found in the job; in others the worker is simply a cog in the wheel for economic gain; and in still other instances, work's sole purpose is for the paycheque, making the most money for the least amount of input. In all of these, work has become bent to the self: as the place of identity, it is godlike; as merely a money-making scheme, the human is overlooked for the sake of productivity; and, finally, as a way to obtain leisure, the paycheque is a means to sloth. When work loses its relational quality, man is idolatrous and selfish; he is biological man. None of these demonstrate a need for God.

Zizioulas describes this striving as an attempt to remove individuality from the whole, it is a rebellion founded in pride or *hubris*. The community is deprived of each person's uniqueness. Separate from the true ontology in relationship with the Other, Man threatens his own personhood. Thus, Adam and Eve destroyed their true ontological state when they sinned; they were striving to become individuals apart from God, thereby,

[199] Ibid. 115. Here again, we are back at a similar point to that mentioned by Moltmann.

damaging the primary relationship. With a relationship to God broken, human relationship followed, and human activity took on a function or purpose different from its original intent.

3.2. MacMurray

Zizioulas' primary focus was on the importance of understanding our personhood through community, specifically Christian community, and MacMurray's work is a good way to follow up on those ideas. In his Gifford lectures, *The Self as Agent*[200] followed by *Persons in Relation,*[201] he discusses this notion as well, but in a manner that adds to our desire to grasp a fuller interpretation of work and relationality.

The Self as Agent questions the notion of Man as merely a thinking being, by introducing a substitution of the word *cogito* with the term *facio* when discussing Man's personhood. This concept of Man as thinking being entered Western culture, according to MacMurrray, through the Greek notion that the primary sense was visual, and theories of sense perception were built on this given. "Thought is taken to be an inner vision."[202] Visual imagery is passive, and as such, it is very difficult to grasp ideas of self and personhood; a dualism occurs between the thinking being and the physical body. According to MacMurray, the visual tends to want to negate the physical; however, it is a catalyst for the other senses, causing the thinking human to experience the image further in order to know and understand more fully. Vision precedes action as a "guide to action…Visual perception is therefore *symbolic."*[203] The Other is something outside of the individual but not fully comprehended. It is when the symbol is acted upon that Man experiences more of the Other, thereby adding more to his own being. Humans are beings with agency, beings that "do" rather than beings that simply think. Whether this doing is working, reflecting, sleeping, creating, resting, playing, it is all action, and it is a part of Man as self. In MacMurray's opinion, the self cannot be considered as an existing being through a focus on only the mind; there must be more in order to be a person. By describing Man in terms of the thinking being, the Self becomes egocentric. As passive

[200] John MacMurray, *The Self As Agent* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1953).
[201] John MacMurray, *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954).
[202] John MacMurray, "The Perception of the Other," in *The Self As Agent*, The Gifford Lectures 1953 (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1953). 105.
[203] Ibid. 111.

or *cogito,* the Self has no being, but once the Self moves into action or *facio,* it takes onto itself the fullness of a dynamic being.

MacMurray sums this up at the beginning of *Persons in Relation* with "Our conclusion was not merely that the Self is agent; but that the Self has its being only in its agency. The Self as 'the Mind', which is the self as non-agent, is a non-entity."[204] MacMurray opts for a being in agency and through agency, thus also a being in relation to other beings. "Since then the Self as Subject is the isolated Self, we can transform our earlier conclusion that the Self exists only as Agent. We may say instead that the Self exists only in dynamic relationship with the Other."**[205]** He then makes a further observation regarding our relationship with the Other that touches the heart of our questions regarding the actor. MacMurray states:

> We are faced at the outset with a methodological problem. How can we determine theoretically, and so represent conceptually, the Other's consciousness, whether the Other is another human being or an animal? From the standpoint of 'Cogito', with its dualism of mind and matter, the answer is that we cannot.[206]

He goes on to explain that, based on our own ability to see, touch and think, we can perceive things about the Other, and we can process conversations and actions of Others based on our own experience. As beings, active and in relationship, our own experience builds, and we become even more proficient with this process. "All human knowledge is necessarily anthropomorphic, for the simple reason we are human beings. By this I mean that we can only determine the behaviour of the Other through a knowledge of our own."[207] He goes on to say "In general then, the rule for the determination of the activity of the Other is this: I must attribute to the Other, if I am to understand it, the form of activity that I attribute to Myself."[208] We can understand what he is getting at, but here MacMurray seems to miss a crucial symmetry; the reciprocal also occurs; we learn about ourselves through the observance of and interaction with the Other. And we must get our priorities straight. The child imitates Others first, before

[204] John MacMurray, *Persons in Relation*, The Gifford Lectures 1954 (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954). 15.
[205] Ibid. 17.
[206] MacMurray, "The Perception of the Other." 115.
[207] Ibid. 116.
[208] Ibid.

putting onto others their own characteristics and individuality. We interact with and learn about how other humans behave in certain situations; how to deal with anger, boredom, joy and so on. We also look outside ourselves at the Other in order to put on what we do not have.[209] We imitate and then make things our own. What we make our own is not just on the surface, shown as body language, but an internal adjustment of what we have viewed externally. This criticism and development of MacMurray's general point is important because it demonstrates how relationality shapes us, forming and reforming us into a person who is particular and individual.

We wondered earlier if there could possibly be more to the actor's job than mere imitation or mucking about, and we see here whole new possibilities regarding the actor's purpose. As a being with agency centred upon relationship, we learn from observing and imitating other human behaviour. It is not only the bad behaviour that we take in but also its consequences. As said earlier, we have a tendency to focus upon the negative aspects of acting and fail to see that the actor mimics the good, true and honest as well. According to Timothy Keller, "every job or line of work can present a new set of moral or ethical questions specific to that particular job; they all have their own set of challenges and issues unique to the given situation."[210] The actor's work is no different, but his challenge is that he not only takes on the responsibilities of his own work, but also represents the moral dilemma of others through each character he portrays. The actor does not stand in judgment of the character; he merely represents or gives an impression of the person in their given situation. It is for the audience to weigh all the information from the play and take away what they need. When we look more closely at the actor's work, we will see how this fits together and becomes a "proper job." His technique and training aid him in order that he can explore all aspects of humanity and safely maintain his own moral character. The actor is then able to put on display a human being who goes through the human thought processes, makes decisions, is involved in dilemmas, and bears the consequences of his actions. The audience participates in a great variety of

[209] An anecdote illustrates this notion of imitation: A teenager, John, imitates his friend Mike because he feels Mike is really cool. Sometime later, he finds out that Mike thought Jeff was cool, and Mike was imitating Jeff. Jeff on the other hand was copying Ray who, in turn, copied Marco. Finally, John discovers that Marco thought that he, John, was cool and was adopting John's mannerisms as his own. Thus, John as a teen was doing a copy, of an imitation, of a copy, of an imitation, of himself.
[210] Timothy Keller, "Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything," in *Keller: Redeemer City to City Lectures* (U.S.A.: Zondervan, 2010).

human situations and, whether consciously or unconsciously, thinks through the circumstances of the play.

4. RELATIONALITY AS A PART OF WORK

We have presented a progression here that flows from an examination of work that tries to pin some sort of definition on it, to an understanding of the importance of relationship to work. Volf presents two features; the teleological function and the recognition of pneumatological gifting, while Cosden hoped to shape our thinking through three aspects: instrumental, relational and ontological. In both authors, the relational quality of work rose to the forefront as something that needed closer examination. Moltmann tied this social aspect to our inner being reflecting God's triune image, and would concur that work's ontology lies within relationship for the very fact that relationship cannot be separated from the human. Zizioulas encouraged us to see the formation of the person through our relationship with God reflected in communion with others in the faith. Finally, MacMurray has drawn us back to seeing ourselves as acting persons whose agency is enclosed in relationship.

We have established that man is a relational being and that true work is a relational activity, but we need to examine further how that knowledge affects our thinking about what is, and what is not, a "proper job." There is a need to look elsewhere to see how work has come to the place where, rather than being individual activities that serve a greater community, work has become categorized. Wendell Berry has made a wonderful contribution towards criticism of our negative understandings of work, and N.T. Wright's writing on the Christian character introduces a new means to approach our daily work, no matter what it may be.

4.1. Wendell Berry

Berry's Agrarian Essays in *The Art of the Commonplace*[211] meet the pervading attitudes towards what is considered "proper work" head on. His focal point is, primarily, a return to a deep connection with the earth, reminding the reader of a

[211] Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002).

forgotten sense of stewardship. He sees the land as a living, breathing organism whose life is connected to us as humans. "As a people, we have lost sight of the profound communion of the inner and outer life…our surroundings, from our clothes to our countryside, are the products of our inward life - our spirit, our vision - as much as they are the products of nature and work."[212] Central to Berry's relating of the human inner and outer self is "our attitude towards work".[213]

In Berry's view, work's primary focus is no longer the care and feeding of the Other, meaning both human and nonhuman, but the care and feeding of only the self through the exploitation of the Other. In order to do so, we strive to free ourselves from any form of labour, looking for the quick solution or assigning to others a task we feel is beneath us. Berry uses the highly offensive term, "nigger," in order to jolt us into seeing the manner that we have abused not only each other, but also the environment.[214] "We want to rise above the sweat and bother of taking care of anything - of ourselves, of each other or of our country. We did not enslave Africans because they were black, but because their labour promised to free us of the obligations of stewardship…"[215] The emancipation of the slaves triggered the rise of a number of individuals who thought that getting their hands dirty, was almost a sin; and so the dirty or "nigger" work is shoved onto the desperate or those without skill. Based on education, ethnicity, gender or mental ability the cycle is prolonged. Berry sees this as the consequence of a worldview in which work achieves one goal: to be free from work. He encourages us to wonder why we would allow ourselves to get into such a state.

He notes an attitude towards work in which we focus upon some nebulous idea of a future time when leisure would dominate our existence. Berry pokes fun at a misuse of eschatological notions; they unrealistically take us away from the enjoyment of the task at hand, focusing on an idea of a heaven in which we are free, and, thereby,

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[212] Wendell Berry, "The Unsettling of America," in *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002). 43. We will revisit the phrase "attitude towards work" when we bring in Sayers.
[213] Ibid.
[214] We will take up the idea of categorization of work later in this chapter.
[215] Wendell Berry, "Racism and the Economy," in *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002). 47.

purposeless.[216] Berry cautions that the "future" exists in the here and now, "…if we take care of the world in the present, the future will have received full justice from us".[217] This statement suggests an outlook on work that requires integrity and honesty here and now, that brings stewardship and servanthood into every task, regardless of its possible teleology or any form of remuneration. Yes, today's work has a domino effect that could possibly touch family life and beyond, but it should not be made a primary concern.[218] Attention is being diverted from the present, from the joy of doing a job and doing it well, to work's economic value and how it can benefit the individual with future ease. Today's work has become a process to be endured rather than a responsibility that gives fulfillment and purpose.

> But is work something that we have a right to escape? And can we escape it with impunity? We are probably the first entire people to think so. All the ancient wisdom that has come down to us councils otherwise. It tells us that work is necessary to us, as much a part of our condition as mortality; that good work is our salvation and our joy; that shoddy or self-serving work is our doom. We have tried to escape the sweat and sorrow promised to us in Genesis - only to find that, in order to do so, we must foreswear love and excellence, health and joy.[219]

There is so much more that Berry has to add to the discussion of the attitude to work. His ideas resonate so strongly with those of Sayers that it necessitates setting this point aside and reintroducing him when we approach her writing. One final point that we must mention is that Berry inadvertently touches upon Volf's notions of *charisms*. "Another decent possibility my critics implicitly deny is that of work as a gift…They assume - and this is the orthodox assumption of the industrial economy - that the only help worth giving is not given at all, but sold."[220] Work, or the ability to work, is in itself a *charism,* a gift from God, through which mankind is invited to participate in the creation. We are contributors and, in some respects, co-workers or co-creators, blessed with the ability to join God in what He is doing in the world and in other humans.

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[216] Brock criticises Berry's notion, but misses the point, in that Berry is not judging Christian eschatology but a misrepresentation of work's purpose. Berry pokes fun at what takes us away from the present and causes a style of working that is less focused on doing a job well and more focused upon getting it over and getting it paid. Brock. 299.
[217] Berry, "Feminism, the Body and the Machine."73.
[218] This statement also resonates with Christ's encouragements to focus upon the time at hand; by attending to what is necessary in the here and now, we will be better prepared for the future. See: Matt 6:25-34, Matt 4:36-51.
[219] Berry, "The Unsettling of America." 45.
[220] Berry, "Feminism, the Body and the Machine." 71.

4.2. The Gift of Work and the Gifts for Work: N.T. Wright

Some of this gifting is quite obvious, there are those who display natural physical and mental abilities that draw them to obvious activities but these are not necessarily the primary way in which we function as Christians. Some abilities do not come naturally but are developed in order to serve in true relationship. N. T. Wright's *After You Believe*[221] uses the building of character as a theme. Any type of character, strong or weak, can affect, and be affected by, the conduct of an individual at work. The building of the Christian character, more specifically virtue, is what Wright is promoting here. Character, when moulded in response to God's grace in the here and now, has significance that extends beyond the present. Just as Volf, Cosden and Moltmann presented work by nestling it within a teleological foundation, so too, the consequences of developing Christian virtue can have dynamic repercussions. Wright uses the example of how the early Christians bore witness to a new mode of being; they were honest in business, charitable, hard working and kind, their focal point was on virtue. This new behaviour caught the attention of the ordinary Roman citizens because it displayed a strong moral and ethical value that went even further than their own. It crossed all forms of bias; gender, economic, religious, in fact, the Christians even extended this grace to their enemies. Wright sees in the Early Christians a teleology that resulted in the development of their character.

> God's kingdom was bursting into the present world offering a "goal" the like of which Aristotle had never imagined. Human beings were called at last to rediscover what they had been made for, what Israel had been created for. They were after all, to be rulers and priests, following Jesus' ultimate royal and priestly achievement, and they would have to learn from scratch what that meant. They were to practice virtue – virtue of a kind never imagined before.[222]

Even more than a moral demonstration, the Christian idea of priest or ruler exhibited a new outlook on sovereignty. The good priest or ruler had a responsibility to his people: he served, guided, protected and provided for all of those in his charge, regardless of status. In our modern understanding, the primary place in which we can grasp and demonstrate this new role is in our work. Berry would concur that there is a

[221] N.T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010).
[222] Ibid. 133.

great need for Christians to grasp what Wright is trying to explain. Work, when connected with the Kingdom, is a service to another out of love. When we realign our thoughts to the outpouring of God's grace and the demonstration of virtue a sense of fulfilment can come from work. When we are in relationship with the Divine we will find, as did the Early Christians, the energy and joy to serve others.

Again, we recognize Volf's ideas of *charisms*. Luther, when talking about vocation, suggested that God's gifts include a person's individual faculties or potential and also their property, tools, finances and the environment around them.[223] When we develop the type of virtue that Wright encourages, we will refine and use the natural gifts bestowed upon us in line with how the Father would want them used. These bestowments will then affect the quality of our home life and our conduct in the world, including the way in which we work. The focus turns from self to service.

5. THUS FAR AND MORE

We have covered a great deal of ground in this chapter. Volf's notions of *charisms,* and Cosden's three aspects of work lead us to Moltmann's relational outlook and into a discussion of Zizioulas' and MacMurray's ideas on the individual, personhood and community. Berry's agrarian views and Wright's ideas regarding the development of virtue focused our attention on some negative and some positive attitudes to work, in both secular and Christian contexts. The path we have followed has refocused our discussion of work from an understanding brought about by a predominantly economic or production-oriented worldview, to an awareness of work as part of what it is to be an active and contemplative human in relationship to God and others.

We have gained a very broad conception of work, well beyond that most familiar today. Before we can move on, there are two more details that we should attend to: first, to see how distinguishing different concepts and types of work is consequential to the notion of the "proper job;" and second, examining work's relationships with other aspects of life like leisure, family life, and recuperation or rest, with which it is often contrasted. We will look very briefly at Joseph Pieper and his notions on the latter aspect in section

[223] Marc Kolden, *Luther On Vocation* (St. Paul: The Luther Seminary, 1983). 387.

5.2. In section 5.1, we discuss some further aspects of work brought out by Brian Brock's consideration of Barth and Wendell Berry. In this section we do note, however, that Brock is dealing with what they call good or honest work from a Christian perspective, within the divine call of God's work in creation, as opposed to acceptable or right kinds of work from a non-religious view. We will be following up this Christian strand in detail, with Barth in particular, in Chapter Four, as it leads us into questions of vocation.

5.1. Brock, Barth and Berry

In his overall study, *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age,* Brock deals with many matters other than work. The first half of this work is concerned with three philosophers: Heidegger, Grant and Foucault. The second half uses Barth and others to build up his own overarching theological view, in which all human life and activity is brought within the arch of worship, and is formed by God's Sabbath. In Chapter Seven, he concerns himself with work[224] and draws on Barth's *Church Dogmatics III.4,* §55 and some of Berry's essays. Similar to Zizioulas' picture of biological man,[225] Brock observes that work, rather than Christ's death and resurrection on the cross, has become in the secular world a means of salvation.[226] Human beings can, through industry and hard work, feed and clothe themselves, build, tear down, fix the environment, and renovate many aspects of their inner and outer selves, their living space, and the environment. This idea then leads to Brock's focus: to flesh out the notion of good or "proper" work within his overall frame of worship and the Sabbath. We will see here that he concludes, with the help of Berry and Barth, that the actual job or task is not the central feature but that there are criteria within which the work should fall, that can give it the status of a "proper job," or in his case, "good" work. We will briefly discuss Barth and Berry and then these together through Brock.

Barth, in CD §55, *The Active Life,* gives us an overview of all of man's activity, which includes, but is not limited to work. The purpose of work, according to Barth, is predominantly for the procurement of what supports and prolongs human life. He gives

[224] Brock. 289.
[225] See above, Section 3.1.
[226] Brock, 292.

complex criteria for good work; which is for him, as for Brock, work under the awareness of God's creative activity and of a person's own call to be human under God's command. His criteria include the following ideas. 1) The individual sets goals and strives to attain them. 2) The worth of the work: the work should promote healthy human existence for the individual, for those in his immediate sphere and/or the community beyond. 3) The humanity of the work: it should function with the awareness of the needs and work of others. 4) It contains an element of inward reflection: moments to muse, among other things, upon the job itself, its purpose and the individual's performance of the task. 5) There is a limit to the work: there is an end to the workday. Man needs to have time to be away from it, "free for God and, therefore, free for himself."[227] Work, in Barth's opinion, is not all that is known by or about the individual or his place and roles in the world. He is insistent that man is discovered through all aspects of his life: work, rest, celebration, lamentation and so on. The idea of Sabbath, rest, enjoyment and non-activity are, according to Barth, intrinsic to our ability to perform our work well. "Work done in anxiety cannot be done aright as such."[228]

Berry draws in other nuances regarding work's provisional importance. As seen earlier, he finds that too often today even the focus on provision for life and living is overshadowed by economics and the desire to make more money than necessary. He also finds that this monetary focus has developed into an elitist view in which some types of work are beneath the dignity of certain individuals. Berry also strives to define what it is that makes work, any work, a good day's labour. In his poem *Healing,*[229] we find nuances of Barth's criteria, most especially its relational nature and the need for rest and reflection. "Love and the work of friends and lovers belong to the task, and are its health. Rest and rejoicing belong to the task and are its health."[230] Berry makes much of the idea of rejoicing and enjoyment in work[231] and adds to the notion of reflection the idea of responsibility towards our work and its effect on the world around us.[232]

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[227] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 551.
[228] Ibid. 554.
[229] Wendell Berry, "Healing," in *What Are People For?* (London: Rider Books, 1990). 8.
[230] Ibid. 12.
[231] See Wendell Berry, "What Are People For?," in *What Are People For?* (London: Rider Books, 1990).
[232] See Wendell Berry, (1970), Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community: Eight Essays* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).

Using these concepts of Berry and Barth, Brock attempts to formulate a means of defining good work. Rather than picking on types of work or particular jobs as an example of good work, he presents, like Barth, general aspects of his own, and draws upon both Barth and Berry to support his conclusions. His criteria for good work are in line with Barth's in seeing it as both communal and reflective; but Berry's influence adds a third aspect, less closely related to Barth[233]: playfulness. Consideration of work's communal nature draws in ideas already discussed in this chapter, regarding the relational aspect of work. As found in Moltmann and MacMurray, work cannot escape its connection to others. Good work corresponds to the community. Brock (here too drawing on Barth) criticises the tendency for work to become competitive rather than co-operative, which undermines the purpose of the work.[234] Brock also notes that "good work recognizes that humans are communal beings, not monads, that work should utilize networks of social associations, just like life outside of work."[235] Rather than spend more time discussing community and relationality, the reflective and playful aspects of work give us more to consider.

Reflection relies on the stewardship of the self in relation to God and others; "Reflective work is, therefore, an exercise in moral ownership."[236] According to Brock, the individual takes mental and spiritual responsibility for his work, lifting it out of the self-centred worldly focus into a place of listening and responding to God. In this type of inward reflection, we meditate on our own relationship to the other, our work, and the needs and work of others. There is an inner side to work, in which the individual can think on or imagine his own outer work, his contribution to his community. The mechanically repetitive job need not dehumanize the worker when reflection is encouraged and practiced. A problem is often that society discourages this relationship-centred type of reflection by demanding a type of production that separates the worker from his connection to the various stages of the company, the final product and, ultimately, his co-workers and place in community. This work makes man a thoughtless machine, it is dehumanizing and, eventually, counter-productive.

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[233] Barth does mention playfulness in a footnote within his section on limitation, but for Barth the playful is but a part of the freedom that results from the recognition of work's boundaries.
[234] Brock. 305.
[235] Ibid. 308.
[236] Ibid. 310.

Brock's final aspect, play, attends to the attitude towards work and the qualities it brings to life. Brock is not interested in play that is separate from work but in learning to work playfully or with enjoyment. When we work rightly, we find joy in the work; it can be "culturally and morally satisfying."[237] He develops Barth's idea of limitation with a different emphasis in that, while working, man is free to not only to be himself before God but to take pleasure in being himself and in the work. Brock refers to Berry when he comments: "Our energy is not something to be saved but something to be used and enjoyed in use."[238] In a job that has no pleasure, the imaginative and reflective part of the human is stifled; therefore, there is no surprise, discovery, risk, fun, or creativity. Work becomes just a means of being busy or a way to achieve things that have the potential to give us pleasure outside of work, rather than being the means of pleasure along with all other aspects of living.

Just as Brock has concluded, we have also gleaned throughout this chapter the idea that good, or "proper," work has its centre in God's own activity and steps into that activity in co-operation with His will. However, Barth's concept of goal-setting and taking the steps to reach the goal is not part of Brock's criteria for work. I would suggest that this omission creates a conflict with the notion of recognizing God at work and thus striving to serve that work. Without a goal that is not reliant on the paycheque, the reason for some work is lost, reflection has no guidelines, which can result in mindless wandering. Both community and reflection themselves seem to require that there is a goal, even if that goal is to set the work within God's will. The idea that humans need to focus on a goal when working is, in my opinion, an important aspect of work and one that should not be overlooked. It reveals a greater purpose in the activity, which seems to be within God's own purpose as He sets goals for us and asks us to achieve them. Brock, in this section, seems hesitant to allow sufficiently for the freedom that God gives, including the freedom in setting goals and the pursuit of them. That said, Brock's evaluation of good work is helpful when striving to understand what work is.

Another means of discovering more about work is, to briefly look at what work is not; to identify some other facets of human living that have an impact on or shape the way we view and conduct our work.

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[237] Ibid. 315.
[238] Ibid.

5.2. Not Work

Part of the limited and distorted conception of work is the categorization of daily living into work and not work and the hierarchical placement of certain types of work or paid work, over and above other activities. Both Berry and Cosden remark on the desire to categorize particular jobs;[239] Volf, in his analysis of work, suggests that, while one can work on a hobby or sport,[240] it does not constitute the type of work upon which he wishes to focus.[241] Brock has found that a tendency to disconnect and hierarchize aspects of life has also led to the point where work, worship and Sabbath are no longer connected.

I concur, and suggest that there is something going on in the human psyche that has affected our view, not only of work but also of other facets of human living and the connectedness or separateness of these facets. There are features of human living such as play, grieving, ritual, celebration or lamentation, where, due to this differentiation, the meaning and significance is diminished or lost. According to Pieper the elevation of work has greatly altered the aspect of leisure in particular.

> The original conception of leisure, as it arose in the civilized world of Greece, has, however, become unrecognizable in the world of planned diligence and "total labour"; and in order to gain a clear notion of leisure we must begin by setting aside the prejudice – our prejudice – that comes from over-valuing the sphere of work.[242]

Leisure has then become a highly sought after commodity viewed in a devaluing way as non-work or a time to do nothing. Rather than a positive part of life, in Pieper's opinion, it is more closely related to two terms, which are rarely part of today's vocabulary: sloth and *acadia*. While sloth is seen as idleness or laziness, *acadia* is something much more insidious. According to Pieper it is "the refusal to acquiesce in

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[239] See above comments on "nigger" work for Berry; and also see Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2006). 23.

[240] According to Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw, *Personal Vocation: God Calls Everyone By Name* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2003)., hierarchical notions were prevalent in the emerging church of the New Testament. Regarding the Corinthian understanding and disagreement over the spiritual gifts they note: "Some apparently valued the gift of tongues and those who received it above other gifts and their possessors. The dissensions that arose from this controversy led the community to consult Paul. But instead of declaring the superiority of tongues, he asserts the validity of and need for diverse gifts." 44.

[241] This, of course, leads us into difficulties when contemplating those whose work it is to play a sport, or perform artistically, or whose hobby also generates an income.

[242] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1963). 20.

one's own being."[243] An individual finds it difficult to be at peace with the self that God intended, therefore, he is less able to attune himself to the rhythm of the world around him. He becomes restless, working for the sake of keeping busy rather than having work flow naturally. In this state, reflection in work is difficult; an individual has difficulty seeing his place in a greater whole.

Thus, just as Brock, Berry and Barth are concerned with the notion of good work, we need to apply ourselves to the idea of good leisure or good use of non-work time. It is common to contrast our own time with time for work. We work and then have other activities such as volunteering, hobbies, sports, imaginative play, arts and crafts, childcare, cooking, homemaking and many other activities that are not pursued as a profession. While not always considered work per se, these activities are time and labour consuming. They take hard work to complete, and yet they have the potential to provide joy; when done, as Berry would suggest, out of the love of others or of the task itself, they are fulfilling. Leisure is a means of redirecting the focus away from our primary work, whether that is paid or not, onto other areas of life. It provides balance.

Finally, we must also observe that it is very difficult for some to relax or even be still. When an individual feels driven to perform, moments in the day or week for imaginative reflection or daydreaming can be very difficult. It is understandable that, with leisure so greatly skewed, a cycle occurs in which work becomes a negative activity. Two strands can possibly occur in this state. First, leisure is no longer a time for a person to shift gears and experience the joy of self or simple 'being,' secondly, work becomes the sole means for achieving this being. Work declines to a means of achieving leisure; it pays the bills and provides for a future of non-work rather than being a positive and connected part of human life and living.

6. WHEN WORK IS HATEFUL

While we have considered notions of good work and of enjoyable work, we concur that there are tasks and elements of work that are not enjoyable, are uncomfortable and disagreeable. There can be forces arising from the setting or context

[243] Ibid. 40.

that contribute to making work unpleasant. For example: working on one's own farm would hold far more positive significance than working as a slave on the farm of another. It is not that these jobs in themselves are nasty or 'nigger' work, the work is poisoned because it is set amidst some bad human attitudes, treatments and relationships. It is hard for any worker or employee, under negative working conditions, to bring positive reflection into the work. Work that is dirty, physically strenuous or mentally and emotionally taxing can be very difficult. Yet, there are certain tasks that must be performed within some careers; few farmers enjoy catching and crating hundreds of chickens; Children's Aid workers do not want to read horrific abuse files; and, even, the academic does not willingly choose to spend hours on revisions. But these and other tasks must all be endured in order that the work as a whole is complete.[244]

A secondary idea to consider, regarding hateful work, is the individual's suitability for the job. There are those for whom a repetitive task is torture; another individual may thrive on such work, finding the physical routine a means for relaxed activity and even contemplation. Society very often pushes the young towards jobs for earning money, rather than encouraging them to find a career to which the individual is naturally disposed. This line of thinking may be utopian but humans do flourish in environments in which they feel that their gifts are used and that there is an opportunity to put to the test their weaknesses, without a constant feeling of failure.

Finally, we must touch upon the question of work that is hateful because it is morally and ethically questionable. There will always be those who willingly choose to serve humanity's fallen nature and, sadly, there will be those who will be caught in the trap of these industries. It is enough to say that these types of activities can never be considered under the category of good work or a proper job, when they are used for sinister dealings, exploitation or to cheat and oppress. There are however, those types of work that, while not blatantly overall offensive do have their grey areas, for example: the military, practicing law and scientific research. We defer to Barth on this:

> We may add that there is a casuistical distinction between work which is worthy and honest and work which is neither possible nor legitimate. To the question whether a certain type of work is worthy or unworthy a

[244] Again here the use of the result of goal or result for achievement in section 5.1.

different answer might be given at different times and places, from different standpoints and for different people.[245]

7. CONCLUSION

We have been striving throughout this chapter to understand work. In doing so, we have discovered far more about human life and living than anticipated. We have found that although work encompasses a great deal of man's active life, it should not necessarily be considered the most important part of daily living. According to Barth "The life which is obedient to the command of God is much more than work."[246] Sabbath rest; proper, contemplative leisure; imaginative play; and even lamentation and grief, are all part of who we are as human beings under the Divine Creator. Within the active life, however, work and our thoughts about work take up a great deal of energy and time.

As such, work demands that we take a certain amount of time to be aware of its proper place as an aspect of life. When we do focus our attention on it, we must have a broad, open-minded idea of work that that can be used by secular people in secular contexts as well as by the religious in the religious context. Thus, true work is a human activity that consciously steps into the structure of the world and to human relationships, and serves them, whether it is for sustenance or maintenance of the environment, the community or the individual or as a means of reflecting upon or serving the human psyche, spirit or being. We have found a process that perpetuates a continuous cycle of meaningful, purpose-filled life punctuated by meaningful, purpose-filled work. In a religious setting, then, the 'proper job' is brought about by constantly remaining in tune to God's activity, His call to orient ourselves to a task and then to step in to that task with integrity.

While we have come to terms with a great deal of what it means to have a 'proper job,' we have yet to understand how this relates to the individual being called by God into the active life and then, within that framework, to a particular activity. The quote above suggests that it is Barth's contention that work resides inside of the greater sphere of God's command or calling of the individual. Therefore, we must look further at work

[245] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 533.
[246] Ibid. 472.

inside the sphere of vocation. Once the view of vocation has been unpacked in the next chapter, we will involve Dorothy L. Sayers in the conversation. We will find, however, that, like work, vocation is many faceted and includes far more than our human understanding has often allowed.

CHAPTER FOUR:

GOD'S CALL AND MAN'S VOCATION: KARL BARTH

Oz Guinness in *The Call*[247] has observed, "Deep in our hearts, we all want to find and fulfill a purpose bigger than ourselves. Only such a larger purpose can inspire us to heights we know we could never reach on our own. For each of us the real purpose is personal and passionate: to know what we are here to do, and why."[248] Guinness suggests that this desire is also linked to Man's need to feel responsible for, or to, something and that this has manifested itself in our drive to succeed in work. This desire or internal pull has been associated with the notion that God is calling us or guiding us to something. When we connect this internal pull with an activity, we begin to think of vocation in terms of doing.

In Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* we find a view of vocation that has a much broader meaning than the restricted view of work, but at the same time includes work in a very special way. While there are many sources to choose from, *Church Dogmatics* provides a truly solid basis for an account of vocation. First, Barth's extensive discussion of this topic in terms of human freedom is the most helpful contribution that we have found. Second, his arguments present an understanding of vocation that not only embrace work, but also resonate with a great deal of what we have already discerned about relationships from a Christian perspective.

In the broader context of this dissertation, Sayers and Barth had some contact with one another early on. Although they did not develop a relationship, as contemporaries they respected each other's work, which had moderate influence.[249] Even though Barth's

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[247] Os Guinness, *The Call* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

[248] Ibid. 3. While not everyone would agree with this statement, there are some who are drawn to the simplicity of quiet of being, and others who are at the opposite end of the spectrum who seem to have very little motivation for self improvement or work. As a whole, however, the majority of people strive in great or small ways to achieve goals.

[249] Barth was very impressed with Sayers' essays *The Greatest Drama Ever Staged* and *The Triumph of Easter*. He decided to translate them into German. In his 1939 correspondence with the author Barth asked for a few clarifications before finalization of the translation. Sayers answered him, five months later, in an extensive letter; he had nine questions and she gave him nine answers. Although, Forssmann says that the tone of Sayers' letter indicates that "Obviously, she doesn't know the translator's eminence" (23), I would question his conclusion. The correspondence took place in 1939. In 1938, Barth had been at the University of Aberdeen for the Gifford lectures on Sayers' favourite topic: the Creeds. Second, he had returned to the UK that same year to receive honorary doctorates at both St. Andrews and Sayers' alma mater: Oxford.

notions on vocation were written long after their initial contact, his views will bear notice when we consider Sayers' work.

Barth's discussion of vocation is set in an ongoing historical context that has gone through a variety of changes. When we look at the historical evidence, ending with the split between the Catholic and Protestant views, there is evidence of a narrow view of the term in both camps; the Catholic focus on the religious life, and the Protestant, leaning towards a connection to work. While the Eastern Church makes its own contribution to these ideas, we have confined our studies to the West; Protestantism and Roman Catholicism have been a primary influence on the Western mindset regarding theatre. Furthermore, as the Post-Reformation Antitheatrical Prejudice has remained predominantly Protestant, I have focused on a Protestant theologian.

1. VOCATION IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT[250]

Viewing the historical documentation on vocation, we will notice a subtle change occurring in the notion of calling and vocation. Initially, the concept centred in the general call to be reconciled to God and to restore a right relationship with Him. For the early believers, the focus was, first, on restoring a relationship with God through Christ and His Holy Spirit. Second, it was on building a relationship with others of the faith in order to learn and give mutual support. Finally, through the first and second, a new life would manifest itself in the believer, demonstrating a change of attitude and behaviour to the greater community while they continued, with some exceptions, to move in whatever

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Finally, Sayers was extremely well read, especially in the area of theology; the notion that she would be ignorant of Barth's contribution was highly unlikely. In May 1941, Dorothy recommended him in a list of "names of Christian thought who interpret the world with depth and insight…" She says of Barth "…and that dynamic, if less strictly intellectual personality, Karl Barth." It would be interesting to imagine a discussion between Sayers and Barth regarding the subjects of work, and most especially, vocation. For the full list of scholars recommended along with Barth see: Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to the Editor of World Review, May 1941," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). 257. It is uncertain why these two did not continue their correspondence after the War's interruption. Possibly their circle just split in other directions; Sayers to focus on theatre and ideas on work and craftsmanship and Barth to begin writing his great theological contribution, *The Church Dogmatics*. See also, Holger Forssmann, "DLS and Karl Barth," in *Proceedings of the Meeting at the Maltesser Kommende*, ed. Geraldine Periam (Ehereshoven, Germany: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2006).

[250] I am greatly indebted in this section to the scholarship of William C. Placher. His extensive historical research on vocation has been instrumental in guiding me towards documents that would have, otherwise, been overlooked. William C. Placher, ed., *Callings* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005).

station they were given in life.[251] It is during the persecutions that the notion of vocation became something more, a call to do something other than experience a relationship with God through Christ in the everyday. The Christian always was a witness to his faith in his daily living; but somehow this further action, the endurance of persecution and sometimes death, began to be considered a higher calling.

As time went on, Christianity was tolerated but the disappearance of persecution left a void.[252] The Christianization of the Roman Empire brought with it, not only peace, but also an assumption that all people in Christendom were believers. The Divine Summons to a life in Christ became somewhat diminished by the seeming Christianization of Europe. Placher suggests that the notion of true vocation became centred on the church related calling of the celebate rather than that of marriage or secular work.[253] Dualism between the material and the spiritual pushed an agenda of separation from the physical world and all its evils. We see, too, a further separation within the religious orders, between the Contemplative and the Active life. Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*[254] argues that the intellect is divided into knowledge of truth (Contemplative) and knowledge of practical things (Active).[255] While certain lay-people were respected for their piety and charitable works, life outside the ecclesiastical setting was not considered a vocation.[256] The monastic calling, however, was primarily open, at first, to those of noble or wealthy households.

Placher indicates that serious doubts regarding monastic life and scriptural interpretation were beginning to stir in the minds of the Christian community.[257] By the thirteenth century, a desire to express a commitment to Christ drew women and men from the middle class but they often found the monastery lacking in piety. New Orders or Rules had been established to address these situations but other means of spiritual devotion began to emerge among those who were unable or hesitant to align themselves with a monastic order. Groups like the New Devout in the Netherlands, and the

[251] We have already discussed the situation of the conversion of an actor in Chapter Two.
[252] Placher, ed. 31.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theologica," (Ordo Praedictatorium, 2010).
[255] Ibid. Iia IIae q. 179 a. 1.
[256] The medieval canon of saints is indicative of this notion; it rarely contains the name of a non-religious.
[257] Placher, ed. 206.

Beguines[258] elsewhere, consisted of men and women, married or single, who ran their own households and supported themselves through various cottage and guild-type industries. These followed a strict devotion to diligent church attendance, study, prayer, worship and meetings for spiritual guidance. These individuals, encouraged and guided by itinerant orders such as the Franciscans or Dominicans, did not take vows or submit to the rules of one particular order.[259]

We can see here that the opinions of Martin Luther, while significant, were not the only ones circulating. According to Placher, there was an atmosphere encouraged the Protestant movement to spread quite swiftly through Northern Europe, especially Germany.[260] The Reformation brought with it, an extreme negativity towards Papal authority and Roman Catholisism.[261] Among other changes, came the development of the idea that vocation was a call for all people to serve in a variety of ways, not just as a religious. Vocation concentrated on a life in Christ that involved a call to live in accordance to a particular service for which they were gifted by God.

This idea of natural abilities, propensities and vocational gifting that came to the forefront was not necessarily new. Catholic circles had long recognized *charisms* within the monastic community;[262] but Protestants laid even greater store on God's bestowal of talents, abilities and attributes. The individual's propensity towards or interest in certain subjects or tasks aided the natural gifts and abilities bestowed from birth. Physical talents, mental aptitude and even character traits, all suggest a person's particular vocation.[263] Thus, all human beings were appointed by God to serve in His Kingdom.

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[258] These produced many spiritual writings and literature, such as *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis (New Devout), that expressed their piety and devotion to God; and individuals such as Mechtilde of Magdeberg (a Beguine), Christine de Pizan, and Jacques de Vitry (whose writings included work on the Beguines) followed similar practices. Eventually, de Vitry adopted the Beguine lifestyle under the tutelage of Marie d'Oignies. See Petroff, ed., *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*. 173-4.

[259] See also Amy Oden, *In Her Words* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

[260] Placher, ed.

[261] Luther greatly regretted certain negativity and the destruction of works of art. See Martin Luther, "The Fourth Sermon: Wednesday After Invocavit," in *Works of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids Baker Book House, 1982).

[262] See Aquinas. IIa IIae q.179 a.1 "Wherefore every living thing gives proof of its life by that operation which is most proper to it, and to which it is most inclined."

[263] Perkins insists that God's vocational *charisms* can be evident in childhood and urges parents to watch their children. It is their duty to guide them towards their calling by observing "first their inclination; secondly, their natural gifts." William Perkins, "A Treatise of the Vocations," in *Callings*, ed. William C. Placher (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2005). 271.

> Henceforth, at least amongst Protestants, one could no longer limit the term "vocation" to some Christians. Every Christian had at least two vocations: the call to become part of the people of God (Luther called it 'spiritual calling,' the Puritans later called it 'general calling') and the call to a particular line of work (for Luther 'external calling,' for the Puritans 'particular calling').[264]

For the Protestant, God called all men into relationship with Him and into a relationship with others, demonstrated through their specific means of service.[265] The Roman Catholic Church, partly due to Protestant influence, began to address the needs of the laity; but Catholic tradition, for the most part, still tended to stress that vocation was primarily a specific call to the religious life. The recent work of Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw recognises that the underlying hierarchical view of vocation in Catholic circles is still one of clergy above laity.[266] Grisez and Shaw represent a growing movement in today's Catholic community, which recognizes that the work of the layperson in a secular vocation is of equal importance in the Lord's eyes to that of the clergy in a religious position. Even so, centuries of thinking are not easily erased. If pressed, most Catholics would still consider the role of the laity to be of less importance than that of the priest; the term vocation applies to the priesthood rather than the layperson.

The Catholic community, however, is not alone in this line of hierarchical thinking. Others, like Paul Stevens, in *Liberating the Laity,*[267] notes that it is an issue for today's Protestant Church, and see it as undermining the occupations of the average Protestant.

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[264] Placher, ed. 206.

[265] This view was far from perfect. Certain extremist views on vocation became problematic and Luther found it necessary to address the education of the children in order to prepare them for the possibility of ministry as well as secular vocation. Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*, ed. William C. Placher (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006). 200.

[266] They have noted: "For example, early in 2002, a prominent national Vocations official issued a statement calling on the 'people in the pews' in parishes across the United States and Canada to pray and work for vocations. These people in the pews, he explained, are 'people who work beside the future vocations in our Church. These are the people who pray next to them. These are the people who know who they are . . .. These future vocations of the Church just need to be invited.' In other words, the people in the pews should invite the people who have vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life to heed the call." Grisez and Shaw. 26. For a further instance of this commonly held view see Suzanne Cita-Malard, *Religious Orders of Women* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964). 76.

[267] R. Paul Stevens, *Liberating The Laity: Equipping All the Saints for Ministry* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2002).

> If you are 'saved' only by the skin of your teeth and are not very serious about the Christian life, you may attend church, but you will give yourself mainly to family, work and making money. Or you could be 'just a homemaker.' If you are more serious, you will choose a people helping profession such as medicine, teaching or social work. But if you are really called, you will go into *the ministry*, a term invariably used to describe financial remunerated ministry in the church. So runs a certain popular and pernicious train of thought in the church. As if being a homemaker were an unimportant task and as if all were not called to the ministry.[268]

While the focus on vocation seen here seems to be task oriented, Barth's *Church Dogmatics* presents a view of vocation that encompasses a much greater part of our lives than that of its secular connection to work or the narrow religious connection with ministry, priesthood and orders. In his opinion, "They do not have a vocation only when they take up a 'vocation' in the narrower sense."[269] His discussion of the subject presents a view that is vast and all encompassing, just as it is subtle and uniquely personal.

2. KARL BARTH ON VOCATION

John Webster describes Barth's theology as one "portraying the encounter of God with humanity with as much density as possible".[270] While Barth's *Church Dogmatics* is massive, and in some senses repetitive (he revisits topics several times), it is only so because Barth does not wish to leave any stone unturned while he unravels his arguments. His concern is to present a clear understanding of the God Who has maintained an ongoing relationship with and an interest in His Creation. Within that setting he lays out mankind's position and purpose. The density of Barth's discussion on vocation is what we are attempting to unpack; more pointedly, the notion of mankind's personal vocation. Barth's focus is to show Man as, primarily, called and fitted to a relationship with God and, secondarily, connected with the rest of His Creation. It is in the way that we move through the world, in our God-given uniqueness, that we demonstrate the relationship that we have with our Creator. The individual's personal vocation is a topic that Barth discusses especially in section §56.2 and that will be our central focus. We will begin, however, by developing an understanding of Barth's broader ideas on vocation, and their setting.

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[268] Ibid. 85.
[269] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 599.
[270] John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 100.

2.1. Barth's View of Different Levels of Vocation

As with any attempt to focus upon just a small section of a much larger work, there are difficulties when pulling it out of the context of the greater body. Barth interweaves his treatment of vocation throughout the *Church Dogmatics*, from the "Doctrine of Creation" to "The Doctrine of Reconciliation," but he gives particular focus to it in §56.2 and §71, while §62 has things to say that bear notice. From these three sections, and others in general, we get an overall idea of Barth's vision of the structure of vocation. This structure resonates with the historical writings discussed earlier, by recognising three distinct but interconnected levels of vocation. Primarily, there is the Divine Summons, the call to be reconciled and to form a relationship with God; secondarily, the call to be reconciled with God's community and form a relationship with the human and non-human; and finally, the call to a unique personal place in the Creation and community. In view of our findings regarding the importance of work's relational aspect in Chapter Three, we note in Barth that vocation, like work, is deeply relational. It is a reciprocal connection. Through vocation, we interact with God and others, and within this interaction our being, and subsequently our vocation, is shaped.

The event of the incarnation gives evidence for this connectedness; God himself took on human form and through that act demonstrated, among other things, a right human relationship with the Divine, and the rest of creation; especially with other human beings. Barth is adamant that God not only calls us into relationship with Him but that He bears witness to that relationship between the divine and the flesh through Jesus Christ. Mangina helps us to see this: "Barth insists that our account of God must not arise from abstract speculation, but must be grounded in the biblical witness…It is important to remember that Barth sees Jesus Christ as the organizing centre of the Bible's 'God-talk', even when Jesus is not explicitly at the centre of the discussion."[271] Barth's discussion of all areas of vocation, especially when we look at the call to reconciled relationship, is Christocentric. Further, our healthy participation with Christ presents not only the opportunity for personal wholeness, but also, through the awareness of God in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the accomplishment of a corporate healing of our relations with the material world.

[271]Joseph L. Mangina, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Christian Witness* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

In §71 Barth deals in detail with the primary call: the Divine Summons of all of mankind to be reconciled to God; a summons that is given to us as individuals. "The Word of the living Jesus Christ is the creative call by which He awakens Man to an active knowledge of the truth and thus receives him into the new standing of Christian, namely, into a particular fellowship with Himself…".[272] God's act of reconciliation through Christ is a constant call to recognize His presence and be in relationship with the Creator Himself. Barth explains that Christ's redemptive work on the cross is not confined to a point in history, but is an ongoing work carried even beyond temporal boundaries by the Holy Spirit. This first stage in awakening Man, is a free, recurring event that originates from God. "That it is God or Jesus Christ who calls makes the vocation of Man, no matter where or when or how it occurs, an act of powerful grace and gracious power different from every other act."[273] Vocation is the opportunity for an individual not only to see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit actively involved in the world but also to turn in obedience to the reconciliation and possibilities that this relationship can offer. In §72, Barth unpacks the Holy Spirit's ongoing connection to mankind as a representative of Christ's activity through history, and points us to a further purpose in our relations with Him: "But His [Christ's] purpose in relation to the individual was not to set him in a kind of uni-dimensional relationship to Himself. It was to unite him both with Himself and also…with the other individuals whom He has called, and wills to call, and will call."[274]

In section §62, Barth explains: "As the work of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community, Christendom, the Church, is a work which takes place among men in the form of a human activity."[275] It is an activity that includes, amongst other things, corporate events. We gather to make the statement that we recognize God's existence and sovereignty, and His work through the Holy Spirit. We come together to say that we accept God's reconciliation through His Own sacrifice as Christ Jesus on the Cross and the Resurrection of His Body. We become "church" when, as a community, through the activity of the gathering, we witness ourselves as God's people; his children and co-workers. We become "Church" more widely when, we as a community work as Christians in the wider society. As fleshly individuals, we create a physical body of

[272] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.3.2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980). 481.
[273] Ibid. 497.
[274] Ibid. 682. Parenthesis mine.
[275] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.1* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961). 650.

believers, and this is a communal, covenantal relationship infused with the power of the Holy Spirit; the collective experience is part of us in the world.

It is in the communion of saints that God calls this human to be involved, but it is not because of being a Christian that the individual is drawn together with other Christians. Barth explains that this particular communal relationship "… does not rest on the natural need of union and co-operation felt by those who share a common aim."[276] As discussed in Chapter Three, relationship is a deep-felt need for all humanity, but Barth concludes that our vocation as an individual takes us beyond fulfilling only that need through the Church. We are a "special people" in a paradoxical sphere of being always connected and always individual, and as both individual and community, it is our calling to bear witness to Christ. Barth explains: "But in his ministry of witness – and it is this essentially which makes him a Christian – he is from the very outset, by his very ordination to it, united not only with some or many, but – whether he knows them or not he knows them and their particular situation – with all those charged with his ministry."[277] This very ministry will be taken up later with Sayers; particularly her opinion on the Church's failure as a community to bear witness to the Gospel.[278] Regarding the individual who bears witness to Christ, Barth has some very particular things to say: "He and they may have received and may take up and discharge, their ministry of witness in very different ways."[279] This idea of "different ways" narrows our focus further towards personal vocation. We move in the freedom to be a certain individual; but this freedom, in Barth's understanding, is not the same as that of the world.

2.2. Personal Vocation as a Unique Opportunity

> The unique opportunity to which we must now turn in detail is simply human life in its limitation by birth and death. And the imperative of the command, to the extent that its target is the freedom of man within the limitation of his being, is simply that this unique opportunity must be apprehended, grasped and used by man.[280]

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[276] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.3.2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962). 682.
[277] Ibid.
[278] See Chapter Seven, 186 – 189.
[279] Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV.3.2*. 683.
[280] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*.569.

It is at the point of the unique opportunity that Barth's distinct view of personal vocation unfolds, when God is seen as presenting the choice of freedom within this temporal limitation. "Choice, first on God's side, then on Man's implies limitation i.e. limitation for what God has chosen for him and devaluation, abandonment and exclusion of what he has not."[281] Barth uses the phrase "freedom in limitation"[282] as a description of a central place for our personal vocation; where God makes known to us another "special, therefore limited thing"[283] that He would have us do. Barth's reasoning is that God's activity demonstrates that He has the freedom to be Who He Is, displayed most effectively in His covenant and relationship with Man; therefore, as God's image, we quite naturally should reflect that same ability to "be" that which we were meant to be. We demonstrate this freedom through the relationship we have with the Triune God, and through our actions in the created universe.

Barth's treatment of vocation resides within his overall idea that each is given a unique life, with specific parameters, in which to operate. Each one of us has our own set of boundaries, or space in which to work. This seems to be in opposition to the common notion that freedom gives one the ability to do or be anything in life. Placher explains, "Much of the Christian tradition, however, has argued that that vision of life as a sea of infinite choices is more like slavery than freedom. If freedom means that every choice is open, and none is the wrong answer, then my choices cease to have any larger meaning."[284] Our vocational limitations, according to Barth, give us that "larger meaning," setting a path before us that has its own set of boundaries, which contain a variety of choices and decisions. "Our resolutions, acts and attitudes may surprise or provoke most of our fellows, and perhaps even to some extent ourselves, and yet in them we are choosing that which…is timely for us, so that we may seize and grasp our unique opportunity".[285]

The structure lays out opportunities that freedom enables us to take up and develop further. The limitation is a blessing from God, giving each his or her own space for service. Our personal vocation is a gift, given in order that we may operate freely

[281] Ibid 595.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Placher, ed. 10.
[285] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 585.

alongside our Creator. It is not a right to behave without control, but the ability to be, unrestrainedly, the person that God created for that particular task. Barth explains that it is "to this particularity, limitation and restriction in which the God who calls and rules always finds Man, and by which Man must orient himself to be obedient, we give the name of the calling or vocation of Man."[286]

Barth's treatment of vocation introduces the reader to a personal vocation within the context of an entire discussion of Creation, and of who Man is as a created being before God, given various freedoms in a specific space. As we stated earlier, Barth makes clear that personal vocation is part of God's reconciling work with mankind, which restores wholeness to all creation. God has not abandoned His creation to itself. Through a partnership with Man as a species and as an individual, God gives Man the opportunity to participate in His restoration. In this reciprocal relationship, God shapes each person and, in turn, that person goes forth to shape all living things. This interaction with others in this present life makes each person a particular in relationship to the Maker. The reconciling work has as its purpose the enjoyment of the Creator and of all that He has given in this existence.

2.3. Limitations as *Terminus a Quo*

Having established that life is structured by limitation, in §56.2 Barth breaks this notion down further into four categories: Age, Historical Setting, Personal Aptitudes and Sphere of operation. God summons each person into a life that is enclosed within these boundaries; but boundaries that are not, in Barth's view, to be considered prisons. On the contrary, they are platforms or places for a beginning, the *terminus a quo* from which one steps out to meet life.

> Vocation is …the *terminus a quo* of all recognition and fulfilment of the command, the status of the man who is called to freedom by the command. It is he himself in his nature and being whom he must critically choose in company with God, if he is to choose what God has chosen for him according to his command.[287]

[286] Ibid. 597.
[287] Ibid. 598.

The limitations define the places in which Man finds himself at the beginning of his calling; through the course of time, a person's callings develop and change. These are the vocational starting points through and out of which God summons or calls him. God has given him the opportunity to serve in a specific capacity, and the means through which the individual can meet the Other: his Creator and the human and non-human creation. While some of the external departure points, such as those included in the Historical Setting, cannot be altered, others will change over time and be developed, expanded or even set aside as the person steps forward as the One that God would have him be, into the work He would have him do.

Although not mentioned at this point in Barth's discussion of freedom, gender will be included in our discussion of starting points. His treatment of gender has occurred earlier in §54 and includes both male and female in the terms, Man, human and mankind. For the purposes of understanding the vastness of our *terminus a quo,* it is important that we include gender and its possible impact on a person's movement in the Kingdom. It is also a topic that is taken up in some detail by Sayers.

2.3.1. Age

Human beings are called from birth, some would argue from conception, to recognize God at work and to step into their unique place in His Kingdom. Barth asserts, "Neither in youth nor age can we try to deduce or assert an autonomous life independent of the command of God."[288] Our limitations change as we age, for the increasing experience and wisdom gained can be applied to new situations; but at each point we are only expected to respond based on that limitation and nothing more. The Father meets each person as he is and Barth urges us to meet Him at the age we are without putting undue pressure on ourselves to be or do more than our age or stage in life would have of us.

> The particular seriousness of every age does not consist, therefore, in a special attitude which one has to assume to life in youth, maturity or old age, but in the seriousness with which at every age one has to go from the Lord of life to meet the Lord of life and therefore to try to live as though for the first time or as though this were the only age.[289]

[288] Ibid. 610.
[289] Ibid. 609.

Barth pays attention to each stage in life: childhood, youth, middle age and old age. It may amaze some, but God does see the child meeting his circumstances and making his choices based upon his limited knowledge of God and his relationship to Him. So too, the teen meets God's call in his time's limitation and the middle-aged or senior in his; each stage brings to the task presented the knowledge and experience particular to the number of years. Barth does caution that we should never use age or inexperience as an excuse for disobedience, "the young are still responsible for the moments in which they did not grasp the significance or seriousness of the call."[290] No human is too young or too old to step into what God has for him or her. The elderly have a unique place, Barth says, a special opportunity to be a part of and give into the world. "To be wise is to open oneself up in old age to be more helpful."[291] Whether in youth, middle age, or old age the opportunity to respond to God's voice is constantly present and unique for that period of the individual's life. God calls us into activities that are appropriate for that moment. "Every special period of life can present only special opportunities for call and discipleship."[292]

2.3.2. Historical Setting

> By the historical situation of a man we are to understand his country, his century, generation and ancestry, the comprehensive state of political, economic, cultural and ecclesiastical affairs, the nature and level of humanity, habits, intellectual conceptions and morality in his immediate environment, the possibilities of education and development presented to him and the fellow-men who in various ways meet, accompany and then leave him again, perhaps crucifying him or in other ways determining his course.[293]

As we can gather, the Historical Setting of the individual, in Barth's view, encompasses a vast number of components that place a particular person into a particular era. Barth has included as many temporal, cultural, political, familial, religious and social parameters as possible when describing the situation into which an individual is born. There may be other aspects, as yet unlisted, but the general concept is easily understood from his description. Each person is placed into a particular era and is

[290] Ibid. 611.
[291] Ibid. 617.
[292] Ibid. 618f.
[293] Ibid. 618.

formed, trained and educated in that era and in his place in a particular society; he or she then has the possibility of contributing to many decades of change based upon the particular point in time given to him or her.

The concept of history is about much more than that individual's particular place in space and time. It is the point at which this particular individual steps into the ongoing story of mankind; into a narrative that is a part of his own life, just as he is a piece of a greater picture that involves the lives of others. He is given the invitation to participate with all others, past, present and future, in shaping the world and building upon the history of humankind in God's creative action. It is his personal here and now. This man has the opportunity to contribute by accepting where he is and then moving forward from that place. When he listens to God in this particular place, he knows his place of contribution, building upon what was before and leaving work behind for others to pick up.[294]

2.3.3. Personal Aptitudes

Historically, many of the Protestant groups had an understanding that personal aptitudes guided the individual towards a line of work.[295] As one of Barth's vocational points of departure, however, personal aptitudes and abilities are a means of guiding the individual into understanding who he is as a person, and finding specific ways of serving God and bearing witness to Christ. "By this we understand his specific endowment and inclinations as these are related to his psycho-physical structure and disposition as they result in his particular receptive and productive ability, fitness and usefulness."[296] Aptitudes are qualities that define a person as this or that particular individual. While some aptitudes can relate to employment, others might have very different applications. Each human being is specifically equipped and made "fit and useful" in order to carry out

[294] Berdyaev concurs: "… the approach, which I would advocate and which alone can help us to build up a real philosophy of history, consists in a profound integration of my own destiny with that of mankind which is so intimately related to me." Nikolai Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, trans. George Reavey (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1949). 17.
[295] See Perkins *Treatise* and also Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School."
[296] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 623. Note that Barth's wording also falls in line with other Protestant explanations such as those of Perkins.

the activities appropriate for his or her life.[297] "The call of God is to wake up, to recognize ourselves and to take ourselves seriously in the totality of what we can actually do."[298]

As we wake up we also have the opportunity to take stock of ourselves. Rather than willfully withholding, we carefully decide which abilities are necessary for a task. Not all are required all of the time. Some aptitudes come forward; others recede; yet they are all part of the whole. As we become more self-aware, we begin to recognize small areas that we have tried to section off from God and other areas in which we are serving him faithfully. Through developing this type of response, we have the added benefit of becoming confident in the knowledge of who we are and who we are not in God's eyes. God's call may be wider or narrower than we think, and as we learn new things about ourselves "the command of God can powerfully change our limit in either direction."[299]

2.3.4. Sphere of Operation

This aspect of vocation is the "framework within which he (man) is in his own way an active member of human society, at once maintaining and developing himself and making his special contribution to the fulfilment of the common task of humanity."[300] According to Barth, the sphere includes our home life, work, religious and social activities and relationships. In essence, there are a variety of intersecting circles that create the territory of our activity. It is that particular Man's place in life, at his various stages in life. Barth asserts: "Wherever and whenever it may be, he will always be confronted by the necessity of fulfilling one specific sphere, of meeting its data and demands, of coming to terms with what is assigned to him in it, of being a man at this particular point."[301] It is the one vocational setting in which we have a great deal of choice over its shape and contents, but it is still bound by the limitations placed upon us through the other *termini a quo*. We can choose to go one way or to seek other

[297] Aquinas saw that in the monastery some were more fit for the Active Life, while others were drawn to the Contemplative. "He that is prone to yield to his passions on account of his impulse to action is simply more apt for the Active Life by reason of his restless spirit… Others, on the contrary, have the mind naturally pure and restful, so that they are apt for Contemplation." Aquinas. IIa IIae q.182 a.4
[298] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 626.
[299] Ibid. 629.
[300] Ibid. 630.
[301] Ibid.

directions; and our sphere can change completely, for example through a change of job or location. However, while this boundary is changeable it is not escapable; there will always be a sphere of operations in which we must move. It creates a certain responsibility on our part to be wise in choosing where we go and whom we follow. "For good or evil he (man) himself is responsible for the fact that he (this man) is now at this particular point."[302]

For some the centre of the sphere can be what Barth calls vocation in "the technical sense" [303] or work. It is the central point of our activity in the world: "[t]he field of his ordinary everyday activity, the place in life at which he is in his own way an active member of human society at once maintaining and developing himself and making his special contribution to the fulfilment of the common task of humanity."[304] Our own sphere interconnects with the sphere of operation of other human beings. We come into contact with their abilities and they with ours; the age or time we share, peer groups or organizations that separate a single age or interconnect all ages. We shape others and they shape us. Above all, Barth stresses that there is a call to our own obedience to God's command within our sphere of operation; will we be the man or woman he has called us to be in that place, or will we allow others to override His primary call and be less of a witness of His grace in the world. "The important thing is not the sphere of operation a man has. It is what the man is within it… The critical question is whether he will achieve freedom of obedience within this sphere…?"[305]

2.3.5. A Fifth Category: Gender

Although Barth does not include gender as a *terminus a quo*, it is a limitation none the less. He has dealt at length with it earlier in §54.1, *Freedom in Fellowship,* stating clearly: "Limitation – this is the first thing which characterises the encounter between man and woman…"[306] He does not, however, revisit this limitation as a vocational platform. But there is much more to be said; first, we need to recognize that

[302] Ibid. 631, parenthesis mine.
[303] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 630.
[304] Ibid. 630.
[305] Ibid. 632.
[306] Ibid. 128.

gender can play a distinct role as a *terminus a quo*; and, second, because it has been a matter of concern for Sayers and, as such, needs to be viewed from Barth's angle.

I maintain that it is in our gender that God has established one of the dimensions of our relationality; we are not just worker and co-worker, there is a dynamic difference in the way in which we relate gender to gender and in our perspective on the world. Barth suggests that the very fact that there are two genders provides a differentiation that defines Man as a relational species. "The first and typical sphere of fellow-humanity, the first and typical differentiation and relationship between man and man, is that between the male and the female."[307] God created these differences; prior to the Fall there were already two distinct persons in relation with the Creator, and two persons interacting with creation from their own individual perspective. They were then asked to step forth as man or woman in order to fulfil God's command in the world. We do not wish to venture into discussions of the *imago Dei*; however, Barth has suggested in §54.1 that God's creation of man and woman is more than that of worker and co-worker. "By the divine likeness of man in Gen. 1:27, there is understood the fact that God created them male and female, corresponding to the fact that God Himself exists in relationship and not in isolation."[308] As a *terminus a quo,* we face our historical setting and personal aptitudes from the platform of either male or female, which further shapes our sphere of operation.

The way God made us originally has been warped and changed by Man. As a vocational starting point there are further limitations placed upon us by the gender we possess. One gender has been raised to a status not necessarily intended by God; artificial barriers have affected the way in which both function. These barriers influence the other *termini* both by limiting the female's ability to be the helpmeet that God intended, and by putting undue expectations on her male counterpart. In many societies and cultural situations, the man is thrust into responsibilities and conditions for which he may not be qualified, restricting his ability to maximize his potential as the person whom God is calling him to be. The woman too, has had her place specifically designated in such a way that she has been, for centuries, restricted from society or unable to develop her attributes. She has been unable either to step forward as a whole person or to take her

[307] Ibid. 117.
[308] Ibid.

place alongside of her counterpart in true relationship. Yet we must still accept this as a point from which to embark and move into our calling.

Sayers' views on gender will be discussed more thoroughly later, especially where they are related to work, but we will make note of a few points. She advocated that every person be allowed to do his or her own job and not be forced into that of another just because of public opinion. She is adamant that the best qualified person; whether male or female, short or tall, and regardless of race or creed, should be the one chosen for any line of work. In her works "The Human, Not Quite Human" and "Are Women Human"[309] she takes a humorous view of male/female stereotypes. Even more to the point, though, is her own example as an academic, writer, wife, friend and communicator; she held the respect of her peers and was considered an equal by the predominantly male theologians and scholars. Her gender was never an issue where the obedience to her vocation was concerned.

Barth is of the same opinion that this form of particularization is a thing of the world and not of God. As post-fall humans, however, we must function within, and are called into, a specific gender. Barth's exposition of gender suggests a great deal of equality. He opposes the idea of specific gender roles: the male as objective, breadwinning leader and the woman as subjective, nurturing follower, "For they cannot be stated in such a way that every third man and every second woman does not become agitated and protest sharply against the very idea of seeing themselves in these sketches."[310] We embark on this journey not only as human but also as this man or this woman. Under God's command we have a freedom to function beyond even the stereotypes imposed by the world, but we still must do so as one gender or the other.

2.4. Reviewing Barth and Personal Vocation

Personal vocation, when equated only to work, would for some be a blessing, but for many of us would end up frustrating and discouraging. From Barth's point of view, there is much greater breathing space than either the Catholic or Protestant traditions would have allowed. Barth demonstrates a mode of being that operates in, through and

[309] Both are found in Dorothy L. Sayers, *Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1946).
[310] Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 153.

with the call of God. From his point of view, God's call is persistent and embraces all our life; and it is to every individual. First, all humanity is to look to Him and see Him at work in the world through covenantal history, Messianic fulfilment and Spiritual intervention. Second, we are invited to participate in God's redemptive work, to be His active, fleshly representatives at work in the world, no matter what our activities. The life of every human being can be involved in constantly moving, communal and individual activity that interconnects history, eschatology and many-levelled aspects of being and doing.

The very specific person that God would have us be, and the specific thing that God would have us do in His Kingdom, fall into what Barth terms our vocation. God asks us to recognize where he has placed us and who we are. When we comprehend that the Maker of the Universe has called us at any age, even when young, and continues to ask things of us, even to the end of our lives, we get a glimpse of the Father's complete love and care for us. When we accept our historical situation and recognize our own gifts as unique and special, then we are able to form a sphere of operation that interweaves itself with God's purposes and other people's spheres in the world. The *termini a quo* that Barth gives, age, history, attributes and sphere of operation, to which I have added gender, may seem like they are limitations but Barth would have us see them as platforms from which to embark on an adventure with the Creator of the Universe.

> He is invited to a journey to new harbours in which he will again be himself in which he will not be divested of self, but will become this εκαστος in a new form, perhaps becoming a source of astonishment not only to others but even to himself in the light of his previous subjectivity, of the former cosmic and historical place which he occupied.[311]

3. REFLECTING FURTHER

We have not been able to give much space to Barth's complex treatment of vocation but it has been important to consider it. He has much more to say on the topic that is insightful than other theologians; and in doing so has incorporated much of what has been said historically. Note for example, in the early Christian writings, discussed earlier, the three levels of vocation. Barth has shown a deeply personal way of looking at

[311] Ibid. 606f.

these three calls, in that God calls each one person to a loving relationship with Him and then gathers a community of believers that surrounds everyone in a larger relationship. He then gives and guides each one within the community towards the ways that they can be involved, not only in the Christian group, but also further in the world.

Moving beyond Barth, we can expand our view or our explanation of vocation further by pursuing it in two directions - one based on relationship, the other on activity - and connecting them together. The first is the call from God to a renewed relationship with Him, and joined with it is a relationship with the fellow man. In my opinion, the set-up of these two echoes Christ's own interpretation of the law in Matt. 22, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." I consider this an affirmation of God's own desire to reconcile and redeem Man, and to build a relationship with man as humankind and as individual. In addition, "Love your neighbour as yourself" reinforces the secondary call to a loving relationship with the human Other. His final words, "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments,"[312] establish a connection between these two and carry it further into all the teaching about personal and social lives in community. This brings us to the second direction.

Barth's treatment of vocation gives evidence that vocation has a purpose in activity. The point of the relationships and the *termini a quo* is that they shape us to step out into the creation; we are to be actively involved as this particular person. The spiritual manifests itself in the material; we make ourselves known and are witnesses of God's grace. One of the many ways in which this occurs is through our work; whether work means our job or any other occupation or task to which we put our hand, this activity is the fulfilment of our vocation. We step into our activities in obedience to the command of God.

Barth would concur that every individual is born to embark boldly into a life, and that God is calling him or her to take hold of that particular life and make the most of it. Humans can do this by consciously choosing to recognize the Lord at work around us and in us. His call goes forth constantly, and all have the option to see each moment and its

[312] Matthew 22:38-40, New International Version.

activity as an opportunity to set forth with Him, or not. Many set forth without Him and choose and act without Him; others see Him but do not set forth; and still others neither see Him nor go forth. There are the few who see God and dive into life with great enthusiasm and joy. No matter which way is chosen there is an effect on the human and non-human creation; the relationships formed shape others, just as the individual is shaped by them, for good or otherwise. Regardless of the choice, God is there, waiting and constantly providing new points of departure, new moments to recognize Him and reflect His Glory. Each such moment, each point of recognition, is a calling; together they make up a lifelong vocation.

4. FINAL COMMENTS

Through the journey of this chapter, we have found that vocation, like work, is many-faceted. We have also found that one of the means through which humans can embark on a journey with God is through the activity of work. Barth's ideas on personal vocation in the greater sphere of reconciliation build on the understanding of life as relationship. While he has shown that vocation is more than our work, we can also see that work does play a great part in expressing who a person is, and work contributes to establishment of relationships.

Through my reading and discussion of Barth, I have come to see a loss of the deep sense of vocation in all aspects of life; the sense of love, connection, purpose and responsibility that just being here with God should give us. I would argue that the primary place in which one loses this vocational quality is in the acceptance of ourselves as Divinely called into being, and into relationships. This results in serious repercussions regarding how we view others and our world, defining every thought, word and deed. The loss of the call to a Christ-centred life has damaged every place in which relationship is relevant, just one of these being the way in which we view our work and the places of work. This loss of a view of vocation under God seriously undermines, among other things, attitudes, choice of occupation and the integrity of the work.

Many are unfulfilled by their work because they are neither recognizing nor obeying the starting points that Barth has laid down as God's vocation. The enemy enters in through the voices of others: parents, teachers, friends, and enemies, and through self-

doubts and jealousies; these block any individual from becoming the person they could be. Diminished by that which is not of God, a person struggles to have the means with which to fulfil the task that God has set aside as his or her own unique place. In a work-driven society this can greatly undermine the motivation and morale of a workforce; rather than personal fulfilment the human being must then seek fulfilment through another means, and that means is found most easily through an economic focus. Sayers raises this very concern when dealing with the attitude towards work in an economically and materially driven society, and I share this concern.

While Sayers does primarily seem to associate the term vocation with work, she held a very broad idea of work. She had a much greater concept of vocation, when applied to our daily tasks, which resonates with Barth's ideas discussed above. Interestingly, it was when she made the shift from novelist to the theatre, that her ideas on the right attitude toward work developed further. Work is the predominant means through which she displayed her being. When we look at her life and person we will see how this vivacious and dramatic personality could find such joy in the creation of fiction and the formulation of relationships. These activities and relationships not only fed her own performative nature, but also insured that her acceptance of historic situation, *charisms* and circle of operation touched the lives of hundreds of others through each stage of her own unique life.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DOROTHY L. SAYERS AND HUMAN WORK

We have seen from the outset that one of the two basic questions is about acting and work: is acting a proper job? But we soon found further questions arising. These questions included: What are the main concerns about acting that could cause problems? What do we know about work in particular that could include acting as a viable job option? How can we look at acting through the lens of theology?[313] In order to discuss these questions we first established that some people outside of the acting profession have misconstrued particularities about the acting craft, which makes it difficult to equate acting with work. We then launched into a study of the human activity of work in order to gain some understanding of the full scope of this term. Finally, as a means of gaining a Christian perspective on Man's activity, we turned to Barth's notions on vocation. All of this has been guiding us towards seeing acting as both work and vocation. We now have a broad range of material that looks at each aspect, acting, vocation and work, separately. As we turn to Dorothy L. Sayers, we will find that she easily addresses these three areas, drawing them together in a manner that is accessible to both laity and clergy, the religious and the secular.

Sayers was in the midst of her career as a writer of detective fiction when the actions of the Nazi party in Germany caused escalating tension in Europe. Her views were shaped and influenced by her place in history, but we will find much of what she said resonates in our own time. At that point, the Church of England recognized an opportunity to discuss the place of man in society and the importance of the voice of the layman. The church authorities noticed that certain authors, already known to the British public, had already begun to address subjects of religious doctrine in newspapers and magazines; they were invited to enter a discussion on work. Amongst those called upon by the church were: T. S. Eliot, GK Chesterton, and Charles Williams; but some of the most fascinating notions were to come from Dorothy L. Sayers.

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[313] These are first given in Chapter One, section 1.1 Unanswered Questions, page 9, but are an undercurrent through the next two Chapters.

Sayers' commentaries on work took many forms. Her *Why Work?*[314], *Begin Here*[315] and "Vocation in Work,"[316] were particularly focused on this topic. Her humorous essays, "Are Women Human?"[317] and also "The Human Not Quite Human,"[318] looked at work from the perspective of gender. As well as her essays and lectures, she included in her novels and plays discussions on various aspects of work; used a certain aspect of work as a Trinitarian model in *The Mind of the Maker;*[319] and referred to the work of the writer and the student in particular in her various essays on the English language and education.[320]

Although her perspective is important, especially where the arts are concerned, we do need to remember a few things. First, there are two minor points. She was contributing to an ongoing discussion, and, while we will hear some of Eliot's views later, Sayers' strong opinions were not the only other ones. Secondly, as we have already mentioned, Sayers' views were formed in a particular historical context; but this dialogue on work, and other related topics, has been continuous into the present, and her conclusions and opinions are often strikingly similar to some of those studied in Chapter Three.

There is a more major matter, however, with which we will engage several times as we move through these chapters on Sayers. Sayers often used a very broad brush, over-simplifying complexities in the working world, in work itself and in working people. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with every weakness in Sayers' writing, but we will deal critically with those points that pertain to themes of the thesis. We can make the best use of her observations by accepting that she was commenting on major, influential trends and tendencies, in the overall context of work, especially within the complex society of her time. She had some valid things to

[314] Dorothy L. Sayers, *Why Work?* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1945).
[315] Dorothy L. Sayers, *Begin Here* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1940).
[316] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Vocation in Work," in *A Christian Basis for the Post War World*, ed. A.E. Baker (London: SCM Press, 1942).
[317] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Are Women Human?," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946).
[318] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Human-Not-Quite-Human," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Inc., 1946).
[319] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind Of The Maker* (London: Victor Gollancz Inc., 1941).
[320] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Plain English," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946), Dorothy L. Sayers, "The English Language," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946), Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning* (Oxford: Victor Gollacz Ltd, 1947).

say about work, particularly where her views on work and vocation considered acting as a 'proper job'. Sayers quite eloquently and humorously guided her reader to consider work as something more than a moneymaking activity. Again, it is surprising just how her unique way of viewing these topics is applicable and valuable today. As we shall see, Eliot, too, generalizes and simplifies in this way; and so do others in this conversation.

Sayers' opinions on work covered many themes that interplay and overlap with one another. We will look more closely at four themes in particular; these domino one into another. First, she noted that a society driven by an economic focus would produce situations in which man would lose his true understanding of the 'proper job'. Second, the loss of this understanding could result in a poor or narrow-minded attitude towards work. Third, this narrow minded economic view caused the worth of the work to be misunderstood or unrecognized. Thus the fourth theme: in order to restore a healthy attitude toward work, Sayers encouraged everyone to look to the example of those who approached their work as something that flowed from their very being; those for whom work was a vocation. If we follow these four themes, we will uncover many of her views, not only about work, but also about vocation. By critical development of her thinking, we will develop a clearer understanding of the artist's and the craftsperson's place in society.

1. A WORKFORCE DRIVEN BY ECONOMICS

In September 1939, publisher Victor Gollancz asked Sayers to write a Christmas message to the nation. Her popularity as a detective novelist, and her articles for *The Times*, and her lectures and short talks on the radio, would make a little pamphlet of this sort marketable. Gollancz had not bargained for the fervor with which Sayers would attack the topic. According to her biographer, Barbara Reynolds, Sayers had just finished reading T. S. Eliot's group of essays, *The Idea of a Christian Society,*[321] and was inspired by its ideas.[322] Gollancz had expected a pamphlet; he received a 160-page book titled *Begin Here*.[323]

[321] T.S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1939).
[322] Reynolds. 295.
[323] Sayers, *Begin Here*.

Sayers laments that the book was written in haste, but it made a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion regarding work and vocation. Eliot's essays claimed that the economic and material focus of society caused people to abandon the creative and spiritual aspects of life. Further, the themes of human purpose, craftsmanship and integrity were those that Sayers had already been considering since the production of her play *The Zeal of Thy House*. In order to get a more complete picture of the discussion that Sayers was now entering, we will look briefly at Eliot's lectures.

1.1. T. S. Eliot: Idea of a Christian Society

The Idea of a Christian Society was a series of lectures given early in 1939; just prior to publication, Britain declared war on Germany. Eliot attached a note acknowledging that the presence of the concern about war influenced his thoughts. He paid homage to other writers who had already contributed to the discussion; and a 'discussion' was precisely what Eliot wished to promote by publishing the lectures as a book.[324] *The Idea of a Christian Society* urged the reader to think about just what was meant by the term 'Christian Society'. Eliot suggested the foundation of a community of laity and clergy, grounded by the absolutes of the Christian faith in the Divine Creator, who would guide and influence the ethical and moral structure of the society. Reynolds comments that this group were "individually and collectively setting themselves to form the conscience of the nation".[325] The community's morals and ethics would thereby permeate all areas of society, from government and legal decisions to education, everyday living, and the arts.

Eliot saw that his skill as a writer made it easy for him to clearly voice the growing concerns and opinions of others in the community at large. He did not want people to ignore the issues underlying the then current situation in Europe, but he saw some deeper issues that had an effect on the decisions the country was making. "Our difficulties of the moment must always be dealt with somehow: but our permanent difficulties are difficulties of every moment."[326] Eliot began by introducing the idea

[324] Eliot. 5.
[325] Reynolds. 296.
[326] Eliot. 7.

that a material and economic focus had tainted the nation's outlook on society. In his opinion, the education system had radically changed from a focus on knowledge to one on career, propagating a generation whose desire for learning came from the desire for earning a wage.[327] The education system, in his opinion, was foundational for the continuance of any society.[328] For Eliot, a nation's system of education was, in many ways, more important than its government. He criticized the common practice of teaching subjects as unrelated units, fragmenting the child's understanding of society; society was no longer seen as a whole unit with interwoven elements.[329] The fragmentation of education led not to a knowledgeable society, but to a society driven by one perspective: economics. The individual saw only the financial benefit of a job rather than the greater benefits of a task with a purpose integrated into the whole of society.

Significantly, Eliot saw that the economic ideal had marginalized those whose intuition and imagination played a large role in shaping a nation's outlook. Economic value was the only ruler with which to measure an activity, but the creative process could not be measured in this manner. Eliot insisted that the artistic intuition contributed something just as important as money: it gave a window into society. He noted, "Decay in the arts is a symptom of society's own ailments."[330] The creative arts, in Eliot's opinion, should not be suppressed or shaped into a form of propaganda. Artists, when guided by their own intuition, were able to freely inform, illuminate, and educate, as well as warn and caution. A society with its finger securely on this artistic pulse would recognize trends and, thereby, be informed and able to adjust to situations as they arise.

Finally, Eliot made an observation that I would suggest has been an undercurrent in discussing his material: do we actually live in a 'Christian' society, or

[327] Eliot is making a generalization here, and we should keep in mind that there were other forms of education, and other educators who questioned the current system. For example, Charlotte Mason's periodical *The Parent's Review* had made an impact on the British system of home education earlier in the century, and Dr. Maria Montessori's system was been firmly established in Italy and the United States for several decades. It may be doubted too that an education at Eton or Oxford had sunk to this level.

[328] For a contemporary discussion of education that echoes Eliot and Sayers see Chapter 1 of Amanda Lang, *The Power of Why* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012).

[329] Eliot. 28. Sayers felt so strongly on this topic that she wrote a separate piece on the matter. See Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*. Currently also available on *Escondido Tutorial Service Website.*

[330] Eliot. 39.

in a society that tolerates what it loosely understands as Christian belief? Eliot's desire for us to develop an 'idea' of a Christian society needs to be continually revisited; only then can the morality and ethics foundational to this faith influence the culture of the community. By highlighting education and the arts as central to the establishment of a Christian society, Eliot gave the reader the impression that the moral fabric could be established early, and the development of the individual's creative imagination is of great importance. Through the intuitive expression of ideas and experiences, the arts mirror not only areas of danger and decay, but also a society's strengths and merits. Sayers had long been mulling over these same notions, and Gollancz's Christmas deadline gave her the immediate impetus to explore them.

1.2. Sayers Enters the Discussion

The war provided a further urgency that Sayers needed in order to voice her ideas. "While time lasts there will always be a future, and that future will hold both good and evil, since the world is made to that mingled pattern."[331] The future was her present, and her public needed her to point towards an absolute. If Christian hope was not a strong ally from the outset of the war, Sayers envisioned that it would certainly not be considered one afterwards, and would be replaced by something else. It was her goal to educate the Christian public in the Christian faith, and then help them to transfer that knowledge to the activities of everyday living; most predominantly in their attitude towards work.

Sayers picked up Eliot's observations on the education system, and tied them into the question of how this system had led to the then current opinion of work. Like Eliot, she stated that there was something seriously wrong with the way people were taught.[332] While she makes a number of points we will focus upon two. The first agrees with Eliot: the education system separated material into subjects. Further, the school day was divided to accommodate one discipline at a time, rather than integrating them as a whole. Therefore, the students experienced a compartmentalized day, training them in a disconnected way rather than

[331] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 11.
[332] Again, Sayers is generalizing: here about education.

interconnecting themes and disciplines as a whole. We will see later how this disconnectedness affected the views of work and leisure.

Second, the student studied facts for exams, and was not encouraged to think autonomously or creatively about what was taught or read.[333] In her opinion, most people developed the habit of not 'thinking' at all. Without the skill of creative and critical thinking, the system produces adults who are unable to discern between truth and mere opinion. She noted that the general public accepted opinions expressed in newspapers, books and on radio as fact, and did not pursue the matter further by questioning the information or gathering other opinions. She states that "The acquisition of knowledge is not the same thing as thinking; it is only the first step towards it. Knowledge does not become thought till we have made it part of our experience and acted upon it."[334] Sayers explains further that through careful reading and creative thinking people will be inclined never to take any facts at face value, but to search for the truth. She encouraged her public to think about the ideas presented, question them, read other sources, and weigh them prior to coming to any conclusion.[335]

The use of simplified generalizations about education is obvious here. There was then, as there is now, far more variety and complexity of education in Britain (and elsewhere).[336] There is even some irony in her preaching creative critical thinking: her own thinking here is not critical or developed. She is thinking about general education, however, (as opposed to the training of actors); so we will not take up this discussion.

Sayers went further, suggesting that the Church was one of the primary sources for perpetuating this wholesale submission to a tradition without question or thought. "What actually happened was this; the church had fallen into the same lazy

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[333] While efforts have been made to address learning styles, (see: Barbara K. Given, *Teaching to the Brain's Natural Learning Systems* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2002).), this type of teaching continues. For example, in grades 3, 6 and 9 of the Provincial curriculum in Ontario, Canada, half of the school year focuses on teaching the students how to respond to the standardized testing from the Education Quality and Accountability Office. The Office's emphasis is on statistics rather than knowledge.
[334] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 19.
[335] Found in the appendix of *Begin Here* and also in the text of Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*.
[336] See for example: D. Gillard, *Education in England: A Brief History,* (2011, accessed 2012). http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/.

habit... She had allowed the professionals to do most of her thinking for her. And the professionals had become old-fashioned in their method of thinking."[337] By 'the church,' Sayers is referring not only to the laity, but also to the clergy who were just as willing to go along and take things at face value; handed down to them by a 'higher authority'. The average Christian, and even the average seminary student, accepted doctrines and practices laid out before them without ever understanding why it was so, or how the Church had come to such conclusions.[338] Sayers concluded that, over time, a similar approach had filtered down to society as a whole, resulting in an environment in which the creative thinker was misunderstood, misrepresented or discouraged and, therefore, unable to contribute to society.[339]

Sayers then suggested that a progression had occurred which resulted in a change in the view of the active life, especially where work was concerned. An inability to think creatively led to peculiar notions of individualism, equality and freedom. People attained a certain amount of freedom. This 'freedom' was no longer attached to the philosophy of being truly human, but, unfortunately, it was now shaped by economic means. Thus, a person desired the type of job that provided the 'freedom' to spend as much as others. Society had perpetuated a cycle: rather than having workers who consciously contribute to society, it produced a vast number of individual consumers. For Sayers, earning and spending power now defined Man; and his job, rather than his relationship to his Maker, defined him as a particular person. Sayers found "a paradox of individualism: that the more value we attach to an individual as a numerical individual, the less value we place on his individual personality."[340]

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[337] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 40.

[338] It was far easier to burn the heretic than to examine tradition or question doctrine. Luther, while succeeding in bringing into question the practice of indulgences, opened the door for a distrust and, in some cases, rejection of other orthodox means of worship, such as those provided by the arts. Luther himself wrote against the thoughtless destruction of statuary and other works of art in: Luther, "The Fourth Sermon: Wednesday After Invocavit."

[339] This observation, while general and sweeping, is based on Sayers' experience; and though it may not be completely accurate, there is some truth to her statements. Her very tongue-in-cheek essay, "How Free is the Press?" is a wonderful comment on how the author herself has been misrepresented and suppressed, giving the general public an inaccurate picture of her; a picture which the public themselves have taken as truth. See Dorothy L. Sayers, "How Free is the Press?," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Inc., 1946).

[340] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 64. As a history of supposed stages, this is very questionable; but the list is illuminating as a list of some influential broad models of man.

Sayers provided a list to help the reader see the progression:

1. The Whole Man, the image of God – (theological man)
2. The Whole Man, a value in himself, apart from God – (humanist man)
3. Man, the embodied Intelligence – (rational man)
4. Homo Sapiens, the intelligent animal – (biological man)
5. Man, the member of the herd - (sociological man)
6. Man, the response to environment – (psychological man)
7. Man, the response to the means of livelihood – (economic man)[341]

According to Sayers, humans yearned for a reason for being; and her list shows the permutations of man's outlook on himself; and of his struggle to find a focus for life, something upon which to pin an absolute. The subsequent points reflect mankind's attempts to develop a sense of purpose without a relationship with the Divine. Mankind looked to history, or its own environment, then to a principal or system that rested in his temporal sphere, for an absolute value or authority. In Sayers' opinion, there was a loss of purpose when science contributed to the search for life and an understanding of the universe. "The silence of science about purpose is certainly not a coincidence, but neither is it a proof that purpose does not exist. It proves nothing either way."[342] She concluded that the more man knows scientifically, "the less he understands the purpose of existence, and the less is his individual importance in the scheme of things."[343]

The final category on Sayers' list resulted from viewing Man as completely separated particularly from the Divine. Man's purpose was his own personal gain. Economic Man had material goods, but was without an absolute.[344] Man was in a cycle of satisfaction without purpose. He struggled to gain the next object on his material list and financial success overruled everything.[345]

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[341] Ibid. 73-74.
[342] Ibid. 52.
[343] Ibid. 74.
[344] It takes little imagination to see how this outlook can affect the artist. The human being is no longer valued for his contribution to society as a creative individual in relationship with other creative individuals, if work is not a money making venture it has no worth.
[345] This outlook on society does not seem to have changed, and echoes of this discussion can be seen in later years. In 1986, Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall noted in his book *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* that through the use of reason we have abandoned our relationship to God as *imago*. That we, therefore, use and abuse natural resources for our own individual or corporate gain, regardless of the consequences. Interestingly, this was a theme in the 2009 inaugural speech given by the incoming U.S. President, Barack Obama. His view was fuelled by the economic crisis that had resulted from this idea of individual or corporate gain. The focus of the speech was Obama's overall

1.3. Economic Man and The Church's Vocational Idea of Work

We have earlier noted that the Church in Sayers' time was striving to focus on what they called a return to a vocational model of work. Sayers and others like her[346] saw that the economic focus posed a problem for this task. The economic worldview permeated not only the development of capitalism but also contributed to ideas of Communism and Fascism. In Sayers' view, capitalism raised the rights of the individual to prosper through the work of others, while fascism and communism had the individual surrender his or her rights of prosperity to the state or nation. But in the end, all three generated the development of a group or class of labourers who surrendered their freedom. "Economic equality cannot co-exist with economic freedom";[347] thus all of these systems ended in the oppression of part, or all, of a society.

Sayers saw a concentration on an economic ideology that altered even the thoughts about or attitude to work. In *Why Work?,*[348] she continued to look at the effect of economic values on work. "The habit of thinking about work as something one does to make money is so ingrained in us that we can scarcely imagine what a revolutionary change it would be to think about it instead in terms of the work done."[349] She concluded that the economic outlook became so ingrained that the worker no longer gained satisfaction from a job well done, unless he was well paid. In *Creed or Chaos*[350], Sayers insists that it is not the work itself but the attitude towards work that poses the challenge. The worker does not focus on the completion of a task, but on the money gained from putting in the daily hours of toil. The product or process was subordinated to the remuneration.

Sayers' conclusions regarding the economic view were problematic for the Church's discussion of a vocational model of work. It is necessary that we pursue her

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mandate: to attack this crisis and rebuild the country's status. Sayers' observations from 70 years ago are still relevant; sadly, her voice of warning was unheard. In the years after Obama's second inauguration, the American economic situation (and the view of human motivation and purposes) does not seem to have changed.

[346] Eliot in particular.

[347] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 80.

[348] Sayers, *Why Work?*

[349] Ibid. 10.

[350] Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949).

line of thinking further, as she has made some very good points about work when viewed mainly for its economic contribution and value; but we cannot generalize that this is the absolute view of the western world as a whole. Sayers, however, recognized that she was making a generalization, but with a purpose: to spur us on into thinking more seriously about how work should be viewed and what work is; more specifically, to consider her notion of the individual's attitude towards work.

2. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

In her essay "Living to Work,"[351] Sayers provided us with a clear picture of how she viewed work. Here, too, she was aware of a simplifying generalization but used it to make a point: how the attitude towards work can affect other areas of our life.

> When I look at the world – not particularly at the world at war, but at our Western civilization generally – I find myself dividing people into two main groups according to the way they think about work… One group – probably the larger and certainly the more discontented – look on work as a hated necessity, whose only use is to make money for them, so they can escape from work and do something else. They feel that only when the day's labour is over can they really begin to live and be themselves. The other group – smaller nowadays, but on the whole far happier – look on their work as an opportunity for enjoyment and self-fulfillment. They only want to make money so they may be free to devote themselves more single-mindedly to their work. Their work and their life are one thing; if they were to be cut off from their work, they would feel that they were cut off from life. You will realize that we have here a really fundamental difference of outlook, which is bound to influence all schemes about work, leisure and wages.[352]

Sayers used a device of broadly dividing people into just two groups. However, other groups should be considered; and a less simplistic view of people and their attitudes brought to bear on the discussion. So, for instance, for many people work is a necessity, but not uniformly hated. Money is only one of the concerns. Some may, for example, enjoy the company of work colleagues; there is some enjoyment and self-fulfillment in community. Her category of those who find

[351] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Living To Work," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946).
[352] Ibid. 122.

personal enjoyment and self-fulfillment does not mention that even they find some of their work tedious or distasteful; and that some even produce with economics in mind.[353] Thus, there are not two groups, but many different kinds and cases. It is much more complicated than she lays out here. To be fair, Sayers did begin by stating that these were personal observations, but she neither mentioned that aspect of her statement again, nor went into any detail as to where her generalization existed.

It is obvious that Sayers would consider herself as a worker in the latter group. It is evident that she loved to work, whether or not it was for pay.[354] Her biographers tell how she approached a variety of tasks with laughter and intensity; and the sheer volume of writings found in her estate indicate that she thrived through her work. She did recognize elsewhere that even when one enjoyed one's work, there were some elements of it that are tedious and must be just gotten through;[355] but, for all this, she was in the midst of doing her "proper job", and she was content with that. It is this attitude that she hoped would be the case for all workers. When looking at work as a matter for investigation, however, she found that this was not the case. Sayers comments on this through Cassiel, the angel in charge of accounts in *The Zeal of Thy House*, "Happily, being an angel, and not a man, I like work. The hatred of work must be one of the most depressing consequences of the Fall."[356] Among other things, Sayers tried to address this hatred of work in her notions about the right attitude.

Though she seemed to focus on the negative aspects, she did offer a positive solution to counteract this overall negativity. Her solution is twofold: firstly, all persons should be given the opportunity to do the work to which they were best suited; and secondly, they should be given the understanding of the purpose of their labour.

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[353] Even actors experience particular situations in their field that are tedious, ridiculous or even dreadful.

[354] Although remuneration does come up in some instances, most especially in her argument with BBC Children's hour over *The Man Born to Be King*.

[355] Her letters to friends are punctuated with moments in which she would refer to a piece of writing as beastly or to her inability to complete a dreaded task. She writes of the ordinary, everyday drudgeries: cars needing the mechanic, and some aspects of housework.

[356] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Zeal of Thy House," in *Four Sacred Plays* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1959). 18.

Overall, these are good ideas; but she does not address other elements that may disrupt an individual's work experience. Briefly, there are situations in which a worker may be in her element, but those who organize and run the workplace oppress the individual's attitude. Management and governments (and even the Church) can interfere, and have interfered, with the workplace to such a degree that the work, even creative work, becomes tedious and soul destroying. Many types of work can be uninspiring or mundane, but a leader who draws the laborer into the big picture, and encourages his or her contribution, inspires meaning and purpose in the workplace. Sayers is writing about the employee here, but more could be said regarding the roles and attitudes of those governing the jobsite.[357] These and other considerations make it clear that the right attitude of the worker is not enough. One must take into account also the nature and character of colleagues or employers, the character of the institution, the environment of the job and the nature of the work. A right attitude cannot be taken if the context is inimical to it. This is a brief observation that will not be developed further; but much more could be said.

Sayers' thinking interconnects many different ideas and we will try to separate some of them. Sayers found that there were particular views about women in the workforce;[358] and certain attitudes towards leisure, both of some of which had also affected gender roles. We will, therefore, continue in this section to look at gender, and then leisure. But Sayers also surmised that when workers feel a connection to their work and to the products of their labour, their attitude toward the job is much more positive. This particular line of thinking will be followed up in a new section, "Work Worth Doing," and we will deal with it in more detail at that time.

2.1. Gender and the Workforce

Sayers' writings on gender, and on women in the workforce, raised an awareness of a bias that contributed to shaping the way work was classified. Even though a great deal has been done to remedy many of the negative convictions of her

[357] Although Sayers is writing in the war era, I have found little mention of the morale of the soldiers and the people. A great deal of effort was put into keeping spirits up and providing hope in dark times. This same tactic could be put to great use in the work place, not through the regulations of the unions, but through the attitude and behaviour of management and governing bodies.
[358] See below footnote 55.

period regarding women in the workforce, this attitude is still evident in particular jobs today. While many inroads have been made in the secular market, we still see women dominating certain types of work, for instance, house cleaning, elementary school teaching and nursing, while financial management, technical/mechanical support and construction are positions chiefly occupied by men. Statistically, women fill the lower paying service industry jobs, while men dominate higher paying occupations. It is almost as if there is a thin line separating jobs involving social skills or meeting basic human needs from those that require physical labour, mechanical skill or, hierarchically, hold more authority.[359] The Church also held certain views regarding women in leadership, a debate in which, although Sayers had things to say, she avoided direct involvement;[360] and we will follow her example.

Sayers noticed that there existed a mindset that held women and men as somehow being of different species: "But the fundamental thing that strikes the observer is that women are more like men than anything else in the world. They are human beings. *Vir* is male and *Femina* is female: but *Homo* is both male and female."[361] In her writing, there is no mention or idea of the man's wage versus the woman's, only that individuals should be allowed do whatever work they are called to do and that the worker chosen should be the one best suited for the type of work available.

2.1.1. The Work of Homemaking

Sayers locates her discussions on gender and work within a greater consideration of a loss of the sacred[362] in daily living, an idea also found in Berry.[363] This loss affects how both men and women view work, whether in the home or the

[359] The Canadian and Scottish Education systems strive to narrow this divide. All classes are open to both genders, and, at the earlier stages of high school, courses like Home Economics and Technical Shop are required courses for all students. In addition, Deborah Starks of Prentice-Hall Canada, Educational Division, explained to me that a great deal of effort is put into the pictorial choices to represent all genders, races and physical abilities equally, in a variety of situations and occupations.
[360] See Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to C. S. Lewis, 19 July 1948," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers:1944-1950, A Noble Daring*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1999). 387.
[361] Sayers, "The Human-Not-Quite-Human." 116.
[362] Sayers makes use of the term sacramental in an idiosyncratic way which we will take up later. But for the moment, we will take it to mean a significant or meaningful spiritual or sacred element.
[363] And Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 152.

marketplace; shaping not only the thinking of women in the workplace, but also the work of the homemaker. In Berry's *Feminism, the Body and the Machine*,[364] he states that the void of a sacred attitude towards our human work has grown to such a degree that it has changed our attitude towards the activities of home life. He laments that men have long turned their backs on homemaking and finds it atrocious that women are being cajoled into doing the same. "It is obvious how much skill and industry either partner may put into such a household and what a good economic result such work may have, and yet it is a kind of work now frequently held in contempt."[365] In fact, in Berry's opinion, any activity performed out of love, rather than for remuneration, is almost inconceivable to our modern, economically driven mindset. In the establishment of a loving, caring, work-filled home life, Berry sees the growth of human dignity, and an economy that outweighs money - for men as much as women.

We add to this Sayers' conviction that the interesting and creative jobs, such as baking, weaving or sewing, formerly part of homemaking, had been moved out of the household, industrialized, and taken over by men; leaving very few tasks in the home for women to enjoy.[366] Furthermore, she criticizes the inclination adopted by the middle class to create the status-symbol or "trophy wife." The husband's salary was so high that the wife could hire labourers to take care of the home making and childrearing. She could, therefore, devote herself to the leisurely activities of self-care, socializing and philanthropy.[367]

Sayers was not typifying work as men's or women's, but simply saying that all people should be allowed to have meaningful work; whether that person was a man or woman, any work should be suitable to the skills, inclination and personality of the worker. "If they are going to adopt the very sound principle that the job should

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[364] Berry, "Feminism, the Body and the Machine."
[365] Ibid. 68.
[366] Sayers, "Are Women Human?." 109.
[367] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Vocation in Work," in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Spiritual Writings*, ed. Ann Loades (London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1993). 137. We see here also Berry's notion of 'nigger' work as mentioned in Chapter Three: the woman has the 'freedom' to hire others to dirty their hands. A recent depiction of this attitude is Katheryn Stocket, *The Help* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009). Things have changed a great deal in our era, with more and more women entering the workforce. Barry laments that the home-life is suffering further because men and now women have given up home making for work away from the family centre. See Chapter Three.

be done by the person who does it best, then the rule must be applied universally…. Once lay down the rule that the job comes first and you throw that job open to every individual, man or woman, fat or thin, tall or short, ugly or beautiful, who is able to do that job better than the rest of the world."[368] Ergo, the opportunity to serve in the manner best suited to the individual should be available to everyone; and no task should ever be trivialized by anyone, be they family, management, government or religious institution. As long as the task was not something that endorsed idleness, sloth[369] or immorality, it should be approached as serious work, and, as such, was considered by Sayers to be a 'proper job'.

2.1.2. Gender in Sayers' Fiction

Sayers' fiction also reflected her era's notions on gender and work.[370] Wimsey and other characters represent Sayers' ideas, as appears, for example, in *The Nine Tailors*.[371] With fifteen-year-old Hillary Thorpe, Wimsey recognizes the girl's particular manner of viewing the world and he equates it to a particular job.

> "H'm!" Said Wimsey. "If that's the way your mind works, you'll be a writer one day."
> "Do you think so? How funny! That's what I want to be. But why?"
> "Because you have the creative imagination, which works outwards, till finally you will be able to stand outside your own experience and see it as something you have made, existing independently of yourself. You're lucky."
> "Do you really think so?" Hillary looked excited.
> "Yes…"[372]

The surprise in Hillary's response is not so much that Wimsey was encouraging her, but that a wealthy gentleman of power was expressing an opinion opposite to that impressed upon her by her uncle, whose view was that her thinking

[368] Sayers, "Are Women Human?." 110. Today we could add regardless of race or creed.
[369] One does not have to wonder what Sayers would say of the video gaming industry or the current North American penchant for casinos and bingo halls.
[370] Sayers recalls a dinner party where a man was amazed that a woman had such an ability to write male conversation so accurately. She replied that she wrote their dialogue as if they were ordinary human beings. "This aspect of the matter seemed to surprise the other speaker; he said no more, but took it away to chew it over. One of these days it may quite likely occur to him that women, as well as men, when left to themselves, talk very much like human beings also." Sayers, "Are Women Human?." 115.
[371] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Nine Tailors* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 1962).
[372] Ibid. 106.

was unfeminine. We see here the common attitude towards women of the era represented by the uncle, and Sayers' own progressive ideas represented in Wimsey. This situation repeated itself in *Gaudy Night*[373] in the relationship between Wimsey and Harriet.[374] Sayers presented the notion that men and women could live in mutual support and encouragement.[375] Rather than promoting a new breed of women, however, Sayers, through Wimsey, is suggesting a man without stereotypes or bias regarding work.

In her comedy, *Love All*, Sayers created a set of circumstances regarding attitudes towards women's work and married life. Her character Godfrey Daybrook is disconcerted and affronted that both his mistress and his wife would wish to focus on their work rather than solely upon him and his writing. His mistress, Lydia, pursued an opportunity on the London stage, while his wife, Janet, neglected arranging for their divorce because she was busy writing and producing two plays. The revelation that his wife desired, and was actually capable of doing, something other than homemaking provides the comic thrust.[376]

> GODFREY: Do you mean to say that you wrote that play while we were still married – I mean, while I was still at home?
>
> JANET: What did you think I was doing all those winter evenings in Little Wookham while you were detained in town – 'on business?' Darning your socks?
>
> GODFREY: A married woman with a house and child ought to find plenty to do without writing plays.
>
> JANET: Don't be silly dear. You needn't talk as of you were born in Queen Victoria's reign. I hope you're not becoming mentally stagnant.[377]

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[373] Sayers, *Gaudy Night*. 291.

[374] While it has been noted that Harriet is the embodiment of Sayers' adult self, I would say that Hillary Thorpe represents Sayers as a teen. Thus, Sayers is able to comment on her own behaviour, and on the reaction of her peers in school, through Wimsey and Thorpe.

[375] We get the impression that Sayers, herself, viewed marriage as a union of mutual respect and encouragement in which neither partner was subordinate to the other. Sadly, for Sayers, although her own marriage began as one of mutual artistic support, it eroded, as her star rose and Mac Flemming's own descended. Mac's physical health did not help matters either. To her credit, Dorothy remained faithful to him until his death.

[376] By today's standards Godfrey appears chauvinistic. His attitude is one of his age and upbringing, and he is in a situation that had, heretofore, never occurred to him.

[377] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Love All," in *Love All and the Busman's Honeymoon*, ed. Alzina Stone Dale (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1984). 168.

Godfrey cannot wrap his mind around the idea of either his wife or mistress working in the theatre. [378] Both Lydia and Janet are willing either to remain married (Janet) or to get married (Lydia) in order to help Godfrey, if it meant that they could continue in their sphere of occupation.

In this play, Sayers raised some interesting points connected to notions on gender roles and home life. It is in the home (or outside of work) where leisure time is located. Unfortunately, it is this very notion of leisure and our attitude toward 'time off' that has helped to skew the way of seeing home-life and homemaking, an area of work which, up until recently, was considered the woman's primary domain. We will turn next to Sayers' views on leisure and will observe how they are interwoven with her views on work.

2.2. Leisure

As we have already seen in Chapter Three, we do not get a sufficient picture of work when we separate it or elevate it from other parts of our sphere of life. As we look at Sayers' focus on leisure, we will find that it resonates with the earlier discussion on many levels. As with Moltmann and Pieper, she found there was a peculiar way of looking at rest. "We have come to set a strange value on leisure for its own sake - not only the leisure that enables man to get on properly with his job, but also the leisure which is a polite word for idleness."[379] When Sayers and Moltmann are brought together, we will find that, as economic man (Sayers), people have lost the connection to the Sabbath rest (Moltmann). Further, Sayers pointed to the descent of a generation into sloth and *acadia,* terminology that came forward with Pieper. Consequently, we cannot get any idea of her view of the 'proper job' without considering her ideas on leisure.

[378] In addition to gender bias, one does wonder if Sayers was also remarking about a negative view of the theatre. Janet's involvement in the theatre puts her in contact with "undesirable people". There are hints here, too, that the occupation of playwright is less savoury than that of novelist. Perhaps Sayers herself had received comments questioning her change of creative expression.
[379] Sayers, "Vocation in Work." 136.

According to Moltmann, the Sabbath, and I would add, moments of leisure,[380] are times set aside for Man to redirect his attentions away from the tasks of his labour, a time of refreshment and rest; and opportunities for a variety of activities. The Sabbath is multi-functional, but its primary focus is spiritual. It is, as Christ has taught, a time set aside for Man to participate in the holy; it is a gift from God.[381] On the Sabbath, Man does not drop out of functioning in the creation, but is encouraged to consciously make this a day or time to centre the source of his life force on a relationship with the Creator. Man has the opportunity to gain a sense of peace (shalom) and, thereby, also to return with a God-given energy to other tasks, not just the primary occupation or job. Moltmann attributes a downward spiral in our view of leisure and Sabbath to the industrialization of work and an economic mindset. This society has a worldview focused on the utile; and the idea of Sabbath, in a secularized cultural setting, seems to have no material or tangible utility. In this setting, even the idea of leisure becomes shallow and impoverished.

Sayers recognizes that when God is out of the picture, He is out of the picture in every aspect of our lives - work, rest, play, home life, even church - and the way that we look at others and the world around us is changed. When a worldview has no spiritual or sacred value, it is no wonder that the way we view the term vocation narrows. There is no view of being called to rest, no 'being still' to know God and definitely no Sabbath. Therefore, no being still to know ourselves in the true sense, as God's children or the Creation as a part of our being. Thus work, in and of itself, has little or no value outside of money, personal gain and the accumulation of goods. One of the dangers of a society of consumers is just this: there is no lasting enjoyment; consumers must constantly look for newer and fresher means of distraction. And this alters the view of Sabbath until there becomes no rest; and leisure is distorted.

Moltmann found that a social concentration on utility and consumerism changed the relationship between Man and God. God became a useful commodity: our helper in need; problem solver; provider of goods; source of direction; and so on. Moltmann suggested that there needed to be a conscious shift of focus; the holy God is always calling Man into a covenantal friendship, and into both work and leisure.

[380] See Chapter Three and references to Pieper on leisure
[381] Mark 2:23-28, primarily verse 27.

Within this view, the Sabbath is not relegated to a day but is also found in many moments, this becomes intrinsic to a further understanding of leisure. On the other hand, the concept of leisure can, but does not necessarily have to, have a spiritual or sacred centre. In leisure, Man takes time to enjoy the fruits of labour, to celebrate, to take up the occupations and activities of leisure, or simply to relax and experience a sense of being. When approached with a God-centred attitude, though, "we gain distance from ourselves and our plans move forward in a natural, unforced way."[382] Man takes necessary pauses in daily living that, when approached wisely, have the ability to help him to contribute to society and the furtherance of the creation in a healthy way. Through Sabbath and leisure, work can be approached with freshness and joy.

Sayers commented that, in her time, there was no concept of leisure that was linked to the sacred or to Sabbath; nothing of what she termed 'sacramental.'[383] Instead, there was a peculiar form of sloth hidden by a skewed idea of relaxation. Her explanation of sloth resonates with Pieper's on *acadia*.[384]

> [Sloth]…does not mean a lack of hustle: it means the slow sapping of all the faculties by indifference, and by the sensation that life is pointless and meaningless and not-worth-while… The next step is that sloth of mind and body, the emptiness of heart, which destroy energy and purpose and issue in that general attitude to the universe, which the inter-war jazz musicians aptly named 'the Blues'.[385]

Sayers saw the focus here was not on rest, but on work in order to make enough money to do nothing. Man worked to be free from the responsibilities put on him by work; thus the term 'freedom' had begun to lose its meaning. Sayers advocated a return to a security in God, in which "freedom was understood, not in the sense we are inclined to give that word today – that is, as an exemption from all external restrictions – but in a more philosophical sense: freedom to be man's real

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[382] Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play*, trans. Reinhard Ulrich (New York: Harper and Row, 1971). 1.
[383] Sayers use of this term will be discussed in a later chapter.
[384] See Chapter 3, section 2.5 'Not Work.'
[385] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Christian Morality " in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946). 11-12. Her own attitude towards the Blues is again generalized, and seems to have missed that most movements in the Arts take up far more of human life. To use her example of The Blues, there was more involved and more expressed than just hanging about in a slothful manner, which is what Sayers seems to suggest.

nature, that is, to stand in a right relation to God."[386] When we see her understanding of freedom in this way, we get the impression also that what Sayers desires is for everyone to experience the same joy that she has in life. She had a *joie de vivre*, especially when she was working in what she called her "proper job," (most often referring to her creative work as a writer).

Sayers' work was not performed as a means of gaining an escape from daily living; rather it was one part of a greater active life. We find that Brock's observations regarding work as salvation are very much in line with those of Sayers. Work, in both Sayers' and Brock's view, is done in order that a person can have the freedom to be him or herself under God, not as a way of obtaining time or money to provide moments or objects that give a sense of freedom or redemption. Again the utilitarian view seems to present only a temporary thrill that loses its potency and must be replaced by the next article of clothing, video game, trip or whatever it is to which the individual has attached enjoyment, meaning or importance. The individual then returns to work to feed this cycle. Moltmann saw this view leaking into the Church's notions on the place of the arts:

> Theology does not have much use for aesthetic categories. Faith has lost its joy, since it has felt constrained to exorcise the law of the old world with a law of the new, where everything must be useful and used, faith tends to regard its own freedom as good for nothing. It tries to make itself useful and in so doing often gambles away its freedom.[387]

The view that Sayers would have us take is one that receives salvation from God. Man in this state has a freedom in Christ that touches and balances all aspects of living: work and leisure, play and relaxation, joy and lamentation, the active and contemplative life. As we move on to unpack Sayers' ideas on work worth doing we will have a greater picture of how all of this fits together.

[386] Sayers, *Begin Here*. 37.
[387] Moltmann, *Theology of Play*. 15.

3. WORK WORTH DOING

In Section 2, we quoted Sayers from *Living to Work*: "I find myself dividing people into two main groups according to the way they think about work."[388] Both groups have, in one respect, a similar way of looking at money. Money provides the means for them to do that which they want to do; for some this is leisure activity, for others it is what Sayers would say is their "proper job."

Looking at her statement regarding the attitude towards work, we could also say, first, that her overall picture of good work is too rosy and optimistic; and that her overall picture of bad work is too dark. There are varying grades and shades between these two. Secondly, as we have seen in Chapter Three, this attitude can vary through the course of daily living, and according to parts of the work, or specific tasks. There is work that is just endured in order that the individual can obtain a desired goal; for one, the goal is to be involved in the more enjoyable aspects of the work; for another, it could be things outside of work.[389]

Sayers' views gave the impression that society, prior to World War Two, had adopted an escapist mentality towards work that involved an odd idea of leisure akin to sloth.[390] She observed that the current situation had everyone hard at work defending their nation and supporting the war effort, but that many had a peculiar way of viewing peace as a time of rest from all work. Sayers wanted to remind the public that there would be plenty of post-war work rebuilding the nation, and that, generally, work was an essential part of life. It is again necessary to remember that Sayers is part of a greater dialogue here. Eliot has been mentioned as one of the partners; but there were many others involved in this discussion. Sayers was in correspondence with many church officials; and her literary friendships included those in *The Detective Club* with Chesterton, and *The Inklings'* Lewis and Williams. These are all part of a generation for whom the effects of World War One were still vivid in their

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[388] See footnote 40.

[389] We have already looked at the misconception of this category. It is a bit of a vicious circle.

[390] A popular wartime song recorded by Vera Lynn states: "There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover…love and laughter and peace ever after… the valley will bloom again...tomorrow when the world is free." A utopian idea of peace that is pastoral, it involves no infrastructure or rebuilding. Walter Kent and Nat Burton, "(There'll be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover," (USA: Bernstein & Co. Music Publishers, 1941).

memories. She did not develop her views in a vacuum, but in conversation and literary discussion. Many of the observations we will highlight may seem to focus on the negative here, but Sayers does make positive points as well.

First, Sayers points out the difference between the amount of pre-war waste as opposed to the careful use of resources in the wartime situation. She observed a set of circumstances in which the engine of the pre-war economy was kept running by encouraging a quick turnover: products were produced quickly and poorly, and the consumer bought not from necessity, but on a whim. Second, the wartime worker had an underlying sense of why he or she was performing the task, thus he or she invested more of him or herself into the task and derived more satisfaction. These two, the product and the purpose, provided balance in working, creating a situation in which the work was worth doing and the worker came away with the inner satisfaction.

3.1. The Products of the Work

The Church's use of the terms sacramental and vocational, when describing the desired alternative to the then current outlook on work, came under scrutiny where Sayers was concerned. On the one hand, she did understand what the Church was driving at while, on the other hand, she concluded that there was far more to be done than just to bring about a change in attitude. "We cannot expect a sacramental attitude to work, while many people are forced, by our evil standard of values, to do work which is a spiritual degradation – a long series of financial trickeries, for example, or the manufacture of vulgar and useless trivialities."[391] The bulk of her thoughts have been separated here into a long list of interlocking complaints:

1. Workers were required to make junk and trash.
2. They displayed shoddy workmanship.
3. They used bad or poor quality materials.
4. Some of the products were vulgar and trivial.
5. Other products were useless.

[391] Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos?* 42.

6. Still others were deliberately manufactured to be temporary, and made to be replaced.
7. Excess packaging was wasteful.
8. The use of the product was wasteful.
9. There was some sort of financial trickery going on that led the consumer to believe that they needed the product.
10. The product, and all that it encompasses, did not contribute to the wellbeing of society or the wellbeing of the earth.

3.1.1. The Cheap Product

When asked to think of a product considered junk, trash, trivial or vulgar it is highly probable that something readily comes to mind.[392] In a bid for profitability, manufacturers have always looked for cheaper and faster means of producing goods. Sayers stated that there was at one time a balance: "We may remember that a medieval guild did insist, not only on the employer's duty to his workmen, but also on the laborer's duty to his work."[393] This balance provided the customer with goods that were worthy of their cost. What Sayers was getting at here was the impact this situation has on the worker. She found that when the product was of little or no value to those who are making it, then no care or skill was put into its making. When a worker has no care for the product, it is highly likely he or she has no care for the work. The production of shoddy goods by workers who could not see any purpose to their toil can, in Sayers opinion, only result in a focus on the pay rather than on doing a good job at work.

3.1.2. Waste

Sayers presented a pre-war view of consumerism in which the public thought nothing of purchasing goods that were temporary or cheap. In turn, some products

[392] In today's society, while the Dollar or Pound stores are filled with toys and items of this sort, there is also the term 'Must-haves.' Magazines encourage the consumer to purchase certain high ticket items for the home, car or cosmetic use. There are also objects designated as giftware or collectables branded with a logo, or linked with a passing fad.
[393] Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos?* 42.

were poorly made to necessitate early replacement;[394] the old item was simply thrown away, with no thought for how it could be re-used. Finally, there was excess and unnecessary packaging, which, also went into the trash. Again, Sayers was presenting a picture of a mindset and practices that had ramifications found in the attitude towards work. If the product is temporary, then the manufacture of that product was a waste of an individual's time. Sayers notes that in this situation a worker would not feel that he was producing anything of lasting value and, subsequently, questioned his own worth and contribution to society.

3.1.3. Trickery

Sayers' own experience with the advertising industry gave her clear insight into the ways that it duped the public. Advertising generated interest in the newest fad; and planted a seed of self-doubt, creating a need where there was none. This need could only be met through the purchase of the advertised item. When satisfaction with that product began to wane, the industry had already presented a newer, better replacement. We see here that skewed notion of salvation mentioned above. The product could bring happiness and self worth, in other words a sense of salvation, and the way to the product is through the money acquired through work. It perpetuates a cycle of hope, redemption, and temporary satisfaction, disappointment and despair; a sequence that begins again through the next purchase. Eventually, this cycle generates less reward, and work becomes futile.

3.1.4. A Positive Solution

By reminding her public of the prewar attitude towards goods Sayers could then begin to address her point. She wished to present another, more positive perspective brought about by the war.

> Unless we do change our whole way of thought about work, I do not think we shall ever escape the appalling squirrel-cage of economic confusion in which we have been madly turning for the last three

[394] We notice this in our own society. Appliances, for instance, do not have a life-time warranty, they are made to be replaced with a newer and better model within a five to ten year period. There is an entire industry based upon this mindset.

> centuries or so, the cage in which we landed ourselves by acquiescing on a social system based upon Envy and Avarice. A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand.[395]

The war effort had changed the focus of production: food, clothes and other products became scarce, and rationing produced the expectation that products should be of good value and lasting quality. Sayers asked her readers to remain aware of an attitude toward work that would return the nation to being a society of materialistic consumers. If the public continued in the war-time mindset,[396] in which goods were judged and bought based on quality in workmanship, and reused or re-cycled to abort wastefulness, it would stimulate the production of well-made goods and induce the worker to see value in his work. Products and services would have a certain level of integrity, insisted on both by those who purchased them and by those who provided them.

3.1. The Purpose of the Work

In Sayers' rationale, when an understanding of or connection to the product is removed from the laborer, this negatively influences the laborer's attitude. The worker who produces junk, or has no idea why she is performing a task, is inclined to feel disconnected from the work. When asked to serve long hours with no other stimulus than extra pay, a laborer focused on the money and not the job. Eventually, even the money and benefits would cease to satisfy. Sayers suggests that "[t]he greatest insult which a commercial age has offered to the worker has been to rob him of all interest in the end-product of the work and to force him to dedicate his life to making badly things which are not worth making."[397] It produced a society of individual laborers, not a community of interconnected people serving one another. The worker's mind focused on personal gain from the job rather than a greater importance in the work. Sayers concluded that a focus on economics disconnected the deep workings of Man's creative imagination; work and the worker become dehumanized. "…The fallacy being that work is not the expression of man's creative

[395] Sayers, *Why Work?* 3.
[396] Sadly, it took a war to bring about this mindset.
[397] Sayers, *Why Work?* 10.

energy in the service of Society, but only something he does in order to obtain money and leisure."[398]

In Sayers' position, this went beyond creating a good attitude towards work; Man has the opportunity to experience through work a deeply spiritual connection to life. She illustrates this idea by identifying those whose attitudes more closely resemble a spiritual connectedness to their work: the imaginative, intuitive, creative class; the artists and craftspeople.

4. CREATIVENESS[399]

Dorothy L. Sayers held a very high opinion of those whose work was in creative and imaginative fields. "I believe, however, there is a Christian doctrine of work, very closely related to the creative energy of God and the divine image of man."[400] Not only did she speak from her perspective as a writer, but Sayers could also project this onto other craftspeople and types of work. Sayers has a great deal to say about the imagination and creativeness.[401] For the purposes of this dissertation, we will only address here these views when they pertain to work, and in particular, to how the imagination affects the attitude. In the following chapters on vocation, and the theatre and actors, we will again find that creativeness enters the discussion.

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[398] Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos?* 40.

[399] For a contemporary discussion on creativity and its links to innovation in the workforce see Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007).

[400] Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos?* 40.

[401] The term 'creativeness' is one that Sayers adopted through her reading of Nikolai Berdyaev's *The Meaning of History,* about which she says "This, I think, is one of the world's really great books." Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to L.T. Duff, 10 May 1943," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). She found Berdyaev and Jacques Maritain particularly helpful in her understanding of the artist and creativity. See Nikolai Berdyaev, *My Philosophic World-Outlook*(1937, accessed October 2011), Nikolai Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, trans. Natalie Duddington (London: Semantron Press, 2009). Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1939), Jacques Maritain, "The Responsibility of the Artist," (Jacques Maritain Center, University of Notre Dame, 1960). See also Chapter Seven.

4.1. The Creative Mind

In *The Mind of the Maker*, Sayers examined the notion of creativeness in work. In the postscript to the book, she points out how work is more than an economic activity.

> We cannot deal with industrialism or employment unless we lift work out of the economic, political and social spheres, and consider it also in terms of the work's worth and the love of the work as being in itself a sacrament and manifestation of man's creative energy. The attitude of the artist to this question is instructive.[402]

Sayers recognized integrity in the work of those such as the farmer, medical practitioner, teacher, and fisherman, to name a few;[403] but she found that others whose focus was creative expression notably and consistently brought forth something from deep in their being to the performance of their work. They fulfilled a burning desire to express their true nature and provided a means to participate in and reach out to society through their work. Further, this particular group of people sometimes worked for little or no monetary reward, other than the love of the job. "The primary contrast between the artist and the ordinary worker is this: the worker works to make money, so that he may enjoy those things in life which are not his work and which his work can purchase for him; but the artist makes his money by his work in order that he may go on working."[404] For Sayers, the artist has a connection to the work that gives his life purpose and meaning; the creativity involved in the work, whether the worker believes it or not, is reflecting the image of his Creator.

Sayers saw the reality of God as fact; further, that God invited man to participate with Him in His creation was also, in her opinion, fact. God, therefore, equipped mankind, in order that a person might be a suitable co-creator. Man could not answer God's invitation unless there was some part of him that enabled him to step up to the altar. Sayers located the answer in Genesis; God had made Man, male and female, in His image.

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[402] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*.
[403] We will come back to this list in the following Chapter.
[404] Sayers, "Vocation in Work." 134. This resonates with McMurray in Chapter Three. We also see a similarity to Sayers' notion of dividing workers into two groups.

> But had the author of Genesis anything in particular in his mind when he wrote? It is observable that in the passage leading up to the statement about man, he has given no detailed information about God. Looking at man, he sees in him something essentially divine, but when we turn back to see what he says about the original upon which the 'image' of God was modeled, we find only the single assertation, "God created." The characteristic common to God and man is apparently that: the desire and ability to make things.[405]

First, God, the creative thinker, made things (some practical and some just for fun). Second, God had made Man in His image: a creative thinker, who made things. This action was for Sayers just as factual as the existence of God.

> He is homo faber – man the craftsman – and this is the point from which I want to set out. Man is a maker, who makes things because he wants to, because he cannot fulfil his true nature if he is prevented from making things for the love of the job; he is made in the image of the Maker, and he must himself create or become something less than a man.[406]

This, in essence, was how Sayers saw not only herself as an imaginative, creative person, but also every human being. If Man's work was to express his inmost being, if it was to be a call that he could answer wholeheartedly, if it was the right, or should we say 'proper job,' for him, then, in Sayers' creatively innovative and special position, it should stimulate his intellect, his imagination, and even more precisely, his creativeness.

4.2. The 'Proper Job'

By Sayers' standard, a connection to the creative imagination could transform most jobs from a mundane task to a 'proper job'. When an individual understood the job's overall result, it could play out further in the mind and in the worker's life. Subsequently, the worker would feel connected to something greater than the task and would experience a sense of overall satisfaction. Sayers drew on an example from the

[405] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*. 22.
[406] Sayers, "Vocation in Work." 132.

war:[407] when a line worker in the munitions factory imagined the use of this particular product in the field, he saw himself playing a greater part in the war effort. His job had a purpose, he served his community, ergo, he performed the work with enthusiasm and integrity. By comparison, the artist and craftsperson imagines the finished product and that image fuels her to work well. Even when the work is tedious, the imaginative process keeps the artist on task as she painstakingly concentrates on each detail. Any worker can use the imagination to envision his work, and it helps him to do a 'proper job.'

4.2.1. Sayers vs Lewis

To further illustrate Sayers' understanding of 'proper job', we will discuss a series of letters between Sayers and C. S. Lewis. It is a fascinating conversation, as it is a point on which she and Lewis strongly disagreed. Laura K. Simmons and Diana Pavlac Glyer have outlined a very lively disagreement that went on between the two friends, a disagreement which involved their views of calling and creative work.[408]

In 1946, Lewis had invited Sayers to contribute to a booklet on sin for a Christian Knowledge series. Her work on the Seven Deadly Sins[409] had impressed him, and he felt that a young audience would benefit from her expertise. Sayers turned him down. She explained that she had no more to add to the topic and did not see it as the right task for her; she wanted to be true to the work. Lewis countered with the argument "Of course one mustn't do 'dishonest' work. But you seem to take as the criterion of honest work the sensible desire to write – the itch."[410]

Sayers replied with an explanation that it would be wrong to accept any and every request that came her way if she could not do so with full integrity. She was referring to Lewis' habit of taking on every speaking engagement and assignment that

[407] This may seem, by today's standards, a rather grotesque example, considering that the end use of the bomb or bullet was to kill another human. It is, however, set in Sayers' time. Work in a munitions factory in times of peace may have a different effect on the worker.
[408] Diana Pavlac Glyer and Laura K. Simmons, "Dorothy L. Sayers and C.S. Lewis: Two Approaches to Creativity and Calling," *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review* Vol. 21 (2004).
[409] Dorothy L. Sayers, "x x Deadly Sins," in *The Whimsical Christian* (New York MacMillan Publishing Company, 1978).
[410] As cited in Brabazon. 236.

he could possibly fit into his already busy schedule. According to Glyer/Simmons, his focus was "…on sacrificially serving those whom God has brought across your path. This was not only his personal habit, but also a life choice that flowed from a deep-seated conviction about the nature of human beings. For Lewis, creative work is done not so much to the urgency of the message but to the need of the audience."[411]

As we have discussed above, Sayers was critical of putting forth poor work just because one was following one's 'Christian duty.' She upbraided Lewis for occasionally speaking beyond his realm of knowledge or the scope of his expertise. By doing this, she felt he was serving neither his audience nor his work and, therefore, serving God incorrectly. "For Sayers, to write for the wrong reasons would destroy both the work and, eventually, the writer's tools."[412] She would turn down invitations that she felt she could not fulfil well or truthfully; he, in turn, would accept any work because the 'image of God' had put forward the request.

Sayers further claimed that she was wary of anything to do with 'serving the community', for in her opinion Economic Man served the community first, with little or no thought for God, while the Christian served God first.[413] When serving the community or the audience becomes more important than serving God, then Man's will overshadowed God's, and the work was in danger of losing its integrity. God is given lip-service through some obscure notion of 'Christian duty.' The two commandments, to love God and to love the neighbour, had become confused. By her standard, when priority was given to serving God through the work, consideration of the community would naturally follow. She explains:

> First, that you cannot do good work if you take your mind off the work to see how the community is taking it… The second reason is that the moment you think of serving other people, you begin to have a notion that other people owe you something for your pains; you begin to think you have a claim on the community… And thirdly, if you set out to serve the community you will probably end by merely fulfilling a public demand… The work has been falsified to please the public… The only true way of serving the community is to be truly in sympathy

[411] Pavlac Glyer and Simmons. 38.
[412] Ibid. 37.
[413] This is a false contrast between serving the community and serving God. Is not the command, to serve both?

> with the community – to be one's self part of the community – and then to serve the work, without giving the community another thought.[414]

We understand that Sayers was careful not to allow the audience to censor or manipulate her creative mind. When we consider Eliot's request that society allow the artist to be free to intuitively illuminate the world, we can see how Sayers would be wary of allowing outside influences, or pleasing the audience, to interfere with her creative autonomy.[415] Even so, I question her argument. First, the artist should not continually check to see how the community is taking the work, but there should be times when the artist pauses to see if he is indeed in line with the truth of what serves the community, and has not gone off on his own agenda, for instance to prove a point, or deliberately shock. Second, it is not always the case that one feels the need to have remuneration from the people one serves. Wendell Berry would agree that in knowing those whom we serve, we often serve out of love for that community. Third, there is a certain amount of onus on the part of the community to allow the artist to have the freedom to create in his own medium and style, and to choose his subject matter. The artist who is comfortable in his own community will feel free to bring forth the work that he is inspired to do and will not fall prey to propaganda. And did "fulfilling a public demand" necessarily deserve a "merely?"

Sayers' statement regarding the artist participating and being an active part in the community was the lynchpin of her whole argument. Sayers pleaded a case for being a good Christian artist, which I support. The best way to be a good Christian artist was to study well the technique for that artistic discipline. Then it would follow that your faith will flow directly from your person through your work. The best means to serve the community was to be in it, to know it and to find comfort in it, and then to simply do your work with integrity.

This view comes out in her choice of co-workers. When told that Val Gielgud, the producer of *He That Should Come*, was not a Christian, she said, "I don't want a Christian, I want a producer."[416] Of the actors, she insisted that they first be

[414] Sayers, *Why Work?* 20-21.
[415] This was at the basis of her argument with BBC Children's Hour.
[416] Simmons. 136.

good at acting and that their personal conduct be such that it does not interfere with the production; if they were Christian, then that would be good too. In Sayers' opinion, Christianity was not a criterion for getting a job done well. "If a statue is ill-carved or a play ill-written the artist's corruption is deeper than if the statue were obscene and the play blasphemous. The artist is being false to his own vision of the truth."[417] She had too often witnessed the Church's insistence on personal piety fail to achieve a good result when it came to artistic endeavors.[418]

5. SUMMARY

Sayers divided workers into two categories: those for whom the outcome of the work is economic; and those for whom the work is an expression of their true selves. We, on the other hand, have found that there are varying shades within this broad division and that work can be enjoyable for the one group, just as it has tedious moments for the other. Sayers also found that, for the most part, the economic focus dominated the West, causing an exaggeratedly consumerist, materialistic society. The result: second rate, quickly produced goods and in an environment in which the worker has no interest in his work. The money earned was for survival, and for a kind of leisure based on escape from work. These two points agree with much of what we have already discovered about work in Chapter Three, especially where the notion of leisure comes into play. But here too, Sayers over-generalizes and over-simplifies.

Sayers, and Moltmann and Brock concur that leisure or rest is a means through which we break from certain tasks in order to centre ourselves on God and, thereby, prepare ourselves for the continuation of our work.[419] While the views of Moltmann and Berry were mentioned in this chapter, I believe there are two other factors that we need to take into consideration that also resonate with Chapter Three.

First, Sayers' view of the creative imagination, and how essential it was to Man's enjoyment of work, drew from her notions on the image of God. God created therefore Man is creative. Man needs to have a creative relationship with every task

[417] Sayers, "The Church's Responsibility." 75.
[418] See Dorothy L. Sayers, "Sacred Plays: III," *Episcopal Churchnews* 1955.
[419] Meaning all kinds of work, not just our careers, or that which we are paid to do.

through his imagination. When the worker is connected to the work through the creative imagination, the attitude towards that work is much more positive. Above all, Sayers has given us a clearer picture of how, when the creative imagination is engaged both in the work and its context in life, the labourer has a sense of purpose. When individuals feel that their work is making a contribution, a positive sense of personhood follows.

Some do not feel this way about work but, as Sayers observes, those who do are often those whose creative imagination is engaged in their work. For these people, work becomes an expression of themselves and a means of stepping into the ongoing creative work of God. Their way of looking at life and work, even running their households and conducting their relationships, flows out of their creative expression. Life itself becomes vocational and, as such, touches society in a way that brings the divine into the everyday.

Second, Sayers crosses paths with our Chapter Three in her unique way of looking at the community or interrelationships. Central to her feelings about work was the acknowledgement that work was man's most natural means of expression to and for God. But this has further implications. We learn from her that, when one serves every task truthfully, one serves God, and one cannot help but be in a positive relationship with His creation, and therefore with one's neighbour. Our work sends us out into the world, and when our primary focus is on doing the work with integrity, we have touched the world in the way that best speaks Christ's intent for His Kingdom. Sayers did not think that work was simply a gift from God to the privileged few, but held that it was a part of what it is to be human. As Christians, however, we understand that we are not alone, but with the Holy Spirit, and thus involved with God's ongoing relationship with his creation. We answer God's call through our activities, many of which fall under that term: work.

6. CONCLUSION

The creativeness and the imagination have the opportunity to play a much larger part in everyday living than may have initially been thought. Sayers' picture of

the use of the imagination in work pulls ideas of work away from the economic and into the sphere of service for God and community. Work itself comes more into line with vocation as the worker then finds purpose in his labour and in his individual contribution to a greater whole. Individuals get a sense of calling and importance when viewing work in this manner. We will look now at Sayers' ideas on answering the call, and at how her perspective on vocation intersects with that of Barth, and in some ways, Brock. We will find that her attitude toward vocation also adds to her idea of a "proper job." Following her lead, these two notions, vocation and 'proper job,' come together and even overlap.

CHAPTER SIX:

DOROTHY L. SAYERS: WORK AS VOCATION

In Chapter Four, Barth's view of vocation gave the sense that every moment in life can be seen as a call from God to everyone to live to their fullest potential. All human beings have been gifted this vocation within particular parameters. Barth called these parameters freedom within limitation; and vocation, the *terminus a quo*. Barth did not consider vocation to mean only a line of work, but declared that a calling was evident in every area of life, making each human a particular person. Here Sayers had much the same overall picture as Barth, but focused on changing the attitude towards work by highlighting its importance as vocation. For many people, their job takes up a great deal of their waking hours and is the primary way that they know and become known. In Sayers' opinion, a vocational attitude towards man's activity or work would make it "the full expression of a worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which he offers himself to God".[420] Work was not the means by which Man gained salvation, but a process by which humans live out and communicate the nature of their being in God.

While Barth did not give a lot of attention to work within his treatment of vocation in §56.2,[421] Sayers presented a view of work as one of the primary places in life in which Man experienced the *terminus a quo*. If work took up so much of daily living, and was an expression of self, then the worker, when viewing work as vocation, should carry that experience into other areas of life. Sayers' creative work took her in many directions, her life was filled with all sorts of activities.[422] Her activities flowed one into another and she did not stop being a creative person when

[420] Sayers, *Why Work?* 12.
[421] He had discussed it earlier in the *Active Life*. See Chapter Four.
[422] Perhaps this was partly why she was against the idea that anyone would do a biography of her life. She was heard to say on more than one occasion "let the work speak for me". She meant her life to be defined neither by any personal flaws and difficulties that the gossip columnists so relished, nor by just her writing, but by how she was represented in her subject matter through the creativity with which she approached every task. Her exuberance for life was evident in her work, not in the mistakes she made as a young woman.

performing bothersome, exhausting and tedious tasks. Most important, she desired this manner of living for everyone.

As found in the previous chapter, when the Church expressed the desire for society to return to a 'vocational model' for work, she responded positively, but recognized some difficulty with the task. Economic Man had separated work out as a means for making money and, in doing so, had also parcelled his day into times of work and times for other-than-work. Man's day had been fragmented and he was unable to function as a whole being within the world. He had lost the expression of his true nature before God, an expression most visible, in Sayers' mind, through the flow of an active working day. "Whenever economics is put first, the worth of the work suffers, and man's creative delight in his work is destroyed and his sense of vocation lost."[423]

Sayers traced a downward spiral; and with it, work had become something outside of the Church, separate from the sacred. She saw a dualism between the spiritual and the material. In this dualistic view, work was of this world, hard labour, cursed by the Fall and part of our fleshly existence. She noticed evidence of this notion even in some Church circles; and until this misinterpretation was addressed, it would be difficult to apply a "vocational model" to work. Much more had to occur to redeem this situation, and turn Man's approach to his work from being solely a means of earning his daily bread, into an act that was integrated into his vocational *terminus a quo.*

One of Sayers' attempts to remedy this situation came through her view of the sacramental. However, in an effort to make the notion of the sacramental accessible to the general public she seems to have over simplified the term. While there are difficulties with her idiosyncratic usage, there is a great deal that we can glean from her presentation. Her notions on the sacramental and its importance to Man as a whole being, are recognized in her view that, "The unsacramental attitude of modern society

[423] Dorothy L. Sayers, *Why Work* (London: E.T.Heron and Co. Ltd., 1942). 13.

to man and matter is probably closely connected with its unsacramental attitude towards work."[424]

1. SAYERS AND THE SACRAMENTAL

By understanding Sayers' ideas on the sacramental, we will gain a clearer picture of her understanding of vocation. Before we begin to look at Sayers' ideas of a 'sacramental attitude,' it is necessary to see where her idiosyncratic means of using the term may differ from the Catholic view. The basic ideas on the sacrements and sacramental would be agreed upon by not only the Roman church, but also many other liturgical denominations for whom the notion of sacrament is important. Sayers' usage is not heretical but it does stretch the term in several ways.

If we think only of "the Sacraments,"[425] we will have only a vague understanding of how she can come to her conclusions. Indeed, she herself refers to the Sacraments when explaining her ideas in *The Sacrament of Matter*.[426] However, her usage actually comes rather closer to the Church's doctrine of the "Sacramentals". As Hardon explains, "A technical definition of the sacramentals would say that they are things and actions the Church uses after the manner of the sacraments, in order to achieve through the merits of the faithful certain effects – above all those of a spiritual nature."[427] Further, we should add that "The sacramentals do not produce sanctifying grace *ex opere operato*, by virtue of the rite or substance employed, and this constitutes their essential difference from the sacraments."[428]

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[424] Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed Or Chaos* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940). 39.

[425] According to the Roman Catholic Catechism these are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Ordination, Marriage, Penance and Anointing. Although Ordination and Marriage are not for everyone, those who do accept either approach them with the reverence given to their place as a Sacrament of the church. See H. Leclercq, "Sacramentals," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 2009). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13292d.htm or John A. Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism* (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1966).

[426] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter," in *The Christ of the Creeds and Other Broadcast Messages to the British People During World War II*, ed. Susanne Bray (Hurstpierpoint: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2008). 38.

[427] Although I am referring to a modern version of the Roman Catholic Catechism here (see Leclercq.) Hardon explains that these sacraments began to be recognized by the Church in the early Medieval period. Sayers, as a medieval scholar and Anglo-Catholic, would have been aware of and influenced by this aspect. Hardon. 548.

[428] Leclercq.

For something to be considered sacramental there is more involved. First, there is the idea of signs of something beyond the physical world; they point to God and His involvement in our life. But second, they are more than signs; in the view of the Roman Catholic Church and some others, God acts in and through them to give the appropriate graces; they are thus "efficacious signs of grace."[429] The Church sees them as having been instituted by Christ and them by Him "entrusted to the Church."[430] Third, a sacramental act does not presume that the one administering is of perfect moral character in order for the sacrament to be at work. The only intention involved is that the priest must intend what the church intends. The Church is trying very carefully to keep the giving of the sacrements from invalidity; therefore, the priest, or administrator is only a representative. His failures do not affect his ability to do this act. Fourth, there is also the state of mind (including the intent) and life of the receiver. The effect can be a gift of grace to the recipient; but the recipient must be in the right mind and state of preparedness to receive what is given; if he or she is not, they can "block the effectiveness"[431] of the sacrament.

Sayers, on the other hand, had a much looser way of using the term sacramental. When Sayers speaks of an action as being sacramental, she seems to link the idea very closely with her notion of a vocational attitude; it is also somewhat similar to the way in which some people of our era use the term spiritual. In Sayers' BBC talk *The Sacrament of Matter,* she lays out specific criteria for her notions: "There must, that is, be three things present before we can call any act 'sacramental' – the right material means, the right words, and the right intention."[432] In comparison with the Church's attitude, we note here, first, that her criteria seem secular, and make no mention of God's presence and action; nor do they include Christ's action in instituting that. If, however, her thought may be that, in principle, because God is all-powerful, He can make any act what she calls sacramental.

Further, her use of intention includes only the intent of the giver or administrator, and nothing of the recipient's preparedness, state of mind or intention.

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[429] Ibid.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter." 38.

In her picture, while there may be wonderful intentions on the part of the representative, the receiver has no ties to the action, and could possibly cause the whole procedure to fail, even if all of Sayers' elements were present. Sayers, however, insists on the careful preparation by the administrator to the point that, if any one of these three are missing, misused or bent, then the act loses its validity; or even worse, becomes sacrilegious.

To be fair to Sayers, she was speaking to a radio audience from all different backgrounds and stages of religious belief. She was attempting to bring common, everyday human actions to light in a profoundly special way. She was also attempting to bring Church doctrine to the people in an accessible manner. While she may have watered down the purpose and character of the sacraments, she did so to cause the listener to think in a new way about their intents, and their use of everyday items or activities. As this talk was on the BBC religious hour, it may have been taken as understood that God was present and active in the sacraments.

In what follows, we will concentrate on Sayers' special notion of the sacramental. We will look at each of Sayers' three criteria in turn in order to get a better understanding of what she was saying. We will thereby begin to see how her idea of the sacramental can link with and build upon her ideas about vocation in work. We will also discuss what she has to say regarding the sacrilegious, as that has bearing on her views on artistry and creativeness.[433]

1.1. The Material

Sayers formulated very carefully her theological views on the proper Christian attitude toward the material creation. In opposition to any form of dualistic thinking, and in particular to Manicheistic forms, she stressed that the material world of flesh and blood was good. God created the material world out of love, and He declared its goodness. God is still at work in His creation; the fall of man did not change that fact. She notes that mankind's attitude toward the earth had changed, resulting in the belief that the earth should be used for his self-interest; and that in order to be pious, his

[433] Much of what she has said resonates with Chapter Three, and Wendell Berry's views on the way that our attitudes have harmed the sacredness of the earth.

mind should focus on the things of eternity and the spirit, not on the temporal things of the world. She sees that gradually, with the inclusion of pagan thought, flesh and matter were looked upon as the source of temptation or evil. Sayers explained the error of this thinking; God moved and worked through flesh and matter; and at the heart of this was the incarnation. "The dogma of the incarnation is the most dramatic thing about Christianity, and indeed the most dramatic thing that ever entered into the mind of man; but if you tell people so, they stare at you in bewilderment."[434]

A clear understanding of the incarnation was central to her faith as a Christian and her work as a creative person. Sayers recognized that the incarnation was difficult for the average Christian to understand, and made it her task to explain it and to clarify its importance. Throughout her work, we find numerous references to the incarnation.[435] Sayers was very careful not to create an imbalance between Christ as God and Christ as Man in her efforts to reclaim the good of the flesh and the material. But she emphasised her belief that matter is good, as God had demonstrated by taking on human form.

> But one thing it is important to emphasise here. The incarnate God did not enter the world altogether from the outside. He was born <u>in</u> the world, as a part of the creation, the son of a human mother. His conception was not just a spiritual revelation; it was also a physical fact.[436]

This "physical fact," in Sayers' view, must be present in anything that we would wish to call a sacrament. The material world participates in the sacramental: the Eucharist uses the material bread, a cup and wine; Baptism uses water. When humans gather in community to participate with one another in a ritual or activity, the flesh is present; and with it the opportunity for the task before them to become hallowed. "The highest functions of the ordinary man, whether he is loving or

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[434] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter To Father Herbert Kelly, 4 October, 1937," (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). 43.
[435] See Dorothy L. Sayers, "God The Son," in *The Christ of the Creeds and Other Broadcast Messages to the British People of World War II*, ed. Susanne Bray (Hurstpierpoint: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 2008). And the focal point of the play *The Emperor Constantine* is the scene depicting the Nicene debate against Arianism.
[436] Ibid. 60.

praying, are carried out by and with the body."[437] In this respect, Sayers was able to say that any human act has the potential to be sacramental.

Sayers uses the material here but for matter to have efficacy as sacramental it must signify something other than itself. A sacramental, in the Church's view, would point to God, and to His grace. The use of an object, therefore, must be appropriate for the situation, but in everyday human activity, does not necessarily point to anything spiritual or Divine. Her emphasis on the material goes with her picture of God's involvement in the material; but she is not specifically clear and explicit about this.

1.2. Words

For Sayers, an artist whose chief expression was through words, it is understandable that, the correct wording would be a part of the criteria. Words are powerful and, when used incorrectly, can cause confusion or hurt. The words used in a sacramental act were, according to Sayers, appropriate for the action and connected with the material used. The words of the sacramental act are the clear expression of the signification and intention, and could be an expression of the sentiment accompanying the physical actions. They help to make it the ritual action that it is.

Sayers' reasons for including language as part of her thinking about the sacramental are very clear. However, she neglects the many acts that could be considered sacramental without using words. In caring for the sick or children, words may not even be needed, or have already been spoken and the action continues for a period afterwards. Moments of pure gesture speak volumes: as in deep grief or intense joy. For the visual artist: paint, clay and other materials speak symbolically and pictorially, and sacramentally; for the musician: sound vibrates through the air, touching places in the heart that words cannot express. For the artist whose faith is present in the work, the sacrament is evident without words.

For these and many other activities, the existence of words is not always necessary for the activity to be complete or for it to have the possibility of conveying

[437] Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter." 39.

meaning that is sacramental, or redemptive or worshipful.[438] While ceremony, ritual and celebration can require words, we must not forget the moments when words need not or cannot be spoken, yet a comparable result is achieved. Even in the church there are moments when there need not be words involved as the sacramentals stand on their own to signify the meaning behind their presence. If we look at Christ's action in the washing of the feet, for example, he demonstrated through action his intention; it was only when Peter opposed him that Jesus used words. His death on the cross, while punctuated with words, was the ultimate silence.

The words chosen for a sacramental action were not an incantation or mumbo-jumbo. They were not there to force something into existence, they are not magic or a means of causing something to happen. The correct words, they convey the sentiment or explanation and form part of the action.

1.3. Intention

Although Sayers presents three aspects of the sacramental - material, words and intention, in balance, her approach to the final aspect implies that it is of slightly greater importance than the other two. "Contrary to what many people suppose, the church insists just as strongly on the intentions as on the words and means."[439] Sayers insists that the intention behind the action and the words upholds the whole process. It is in the attitude of heart and the focus of mind with which we participate in the world, that we demonstrate our faith. These raise a task, ritual or celebration from meaningless activity to a positive act. Words and actions have no meaning when there is no intellectual and emotional connection. Sayers observes, "You must be sincere in your wish, otherwise, you are committing yourself to a solemn and public lie, and the thing is not a sacrament but a sacrilege."[440] For example: the child instructed to say "Sorry" who does so begrudgingly, fails; while the one who sincerely wishes to bring about healing and restoration, succeeds.

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[438] It is just so with the example of Jesus washing the feet.
[439] Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter." 38. We have discussed earlier the church's complex views of intention and other personal states. Sayers' view does not deal with these complexities; she is trying to simplify this for the ordinary listener.
[440] Ibid.

While Sayers does not overtly mention the intention or attitude of the recipient of the sacrament, but it could be inferred from her other views. To approach any task in this God-centred, created world with a poor attitude was, for Sayers, sacrilege. The holy could quickly turn into the unholy simply through the motivation behind the action and the words, and also by the way in which it was received. A change for the good in our attitude could turn anything from 'other' into a sacramental act, and vice versa. For Sayers, a workplace, for instance, could never be a place for sacrament or vocation unless the attitudes of the owner, management and by the worker were appropriate. Their thoughts and actions could alter any *terminus a quo,* or starting point, from one with the intent to serve God, to a place of revenge, resentment, or boredom. Sayers explains this well when she deals with the sacrilegious.

1.4. The Sacrilegious

Sayers was very clear about what she viewed as sacrilege, saying, "Now, this doctrine of the sacramental nature of matter and mind has consequences which we do not always fully realize. All abuse of matter, or body and mind, is sacrilege, and a crucifixion of the body of Christ"[441]. She goes on to clarify this with a list of abuses:

> All bad art is sacrilege; it is the torturing of matter into ugly and unnatural forms, and a treason against the divine beauty. All jerry-building or dishonest workmanship is sacrilege; it is introducing a lie to the body of Christ. And every sin against society is sacrilege, because we are all members one of another, in that material body which is the body of the living God.[442]

This resonates with Wendell Berry's agrarian view that vocation and sacrament can extend beyond just people:

> And so the people who might have been expected to care more selflessly for the world have had their minds turned elsewhere – to a pursuit of 'salvation' that was really only another form of gluttony and self-love, the desire to perpetuate their lives beyond the life of the world. The Heaven-bent have abused the earth thoughtlessly, by inattention, and their negligence has permitted and encouraged others to abuse it deliberately. Once the creator was removed from the

[441] Ibid. 41.
[442] Ibid. Jerry-building is very poor quality construction that is put up too quickly and cheaply.

> creation, divinity became only a remote abstraction, a social weapon in the hands of the religious institutions. The split in public values produced or was accompanied by, as it was bound to be, an equally artificial and ugly division in people's lives, so that a man, while pursuing Heaven with the sublime appetite he thought of as his soul, could turn his heart against his neighbours and his hands against the world.[443]

Berry sees a selfishness here that has contributed to the exploitation of the creation. Sayers, in her ideas of Economic Man, points to a situation in which the material dominated, over and above the spiritual. She saw an environment in which satisfaction and happiness came from the manipulation of the world for economic means. Again, Man's use of matter provided him with a means for some sort of salvation substitute, which does not include God.[444] For Sayers the intention to use the world for selfish gain, including some form of salvific restoration, would have been sacrilegious. In Sayers' opinion, the abuse, misuse, and neglect of any of the earth's people, animals, plants or resources was sacrilegious including: "All cruelty to God's living children, all greedy exploitation of the world's resources, all waste and destruction, all use of matter for ugly and evil ends."[445] Her focus also turns to degrading work situations, and the abuse of mental capacities.

As noted in an earlier quote, Sayers regarded all poor quality work, including poorly executed art, as sacrilege. Now a question needs to be addressed concerning the intention of the Church's attitude towards art work: can poor quality work, when done with the right intention, be considered as a sacramental act? If we simply use Sayers' criteria, of matter, words and intention, then we could justify the use of some attempts at creative work in the church as worthy. I would conclude, however, that Sayers would say that matter was abused in the church when the congregants or clerics accepted mediocre attempts at artistry; those that were thrown together or contained poor acting technique. The worker had not taken the time to learn how to do the job well enough to perform the task. However, we must make room for those who are in the process of learning their craft, such as students staging a first performance or individuals attempting a new means of expression to God. Too often,

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[443]Wendell Berry, "A Native Hill," in *The Art of the Commonplace*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2002). 23.
[444] See also this dissertation's discussion of Brock in Chapter Three.
[445] Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter."

however, the church has accepted poor craftsmanship, accepted the 'cutesy' or kitsch, as having pious intent. Sayers criticized this behaviour of the Church, saying, "She has forgotten that the secular vocation is sacred. Forgotten that a building must be good architecture before it can be a good church; that a painting must be well painted before it can be a good sacred picture; that work must be good work before it can call itself God's work."[446]

Further regarding Economic Man's attempt at salvation, Sayers saw that, for many, a sacrament was akin to an incantation or magic spell. "There is a deeply rooted conviction in most people's minds that the Sacraments are magic, working *ex opere operato*."[447] The misguided thought of some is that if you just said words and performed certain actions, then you could get the result you want: you will be saved, forgiven, vindicated, loved. In this picture, the person thinks they have control over the surrounding elements, causing a thing to happen. Sayers' underlying message was that it was God, not people, who had the ultimate control; God's grace, His gift of the sacraments, should help Mankind to remember God's work on earth.

1.5. The Sacramental and Vocation

We have laid out Sayers' ideas regarding the sacramental in order to understand her idiosyncratic way of using this concept. While hers is not the definitive view and there is much more to be said and understood regarding the sacrements, the sacramentals and the sacred, it is the purpose of the present section to uncover how Sayers' view of the sacramental affects the overarching theme of vocation. In our discussion of her view of sacrilege, we uncovered the idea that the misuse, or as Sayers has said: the "torturing of matter,"[448] was considered by her to be sacrilegious. We could also add that there is the suggestion that the neglect of matter

[446] Sayers, *Why Work?* 16.
[447] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to Father Herbert Kelly, 4 October 1937," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright.*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997).48. I am indebted to Barbara Reynolds' footnote on the same page explaining the difference between the Latin phrase above meaning "from the work done" and its counterpart *ex opere operantis*, "from the work of the worker". But we should note that the Catholic interpretation of that phrase excludes the possibility of the sacraments involving magic. The fundamental work is done by God's grace the person that is doing it does not cause anything to happen. It is God, not we, who has the ultimate control. See our discussion of the working of the sacraments.
[448] Sayers, "The Sacrament of Matter." 41.

is also sacrilegious; especially in the case of a neglect of the *charisms* bestowed upon an individual.

Nothing disappoints more than when an individual feels that they are not reaching their true potential. This fact is central to an understanding of Sayers' ideas on the sacramental and its connection to vocation. Man's potential in God and in relationships, and the way that he enters the environment of the created order, is affected when he does not become the being God intended. It is in this potential that Barth's language of *terminus a quo* can be helpful.[449] Every individual is called, first to recognize a natural purpose or point of departure, and then to step into it. The individual finds a natural purpose for themselves in the world, that fits in gracefully without destroying the purpose and potential of all creation that crosses his paths. The sphere of operation includes not only self-awareness, but also the awareness of our environment and those in it. When a person moves through life with an awareness of calling, Sayers would say that they convey a sacramental value to everything with which they come in contact, including work. This sacramental value, in Sayers' thinking, is also linked to vocation.

2. VOCATION IN WORK

It seems a rather idealistic notion that daily living, with all of its interweaving facets, could have a vocational (or sacramental) pattern, especially when life can be more fragmented than harmoniously integrated. This vocational pattern was, however, an ideal that Sayers did wish to convey to the common man through her theological writing, radio broadcasts and the dialogue of her plays. Earlier we spoke about how fragmentation has affected our outlook on leisure and work; and though this may paint a bleak picture, Sayers was able to point to many who were living proof of a vocational fulfilment in life, centred on their work. She provided a long list of people in whom she recognized the full expression of mental, spiritual and physical satisfaction through their engagement in specific kinds of work. We have provided the paragraph in its entirety as it is very difficult to decide which parts of the list to exclude.

[449] See Chapter 4.

> It includes the artists, scholars and scientists – the people really devoured with the passion for making and discovering things. It includes also the rapidly diminishing band of old-fashioned craftsmen, taking a real pride and pleasure in turning out a good job of work. It includes also – and this is very important – those skilled mechanics and engineers who are genuinely in love with the complicated beauty of the machines they use and look after. Then there are those professionals in whom we recognize a clear, spiritual vocation – a call to what is sometimes very hard and exacting work – those doctors, nurses, priests, actors, teachers, whose work is something more to them than a means of livelihood; seamen who, for all they may grumble at the hardships of the sea return to it again and again and are restless and unhappy on dry land; farmers and farm workers who devotedly serve the land and the beasts they tend; airmen; explorers; and those comparatively rare women to whom the nurture of children is not merely a natural function but also a full-time and absorbing intellectual and emotional experience. A very mixed bag you will notice and not exclusively confined to the "possessing classes," or even those who, individually or collectively, "own the means of production."[450]

Sayers 'mixed bag' described a grouping of people for whom the vocational *terminus a quo* culminated in a certain type of activity: their work was the primary expression of their natural personhood created by God.

The list may not seem complete and there could be more examples to add, but in viewing this list, we note three areas of interest. First, it provides another consideration of freedom in limitation. Not only is the person bound by Barth's four limitations,[451] but there is a further limitation set for them by their specific activity; we could say, of the people in this 'mixed bag', they are almost all partly defined by their active life in work. Work is the primary place in which these particular persons fulfil their purpose, and contribute to the ongoing work of creation. The work is not easy; it is a wrestling with the elements of the world, relying on creative ingenuity and inspiration. But it is in that wrestling and uncertainty that the individual is exhilarated, and is involved in shaping his or her community.

[450] Sayers, "Living To Work." 123.
[451] History, age, personal aptitudes and sphere of operation.

Second, each of these jobs suggests a certain type of relational quality to the work. The seaman's and farmer's activity moves in relation to the elements of nature; the craftsman, actor, artist and scientist interconnect with their medium; and the medical person and the teacher are dealing directly with people in relationship, as an essential part of their own discipline. Although we might wonder how a person can have a relationship with an inanimate or intangible object, none-the-less there is something to be said here. The people in Sayers' list have jobs that require them to connect with the purpose of the activity in a deeper manner. They must look ahead to or imagine a desired result. Financial remuneration is secondary to the draw of a job that stimulates them to reflect on and connect to something more outside of themselves.

Finally, when we look at this list we see that central to the ways of living and being of all these individuals, was the fact that their specific, particular or peculiar creative imagination was stimulated within their specific, particular and peculiar work. The work was thereby raised from the dullness and drudgery instilled by a merely economic outlook, to a place of exhilaration; and, we could add, spiritual fulfilment. Sayers noted that, like her, these people throw themselves into the given task with the passion and integrity indicative of a heartfelt realization that this was what they were meant to be and do. She would agree that it is in the stimulation of their powers of invention, their resourcefulness, or their fancy that the person is inspired. We will look now in greater detail at Sayers' thoughts on the creative imagination, as they are integral to her notion of the "proper job.'

3. SAYERS' EXPLORATION OF THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION

Sayers saw that the types of work that kill the inner spirit and rob the worker of his humanity have one thing in common. They attack the man at the root of his individual expression, his place of inspiration, and the point at which he processes symbol and image: his creative imagination. The ability to envision, conceptualize and picture is, in her opinion, at the heart of creation and is the closest indication of the *imago.* Sayers reasoned that God is Creator and God created Man in His Image, ergo Man mirrors God by creating. The process of creating became, for Sayers, the work of the Trinity.

3.1. A Defining Moment for Dorothy

We have already presented a woman whose life, along with her scholarly pursuits, revolved around some kind of creative process or other. As a child and teen this passion was best served through performance. At Oxford she continued to play the violin, was a contralto in the Oxford Bach Choir, and wrote theatrical entertainments that not only met her own need to perform but also provided 'a lark' for her friends and the audience. After Oxford, however, we find that her life and letters take on a tone of yearning; it is as if she is constantly searching for something (or someone). Although she satisfied her literary imagination, first through poetry and then through the Wimsey novels, for a long time we do not hear about her participation in or writing of theatricals. She continued to attend the theatre and concerts, but her own gifts in this area seemed to sidetracked by her personal life, her wage-earning work and other creative pursuits. It may be coincidental but interesting that Sayers' writing seemed to open up to further ideas and theological depths, and to creativity, as she began to write for and return to the environment of the theatre.

Writing had been solitary work but during the production of the *Busman's Honeymoon,* Sayers was co-writing with an old friend. She experienced the exhilarating phenomenon of a co-creative relationship; and the professional theatre network was unlike her experience at the office, or in the literary and scholarly community. The theatre people had the same artistic integrity that she recognized in herself, but they expressed it with an outward show of passion and panache. Sayers was able to watch other creative minds at work, in a place where the arts unite; costume and set designers; lighting, music and sound technicians; painters and prop makers; and the fascinating activity of actors exploring and developing her characters. She participated in the spontaneous creativity of teamwork as she discussed and worked through challenges with all levels of the production crew. When all of the other artists drew back, the production rested on the shoulders of the cast. These worked directly with her words to bring her beloveds, Peter and Harriet, to life. The actors strove for the correct portrayal of the character, not wanting to miss any nuance or subtlety of voice or movement that might add to the believability.

For someone as analytical as Sayers, it is not difficult to understand that she began to make comparisons between how creative work unfolded in the theatre and how it unfolded in other work in the world. She experienced the intensity that the theatre people applied to getting the job done, and the integrity involved in doing it well. She saw an underlying drive, which fuelled the work, regardless of the salary. The *Busman's Honeymoon* brought her back into the theatre world; but during the writing of the Cathedral play *The Zeal of Thy House*, the theological significance of the artist and his work began to take shape. It is interesting to follow how this train of thought unfolded.

3.2. The Creative Process

Sayers invited in 1937, by the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral to write a play for their Festival in which Eliot and Williams had been her predecessors. She was reluctant at first to accept the invitation to write a Cathedral play, but the Arts and Crafts theme for the festival appealed to her. The process of working out the plot drew Sayers to further consider her own ideas on the creative imagination and the methodology of the creative person; and to connect these with ideas and observations on work and vocation. In the dialogue and action of this particular play, *The Zeal of Thy House*, we find the seeds for ideas that Sayers would discuss in her letters, repeat in her talks, and develop into a much more ambitious work.

3.2.1. *The Zeal of Thy House*

The background for the play was located in the chronicles of the twelfth century monk, Gervase. He had described process of the rebuilding Canterbury Cathedral's choir section after a fire. Gervase had recorded the details surrounding the choice of the architect, William of Sens, and William's failure to disclose the ongoing cost of the project. But when a terrible accident injured the architect, Gervase simply wrote: "Either the vengeance of God or the envy of the Devil, wreaked itself on him alone."[452] The simplicity of Gervase's words stimulated Sayers' fancy.

[452] As cited in Pickering. 220.

Sayers adhered closely to Gervase's outline, while taking creative liberties, one of which was to take up the convention of representing the heavenly realm by the presence of Archangels on stage. But not just any angels; the four magnificent Archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Cassiel, "…stand eleven feet high in their wings and blaze with gold and colour…".[453] They walked amongst the actors, commented, and where necessary, intervened on God's behalf to move the action forward. With the synopsis before her, she filled in the blanks, created the characters (including Gervase) but employed artistic license to suggest the reasons for either the Devil's envy or God's vengeance.

Sayers' passion for poetry, and her own historic studies and literary abilities, enabled her to incorporate a great many of the properties of the medieval period.[454] The play's setting is the Cathedral itself; therefore the audience already had a sense of place. Sayers used language to present the audience with the reality of the ecclesiastical and secular at work. She chose a combination of verse and prose, and contrasted the sacred choral music of the monks with the songs of the common worker. Sayers presented a work of art that displayed her own skill; and to the credit of the Festival, the production company hired professional actors for the main characters, all with the focus on presenting a piece with artistic integrity.

The entire play revolved around the notion of the craftsman, whether secular or clerical, and the integrity of his work. The architect, William of Sens, provided the primary thrust; and his downfall presented some interesting theological and ethical challenges. The compartmentalization of daily living into work and leisure was evident; and the idea that creative gifting ensured neither pious living nor salvation was evident when William failed to see how his private life could affect his work. Sayers used another favourite motif in the play: the seven deadly sins. Her essay, "The Other Six Deadly Sins"[455] was a straightforward treatment of them, but

[453] Sayers, "Letter to Father Herbert Kelly, 4 October 1937." 49.
[454] She discussed the notions of period in play production more in Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Sense of Period MS 184," (Wheaton: The Marion E. Wade Centre).
[455] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Other Six Deadly Sins," in *The Wimsical Christian* (New York: Collier, 1978).

references were scattered throughout her writing.[456] She often commented that the Church seemed to focus primarily on lust and to downplay the other six sins, though these were equally heinous. In her opinion, common folk, too, failed to see that there were seven deadly sins and not just one.[457] In *The Zeal of Thy House* Sayers commented on the danger of the sin of pride.[458]

For the play, Sayers created in William an amazingly gifted designer and builder, who behaves as if he could do no wrong. To him the integrity of the work was all that matters, and any sin in his life had no meaning with respect to the work. In his desire to get the best materials for the work, he wa shifty in his money dealings. He also had a love affair with a patron of the building, Lady Ursula. Even more important, however, Sayers presented a man who could not see himself working alongside God or in co-operation with others. For William, God was the uninvolved recipient of the work. William was a man who had recognized his own charisms, but has failed to see God's hand in their giving; he was doing God a favour by using his skill.

> Say God needs a church,
> As here in Canterbury – and say He calls together
> By miracle stone, wood and metal, builds
> A church of sorts; my church He cannot make –
> Another, but not that. This church is mine
> And none but I, not even God, can build it.
> Me He hath made vice-gerent of Himself,
> And were I lost, something unique were lost
> Irreparably;[459]

William separated his work out from the primary calling: to love God with all his heart, soul, and mind (intent). Therefore, some of his earthly relationships were ones based on usury and adultery. When cautioned about the relationship he had with the Lady Ursula, he was unwilling to hear that his private affairs were any concern to others, because they had nothing to do with the integrity of his work.

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[456] See also Janice Brown, *The Seven Deadly Sins in the Work of Dorothy L. Sayers* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1998).
[457] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Dogma Is the Drama," in *Sayers: Creed or Chaos?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949). 23-24.
[458] Pride is also a theme in *The Just Vengeance* and *The Emperor Constantine*.
[459] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Zeal of Thy House," in *Sayers: Four Sacred Plays* (London: Victor Gallancz Ltd., 1959). 68.

> William: Very well. As my employer, to use your own blunt term, what fault have you to find with my private amusements?
>
> Prior: This: that instead of attending to their work, your workmen waste their time in gossip and backbiting about you. If you choose to be damned, you must; if you prefer to make a deathbed repentance, you may; but if an idle workman does an unsound job now, no repentance of yours will prevent it from bringing down the church one day or another.[460]

The Prior found the only argument that could shake William; the idea that his own behaviour might actually harm the work. Further, the Prior's speech foreshadowed the very event that occurred. A young workman, Simon, and an older monk, Theodatus, were asked to examine a rope that William would use for the installation of the key of the great arch. Lady Ursula arrived and her presence beside William distracted them. Simon ogled the two lovers and sang a bawdy song, while Theodatus, in righteous indignation, closed his eyes to pray. The angels whispered warnings of a flaw in the rope, but the attention of both of its examiners were inattentive. The flaw slipped through their fingers, unnoticed. William was then hauled up the rope to place the capstone. A crowd of onlookers watched as the rope unravelled and snapped; but a young boy claims to have seen an angel with a flashing sword cut the rope. William was gravely injured in the accident.

At this point, Sayers shifted the theme of pride from William to the character of Theodatus. His self-righteous, judgemental attitude was vindicated by the accident; he used prayer to justify his inattentiveness. The Prior pointed out that no matter what the excuse, Theodatus' inattention resulted in dishonest work, causing injury to another human; and that piety was no excuse for neglecting the Body of Christ.

In William's case, Sayers used a dream sequence in which the Archangel Michael visited William. William argued with Michael that he was without sin because "none ever came between my work and me".[461] Rather than recognizing a fault in himself, he accused God of being jealous of his work. William would not allow another architect to help, he insisted on continuing to oversee the project from

[460] Sayers, "The Zeal of Thy House." 63.
[461] Ibid. 94.

his sickbed. The ensuing dialogue explored the reality of the Incarnation, in which God allowed himself to be broken and beaten as a human for the sake of His Work. Michael guided William, and the audience, to see that even God gave over His earthly business into the hands of men who were flawed and unworthy. William finally understood. Although he thought his intentions in completing the task were good, his pride had blinded him to the fact that God was in charge, and that it was God's work to be completed and not his own. William recognized that he had left God out of the process; he had failed to accept God as the ultimate maker. Assured by the fact that the building was well planned, he confessed to the sin of pride and was absolved. He awakened, named a successor and allowed himself to be placed into Lady Ursula's care.

In addition to the sin of pride, *The Zeal of thy House* dealt in a creative manner with such theological issues as sin, the Incarnation and God's ongoing invitation to man to enter into His Work, using the integrity and the depth and breadth of what was involved in the work of a craftsman as the central theme. But the initial production left out the capstone of Sayers' theological musings. The final speech of the play was cut from its first production. While the play as a whole was filled with source material for essays, lectures and themes of later works, the final monologue, in particular, was a *terminus a quo* for the pursuit of a full theology surrounding the *imago Dei*. The only reasons that the monologue was originally excluded are: it made the play too long, and it did not further the action. As an epilogue for the entire piece, however, it gave the audience a sense of completion and a full connection to the Festival's theme of Artistry and Craftsmanship in a theological context.

Through the words of the Archangel Michael, Sayers drew a Trinitarian connection between the eternal heavenly realm and the way in which the temporal world imaged God's creative act.

MICHAEL

> Children of men, lift up your hearts. Laud and magnify God,
> the everlasting Wisdom, the holy, undivided and adorable Trinity.
> Praise Him that He hath made man in His own image, a
> maker and craftsman like Himself, a little mirror of His triune majesty.
> For every work of creation is threefold, an earthly trinity to match the

heavenly.
First: there is the Creative Idea; passionless, timeless,
beholding the whole work complete at once, the end in the beginning;
and this is the image of the Father.
Second: there is the Creative Energy, begotten of that Idea,
working in time from the beginning to the end, with sweat and passion,
being incarnate in the bonds of matter;
and this is the image of the Word.
Third: there is the Creative Power, the meaning of the work
and its response in the lively soul;
and this is the image of the indwelling Spirit.
And these three are one, each equally in itself the whole work,
whereof none can exist without other;
and this is the image of the Trinity.[462]

The play was a great success. Not only did its theological content prove to be revelatory to the audience and those who would read the script afterward, but also the entire process from writing through rehearsal stimulated Sayers' imagination. In letters afterwards, to Father Herbert Kelly, the themes of the Incarnation and sin, pride and the whole workings of the monastic crowd, became lively topics of conversation. In her correspondence with him, however, she worked through the Michael monologue. She explained to Kelly that the Idea was "*The Book as You Think It*", the Energy was the "*The Book as You Write It"* and the Power was "*The Book as You and They Read It*".[463] Sayers expressed this particular way of seeing the creative act more clearly four years later, in her 1941 publication *The Mind of the Maker*.[464]

3.3. *The Mind of the Maker*

John Thurmer said of *The Mind of the Maker* that "Dorothy L. Sayers provided the most developed and useable analogy of God the Holy Trinity in the English Language."[465] Art, especially the theatre, had become her prime medium for explaining Church doctrine, and the artist, especially the actor, her most frequent example of the vocational life. Sayers had long recognized the lack of relationship

[462] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Zeal of Thy House* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1937). 103.
[463] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*, ed. Barbara Reynolds, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). 45.
[464] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*.
[465] John Thurmer, ed., *The Reluctant Evangelist: Papers on the Christian Thought of Dorothy L. Sayers* (West Sussex: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1996).

between the Arts and the Church. In her opinion, the Church did not know what to 'do' with these sorts of people, because the Church did not quite understand them.[466]

Sayers had lectured and written about the neglect of this relationship; but *The Mind of the Maker* was the major work that tackled this subject. Her approach was as much scholarly and orthodox as it was relevant and available to the average reader. She wrote simply and accessibly in an attempt not only to bring theology to the people, but also to present the church with a means of seeing the creative imagination of the artist. More to the point, she was trying to help the uninitiated to discern some truth about God by examining the way the creative mind and the imagination function. As an analogy, the book may not work for everyone, but it is, nonetheless, an approach that causes one to seriously consider the creative act and its connection to God. Sayers herself admitted that the book was not the definitive answer, but maintained that it was a start.

Sayers' Trinitarian model was based on the three-fold concept of the Idea, the Energy and the Power. The creative Idea represented God the Father; the Energy exerted to fulfil the task, God the Son; and the Power of the work, influencing the artist and society, matched God the Holy Spirit's continued presence in the world. If we then take Sayers' concepts of Idea, Energy and Power, we should be able to look at any job and see this model in operation. The factory worker who has a respectful understanding of the product that he is producing and an understanding of his own place in the process has the potential to employ Sayers' *Idea* concept to envision the product as finished. His part (and maybe those of others) in making it correspond to the *Energy*, and its use, by those who will purchase, receive or use it, is *Power*. For those offering a service, there is the imaginative grasp of service itself, the worker's efforts in providing it and the impact of the service on the recipient.

This use of Sayers' analogy envisions it in a way that she herself would, I think, advocate: in particular, that we are connected to our daily tasks through dreaming, imagining and thinking about them, whether they are work, leisure,

[466] She comments on the difficulty of the Church to recognize Christian truth in the Arts in the secular world in: Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to The Rev. Canon S. M. Winter: 2 February 1943," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). 387-389.

homemaking or other aspects of daily living. She operated from the perspective that if the Presence of God (as Logos) is constant in all aspects of this world, then He is calling us to use this creative/imaginative/thinking process in all aspects of our day. Some time after *The Mind of the Maker,* she wrote in a letter:

> What is at question, you see, is not a revision of doctrine, but a metanoia – a determination to recognize the Logos wherever He is found, weekdays as well as Sundays; in the carpenter's shop as well as in the Temple; in the workman's truth as well as in the theologian's truth, to do so in practice, and not only in theory.[467]

While Sayers' use of a Trinitarian metaphor in *The Mind of the Maker* is fascinating, she made a claim that does not line up to what she has proposed: "The creative act… does not depend for its fulfilment upon the manifestation in a material creation."[468] She argued further that the Trinity was inherent in and of Itself in the heavenly realm, independent of the created, temporal order; and that the Idea, Energy and Power can exist solely in the mind of the human artist. [469] She speculated that a writer may be heard to say: "My book is finished, I have only to write it."[470] These claims lay her open to criticism from two perspectives: first, that God Himself, in the Trinity, is involved physically through the incarnation (Energy); and, second, that the human artist must produce a body of work in order for art to come into being, and affect an audience (Power). In her other writing, there was an emphasis on matter, insisting that man lived in a world of physical matter, and that his physical work was an expression of himself.

If we try to follow her mentalist model at this point, then two questions arise immediately: first, could we still call God 'Creator' if there were no creation? Second, is a person an artist or maker if there is nothing made: no book, film, painting, or music? So as to the model when applied to the human creativity: while the Idea can remain in the artist's head and never come to fruition, the physical act of

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[467] Ibid. 389.
[468] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*. 42. We see here the influence of Berdyaev: "Cognition bears a creative character and itself represents an act of positing meaning." Berdyaev, *My Philosophic World-Outlook*(accessed). 2.
[469] Rather ironic considering the great effort that Sayers takes to redeem the material world and insist on its presence in the sacramental act, but the intent of this work is to help us to consider other ways of looking at the doctrine of the Trinity and the importance that she gives the creative imagination.
[470] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*.

working it out (on paper, in clay, in rehearsal) is the Energy, and the full impact of the finished work and its repercussions in society are the Power. These two can take effect only when the book, the sculpture or the play materializes. As for the Idea, Sayers seems to be suggesting that man's imagination works independently of the material world around him. God creates *ex nihilo* but Man cannot. Man is reliant on the elements of this created place to give him his Ideas and on the materials in creation for the Energy's tools and materials. In short, his own ideas rely on the Power of the creations of the Other which are manifested in the world.[471] To use Sayers' own statement, if the book were to remain in the artist's head, then there would be nothing added to creation and nothing to stimulate another artist; it would be a selfish form of creation. There must be a material product; part of the creative act involves a mental process, but it is only complete when realized in material form. This is recognizable in the work of the carpenter, engineer, farmer, etc.

This is quite a major flaw in the book; but her overall attempt at developing a theological understanding of the artist's creative process has merit. Sayers knew that there was more to be said but had hoped that this would be a starting point for further discussion.[472] The concepts that she introduced have stimulated others to approach the topic from other angles.[473]

The process of the development of *The Mind of the Maker* was fascinating, but by the time Sayers completed it she had travelled through a great deal of other creative work and entered a new sphere. She had been moving from one theatrical production to another, not only completing her second Canterbury play, *The Devil to Pay,* but also several plays for BBC radio; *He That Should Come,* and the twelve plays of *The Man Born to be King* cycle. Great Britain had been plunged into war; and while dealing with production values, she also focused upon the realities of rationing, and the Blitz with its air raid shelters and disruptions. It is in this environment that she was producing the bulk of her writings on work and vocation.

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[471] This was Lewis' point of view regarding creativity. He refrained from applying the terms 'maker' or 'creator' to mankind, preferring to use 'builder.' See Pavlac Glyer and Simmons.

[472] This was the first volume for the *Oecumenical Penguin*, a series of books that would approach theological and scholarly topics for the layman. Sayers had approached other authors for the series but it never completely came to fruition.

[473] The "Power" in action.

We have seen here how her pattern of thinking manifested itself in the use of artistry as her example for work as calling; and it will be helpful to get an idea of her thinking on her own personal calling and her 'proper job'.

4. SAYERS AS AN ARTIST IN HER VOCATION, HER 'PROPER JOB'

At first glance, Sayers' view of vocation seems closely linked to the notion that vocation applied especially to work. In fact, much of the time she seems to shift between the words 'proper job' and vocation without making a noticable difference. When one looks at her daily living, however, she embodied a person for whom all aspects of daily living were integrated and vocational. Just as we discovered when she wrote about education in *The Lost Tools of Learning:* all subjects should be taught, not as separate entities but as connected parts of a whole; so too all aspects of living were interconnected. Her daily living blended leisure with work, her work connected to the sacred, and Sabbath provided serious time to focus on God, which then circled back around to how she thought about work and leisure. For Sayers the lines between work, leisure, and the sacred became blurred.

In a vocational life, there is deep satisfaction in all elements of daily living. Sayers is a good example. In her spare time she took pleasure in the antics of animals, toiled over clever cartoons in her letters and would laugh with friends until the tears rolled down her face.[474] Every one of her biographers commented on her laughter, *joie de vivre*, exuberance, and vivacity. Even a sacramental or ritualistic activity need not be a dull, somber, sober act, but can be one of lively dimension.[475] Sayers exuberance in life did not affect the seriousness with which she approached her work. Sayers had a strong work ethic captured in her notion of the 'proper job.' When she agreed to do a job, she fulfilled it, most often, with gusto. Through the strength of her calling, she was willing to move and grow in many directions. For

[474] In fact her work as an illustrator is highly overlooked, and it is rarely known that in the 1950s she helped design a series of religious cards. See Laura K. Simmons, ""Seeking But To Do Thee Grace": Dorothy L. Sayers' Illustrated Religious Cards," *VII: An Anglo-American Literary Review* Vol. 24 (2007).

[475] Unless you were in the Detective Club with Sayers as the President and writer of the opening ceremony.

instance, she did not stick to one genre, detective fiction, but was willing to expand into other areas.

The creative connection to the work fuelled an internal need to take on the work personally; but this is the very point at which Lewis had difficulty. Sayers had to feel something about the job, it had to spark her imagination and seem right in order for her to move forward. An underlying desire to do well may also have added to this approach. As we have noted, Lewis felt compelled to accept every job that came his way, while Sayers was much more selective. In the end, both Lewis' and Sayers' choices were based on an inner urge, and on an imaginative means of looking at the audience; but they had different ideas of calling. They served the *imago dei*: one by giving people as much of his time as possible; the other by limiting the amount of work in order to make sure that the product she gave was of high quality. Both have their merits; but we can see how Sayers' approach has more to say regarding the Church's acceptance of mediocrity where the arts are concerned. Sayers was concerned with quality to such a high degree that she often went beyond the necessities of completing the job, putting in extra time and effort.[476]

The creative side of the work and the integrity of the work merged to keep her going even when faced with the everyday challenges of life. Jobs overlapped or happened simultaneously; a lecture topic could be hanging over her head while she was struggling with a translation and the difficult demands of home life. When her private life was stressful or she was simply exhausted, she looked to the example given by her actors,[477] and showed up for work. She dealt with delays, disagreements and interruptions constantly. These are challenges similar to those faced by all workers, but we do recognize that Sayers was more fortunate than many in the nature of her work; and like others who are self employed or in charge of the business, she often had the opportunity to be selective about her jobs.

Sayers' thinking about her own "proper job' was not only selective but also protective; she was grateful for guidance but would not stand for interference, and this

[476] An author does not normally attend every rehearsal or make props. She spent time answering simple queries from the common folk in order to clarify or discuss ideas.
[477] We will discuss this in Chapter 7.

extended to her thinking about proper work in general.[478] She also expected that others would carry out their own work with a similar integrity, as their skill and training guided them. She would discuss ideas on direction, characterization or design, but would not presume to intrude into another artist's area of expertise. She had her proper job, just as they had theirs. She also welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a production in other ways than writing, in order to see that the entire project moved along smoothly.[479]

Sayers saw a certain satisfaction was gained in any job when the whole human, heart (the creative imagination), soul (spiritual), mind (rational) and strength (the physical and emotional) was involved. Her skills as a scholar and her physical and mental ability to do the jobs that came her way made her right for the job, but her inner self also needed to be stimulated in order for the job to be right for her. "The only decent reason for tackling any job is that it is *your* job and *you* want to do it."[480]

5. SUMMARY

Sayers' view of vocation encompassed a fullness of life.[481] Vocation should encompass all aspects of living; leisure, work and all manner of things in between. Life could be lived and enjoyed when the boundaries were lifted that separated work from leisure and the sacred from the secular. One would flow naturally into the other. Even though there would be aspects of living, and work, that were boring or distasteful, these could be endured or overcome when life was approached with the attitude that the person was integrally involved in something much greater than the small task at hand. She found that the best group of people to illustrate her notion of the vocational attitude was artists. When any artist's task was mundane - cleaning paint from brushes, spending hours stretching muscles, editing the same passage for the tenth time or playing the same scales of music over and over - the artist recognized that this too was part of the greater picture of the work, and that it must be taken care of and done well. The life lived in vocation is one that has many tasks, but they all focus on fulfilling a bigger picture. This picture included work. A person

[478] As seen in her reaction to the BBC Children's Hour.
[479] Reynolds. 362.
[480] Sayers, "Are Women Human?." 109.
[481] This seems closest to Barth's.

with a vocational outlook would gravitate towards work that was their 'proper job,' and they would strive to do a 'proper job' in all their work.

Sayers' understanding of a vocational attitude to work drew on her thinking about the creative imagination. Her insistence on creativeness affected even her view on the sacramental, when she envisioned a sacred quality that could be attributed to even the most simple of human actions. Without the opportunity to use the creative imagination for reflection on the task, however, the intent would become unclear, matter mishandled and the words made hollow. The absence of the imaginative in any job could interfere with the worker's ability to have a deeper involvement with the work. The work would become mundane, and perhaps even hated; the quality of the work would diminish. In all manner of life, the unhappiness instilled by this negative attitude towards work could even affect the sense of vocation.

6. CONCLUSION

Sayers' notion of vocation leaned a great deal towards a connection with work, to the place where she blurs the distinction between the two terms: work and vocation. It is at times difficult to separate the two from each other when approaching the task of discussing Sayers' view of vocation on its own; but this is partly because her view of work was as extensive and varied as her view of vocation. Both could occupy so much of a person's life, as demonstrated by Sayers' own life. We have found that she also seemed to relate vocation closely to the sacramental. The concepts, work, vocation, sacramental, were blended into a view of what she termed the 'proper job.' In doing the 'proper job' one was serving the task to which one was called with the fullness of who God created one to be; whether that task was to feed the cat, relax with a book or write a novel, lecture or write a letter. Taken a step further, one could use one's skill set and inclinations to train or prepare for a vocationally appropriate career in life, and would, therefore, establish oneself in a sphere that was correct and comfortable. One's life would revolve around work, not because it was a demand or burden forced upon one for economic reasons but because it was part of the greater vocational whole of daily living, and one's 'proper job.'

CHAPTER SEVEN:

SAYERS, ACTORS AND THE CHURCH

Sayers' involvement in theatre and her subsequent writings on the topic provide a fresh understanding of the craft. She recognized that actors utilized their creative imaginations to full capacity, that all of those who work in the theatre had a great deal of integrity and passion where their jobs were concerned, and that thus, theatre brought fulfilment to the worker.[482] Further, acting was well-executed work, which provided a service to the community. As Sayers' own plays demonstrated, this service could involve, a discussion of theological concepts, serious insights into human behaviour and character, or the laughter, playfulness and whimsy that added joy to daily living. With the creative imagination, and integrity in the work, it was, in Sayers' opinion, a 'proper job' and a suitable area of vocation for a Christian.

Sayers also showed, by her work and in her reflections, that the theatre could be of service to the Church. She recognized that there were some difficulties that needed to be addressed: in particular, where the Christian ideology of some individuals and the actor's job of truthfulness in characterization were concerned. Using her own convictions about creativity, and her skills as a writer and lecturer, she confronted some of the difficulties by focusing on the positive merits of the theatre. She had a way of looking at those involved in the theatre that challenged the Church to contemplate the actor's work in new ways.

In the previous chapter, we noted that Sayers' ideas on work were closely linked to those on vocation. We also saw that her unique conceptions of the sacramental played an important part in a fuller understanding of her vocational outlook on life. In the spirit of Sayers' playful creativeness, we will begin this chapter using her three-point definition of sacramental to address acting as a vocation and as a 'proper job'. Thus, we may glimpse the actor's work through Sayers' eyes, and possibly see how that work could affect or influence their own daily living and that of others in the community. We will then move forward to Sayers' discussions

[482] This also applies to working in other performance media.

on and involvement in the theatre; her circle of influence; and her attempts at the harmonization of church tradition and dogma with aspects of the theatrical. We will also return to look at some of Sayers' insights on creativeness in more detail.

1. *THE SACRAMENT OF MATTER* AND ACTING

In *The Sacrament of Matter*, Sayers, first, recognized that the material, fleshly part of creation is good in God's eyes. For his work, the actor uses his own human flesh and the physical realities of the body to incarnate the character he portrays; a character other than own personal human self. He builds a reality separate from his own space and brings out the choices, mannerisms and being of that character for the purpose of the performance. Furthermore, the actor's integration of costume, props and familiarity with the set further establishes some of the realities of his character's situation.

Interestingly, the fact that acting is fleshly has added to the moral concerns regarding this art.[483] When choosing a role, the actor walks a fine line. There is a right and a wrong way to use the body. When portraying characters that take him out of his own moral and ethical comfort zones, the actor takes a great deal into consideration. There are times when, for the purpose of the story or the point being made, the actor occasionally chooses to portray a role which puts him in an uncomfortable place personally.[484] I believe that Sayers would concur that, provided the work is not insidiously pornographic or gratuitously blasphemous, the actor could use God's physical creation to fulfill the material aspect, in many different, and sometimes morally difficult, plays.

Her next criterion was the right use of words. The presence of words is almost a given in this instance; unless the actor is working in Commedia del Arte or other forms of improvisational theatre, the play is his source for the right words. The script is more than mere vocalization, it give him clues about his character and his

[483] Dance, too, has suffered from the same concerns as acting due to its use of the body and sometimes the costuming.
[484] For example, the role of Mrs. Kendal in *The Elephant Man* requires that the actor bare her breasts to John Merrick. Taken out of context, this action would be unacceptable, but that scene in the play is one of beauty and of redemption for the man Merrick; it is neither gratuitous nor pornographic.

relationship to the other material aspects of the play. In order for words to be the right words, they must clearly convey the story of the play; and, for the actor's use, the action and intent of the character. But the use of the term 'right' is complex here, and related to the life of the theatre. As well as the senses of 'right' already noted, the words must be suitable (right) to convey the action and story; and also, where the actor is concerned, he must use them rightly. For this, he needs to be consistent in his performance for the sake of his fellow actors, by memorizing and staying with the script, and he must communicate the sounds and interpret the meaning clearly to the audience.

The final point of Sayers' sacramental model is the intent. Intent, in the acting world, has many layers. We shall try to draw out some of these. We have discussed in Chapter Three, the influence of an economic outlook on the methodology behind work. The actor's choice of work can be governed by the paycheque; but most often, when the actor is in rehearsal and seeking the truth of his character, his intent is to do the job properly. In fact, many actors perform for free; their intent is wrapped up in the love and joy in the work of the theatre. As well, the actor must be careful, when choosing his work, to examine the intent behind the play, including the intent of the production company. He could be involved in a production whose entire motivation is to serve some immoral purpose, which would not meet Sayers' standards. On the other hand, the character could be immoral or evil, but the play's purpose (intent) could be to show redemption, or to serve some other higher function.

There is also the intent behind the interpretations of the words and the story. As with many jobs, there are personal egos involved; but for honest, truthful characterization, the actor must get his self and ego out of the way, in order to understand the person he is portraying. When the actor allows his own presuppositions, opinions and judgements of the character to influence him into manipulating the character in opposition to the author's design, he will, inevitably affect the response of other actors, and may even push the whole play to another direction. The actor's job requires him or her to seek out the correct movements, vocalizations and emotional phrasing for the character, and to create for the audience a truthful portrayal of the character. When his character's intentions are clear, the entire work will have a better opportunity of achieving its intended outcome.

Finally, the actor must work with intent on a finer level: to find the intent, target,[485] and motivation of the character. His internal and emotional level of work will vary from play to play, but, through thoughtful use of his chosen technique, the characters inner workings and choices will appear natural and clear to the audience. We will discuss how the actor does this in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

Sayers' criteria of matter, words and intent, when used to examine acting, have brought us a fresh perspective to thinking about this art form. It has helped us to think of the actor in terms of Sayers view of the sacramental. Acting is a calling involved with truth, integrity, and ethical and moral choices. The actor's job is not one to be taken lightly, for instance by showing off on stage in front of others. It should not be a selfish egotistical act, but one of serious service, and with theological implications. As we look at Sayers' views on the arts, we will see how the thoughts that she had formed regarding creativeness, the imagination and artistry fed into her approach to this type of imaginative work. These attitudes will then inform our understanding of how she saw acting, and how the theatre inspired and informed her theology and her views of the Church.

2. THE ARTIST'S WORK

Sayers' friend and biographer, Barbara Reynolds, remarks on Dorothy's own creative gifts; "She saw in the every-day a potential for the numinous, the spiritual, the other-worldly, and she saw the possibility of exploiting that to vivid effect in a very original way when she wrote her dramas."[486] This potential for the numinous, spiritual and otherworldly, enabled her to fill out her understanding of something as intangible as the imagination. Her insistence on the use of creative, imaginative reflection in work could then not help but spill over to her interpretation of a feature of Christian life that is difficult to grasp: faith, and its relation to the arts.

Sayers' thinking about the Christian faith and the arts was not formed in a vacuum. As we have seen, like all scholars she built upon the scholarship of those

[485] In the sense of Declan Donnellan see Chapter Eight.
[486] Barbara Reynolds, "DLS As Dramatist," in *Conference: Dorothy L. Sayers As A Dramatist*, ed. Geraldine Periam (Witham: The Dorothy L. Sayers Historical and Literary Society, 1984). 6.

before her, and discussed and elaborated on the ideas of her contemporaries. Among those whose work pertained to artists, the work of Nikolai Berdyaev and Jacques Maritain were particularly important in the development of Sayers' views on artistry. She saw that there was a dearth in the interaction of theology with the arts, and that the Church could be given a fresh perspective on the thoughts about, and use of, the artists in her midst. We will look briefly at two areas which Berdyaev and Maritain influenced Sayers' thinking regarding the Church and the arts.

2.1. Berdyaev and Maritain

Sayers held Berdyaev and Maritain in high regard. Sayers cited them both in her non-fiction work, and they were among the few authors listed in her recommended reading[487].

A. Berdyaev

Berdyaev's ideas dominated the writing of the *Mind of the Maker.* She quoted him extensively throughout her book, often used the term "creativeness" in this and other writing, which was how the translator expressed Berdyaev's Russian. In *The Destiny of Man*, Berdyaev's notions of creativeness rested on his idea that Man best represented the image of God through his capacity as a creative, imaginative being.[488] This was the primary influence on Sayers' views of the *imago*. She stated in *The Mind of the Maker* that "The experience of the creative imagination in the common man or woman is the only thing we have to go upon in entertaining and formulating the concept of creation."[489] For Sayers, God creates; ergo, Man is creative. We have seen something of this thinking in Chapter Six and will not pursue it further here. We will concentrate on the other major source noted.

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[487] See her recommendations at the end of Sayers, *Begin Here*. And suggested reading in Sayers, "Letter to L.T. Duff, 10 May 1943."

[488] Berdyaev, *My Philosophic World-Outlook*(accessed), Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*. See also Nikolai Berdyaev, "My Philosophic World-Outlook," (Berdyaev Online Bibliotek Library: Accessed 2010).

[489] Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker*. 29.

B. Maritain

Maritain influenced Sayers' ideas about the artist's relationship to his work. She referred directly to Maritain in a letter to Rev. G. E. Wigram:[490] "…the duty of the worker, is to serve his work".[491] For Maritain, the artist's technique could not be thought of in terms of morality; the artist's job was to be truthful to the medium and his work, whether or not the subject matter was immoral.[492] While this may be quite controversial to some, it brings an order to thinking about a work of art: first, is the product good craftsmanship; second, is the subject matter worthy of such craftsmanship?

Sayers brought Maritain and Berdyaev into her theological lectures and writing when she explained how integrity and creativeness were important to the work of not only the artist, but also all workers. In *Why Work?*[493] she described how the worker is a good Christian when he or she produces good work (Maritain). She emphasized this further in the arts; an artist produced "Christian art," not because the art had a "Christian message," but because they were good Christian workers who brought their creativeness, skill, technique and training under God and into the working out of the piece. "God is not served by technical incompetence; and incompetence and untruth always result when the secular vocation is treated as a thing alien to religion."[494] In Sayers opinion, for the workers have the best means to serve God they need also to utilize their most valuable asset: their imagination and creativeness (Berdyaev). The artist could best express and tap into his being as *imago* by doing the creative work set out for him, in the medium best suited to him, and that was his "proper job." This manner of being would, in turn, inspire and shape other aspects of daily living and the world around him.

Sayers talked further about this view of secular calling when addressing the Church's attitude towards workers in her midst. She was particularly aware of the

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[490] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Letter to the Rev. G. E. Wigram, 14 January 1943," in *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers: 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*, ed. Barbara Reynolds (Cambridge: The Dorothy L. Sayers Society, 1997). 383-384.
[491] Ibid. 383.
[492] See Maritain, "The Responsibility of the Artist."
[493] Sayers, *Why Work?*
[494] See Ibid. 17.

ways that the Church often stood in the way of artists and the fulfillment of their creative vocation.

2.2. Artists in the Church

For the most part, Sayers was critical of the Church's miss-use of its artists. First, she was opposed to the artist who fell prey to pushing a pious agenda, however good that agenda may seem in other ways. This art was manipulative and the artist or the Church authorities who produced work that says: "I propose to work you into a state of mind in which you will believe and feel and do as you are told"[495] were, in Sayers' opinion, not using the art in a truly Christ-like manner. It was the Church's responsibility, to not push the artist to purposely edify people or tell them how they should behave or feel, but to allow the creative act to happen. "Let her by all means encourage artists to express their own Christian experience, and communicate it to others."[496] According to Sayers, a church which twisted any image or written word in order to fulfil a human agenda committed sacrilege. "This pseudo-art does not really communicate power to us; it merely exerts power over us.[497]

In addition, Sayers saw the Church pulling artists away from their own work to accomplish "Church business," or putting them under a sense of obligation to become involved in Church volunteering.[498] "Let the Church remember this: that every maker and worker is called to serve God *in* his profession or trade – not outside of it."[499] By 'outside' Sayers meant doing what the Church often labelled as Christian service but with no focus on the individual's true skill set or inclination.[500] She feared that, by removing the craftsman from his true vocation, the Church would cause him to become distracted, or out of practice, or even burnt out, and, thereby, injure his ability to his "proper job."

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[495] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Towards a Christian Aesthetic," in *Sayers: Unpopular Opinions* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1946). 41.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid. 41.
[498] She did work for her own parish church, serving as churchwarden, and volunteered her time at St Anne's, Soho. But she was affronted when approached to organize church socials and open church bazaars. To have any other ecclesiastical duties thrust upon her was a distraction from her true vocation. In Sayers' case, I would say that these requests were in part due to her celebrity status.
[499] Sayers, *Why Work?* 16. Italics Sayers'.
[500] See Ibid. 18. She is talking mainly about any secular vocation here, and not just that of the artist; however, her use of the artistic example is dominant in this section of her argument.

It could be concluded that these situations come about because certain individuals in a church do not completely understand or respect the creative process involved in the artist or craftsperson's calling. The hours and days of imaginative musing and of strenuous craft work or practice seem, to those who do not understand them, empty. It is often much easier, and may seem more 'Christian' to point a person towards ecclesiastically directed tasks or service rather than to support and make it possible for them to serve a vocation in the secular market.[501]

By contrast with these misuses, Sayers believed in, and demonstrated in her own work, better or good uses of the artist by the Church. Under the guidance of the Rev. Patrick McLaughlin and the Rev. Gilbert Shaw, St. Anne's clergy house in Soho was turned into a lively place of intellectual discussion and social outreach to the London community. Sayers was caught up in Father McLaughlin's work of helping the church to understand the nature of society and culture and his search for a means of speaking into the immediate surroundings. St. Anne's location in the heart of the theatre district made it a wonderful place for the production of numerous creative ventures and amateur dramatics. Unfortunately, Church authorities in the Diocesan Reorganization Committee could not see the necessity of such an outreach, but Sayers fought long and hard to keep this ministry going. Brabazon points out the irony that Sayers' work at St. Anne's was before its time, noting in his 1981 publication that the Church had not begun to fully move in that direction.[502] We shall see more, in what follows, of Sayers' work for the Church and for the Church's broader purposes.[503]

3. DOROTHY AND THE VALUE OF ACTING

Sayers had always been fascinated by the actor's craft. As mentioned in Chapter One, she had toyed with becoming an actor at school and college, but then pursued other interests, later arriving back in the theatre to find her rightful place as playwright. Although she was a performer by nature, as pointed out by Downing's

[501] This attitude harks back to the hierarchical notion that the individual who serves in the Christian or ecclesiastical setting is somehow better or more pious than those serving in the secular market. See Chapter 3.
[502] Christian scholars, laypeople and clergy are still striving to come to terms with the use and place of the arts in society and the Christian community.
[503] See especially Section 4.

comments, outside of her school days she did not act in any of her own productions, preferring to allow others to speak her lines. In the 1950s, however, she appeared as Mrs. Hudson, with G. K. Chesterton as Sherlock Holmes, for a Christmas party at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (R.A.D.A.); and modelled Mrs. Pankhurst's costume for a show of Doris Langley Moore's designs; but these were the only other recorded instances of her on stage. We can only assume that she recognized that acting was not *her* "proper job."

3.1. Sayers' Early Personal Convictions About the Value of Acting

From an early age, Sayers had a unique perspective on actors and their ability to hold the audience spellbound. Her first personal experience of anti-theatrical prejudice occurred when her school attended a play. A teacher prevented her from speaking with a family friend, an actor who had appeared in the production. Sayers saw the incident as misplaced piety and was inspired to write the following sonnet:

> A hundred years and yet a hundred years
> Pass, and no change. How long, oh Lord, how long?
> We grow weary of the shame and wrong.
> Over our painted cheeks run bitter tears.
> Oh stainless Christians, how your Christ appears!
> What shall we call him who did sit among
> The publicans and sinners – wise, kind, strong?-
> Him whom his Christendom nor heeds nor hears?
> Nor have we sinned. We are thy servants still,
> And they would take our service from us – yea,
> God, they would take our very God away.
> Hard is belief when Christians use so ill
> Christ's prodigals. Just heaven, is this thy will?
> We watch the dark. How slowly breaks the day![504]

While she was commenting here on the long tradition of anti-theatre in the Church,[505] there is more hinted than the fifteen year old author may have intended. The lines; "And they would take our service from us – yea, God, they would take our very God away…" foreshadow Sayers later theological convictions that the best means of serving and imaging God was through one's work. In Sayers' young mind,

[504] Cited in Brabazon. 40-41.
[505] Sayers' love of Moliere had made her aware of the circumstances of the actor/playwright's death and the Church's refusal to give last rites.

the Church inhibited the particular work that God was accomplishing through the theatre. In the sonnet, a very young Sayers saw that the actor's work had a numinous quality that was profoundly needed in this world; she was in effect claiming that the actor was in a God-inspired vocation.

3.2.1. Values Shown in the Activity of the Theatre and its People

Sayers' was the period of stage appearances by Laurence Olivier and Vivienne Leigh; she could be in the audience for the new play by Shaw, Eliot or Coward. Her college friend, Muriel, was a teacher at R.A.D.A., and they must have exchanged many involved conversations regarding the work of theatre.[506] And "work" was what she, and others like her, called this activity, thereby ascribing a certain value to it. "The actor, like other artists, passionately enjoys doing his work for nothing, or next to nothing, if he can afford to do it. And he never talks of himself as being 'employed'; if he is employed, he tells you he is 'working.'[507] She had been on the fringes of the theatre; but when she finally worked as a playwright, she became an eyewitness to an intense rehearsal process and performance ethic; a type of integrity beyond anything that she had experienced in other lines of work. The actor, with regard to his work, was passionate, focused and fussy and, no matter what was going on in his personal life, he showed up for work and performed his task.

> The actor knows quite well that even if he has a toothache, and his wife has that morning run away with his best friend, and the baby has fallen down the stairs, and he has broken both bootlaces and the house is on fire – still, if the curtain goes up at eight, the curtain goes up at eight and he has got to be there.[508]

Here, too, were shown in the character of the work and the workers. Work is not treated like this unless it is valuable, in some way.

But who were these actors and other theatre artists who were "there" when the curtain rose for Sayers' productions? We are already aware of her own celebrity

[506] As we have mentioned, it was Muriel who co-authored *The Busman's Honeymoon.*
[507] Sayers, "Vocation in Work." 135.
[508] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Christian Faith and the Theatre, MS 43," (Wheaton: The Marion E. Wade Centre, Date Unknown). 13.

status and the circles in which she moved. Her literary circles and the members of the Detection Club included Chesterton and Agatha Christie; her correspondence encompassed other artists and authors: Charles Williams, T.S. Eliot, and C.S. Lewis; and ecclesiastical contacts: archbishops, bishops and well-known clergy and laity. But how did she respond to those who worked in the theatre? Muriel was responsible for her initial entry into the professional theatre, but Sayers ensured that the door never closed. She found that the theatre crowd were people after her own heart and treated them with enthusiastic support, honour and dignity. In these ways she valued them and showed that she valued them.

James Brabazon discusses Sayers' connection with her actors and the value of her working relationships with them, with great affection; that he was authorized by her son to write her biography is no surprise. His first encounter with the creator of Peter Wimsey was, significantly, at a lecture given by Sayers at St. Anne's House, Soho, on *Christianity and Drama*: "We sat in a hot, crowded, dusty room, with too few chairs – and almost immediately forgot our discomforts. Such was the force of Dorothy's enthusiasm, such her ability to communicate it, that the course of my life was changed."[509] Brabazon became an actor, producer and director for theatre; and part of the drama department at the BBC. He also devoted some of his time to being the St. Anne's secretary, appearing in amateur productions there under Sayers' direction. She had communicated to him the value of acting.

4. THE CHURCH AND THE THEATRE

We have already discussed (2.2) Sayers' critical view of the Church's use and misuse of actors. In this section, we carry this further, into her critical comparisons between the qualities of life and work in the Church, and the qualities of life and work in the theatre. If we consider the period in which she wrote, we could begin to understand the unusual, even unorthodox, use that Sayers made of the example of actors in her lectures and writing. The work of Stuart Headlam[510] on the Church and the theatre artists had been done only thirty years earlier, but the acceptance of the

[509] Brabazon. 241.
[510] See Anti-Theatre Chapter, the Victorian era.

theatre had not yet permeated all corners of the Church. Pickering notes the following:

> The battle against prejudice was not yet won, however: in 1936, for example, the great pioneer of Drama-in-Education, Peter Slade, approached Westminster and Ely Cathedrals for permission for his Parable Players to perform there, but the authorities were "shocked at the idea," even though London schools and Churches had hosted performances.[511]

By this time, Eliot and Charles Williams had already presented their Canterbury plays and Sayers' *The Zeal of Thy House* debuted in 1937. We see in Sayers echoes of Stuart Hedlam's work, in her continuing a dialogue between the church and the theatre. Sayers also used the actor and the workings of the theatre as an analogy in a number of lectures and essays.

4.1. *The Christian Faith and the Theatre*

Her lecture, *The Christian Faith and the Theatre*, gave a clear illustration of how Sayers viewed the Church's "proper job' in the world. She did so by addressing what she felt were three very important dogmas. The first of her dogmas concerned Christ's participation in creation; the second, the human participants in creation; and the third, the witness of the Gospel. A theatrical analogy was given for each of three: Christ was the divine playwright; Humanity were the actors; the third, the Gospel was a story or the perfect play.

In the lecture, she spoke about the playwright who composed a grand play; but, just as Sayers herself experienced, the play was left to others to perform. The actors in her own plays gave her profound insight into human behaviour; she was to say things of them that ring true for all humans and for the way in which all work. The following use of the example of the actor is one of Sayers' best, communicating the importance of how their particular brand of creative work mirrors the human community at large:

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[511] Pickering. 29. The quotation is from a letter to the author from Slade, see Pickering footnote 101 page 32.

> The wills of the actors are not only independent of that of the playwright – sometimes they oppose themselves to him and to his word; sometimes they misinterpret, sometimes they are lazy, uncooperative; sometimes they deliberately set themselves to play against the spirit of the word and against one another. …But where the actors are ready and eager to cooperate, when they are anxiously striving to lay their wills and their selves aside, so as to serve the word and interpret it in conformity to the author's intention…The less they are puppets doing passively what they are told to do, the more they work like free and conscious creatures, thinking and willing and doing for themselves what the playwright wants them to think and will and do, the closer they will come to the intention of the play, and the more power will communicate itself from the playwright, through them, to the audience.[512]

The notion that the Gospel is story is paramount to Sayers' ideas. "The Incarnation of God, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is not a system of ethics, though it contains a code of ethics. It is not, primarily an explanation of the universe, though it provides a rational explanation of the universe. It is a STORY."[513] As story it is something that should be told and a thing with which we should all be familiar. Note that the story can also be enacted. Sayers, however, finds that the church has failed in its "proper job,' because it has failed to perform the play as scripted, and it has muddled up the story by bringing in its own presuppositions and doctrines. The story is simple and beautiful but some feel the need to embellish or detract from its original text.

4.2. Malvern

In 1941, Sayers was invited to address a conference on *The Life of the Church and the Order of Society*, in Malvern arranged by Archbishop Temple. In her lecture to the conference, "The Church's Responsibility," Sayers again points to the theatre as an example for the church. This time she uses it as an illustration of how the Church should function as a community in order to tell the Gospel story. The Theatre, like Christendom, "is a world within the world, much involved with and bedevilled by the world, but living a separate life with separate standards."[514]

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[512] Sayers, "The Christian Faith and the Theatre, MS 43." 10.
[513] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Christian Faith and The Theatre, MS 43," (Chicago: The Miriam Wade Centre, 1943). 15.
[514] Sayers, "The Church's Responsibility." 59.

For some time, Sayers had recognized in the theatre community that actors of different disciplines and nationalities have a common bond that unites them. They hold an outlook and vocabulary that together maintain a mutual support in spite of the barriers of language, gender, technique or personality.

> They are conscious, even if dumbly and vaguely, of a tremendous traditional solidarity, reaching so far back into the past as to make the Christian Church look like a mushroom of a night's growth…Above all I am conscious of that rooted loyalty to something outside themselves which is expressed in the threadbare formula, "the show must go on"; and which not only makes the toil and fatigue and hardship and difficulty negligible, but transforms them into a kind of arduous pleasure. And because of these things, I recognize in the theatre all the stigma of a real and living Church.[515]

This allegiance to the task to be performed and its end result is the very thing that creates the bond of community in all professions but is far more easily identified amongst those in the theatre.[516] Actors are drawn to one another in a remarkable manner, as illustrated in the following passage from *The Christian Faith and the Theatre*:

> If you put a thousand people, all strangers to one another, of a desert island, and there were fifty actors among them, then within the first half-hour the actors would have discovered one another, within five minutes after that they would be swapping theatrical anecdotes, and within 24 hours they would be giving a performance to the other 950 people.[517]

In her address to the Malvern Conference, she launched into a comparison between actors and Christians by asking the following:

> Do I, for example, immediately feel at home with Christians of any class or nationality – more at home with them than with non-Christians of my own nation and class?

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[515] Ibid. 59-60.
[516] One wonders if such an allegiance is a throwback to the centuries of anti-theatrical prejudice. Actors were forced to take care of each other and fend for themselves. They banded together as families even when not blood related.
[517] Sayers, "The Christian Faith and The Theatre, MS 43." 13.

Her response:

> I cannot honestly say that this is so. Partly, no doubt, the fault is with me for not sufficiently desiring common ends. But I fancy, too, that there is some failure in the Church herself; for I do not feel about her, even as an outsider, that mysterious unity which impresses beholders even though they cannot share or understand it. And yet, if I want to experience the living reality of such a community as I have defined, I can do so immediately, merely by stepping through the pass door of any theatre in the world.[518]

Sayers left her listener with a profound and poignant thought to ponder: the Church, as a community was fractured to the point that her internal arguments had inhibited her from doing the work that God had set out for her. As individuals, congregants of one denomination held certain views about those in another, pursuing these to the point at which they had again blocked the Gospel message.

One wonders how the attendees at the conference reacted to the comparison between the Church's inadequacies and the good ways of the theatre, that place of ill repute. It seems to be a generalization that is a bit harsh on the Church,[519] however, Sayers did love the Church and she was not comparing the two morally. Her desire was to draw a parallel that centred on the idea of the communication of a story. At Malvern she elaborated more clearly: "the theatre is there to present a play, and the church to live the Gospel. Both of them exist to tell a story in action."[520] Sayers was not saying that actors were better than the church-going public; on the contrary, she was saying that the church-going public and the actors shared one major commonality: they both have a task that involves humans in communication, and as such they involve human frailty and failings. She had found some of the individuals in the church "tiresome, stupid, selfish, quarrelsome, pigheaded and infuriating…",[521] while actors were "…exactly like other human beings, only a trifle more exasperating".[522] But given human nature she found that the theatre community was admirable because, in spite of these differences and difficulties, the actors got the job done, while the individuals in the Church sometimes did not.

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[518] Sayers, "The Church's Responsibility." 58-59.
[519] Both the Church and the theatre are much more complex.
[520] Ibid. 4.
[521] Sayers, "The Church's Responsibility." 58. Sayers herself was opinionated and stubborn.
[522] Ibid. 59.

5. THE THEATRE AND THEOLOGY

One of the points of the Gospel Narrative that the Church had failed to communicate clearly was, from Sayers' view, the incarnation. To her it was the central and most important of all of the doctrines of the Church.[523] She observed that the ordinary Christian, and even some clergy, did not have a clear understanding of God Incarnate. She explained clearly other points of doctrine and dogma, but none were as important to her as God: in the Babe in Bethlehem, growing up as a fleshly human, dying on a cross and achieving, through His Resurrection, the redemption of all matter from its fallen state. Because of the Christ, matter was good, ergo, fleshly man was good. Mankind was able to participate in the action of a God Who works continuously. Sayers spoke this message clearly in her radio talks, her lectures and essays. By her use of theatre, Sayers was able to stimulate the imaginations of countless people thus helping them to understand and make sense of this complex doctrine.

5.1. How Should Christian Doctrine and Dogma Enter the Theatre?

We have already seen Sayers' strong views on how the theatre can and cannot help the Church, a similar pattern is to be found in her views on how the theatre can and cannot help theology. Barbara Reynolds in "DLS as Dramatist,"[524] draws attention to a very important point regarding Sayers' intentions as a playwright. Sayers did not purposely set out to write any play to convert people to Christianity. Such an approach results in propaganda and, as we have already learned, should the playwright descend to this form: "He will lose his professional integrity with all its power – including the power to preach the Gospel."[525] According to Reynolds, Sayers set out to write a good play, produced by a good producer and acted by good actors who knew their craft. Discussion of dogma was possible; it came through the course of the dialogue and dramatic action of the story. As in all things surrounding

[523] She would have been re-enforced in this thinking by her friendship with Charles Williams. A comparison of the work between Sayers and Williams on the incarnation would be of great interest. See for example William's essays in: Charles Williams, *He Came Down From Heaven* (Berkley: 2005).
[524] Reynolds, "DLS As Dramatist."
[525] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Playwrights are Not Evangelists," *World Theatre* Vol. Winter, no. 1 (1955). 62.

her work, her theatre production values were able to meet criteria that made the play itself, not an evangelistic tool, but a work worthy of the theatre-going public and of the theatrical professions; a good work of art accessible to the theatre-going public. When these criteria were satisfied, doctrine and theology could find appropriate and valid places and roles in the theatre.

So too the interpretation of Christian Character was not always direct. As mentioned in Chapter One, the average theatre attendee is often amazed that the actor playing the nun or the priest is not a practicing Catholic, especially when the role is played with depth and sensitivity. Her picture of the actor's role remains consistent in that a good portrayal is due, not to the actor's own personal values or belief system, but to his ability, to set aside his own presuppositions and prejudices and find the *truth* of the *character*. He may not agree with his character's choices, lifestyle or worldview; but it is not his job to act as judge but to act the part.[526] Sayers saw in her own writing that she must remain true to the characterization, and tell the story clearly. But if part of the story included the clear explanation of church doctrine, then she utilized the vehicle of the dialogue to do so.

5.2. Doctrine Enacted

Sayers recognized as one of her own *charisms*, the ability to put dogma and doctrine into plain English. Father Herbert Kelly pointed out that Sayers' plays were "… able to teach certain doctrines, not in the abstract fashion which is all we theologians can teach, but in a living pictorial fashion which common people can follow."[527] For Sayers, poverty and oppression resulted, in part, from the neglect of the intellect of the common man. When the ordinary person clearly understood his Christian faith, then all manner of change would come about; and the place where it would manifest itself most strongly was in the workplace.

When the words were made flesh by the actors, the theological truths in the plays were able to penetrate and be understood in a new way: they became clear. For

[526] As said already, it is his own decision whether to play the character or not.
[527] As quoted in: Sayers, *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1937-1943: From Novelist to Playwright*. 42.

instance, a doctrine, when explained, can be dull. So too, when a portion of her plays is merely described, it sounds like the most boring piece of drama ever to be performed. But we will find that something miraculous happens to the audience when the words are spoken and enacted before them. For example, Reynolds tells us about a scene from *Constantine* in which the Christian officials discuss the Nicene Creed. Sayers wrote a straight theological discussion and put it on stage for the average Englishman or woman in the audience.

> It would seem impossible to make a workable play with such an ingredient as that. And yet she did! I heard her say that when the scene of the Nicean Council was acted, both at Colchester, for which the play was written, and later in London in its shortened form entitled Christ's Emperor, the audience were held spellbound… In this play, Dorothy Sayers achieved in one magnificent image the fusion of drama and dogma, and there above all we find vindicated her own phrase 'the dogma is the drama'."[528]

Thus, it was demonstrated in her own work. She was able to introduce large elements of doctrine into a play. She was also able to do it in appropriate ways and hold the audience's interest.

5.3. A Theological Role for the Actor

Sayers had a unique way of seeing the actors in her midst; it was as if she felt it her Christian duty or mission to watch over this part of God's image. She became very aware of their sensitivity to criticism and their heightened need for positive re-enforcement. She noticed a change in an actor's performance depending upon outside opinion.[529] She learned very quickly how to treat this very sensitive group, whose work relied on external judgment; actors were fragile when it came to their work. Among her unpublished notes is *The Living Theatre*.[530] More than half this document is devoted to the treatment of the actors, with several variations on what she humorously calls "The Ten Commandments." It contains advice such as: "Don't startle your actor with disagreeable news just as he is going on the stage."[531] The

[528] Reynolds, "DLS As Dramatist." 8-9.
[529] I often wonder if one of the criteria for this job is a slightly higher sense of insecurity.
[530] Sayers, "The Living Theatre, MS 124."
[531] Dorothy L. Sayers, "The Living Theatre, MS124," (Chicago: The Miriam Wade Centre).

actors' work was so closely enmeshed in themselves that they often took criticism, no matter how well intentioned, personally. They needed positive reinforcement in order to perform with confidence.

Although she seems to have felt it was her duty to recognize and protect this profession, Sayers carried her estimation of actors further than simply watching over them. She saw the actor's job as providing something very special and important to society and she even felt this necessary to express this in theological terms.

> Yet there is an enduring truth that the actor's profession is sacred – sacred in itself, quite apart from the character and purpose of the play performed. *Simply by being what he is and doing want he does, the actor is a living symbol of certain universal truths – truths which are formulated for us in Christian Dogma.* In the Dogma, truth is in the form of a statement; in symbol, the truth is represented to the imagination in the form of an action.[532]

She is setting a very high value on actors. It is not that it is a place of social standing, but she recognized the actor as having a place of theological significance in the world amongst other people.

6. SUMMARY

Sayers' ongoing enthusiasm for the creative arts and the esteem in which she held the theatre, and in particular its actors, gave her the ability to bring both the artist and the churchman together. Watching actors on stage, she was captivated by their ability to convey their subject and to draw her into the story they were creating. But, when she saw them in rehearsal, human beings struggling with their co-workers and grappling with characterization and truthful portrayal, she experienced an epiphany. She noted that the Church did not quite know what to do with the players in their midst; and she sought to remedy that through her writing, talks, and her activity in the Cathedral plays as well as at St. Anne's Soho. She not only saw the way that their work ethic could speak to the Church, but also saw in the theatre artists a representation of Christ's Church as it ought to be.

[532] Sayers, "The Christian Faith and the Theatre, MS 43.". 3-4. Italics mine.

The irony of this connection was not lost on Sayers. She concluded that, "the weakening within the church of the sacramental sense produces a fear and distrust of the flesh which makes it impossible to see the material 'show' as a vehicle of Divine reality."[533] The fleshly nature of the actors and their work, coupled with centuries of opposition to the theatre, made it a difficult comparison for some of the clergy and the laity to swallow. None-the-less she continued to work in this genre and successfully utilized it to explain doctrine to the average Christian. Thus, she demonstrated how the theatre could be used for doctrine. Her work was well received by many in the church and though she may not have witnessed an immediate turnaround, her letters indicate that she did manage to get the clergy to contemplate what she was saying.[534]

Sayers recognized that the strength of the professional actor was that they could so easily em*body* the human character in order to fulfill their task in the *corpus* of the production. No matter their belief system, their personal history, or their private life; they did not allow it to hinder a major purpose of their calling: telling the Story. The actors had a powerful sense of the purpose of their component in the overall production, and this fired Sayers' imagination. She was able not only to successfully turn the Theatre into a means of examining her own theological understanding, but also to have it influence her further writing and the development of other ideas.

7. CONCLUSION

We have found that Sayers viewed creativeness as something deeply ingrained in Man's psyche. Her insistence on connecting it to the Image of God struck a chord when we discussed some workers from whose work all manner of imagination was removed.[535] Sayers would repeat that in such a case "they would take our very God away."[536] In Sayers, we view someone for whom a calling to serve God in the world was necessarily linked to some form of creative expression, even when it was just imaginative musing on the purpose of the work.

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[533] Sayers, "The Christian Faith and The Theatre, MS 43." 3.
[534] The Malvern invitation is another indicator of their respect for her opinion.
[535] See Section 3, Chapter Six.
[536] See Sayers' sonnet above.

For Sayers all forms of work, secular and ecclesiastical, could and should be vocational. The Church's call to view work in a vocational manner, as seen in Chapter Six, was, therefore, in some ways almost redundant. We understand that, from Sayers' perspective, true vocation was found in recognizing God and then serving Him through good quality work and life. The actor, then, who learned his technique, studied his lines, sought the character honestly and in truth, and served his audience with integrity, would be most of the way towards having a vocational attitude. The only thing that could be added to this formula was that his heart, soul, mind and strength were focused on serving God in all areas in his life. Acting was good work, with meaning and purpose, and for Sayers was a worthy vocation for anyone, even if they were Christian.

Thus far, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, we have discussed and developed Sayers' ideas on work and vocation. We have also dealt, to some extent, with her use of the theatre in her theological discussions and her opinion of actors. At the end of these three chapters on Sayers where do we find ourselves with regard to the two main questions of the thesis? Is acting a "proper job;" and is it a vocation suitable for a Christian? In the final chapter we will carry our explanation of these question beyond Sayers' contribution and try to give our own perspective.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

THE ACTOR, WORK AND VOCATION

As we move into this final chapter, we need to look back at what this journey has covered. We began in Chapter One by introducing the dissertation as a personal dilemma and by establishing Sayers as a reference point. We moved on to flesh out some of the historical anti-theatre objections to theatre and to recognize that they still exist in some form or other today. In Chapters Three and Four, we looked at work and vocation as general topics. Finally, we have brought in our conversation partner, Dorothy L. Sayers, to draw acting, work and vocation together. All of this is in an effort to come to conclusions about acting as a 'proper job,' and a vocation for a Christian. With Sayers, we were left with the idea that acting is work and, for some, a calling. To carry our main questions deeper, further questions remain. One, what roles does the acting profession play in the world that makes it not only "proper," but also a valuable contributor to the lives of people and society? Two, just where would a Christian fit into this difficult and sometimes controversial secular profession?

This chapter will begin with some of the earlier difficulties brought out in the anti-theatre debate. Is the actor denying himself as image of God by playing Other [537]; is he lying or deceitful; and can acting be taken seriously as a profession? We will present new answers for these questions, showing up positive functions for theatre in the business of life. Next, we will look at actual cases in which involvement in the profession has served society: theatre has social and political functions too. We will then explore the actor's work; his use of research, technique, and natural ability to consider the importance of this profession to society. We will then conclude with a fuller presentation of acting as a 'proper job' for a Christian: a vocation.

[537] We will continue to follow MacMurray's example by using the capitalized Other when referring to outside of the self.

1. ANTI-THEATRE UPSIDE DOWN: A REHEARSAL OF LIFE

We have already established that, for centuries, the actor's ability to assume the place of the Other for stage purposes, and to do it convincingly, is at the heart of much of the anti-theatre discomfort. In our brief tour of anti-theatre, we witnessed the attachment of many 'monikers' to the actor, as well as some words derived from the theatre that now refer to negative human traits. The actor is a hypocrite, a mere *persona*, two-faced and therefore, untrustworthy. The McConachie article discussed in Chapter Two, demonstrated the depth to which this lack of understanding took the U.S. Government during the Cold War. Sadly, at that time, the actors themselves could not clearly explain what it was that they were doing when portraying a character. It is our task here to underline how concepts of the Other, truth and playfulness are at the centre not only of the actor's art, but also the lives of people as creative beings in relationship.

1.1. The Actor as Other

The supposed accusation against the actor, of portraying the life of another person, may seem, when explored and scrutinized, to be complicated. In several sections of Chapter Three and later chapters, we discovered that Man is a relational being who must have community with the Other in order to develop as God has designed. We note again the importance that Barth places on this:

> "Humanity, the characteristic and essential mode of man's being, is in its root fellow-humanity. Humanity, which is not fellow-humanity, is inhumanity. For it cannot reflect but only contradict the determination of man to be God's covenant-partner, nor can the God who is no *Deus solitarius* but *Deus triunus*, God in relationship, be mirrored in a *homo solitarius*." [538]

The confusion about the actor relates to the problem of the double consciousness. Is the actor himself or the Other? Where does the actor end and the character begin? Is Von Balthasar correct in suggesting that the actor somehow carries with him another 'I' that he removes from his own psyche in order to portray

[538] Found in Footnote 30, Chapter 3, Barth, *Church Dogmatics III.4*. 116-7.

the character?[539] Is he denying his own self, or existence; and rejecting, as Tertullian would assert, the image that God has given him?[540] But we may add another question: is it wrong for any human being to take on the character and part of another? Or is it good, and potentially of great service to all of us?

Theatre practitioner Augusto Boal notes that humans instinctively use the creative imagination to muse about various scenarios with others.[541] Sayers, Barth and Brock have all touched on this in some way, especially in relation to work. In general, humans need to use imaginative rehearsal to understand others and relationship. The development of self also relies heavily on the mental rehearsal of relationship. The visualization of positive or negative interactions, creation of new stories, or meditation on those from the past, have a function in understanding and relating to others, and in self-development. Humans also share stories about experiences; for example, in gossip, family, or friendship, or in therapy; but in all cases we are working out our own participation in life, with others, and discovering more about who we are and who others are. Through this imaginative activity, most come to an understanding of others and the self in community.

Boal asserts: "Theatre should be a rehearsal for action in real life, rather than an end in itself."[542] Theatre, film, and television are communal activities that present the scenarios of life. In them, the actor experiences and presents human relationship on many levels: actor to character, actor to actor, character to character, actor to audience, audience to actor, and actor to those backstage who support and promote this communal event. Even the enactment of aloneness – Lear, Hedda Gabler or an outcast - draws people together to experience the ordinary in life. The actor, in an enhanced and public way, goes through the process of rehearsal in order to develop the Other in the script, his whole intention being to tell a story to an audience through enactment.

The actor's ability to be conscious of the Other he is portraying concerned Henry Irving in his introduction to Pollack's 1883 translation of Diderot's *Paradox of the Actor*. He asserts, "It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were,

[539] See Chapter Two.
[540] Ibid, 27.
[541] This will be developed further in section 2.2.
[542] Augusto Boal, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006). 6.

a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the occasion may have full sway, while the actor is all the time on the alert for every detail of his method."[543] The personal private self never leaves the actor. It is his job to have a heightened awareness of not only his character role but also his own emotional and physical equipment and the physical space around him. He must use his intelligence in order to tap into the typically human physical and emotional idiosyncrasies of the Other; at times this may require research and technical practice, at others his natural abilities and technique make the transformation a relatively easy one. The actor is not the Other to the point where there is a dual personality disorder, nor does he participate in channelling or demonic possession and lose his own awareness. He portrays this Other for the purposes of his craft and the production of theatre; but beyond that, as we see, for fundamental life purposes and the nurturing of basic life practices.

The actor who does his work with skill and integrity provides his audience with an opportunity to experience the emotions, life situations and scenarios of the Other. When the work is done well the audience member also leaves his or her own sphere to one side in order to experience this Other. The audience can fly to Neverland, escape to the forest of Arden or grieve for a lost child, through the actor's exploration of humanness. If the actor does not pay close attention to bringing his character to life, or conjures up a character that is in direct opposition to the one written for those scenes and that particular telling, the audience knows and is unsatisfied. Peter Pan would fail to enchant, Rosalind would not have our sympathy, and the fate of Lear or Mother Courage would never touch our hearts. *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* observes:

> "In our world it is becoming harder and harder to communicate with each other simply and honestly, on a gut level. Yet we still go to the theatre to have a communion with the truth of our existence… theatre can put forward simple human values in hopes that the audience may leave inspired to live by such values...When truth and virtue are so rare in almost every area of our society the world needs theatre and theatre needs actors who will bring the truth of the human soul to the stage. The theatre may now be the only place in society where people can go to hear the truth.[544]

[543] Walter Herries Pollock, *Paradox of Acting* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883).
[544] Melissa Cohn Bruder and others, *A Practical Handbook For The Actor* (New York: Random House, 1986). 6-7.

1.2. Is the Actor a Deceitful Liar?

In order for a deception to have its impact, it must set out to purposely and deliberately cover up the truth. The recipient of the lie is not intended to know that a deception has been perpetrated. Theatre, on the other hand, creates a fictitious world without deception. The audience knows why they are there; they know that they are in their seats to see and hear truthful people like themselves enact a story. They know that the people on stage are doing what they do in order to communicate that story through character portrayal so that they, as audience, can understand it. The audience, when entering the theatre, has already agreed that they are participating in, as Coleridge named it, "the willing suspension of disbelief."[545] Once the story is over, the audience is free to think about elements of the performance, and about human characters and behaviour.

The actor also has agreed to suspend his own disbelief for the duration of the performance; and for the sake of the audience, he imagines himself into the role, and plays out an imagined life in the setting and scenario of that character. There is an unspoken agreement between the audience and actor: that it is not the actor's intent to participate in an ongoing deception, nor to permanently portray someone he is not, in order to trick, double cross or perform a scam. No matter who he is as an individual, no matter what is happening in his personal life, it is his job, his art, to focus on the reality of the person he is portraying on stage. If an actor brings his own presuppositions or personal agenda into the portrayal, he performs a twisted version of propaganda. There are playwrights and directors who strive to push their own agenda by misrepresenting facts or occurrences, in the script; but it is not the actor's job to judge the script; he performs his character's part in the story, as written and directed.[546]

The actor shines a light on human behaviour, even when he is enacting a villainous deceiver. The actor, in playing the 'true' liar, demonstrates how that

[545] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIV," (http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/essay/237838: Poetry Foundation Website, 1817).
[546] The actor may reject the script and the work if it does not fall into line with his personal ethics or worldview. There are occasions, too, where the actor is involved in the development of the script and can make suggestions that move the character in certain directions.

person breaks the bonds of pure human relationship. The actor shows that, rather than an honest human relationship of love and care, a liar forms bonds for his own selfish motives, he works in secret, and deals in treachery, breaking the connection of community. When the reality of fraud, deceit, and duplicity in the world is played out on the stage the audience becomes aware of the situation. There is the hope that the liar is caught out and punished. When this occurs the audience feels justified, and that a sense of rightness is restored. If he is left unpunished there is a righteous indignation or an unsettled feeling in the psyche of the observer. In Comedy, however, a lie can often be the catalyst that propels the situation, revealing the ridiculous means that the perpetrator must go through in order not to be discovered. In the end, the play is what conveys this story. Playwright and director David Mamet explains: "It is the writer's job to make the play interesting. It is the actor's job to make the performance truthful."[547]

1.3. Can Acting Be Taken Seriously as Work?

Another difficulty with acting and other forms of creativity lies in the fact that they are so closely related to play. Indeed, children play-act on a regular basis; but what is it about play that makes it become so taboo when performed seriously by adults? Schechner, in his extensive studies in performance, has sought to understand the nature of theatre and its link to play. When defining play he states:

> "Play is very hard to pin down. It is a mood, an activity, an eruption of liberty; sometimes it is rule-bound, sometimes very free. It is pervasive. It is something everyone does as well as watches others engage in – either formally in dramas, sports, on television, in films, or casually at parties, while working, on the street, at playgrounds. Play can subvert the powers that be, as in parody or carnival or it can be cruel absolute power, what Shakespeare's Gloucester meant when he cried out, 'As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods, They kill us for their sport.'"[548]

In *Christians at Play,* Robert Johnson asserts that over time the Western mindset diminished the importance of play, amusement and relaxation. He asserts that humans need the freedom to explore all aspects of living. Modern Christians are

[547] David Mamet, *True and False* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1997). 41.
[548] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002).79.

slowly discovering and accepting the notion that play is a necessary part of human development at all ages and stages of life.

> Christians today are rediscovering the need to play. In a world in which our work gravitates toward the extremes of ulcers or boredom, play becomes the possibility for discovering our common humanity. In a world that has become objectivized and routinized, play offers freedom to the human spirit.[549]

Moltmann's *Theology of Play*[550] focuses on our struggle to deal with aspects of this fallen world. He finds that humour is "The means the powerless use to shake off their yoke, for in these surprise situations they are escaping the bonds of fear which has made their hope possible. The power of the powerless lies in such liberations from fear…"[551] The importance of sheer frivolity, laughter and fun can be experienced in many ways, for instance, in watching a street performer, a situation comedy or a play that lifts our spirits and moves us to suspend reality for a time, refreshing our outlook. There are also more serious versions of play in the theatre: drama and tragedy. These, too, as we will see in the next section, have powers such as those of which Moltmann writes.

Theatre is a means of conveying story, but theatre can be much more than that. The actor has the opportunity to examine and present the human condition through a vehicle that places his audience at a safe distance from the reality; but there is no confusion or hiding. While we did not completely agree with Zizioulas in his study of individuality, he interpreted Greek tragedy in a way that is helpful here.[552] He explained that within this particular culture, philosophical rhetoric was highly valued, and the theme of individuality explored through a very sophisticated style of performance. The masked actor reasoned, and even fought, with the gods; and in doing so, he also questioned his own existence. The mask is, in Zizioulas' picture, the essence of the person bound and enclosed in a temporal state; the actor accepts his fate as *persona* and lives with this lack of freedom. "It is precisely in the theatre that man strives to become a 'person' to rise up against the harmonious unity which

[549] In Robert K. Johnson, "The Christian at Play," ed. Herbert F Lowe (Religion Online, 1983). 2.
[550] Moltmann, *Theology of Play*. In the UK Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology and Joy*, trans. Reinhard Ulrich (London: SCM Press, 1972).
[551] Moltmann, *Theology of Play*. 13.
[552] We must remember that theatre held a very serious position in the ancient Greek society and the actor was viewed as an important contributor to rhetoric, religion and culture.

oppresses him as rational and moral necessity."[553] The person bound by his state, or mask, is temporary. The actor, as Zizioulas sees his role, provided the ancient Greek spectator with much more than what is seen on the surface; he embodied, through the use of his mask, a brief taste of freedom, an opportunity to experience being an individual, a *persona*. Man became something more, for there was a substance beneath the surface, more than met the eye. Although there is rarely the need for today's actor to use the mask in his portrayal, the same idea is applicable. An honest portrayal lifts the audience member into a place of belief; the character is allowed to be 'real' for that moment. In the moment of pseudo-reality the audience is drawn into the world of the theatrical presentation.

The pursuit of truth in theatre and through acting is a serious practice, for we are pursuing the truth about life and relationships, values, communities, cultures and historic events. Schechner believes that "In fact, one definition of performance might be: ritualized behaviour conditioned/permeated by play."[554] If we think of acting as linked to play, rather than diminishing the actor's job, that view allows us to consider exactly what children do when they play. Children involve themselves very seriously in games, stories, and imaginative projects. Boundaries are set, and the moment someone overlooks or disobeys the rules or limitations of the game, the other children will recognize that the game or play is not unfolding honestly, and cry "cheat." The same can be said regarding the 'play' of the actor, and his relationship with others involved in the performance. Parents and educators encourage children to 'learn through play' or to discover who they are through their imaginations, but we need to ask ourselves why we feel that these practices should not be a part of our adult lives. At what point does play, celebration, festival and laughter become not right, or even unnecessary, for further human growth?

1.4. Other Problems with Acting

The final aspect of acting that can be a struggle for many concerns the moral choices that are presented to the actor within a role or script itself. This may seem a relatively minor point in the great picture of what acting is, but has become a major

[553] Zizioulas. 32.
[554] Schechner. 79.

stumbling block for some actors and especially for the parents of performative children. We must begin by observing that it is a dilemma common to not only the acting profession, but also every job or line of work faces its own moral and ethical decisions. Christian educators and doctors have been confronted with issues based on new legalities regarding pro-choice and sexual identity, not to mention others who are encouraged by superiors to produce shoddy workmanship in order to meet the demands of the clock. The Christian at work deals at all times with Man in a fallen state. The co-worker who steals, the boss who sexually harasses, and the client who fails to pay are found in all areas of society, including the Church. There is not a general answer; the actor, like all workers, must deal with this from role to role, job to job.

Regarding the choice of character or script, all actors, whether they are of the Church or not, are faced with moral dilemmas**.** They do not have to be Christian to say no to pornography, or any work that makes them uncomfortable. Murray Watts, in *Christianity and the Theatre,*[555] has a great deal to offer when dealing with these questions. He concurs that there is no set legalistic means of approaching the actor's moral choices, but he does advise the actor not to separate his work from himself or his faith. "There are no such categories for the Christian: Christ dwells within him at all times and this profound knowledge of inner sanctity, given by the grace of God, surely bring the choices facing every actor into sharp focus."[556] The actor who is Christian is therefore at a greater advantage than others, as he is able to see God at work in his ability, his training, in the script, and in the actor's own presence in the small community involved in the project.

While this may not completely resolve this difficulty, suffice it to say, that the actor who is Christian has the opportunity to be present and participate in a variety of genres. The actor must deal with deeply human issues in his job with as much truth and honesty as possible, but it is up to the individual artist to decide the degree to which they wish use their creativity. We will see in the next section four examples in which actors have confronted the human on many levels. They have been forced to look at their own experiences of life, personal morality and issues in society, and in

[555] Murray Watts, *Christianity and the Theatre* (Edinburgh: The Hansel Press Ltd, 1986).
[556] Ibid. 21.

doing so have had to make some very difficult and courageous choices regarding the roles that they have portrayed.

2. THEATRE AS A MEANS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE: FOUR STUDIES

We have seen in the previous sections that acting has important human functions. Indeed, it is used to serve a fundamental human need; to enter into understanding of others and to engage with life possibilities and problems. In this section we will see not only this, but also the use of acting for social and political purposes, not as propaganda but in beneficial and healing ways. The actors involved struggled with ethical and moral questions on a day to day basis, not only in the script but from within their own psyche and through audience reaction. Each of these individuals or troupes, to varying degrees, have experienced external resistance to their work.

For centuries, acting has been a powerful tool, used not only to educate the public but to also give the populace a voice with which to express itself, whether the expression is dramatic, comedic or tragic. We will look at four cases in which theatre has been a means towards personal, social and political goals. Karol Wojtyla, and Augusto Boal, have seen theatre and acting as a means to explore relationship and social issues; Wojtyla represents the actor as a conduit for the voice of a people; while Boal envisions theatre that can be used to transform individuals and influence a society. The work of Director Curt Tofteland and his Shakespeare Productions, as demonstrated in the documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars,* gives a look at the effect the rehearsal process can have on prisoners who become actors and explore a given role. Finally, I have included my own experience working as an actor with the Metropolitan Toronto Special Committee on Child Abuse.

2.1. Karol Wojtyła: Preserving a People's Voice

Although his career as an actor was short-lived, Wojtyła's experience in theatre influenced the manner in which he viewed the contribution of the artist later in his life, as a priest and as Pope John Paul II. Early in his life Wojtyła felt drawn to a career in the theatre. One biographer writes: "It was as if he had come face to face

with his destiny."[557] The German occupation of Poland interrupted his studies at a theatre school in Krakow but it did not stop this talented young actor from using his craft. The cruelty of occupation and its aim of reducing the Poles to a sub-human subservience brought out a desire in many to find a means to counter its evil effects. While some formed an active resistance, Wojtyła and his comrades chose theatre and not guns. In this situation his desire to perform became more intense. He said of theatre that "Being an actor is not just a job, it is a mission to try and make people nobler."[558]

Wojtyła and his group saw that their Polish identity was actively being undermined under the Nazi directives. His contribution to the resistance was his work as an actor with the underground theatre companies, Studio 39 and the Rhapsodic Theatre. "The theatre would now become a weapon in the defense of Polish culture and the Polish homeland in the face of a relentless Nazi onslaught."[559] The Germans were trying to degrade all of Poland by suppressing and breaking the will and the spirit of its people. These actors were trying to maintain this will and spitit; and if caught, they would have been executed. This was not just a little group of people doing 'drama' for fun, but a deeply serious process of protecting a national culture.

Actors gathered secretly to work through scenarios and scripts for each other. It was Wojtyła's main concern that through this medium they would preserve the Polish cultural identity, rather than have it replaced by the identity of those who held them captive. He and the other actors sought to maintain that which was distinctly Polish. They memorized and rehearsed the works of the country's great authors. They used this time as a forum to workshop these, and also to write new plays for an audience gathered in secret. Wojtyła wrote some scripts; his *The Jeweler's Shop*[560] is an exploration of the relationship between three couples whose lives revolve around their connections to the shop. He has a great deal to say about marriage and love through the vehicle of the play. It has a profoundly redemptive quality; particularly meaningful because of the oppression at work in the world around him.

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[557] Carl Berstein and Marco Politi, *His Holiness: John Paul II and the History of Our Time* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996). 35.
[558] Philip Smith, "Young John Paul," (Great Britain: BBC, 2009). Accessed October 2009 on Youtube: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jzly.
[559] Berstein and Politi. 53.
[560] Karol (became John Paul II) Wojtyla, *The Jeweler's Shop* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992).

Considering our earlier comments on the communal aspect of the theatre, it is fascinating to note that Wojtyła saw the theatre as "a Church where the Polish spirit is."[561] The work of the theatre also became a deeply spiritual act, working on the inner life of the people involved, both actors and audience. For him acting was a vocation from God wherein he could serve the Polish people. For Wojtyła, this work was not propaganda but the maintenance of a deeply spiritual identity of a people; the protection of a society and culture, under God's sovereignty. It was this burning desire to serve God that also contributed to the next calling on his life. In 1942, he made the transition from actor to priest through seminary studies – again carried out in secret.

Biographers would note that Wojtyła's years in the theatre, and his studies as an actor, contributed to the charismatic presence of Pope John Paul II, making him comfortable with the performative nature of his job.[562] Even more than that, as Pope, he had a profound sense that he was in relationship with God and with a people whose spirit, like those of the Polish, needed protection and restoration. His concern for the place of the artist in God's kingdom was profoundly different to that of many before him. His *Letter from Pope John Paul II to the Artists*[563] demonstrates that his early experience in the theatre had given him an understanding of the artist's place in society; the use of their gifting and training to touch other humans in a profoundly deep manner. Although Wojtyła did not remain an actor all of his life, it is obvious that the training and experience he received in that profession affected his worldview and work.

We see here a case where the extreme circumstances of war have forced the use of theatre as a form of resistance. The ethical and moral issues arise also for those who would advocate a submission to the authority. The actors and audience faced imprisonment and death by meeting, and for writing and performing in their Polish cultural custom. They performed under great duress and wrote about the stresses incurred through this time in Polish history. They portrayed lovers, haters, and the morally bankrupt as well as exploring redemption and grace. Theatre provided the

[561] Smith. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jzly.
[562] Berstein and Politi. 61.
[563] Pope John Paul II, "Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists," (Catholic Library, 1999).

means of expression whereby, for a brief amount of time, the actors and audience experienced freedom from tyranny; the freedom to be human. This use of theatre leads to our next case; it was also developed from the oppression of a society. Augusto Boal has used his experience in an oppressive military regime and then transferred it to encounter and deal with other cultures and forms of oppression.

2.2. Augusto Boal[564] and Bertholt Brecht: Social and Political Change.

South American theatre practitioner Augusto Boal was greatly influenced by the dialectic theatre introduced by Bertholt Brecht. Boal employed part of Brecht's style through the notion that the actor and audience participate in the event as a unit, rather than having a staged event for viewing. He did not, however, have the same outlook or agenda. Unlike Brecht's metaphorical picture of life as a journey,[565] Boal's philosophical approach to theatre viewed life as a series of many moments in which our life is a performance that unfolds as we live before others, and they before us. As humans we interact with and react to one another, participating in and contributing to the action of the world stage. These life moments were worked through on stage and adjusted to find an equitable solution to struggles or oppressive scenarios. The solution could then be reproduced and implemented in society.

We will take a very brief look at Brecht, as an introduction to Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Forum Theatre*. Although Brecht was not an actor himself, he had very strong ideas regarding the profession, and about the actor's place in performance. Contrary to the realistic or naturalistic technique commonly seen today, Brecht instructed his actors in a way of performance that encapsulated an Expressionistic form of theatre, known as 'Epic Theatre.' Rather than the suspension of disbelief, the fishbowl effect of the fourth wall, or the proscenium arch of the then current productions, he employed what he called the 'alienation device.' The audience was not separated off as a voyeuristic silent crowd, but was encouraged to participate by actors who sat amongst them. The style invited the spectators to feel

[564] The information in this section is condensed from a larger conference presentation: Gwendolyn Starks, ""All the World's a Stage:" Augusto Boal's World Stage Ideology.," (Leeds: University of St. Andrews, 2008).
[565] Ronald Speirs, *Bertholt Brecht* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1987). 3.

they were a part of the social commentary on stage, and encouraged them to express their opinion during the action of the play.

Brecht supposed that a heightened performance "would imitate the doings of men in such a way that it would put the spectators in a position to form a judgment about what they saw on the stage, a judgment upon which they might then act in the world outside the theatre."[566] His style of playing came out of a conviction that, by presenting the tension between the 'is' and the 'ought' through a heightened reality, the audience would thereby see things in a new way. Rather than the audience as a silent participant, the actors created a new relationship with the spectator. There was no separation of them from the play; therefore they too were participants in the action, just as they were participants in life's political and social situations. There are clear social purposes here. It was Brecht's desire that this new theatrical experience would heighten the awareness of reality's situations. In doing so, the theatre would stimulate the imagination to formulate new means of participating in and responding to society. Just as they were in the theatre, persons were active participants in life.

Boal added to this type of physical staging a new idea of a type of theatre, which goes on in the mind through the work of the imagination. As we saw in Section One, humans replay experiences from the past, create scenes for the future, or concoct fanciful scenarios regarding life. Boal asserted that we are the spectators of the theatre of our own lives as we perform for ourselves internally all of the time. This human capacity to live moments in our imagination is central to the understanding of Boal's philosophy. He used this twofold philosophy, of the theatre in the mind and theatre of life, to influence and shape his style of training. Boal states: "Theatre should be a rehearsal for action in real life, rather than an end in itself."[567] Theatre, for Boal, was intrinsically connected with human life. To him, the theatre of the imagination can be concerned with social and personal morality. He draws from the idea that the individual's personal conduct and moral code impact their interpersonal behaviour; it is at this point that Boal sees the imagination as having political implications. As people mentally and communally play through various scenarios, they question what is wrong and debate what is right. They then

[566] Ibid. 3.
[567] Boal. 6.

exercise their own free will when choosing how they wish they could perform in life; as humans, they can then fulfill this through actions.

But Boal's theatre, and his ideas on this mental rehearsal, were formulated under a state of military rule. Under a state of tyranny, mental rehearsal may never lead to a life of communication or action. It will be oppressed into a state in which it freezes or edits; it rarely reaches a point of participation.[568] His South American context necessitated that he, like Woytyła, finds a way to utilize the power of theatre in order to make a difference to his society. In his development of *Theatre of the Oppressed,* he used theatrical methods to help the participants to get this mental action out of the head and into physical action in society. Boal then conjoined therapy and activism, influencing a multiplicity of disciplines and fields: psychology, politics, ethics, trauma therapies, racism, and feminism; giving those who were voiceless the means with which to speak.

As he traveled the world, he developed a variety of ways to use the actor's training and technique for social action. His work successfully developed exercises for the actor and non-actor,[569] in order to free up the participant and release the creative imagination. He also applied performance theory to rehearse scenarios in order to examine or raise awareness of social issues. Another development was Forum Theatre,[570] in which a theatre piece is enacted once by actors, discussed and re-enacted several times, substituting audience or "spect-actors"[571] for various roles in order to re-work the scenario. Finally, Legislative Theatre used the methodology of Forum Theatre in order to work through real bills that were presented to the Brazilian Legislature.

Boal also used actors to work in his Invisible Theatre.[572] This is a rather controversial form (similar to Guerrilla Theatre) in which "A prepared scene or action addressing an important issue of social concern is played in a public context as if it was a real (i.e. non-theatrical) event. Invisible Theatre seeks to provoke reactions

[568] See Augusto Boal, "The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses," *The Drama Review* Vol. 34, no. 3 (1990).
[569] Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[570] Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1995).
[571] Boal's terminology.
[572] Augusto Boal, "Invisible Theatre: Liege, Belgium, 1978," *The Drama Review* Vol. 34, no. 3 (1990).

from and debate among spectators, who remain unaware that what they have witnessed is a piece of drama."[573] However, even Boal questioned the use of actors in this manner, as he was unsure of its manipulative and ethical effects on those who were being deceived.

Boal passed away in 2008, but his work has touched the lives of many, not only those who train in the theatre, but also those who use his techniques to prepare for life situations. He has raised an awareness of what he termed the "Cop in the Head," the voice inside every person that stifles creativity and the ability to perform to the best of their potential. His work has been used internationally as team building exercises in corporations, in education as a means of discussing social issues, in therapy, and as public theatre. The actors who have trained in his methods have found that it transformed their outlook on their work, and gave them a profound sense of being more than mere entertainers.

In Boal's theatre the actor must make the difficult choice of enacting oppression on stage. Some oppressive scenes are from a militarized situation in which actors portray difficult situations of severe violence. In other circumstances, the actors truthfully portray scenes of physical or mental illness, harassment, or the effects of extreme poverty. The actor is required to depict these scenes, thereby taking his own human person through the actual oppression in question, in order to work through each case.

2.3. *Shakespeare Behind Bars*: Theatre and Forgiveness

The 2006 release of the documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars*[574] showed a unique perspective on life at a medium security prison: the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in La Grange, Kentucky, U.S.A. The Warden promoted the idea of education over "locking people up" and his facility had several programs in

[573] Frances Babbage, *Augusto Boal* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004). 142.
[574] Hank Rogerson, "Documentary: *Shakespeare Behind Bars*," (U.S.A.: Sony BMG Music Entertainment, 2006).

place designed to help the men to be ready for the day that they were paroled. One of these had run for seven years at the time of the documentary's filming in 2005. Curt Tofteland, Volunteer Director, had been guiding some of the inmates through theatre exercises and the exploration of character. They rehearse and perform a Shakespearian play every year. Knowing that some of the men were approaching parole, the chosen text was *The Tempest*. The documentary follows them gradually working through themes of redemption and forgiveness.

When Tofteland began rehearsals, the inmates had already cast the play, basing their selection upon what they feel each had to give and needed to explore about themselves through the characters. As well as working at other forms of therapy and education, they have also chosen the hard road of working through these characters as people. They looked for the human in them; and through the process finding the human in themselves. There were unusual disturbances that these "actors" had to deal with; an inmate/actor could be thrown into the hole (solitary), transferred, or granted parole. Once the entire process was brought to fruition in rehearsal, they stood in front of others and portrayed these characters in performance. Through their year-long process, the documentary showed the actor at work in a way that no theatre school could demonstrate. Actor/inmate Big G. notes:

> I've often thought that a bunch of convicts would make good actors because they are used to lying, or, you know playing a role but, um, it's the exact opposite of that. It's to tell the truth and inhabit the character. That's so scary for me and the rest of the guys in the group; to open themselves up, to connect their, their, inner selves to the inner part of one of these characters that they are inhabiting. That they are just baring themselves for the yard, and for everyone else to see.[575]

Director Lofteland adds,

> I have worked almost exclusively with Shakespeare for fourteen years and he never ceases to teach me; he's my mentor. His gift truly was insight into human behaviour. Because in his plays I can find human behaviour that is as true now as it was 400 years ago.[576]

The documentary confronted human spirit. Surprisingly, it was through the very people removed from society that we join in the exploration of the depths of the

[575] Ibid.
[576] Ibid.

human psyche and emotions. This exploration was not demonstrated in therapy groups, hypnosis or counseling sessions, but in the character exploration of actors, and relational interaction both in rehearsal and in the yard. Through the craft of the actor and character study, we met Big G, Hal, Sammy and Red as they explore the depths of Prospero, Caliban, Miranda, Antonio, in an in-depth manner that many actors would covet. Most actors have mere weeks to dig out the truth of these parts, while these actor/inmates take almost a year.

As with other acting troupes, the players must deal with relationships on many levels. They worked through their frustration with each other as actors, and their characters found reconciliation. They were fighting through serious personal issues brought out by the emotions of their characters. Fear, virtue, and above all forgiveness and redemption, were exposed. The length of the rehearsal time forced them to face their humanity, in ways that those of us who are free do not ever get the chance or take the time to employ. But they did it together, for personal redemption and for the play.

In the process, they examined what caused them to become criminals. It was not the gun, not the crowd that they hung out with; it was they, themselves, their own choices. Just as the characters in the play came to terms with a difficult situation, they, too, were forced to face what was going on in their internal lives. They used the actor's research language. Why is this conversation happening? How do I say this line? Yet they take the script and apply it to the substance of living, by also asking: "How did I get here? What do I do to turn this around? How will I survive out there, when all I have known is prison?"

Watching this process, we are amazed that a play, and actors such as these, could possibly give us such insight into what we are as human beings, and into the importance of forgiveness and redemption in life. Actor/inmate Hal ponders: "Why do you forgive - for yourself? - For others? No, there is something more. If there was no forgiveness in the world then there would be anarchy, there would be no order."

The rehearsal process is grueling not just because it is hard to learn the lines, but also because of the emotional toll that it takes on these men. As they approach the

performance date, they are concerned about the work. A scene was played and the actors were unsatisfied, insecure about their performance. The director coached them with words that were just as true for the portrayal of life on stage, as they are for life in the world.

> Create the most truthful moment that you can, and if it isn't truthful you move to the next moment and attempt it there. You can't go back to the past, the past is gone; that moment in time is gone, it is only this moment. And this moment in time creates the future. How are you going to live this moment in time? – 'Cause that's what you have.[577]

The documentary itself brings a new way for us to view life. We watch a play within a play that unveils the very depths of evil in society. These actors are real murderers and rapists, but they are also human beings who are dealing with situations that cause them to look at the self. There is a final performance before other inmates and in front of family, but some perform knowing that there will be no family in the audience, no one to support them from the outside; the choice they made in the past has ended any outside relations. It takes great courage to perform without support or hope for release.

2.4. *The Journey From AMU*: Safety and Help

In the mid nineteen eighties the Toronto Children's Aid Society set up a special task force to research and find the means to address the needs of abused children. The Special Committee on Child Abuse, as it was called, decided that the best way to reach a wide group of children and inform the public was through the schools. The committee then designed a program that covered every school in the Metropolitan Toronto system; Separate, Catholic, Jewish and even some of the private schools, over a three year period. They hired a playwright, David Craig, to write a forty-minute play that would address the issues of abusive situations, in a manner accessible for children. The Company included a director, stage manager and three performers all from Canadian Actor's Equity, and a social worker from the Children's Aid.

[577] Ibid.

The purpose of the play was to teach children about touch and the feelings associated with that particular sense; and to reach children who were in dangerous situations. The script introduces a planet AMU (All Mixed Up), which has been placed under a magic spell that blocks anyone from touching. The story revolves around a young girl, Merlana, who is sent to earth to learn about touch. Merlana is magically transported into the lives of earth children; and through a variety of situations, she experiences all kinds of touch.[578] In between each scene, through discussions with onstage friends Bobbie and Cool, and questions to the audience, Merlana learns about "Touch that makes you feel good, touch that makes you feel bad and touch that makes you feel all mixed up."[579]

The play, although a powerful piece, was just a portion of the program set up by the Special Committee. A social worker chats with the children, and a question and answer period with the actors reinforces the concepts learned. The kids were invited by the social worker to approach her if they need to talk after the show. It is at this point that we see Sayers' concept of the Power of the piece becoming evident. In the days and weeks after the show, the Children's Aid Society followed up on each case of suspected abuse.[580] In addition to the school visits, the program was presented on Thursday evenings for the parents and teachers, prior to entering a particular location. The play was performed for them, with an extensive question and answer period with the Supervisor from the Special Committee. In more than one incident, adults gained the courage to finally seek help for childhood wounds.

During a performance, the actors also developed a heightened awareness of the audience. They began to listen to the responses, and to watch the body language of the children, and adults; and they could discern discomfort for individuals in certain scenes. This afforded them the opportunity to confer with the social worker about certain audience members, for the purpose of follow-up. Further, the effects of

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[578] The other two actors portray a variety of characters from the overzealous, cheek squeezing aunt, to parents and other children in the scenes.

[579] The Special Committee on Child Abuse has since been changed into another program called Boost. The script from the *Journey From A.M.U.* was no longer available when I contacted the Children's Aid Society in Toronto. After having played the role on four separate occasions, I am citing the quotations from memory and they are fairly accurate, but do not have page references.

[580] Some children needed time to process the information. One child disclosed using the words, "Merlana said that it was 'never too late to tell.'" It was discovered that she had seen the play three years earlier. It had taken time to process the information and work up the courage to step forward.

Von Balthazar's other 'I' concept, and the difficulty of actor/character separation, were, in this case, advantageous. The children identified with the actors as their characters; thus the actors became more accessible. Even out of costume and in street clothes, the actors bridged the gap between the play and the reality of a child, because they were recognized as children and adults at the same time.[581]

The ethical and moral issues dealt with in this program were difficult for the actors who were called to audition. The script for *The Journey from AMU* was not available to read beforehand, but the subject matter was well known before the auditions. Despite the nick-name 'the Cadillac of Tours,' because it paid very well, actors did turn down the chance to audition, because of the subject matter. We see here the opportunity for the actor to control his choice of material.

The actors, by choosing to move forward with the production, set aside their own comfort and emotional well being for a time, in order to rehearse and perform in a piece that had a higher purpose. During rehearsal, the actors, director and stage manager had moments where they were overwhelmed by just the idea of child abuse. The blocking of the abuse scene, though very carefully choreographed as mere suggestion, was difficult for the perpetrator as well as the actor playing Merlana; although a support system was in place, the emotional rawness necessitated pauses for discussion during rehearsal. As a result of this work, however, hundreds of children and families in the Metropolitan Toronto area were able to receive the help and counseling through difficult and abusive situations.

2.5. Theatre as Play: Entertainment and More

These four scenarios have presented, through theatres unique artistry, four different ways of exploring something more about the human. But though each shows a deeper usage for the theatrical craft, theatre also retains its function as entertainment, which is not lost in any of these cases. While life has its heaviness, it also has its joy. Actors often experience a community full of laughter and joking in rehearsal. In *Shakespeare Behind Bars,* the actors laugh at each other and are

[581] Ibid.

delighted in each other's work. Rehearsal is a creative space charged with anticipation and excitement. During performance, audience members release tensions as they recognize the humour in some of the ridiculous situations of life displayed on stage, especially in comic scenes. The audience and the players do enjoy themselves; but they can also do more.

If all that the actor has accomplished with his training and technique is to give the audience a few moments of joy and wonder, then that is a good thing, but much more can be and is often achieved. A performance is a time for the engagement in the imagination, and for the individual to experience a serious form of play. We have established that it is important for us as humans to exercise the imagination, in order to engage with people, and with life situations. The work of the theatrically trained can serve the community by this means: theatre facilitates an imaginative engagement with life. When a playwright says something much deeper, the theatre reaches a part of the human spirit in a way that is unique to this form of art.[582] It is the actor's job to be prepared to such a high degree that he does not stand in the way of this experience.

It is the work of the actor to represent life and human living. It is his particular work, though, to be ready to meet the kinds of opportunities discussed in sections 4.1 to 4.4. He trains himself in Otherness, to present human beings, character, behaviour and imaginary life scenes. He familiarizes himself in the use of the creative imagination within the boundaries of what it is to be human, in order to recreate humanness on the stage, for an audience.[583] The next section will look at the actor's work specifically; how he prepares himself, and the difficulties that he encounters when doing his job.

[582] Other forms of art express their own profound truths in a manner that theatre cannot. That is their purpose and their unique gift.
[583] There are times when the actor portrays a non-human being, alien or animal, but the audience must be able to recognize and identify the human and non-human qualities of this creature. It is the actor's job to facilitate these connections.

3. TRAINING FOR ACTING AS A WORK OF LIFE REHEARSAL AND OTHERNESS

Until the twentieth century, there have been only a handful of written sources available for the study of the acting craft.[584] The richness of the craft, handed down from human to human, is a source in itself. According to Benedetti:

> "…acting is a heritage passed on through the ages…from Burbage to Garrick, from Garrick to Kean and Macready, from them to Irving, and on to Olivier, Gielgud, and Richardson – and Gambon and McKellen. As is also true of great clowns, actors learn and borrow from their predecessors, who borrowed from those who came before them."[585]

Today, however, while the old way of learning is still present, there are also sources on training the voice and accents; on styles of portrayal and techniques; biographies, dictionaries and bibliographies; and even sources for help with the 'business' end of the profession. The reality is, however, that actor training is, like all of the arts, the development of an individual craft. Gielgud makes this clear in the following passage:

> Let nobody imagine, however, that he can learn to act from reading books, however intelligent or profound they may be, about the art of acting…But, as the theatre is an imitation of life, it is as ephemeral and intangible as life itself (in a way that music, painting, and literature are not), and it changes every decade and generation. One cannot copy acting or even what seems to be the method of acting. One has to discover one's own way of expression for oneself, and one never ceases to be dissatisfied…it is hard to pin down on paper any practical guide to help an individual actor to select the best means of discovering the wellsprings of his art…"[586]

The actor's work involves Otherness and life rehearsal. It is the actor's job to learn how to appear so true to the character, so real and lifelike, that he disappears for the duration of the performance. But just how does the actor train himself to portray Otherness? How does he deal with truth? We have said that it is his job to not get in the way of the story or the message; but how, as a human being himself, does he

[584] Most of which can be found in the bibliography in Benedetti.
[585] Ibid. 14. In essence the actor today is learning from Thespis and Garrick and Bernhardt, not through their writings, but through those who came in touch with them and worked with them, and then passed on certain truths about technique and characterization.
[586] Sonia Moore, *The Stanislavski System* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985). iv.

accomplish this? It is this work, the craft, that we will investigate: the work involved to accomplish this physical, vocal, mental and emotional awareness, in order to give a truthful portrayal of other than self for the audience.

3.1. *Charisms* and Training

There are those for whom the acting profession seems to be a natural choice. Uta Hagen finds that the artist must begin with "an amalgam of high sensitivity; easy vulnerability; high sensory equipment (seeing, hearing, touching smelling tasting – intensely); a vivid imagination as well as a grip on reality; the desire to communicate one's own experience and sensations, to make one's self heard and seen."[587] Famed theatre trainer Stanislavski found, however, that when training those with a natural performative bent individuals still needed to take their innate ability and make it ready for the stage.

> Both in spirit and in body [acting] is part of our organic natures….It is not possible to invent a system. We are born with it inside us, with an innate capacity for creativeness….Yet strangely enough, when we step onto stage we lose our natural endowment and instead of acting creatively we proceed to perform contortions of pretentious proportions."[588]

The training process explores the practices of interior and exterior development, humanness, relationships, and life patterns. In this way, the training relates to the functions and purposes that we have observed in sections 1 and 2.

3.2. The Study of Physical Technique: the Voice and the Body

Writer and theatre director David Mamet gives us the first stepping-stone towards the physical attributes required for this profession. "…the actor needs a strong voice, superb diction, a subtle, well proportioned body, and a rudimentary understanding of the play.[589] A naturally good, clear voice is a gift; but vocal work improves diction, pronunciation, breath support, and strength. Like the professional

[587] Uta Hagen, *Respect For Acting* (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1973). 13.
[588] Stanislavski, Character, 287.
[589] Mamet. 9.

singer, the actor studies and practices vocal exercises that build breath support, open the resonation cavity, and relax the muscles needed to heighten volume and control a natural speech pattern. The voice must be a strong and supple apparatus; and the body must also be maintained to withstand the rigors of the rehearsal process and the ability to sustain characterization for the performance over the duration of a production. Just so, the body can be trained in order to develop the stamina and control necessary to handle the demands of a two or three hour performance, seven days a week.

There are systems that include relaxation and stretching such as yoga and pilates; that focus on physical placement like the Alexander technique; or are stamina and strength building like weight and cardiovascular training. Every actor finds his own means of physical development. Regardless of the actor's choice of regime, when the body is prepared, it will respond readily to what is required of it.[590] While these activities are common to many people, whether for other jobs or simple health, the actor's purpose is in preparation for the specific work of convincingly portraying human qualities.

Kathryn Marie Bild, in *Acting From a Spiritual Perspective,* gives us a clearer picture of what more the actor must add to the maintenance of his physical apparatus.

> It requires great intelligence to be an actor and great compassion. You have to really understand the human the intricacies of consciousness, and the psychological elements that play upon or come up against one another in relationships. You have to understand the deepest human desires and motives, as well as the neuroses, fears, and inhibitions that resist and retard the expression of those desires and motives.[591]

She then insists that the main criterion that qualifies anyone to be an actor is that they are a human being. "If you are a person then you are already qualified to represent a substantial contingent of humanity."[592] The actor finds ways to utilize his knowledge of the human self in order to embody the human character in all of its

[590] These requirements vary as some roles require much more physical work than others. For instance, a role may require corseting and heavy period costume, a fight scene or, like that of John Merrick in *The Elephant Man*, physical contortion.
[591] Kathryn Marie Bild, *Acting From a Spiritual Perspective* (Hanover: Smith and Kraus, Inc., 2002). 5.
[592] Ibid. 6.

strengths and limitations. But here, too, the body has its place. For instance, the emotions trigger the body's physical reactions. The correct use of, and means of tapping into, the emotions influence the voice and subtleties of speech, and can bring about certain physiological changes that effect gesture and other movement.

3.3. Different Views of the Internal and External

Stanislavski and others have sought to break down and harness a methodology that would aid the actor to use his creativeness. The various training methods, regardless of style of performance, break down into two categories: external and internal. When training to portray the human it is obvious that the training will involve the internal and external being. People have a body and they have an internal spirit and soul; the mental and the physical. There are many views on how the mind and body work, and how they work together. These different views are reflected in the actor's training, and in his knowledge and use of different schools and philosophies of training. We find, then, too, that the work of actual acting takes on different forms, depending upon how the actor views a role or play, and on how different schools of training can enable him to portray that part.

Stanislavski, whose approach pays a great deal of attention to the inner workings of the human being, notes that the inner workings are encased in the external workings of the human body.

> "… note especially that the dependence of the body on the soul is particularly important in our school of art. In order to express a most delicate and largely subconscious life it is necessary to have control of an unusually responsive, excellently prepared vocal and physical apparatus."[593]

While Stanislavski saw a dependence of the body on the soul, we might also add that the reciprocal is true; there is also a dependence of the soul on the body. The voice and body are connected with the soul because they are the means through which the character and the emotions of the person are communicated to others. The actor's physical self is the apparatus from which his art flows. When any of us have an

[593] Stanislavski. 15.

emotional response to something, it manifests itself physically. Part of the actor's job is to display these physical manifestations, but without letting the emotion so overwhelm that he loses control of the action of the play. Whether the play is set in a fantastical world or a modern apartment, whether the actor is a prince or a thief, a donkey or an ogre, the actor is governed by the fact that his universe is physical. It is in the confines of this physical universe that we all live, and move, and have our being.

The quest for a more natural, realistic means of enacting the physical universe has resulted in some dramatic developments in training. Lee Strasburg's *Group Theatre,* and others who followed him, branched away from Stanislavski's original intention, diverging into a form known as "The Method." Psychoanalysis entered into the teaching practices of Method studios, resulting in what is known as "a post-Freudian" acting style.[594] Stanislavski's system, while it made way for the development of Strasburg's acting training, differed significantly from the inner digging required by Strasberg's 'Sense Memory' approach.[595]

The Method's training involves deep emotional digging. First, there is intense psychological awareness; and, second, a great deal of imaginative thinking creates a 'life' for the character outside of his brief moments in the play. Some actors have gone to such extremes that they have exhausted themselves in order to understand the character's exhaustion, or gotten terribly drunk in order to experience the human state of drunkenness, all in an effort to 'become' the character. As a result, the theatrical classroom has been an emotionally draining and sometimes dangerous environment for a young, vulnerable student.[596] The study of the actor's internal emotions and workings resulted in some controversy between various schools of acting. American acting coach Uta Hagen concurred, "I am frankly fearful of those who profess to teach acting while plunging into areas of actors lives that do not belong on stage or in a

[594] For a brief but thorough discussion of this development see Guthrie's chapter: *Is there Madness in 'the Method'?"* 165.
[595] Discussed later in this chapter in 3.3.2.
[596] This form of actor training is adamantly discouraged and resisted by acting coaches and directors such as Hagen. And Mamet.

classroom."[597] In many cases, The Method disregarded the importance of physical or vocal training.

Actors whose technique developed in line with a consideration of the external and the body, came to be concerned about the notion of delving too deeply into the actor's own psyche, and being unaware of the common, ordinary tasks of everyday human living. Actor George Rose commented in the early 1980s: "It is the things to which one pays attention outside oneself that develop you as an artist. Yet, today, there is an appalling and profane heresy that, if you refer back to your own neuroses, if you refer back to your own pathology, you automatically become a superior artist. Nothing could be further from the truth."[598] The lengths to which some actors went in their quest for characterization blurred the lines between the actor's personal life and his or her on stage life. This behaviour was spurned by many performers, who saw the necessity for the development of a technique in which the voice and body was trained along with an understanding of the human emotion, in order to portray Otherness and still be in control of their character on stage.

In these other schools of acting, then, the creation of a character developed from an observation of the human in the world, rather from than his or her own personal inner workings or neuroses. Technique was learned in order to truthfully represent the emotions of the character. The actor needed to heighten his powers of observation, understand emotion and how to convey it, and develop an awareness of relationship between one human and another. The actor in these training styles concentrated on what is in the world, and learned how to reflect or give an impression of human behaviour.

Through a variety of training techniques, the actor learns his own personal instrument and how to use the physical self to reproduce a human, at the drop of the hat, with a natural sensitivity; all the while maintaining a connecting to and understanding of the script and the playing space. In other words, in order to portray a person you must first be, as Bild has suggested, a person, and second, as Sayers would suggest, that as a person you must be ready to put in the hard work involved in being

[597] Hagen 9.
[598] Brown. 49.

an actor and third, remain aware of your environment. The individual, in order to succeed at portraying a character, needs to be human and a good actor; it has very little to do with piety, or religious fervor, or with deep self-analysis.

3.4. Physical and Emotional Practice: The Rehearsal of Life.

It is clear that in these more external techniques, the actor is preparing and rehearsing life. But this needs practice and work. Hagan has noted that the actor must train himself like the musician trains on his instrument. "Many people…admire the fact that an actor has a trained voice and body, but believe that any further training can come only from actually performing before an audience. I find this akin to the sink or swim method of introducing a child to water."[599] While there are some individuals who have a built-in or natural sensitivity, through training and practice, necessary and appropriate skills will be learned, mastered, and fine-tuned. Through practice, actors begin to recognize patterns in human behaviour, and to find ways to recreate them for the stage. They make them second nature. But how does the actor get to practice his technique in order to be ready to audition for a play and then take on a script? He takes classes with a recognizable coach or instructor. He also practices by taking on opportunities that place him in front of an audience, even if the work is voluntary. He learns and listens to others in the business like directors and seasoned actors. All of these not only build his resume and contacts for business purposes, but also help him to discover the technique that works best for him.

In fact, most professional actors take many classes. It is in the classes that the actor can be guided to discern the character's reasoning behind his actions, ways of establishing onstage relationship, and the means of using his intelligence to mirror the physical and emotional subtleties of human behaviour. We will discuss some of the aspects of the actor's class-work: improvisation, individualized exploration, and scene study, in order to gain further understanding of the necessity for the actor to constantly hone his craft.

[599] Hagen. 3.

3.4.1. Improvisation

If we are trying to reproduce onstage the spontaneity of life then the practice of improvisation is important. We enact a script as if the script does not exist, and we do not know what is happening next. Improvisation is key to understanding this fundamental part of everyday life. We do not know what is happening in the next moment of our life.[600]

Viola Spolin[601] was one of the earliest innovators in the development of improvisation. She recognized that actors needed to learn the quick access to the imagination akin to that of childhood. According to Spolin:

> Acting can be taught to the "average" as well as the "talented" if the teaching process is oriented towards making the theatre techniques so intuitive that they become the students' own. A way is needed to get to intuitive knowledge. It requires an environment in which experiencing can take place, a person free to experience, and an activity that brings about spontaneity.[602]

Spolin developed a series of exercises or games to bring about this opportunity. Augusto Boal[603] and Keith Johnstone,[604] amongst others, have developed this technique further. In Boal's words:

> *Games* help enable the de-mechanization of the body and the mind alienated by the repetitive tasks of the day-to-day, particularly those related to work and to the economic, environmental and social conditions of those who take part in them… *Games* facilitate and oblige this de-mechanization, being, as they are, sensory dialogues where, within the necessary disciple, they demand the creativity which is their essence.[605]

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[600] Many scripts and film dialogues are worked out through the use of improvisation. The actor knows his character well enough to know what he will say next, and how he will react in a spontaneous, non-scripted moment. There are many directors who trust the cast to work in this manner. The discovered dialogue is then made script, and used for the final performance.
[601] Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theatre* (Evanston: Nothwestern University Press, 1983).
[602] Ibid. 4.
[603] Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.
[604] Keith Johnstone, *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (London: Methuen Drama, 2007).
[605] Boal, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*. 5.

3.4.2. Individualized Exploration

There are many different ideas and methods available to help the actor to explore human behaviour. One aim behind much of this practical work is to explore ordinary human activities. The actor recreates and rehearses actual daily activities in order to explore their details and repeat them in a natural manner. While this repetition may seem ridiculous to the average person, it is the artist's job to understand how to make these simple things continue to look simple, and not stilted, mechanical or unnatural.

Strasberg's 'Sense Memory' exercises guide the actor to focus on the small details in simple objects. By concentrating on his own memories of the object in question, the actor can then learn how to endow certain objects with the qualities that connect with the muscular reactions needed in performance. On stage, wood and papier-mâché becomes a heavy barbell; and a glass of water is believed by the audience to be whiskey, iced tea, hot coffee or melted chocolate. These techniques are used as a moment to re-live a type of personal experience, in order to portray a similar moment with sensitivity to the surroundings for the character.

Uta Hagen became frustrated with the fact that she could make use of the training of other performance disciplines like music and dance, but nowhere, outside of formal acting schools or classes, was she able to find simple exercises with which to explore the ordinary everyday human behaviours. It was, after all, herself that she was putting on stage. She developed a series of "object exercises" which are a way for the actor to discover easily how to recreate simple tasks, such as talking to oneself or on the telephone, or giving a sense of being outdoors, while living on stage. Designed as exercises to explore common behaviour, *not* a state of mind or emotion constantly dredged up while on stage, these require the actor to revisit moments from his own life; not to psychoanalyze, but to become aware of the physical body in these situations. There are certain idiosyncratic, human things that we do in everyday living, that the actor needs to study and repeat naturally for the theatre.

3.4.3. Scene Study

Scene study's greatest asset is the opportunity to develop the workings of relationship, to establish believable human interaction. This is important whether portraying Shakespeare, Shaw, Brecht or Stoppard. As humans, it is our connection to something outside of ourselves that draws us to act and react; the player is always in relationship, whether in dialogue or even in monologue. This perspective shapes all action on stage. In scene study the actor practices making human relationships, within the safety of the classroom.

While many other styles of scene study training have been developed, we will look at one that is especially intriguing that draws on Declan Donnellan's notion of the target.[606] Donnellan trains his students in scene study to look for a target outside of themselves as characters; the target is something he yearns for, stretches to achieve, hates, loves; and it is the subject of his action in the play. He instructs the student to not look for a "motive" or a "focus," nor to internalize the character. "You can never know what you are doing, until you first know what you are doing it to."[607] Donnellan asks his students to locate the subject of the scene for that character and to pay attention to it; that target triggers the character's action and emotion, and the scene is driven forward with intention. For example, Romeo's target is Rosalind, but he sees Juliet and his target is dramatically altered. The intense pursuit of the new target, Juliet, drives the actor as Romeo. As the actor keeps his target in sight, his physical and emotional self becomes involved in the scene; he becomes frustrated when he can't achieve it, or joyful when it is near.

3.5. The Call to Act

Some of this work seems as though it can be done by anyone; or at least anyone can learn or be trained to do it, especially the vocal and physical aspects of the job. It is, however, the emotional and psychological, even spiritual, aspects of the work that require that it be pursued by those who feel drawn or called to the task. This emotional and physical replay in front of others is very nerve-racking and not

[606] Declan Donnellan, *The Actor and the Target* (London: Theatre Communications Group, 2005).
[607] Ibid.

everyone feels the call to perform in this manner. Even those who are performative by nature may not find that acting is their true calling. Many people utilize the exploration of the human, but turn their work towards directing, the written word, or the depiction of the human in visual art; some even use these techniques to enhance their people skills for management.

This thesis deals with those who feel the inner call to act, and asks the question: is it a "proper job" for a Christian? It is necessary that we understand how those who are Christian can approach this work as part of their greater vocation under God's command.

4. THEATRE AND THE CHRISTIAN

Vocation calls us into a life in the world. The Old Testament writings are full of instruction regarding true, covenantal living. More pointedly, the Gospel narratives centred on the fact of Emanuel: God with us. The act of the incarnation, in which God set aside the heavenly realm in order to walk among us, revealed a Divine Creator who is incredibly involved with what it is to be a human being. Christ demonstrated, among other things, the truly human; he saw further into human reality than others do, and enacted these insights in his life. He recognized the unnoticed and deeply hidden, and found worth in the social outcast. He has brought to light something more about being human than many, thus far, have supposed.

In God's presence, people should begin to have a heightened perspective regarding His creation.[608] They should see things differently to the way that they have before, and be ready to see things that they have not seen before. The relationship of human beings to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit gives them the potential to be and encounter more. The Christian has the opportunity to see humanity in an enhanced way, with a clarity that comes from an everyday, moment-to-moment vocation with the Divine. But what does that mean with regard to the actor who is Christian?

[608] I am indebted to Jeff Strong, Associate Pastor of Grindstone Bible Church in Waterdown, Ontario, for his sermon Sunday, February 12, 1012. His use of the photographic enhancements on an iphone app as an illustration for way we, as Christians, that we should pay attention to the world around us, at the eleventh hour, added a deeper perspective to this dissertation.

We have already noted that actors (and other artists) in general are in tune with and practicing a heightened form of observation;[609] and the actor who is Christian has the opportunity to bring to the craft even greater levels of seeing and being. The Christian actor's approach to his own studies, technique, and work can be electrified by a spiritual insight that allows him to portray a character's individual persona with a deep heartfelt understanding of this human as seen in God's eyes.

This does not only apply to the actor, however, but also to the audience. The average congregant has the God-given ability to glean more from a performance than the average ticket-holder, simply because he has an opportunity to try to view it through God's perspective. But too often, he or she fails to see it thus, i.e. through God's perspective; and even fails to try. Amongst other failings, some want to censor or hide elements in the world that they find distasteful or disturbing. Alternatively, some only want to see the view of the non-Christian, with no recognition of redemption, or grace, or any of the other qualities brought forth through Christ. This can then lead to a judgementalism that seems closed minded and antagonistic, a thing quite opposite to the message of the Gospel. Some have too often presented a narrow-minded cliquishness, rather than imitating Christ's example by meeting anyone, family, friends, strangers, and adversaries, with openness, as each presenting an *imago*. Rather than picket or censor a play or movie, a Christian may need to go and see it in order to try to understand the other human at work. They can then respond with a religiously trained intelligence to that particular human struggle or misconceived idea of a situation. They have the potential to look beyond the surface of issues, and so to love the humanness in anyone. Theatre, indeed all of the arts, should be embraced as allies, rather than kept at arms-length.

Both Barth and Sayers have showed us something of this positive Christian response to the possibilities of theatre. Barth's exposition of vocation demonstrates that God is concerned about the details of our human life. He is calling us into the details, while He cares for the greater picture. We are to be aware of our person and place in the human and non-human creation; and when we are obedient in the special

[609] See Eliot and Sayers in Chapter 5, and we have just noted ways in which this is part of the actor's training.

vocation set out for us, we begin to see the details in a much clearer fashion. Sayers does this with theatre**.** The controversy that surrounded the radio plays of *The Man Born to Be King* was mainly concerned with the perception that she was making biblical characters too human. And here we see repeated the same attitude: that the scriptures are so holy that they are above humankind. Sayers, on the other hand, saw the dogmas, doctrines and traditions of the Christian faith from the perspective that they were deeply important to our human lives. She displayed them as such through the enactment of human stories and lives by fleshly actors in plays. Her novels, and the plays *The Busman's Honeymoon* and *Love All,* although not of overtly Christian content, discuss and work out situations and dilemmas that are serious (even when written as comic) to human persons. It is our willingness to be the full, true human that Christ calls us to be, that Sayers would say is 'the right attitude.'

4.1. Relationship Again

Relationship is central to human life. Earlier in the thesis, we saw that relationship is a central part of human ontology and consequently anthropology. It is also central to Christian theology and practice; for instance and in particular, through the major Christian emphasis on *agape*. Interestingly, the underlying theme of many plays is that of the broken relationship needing restoration. This aspect of human life is of immediate concern to the actor, whether s/he be Christian or non-Christian. We live in a fallen world of broken relationships, and the theatre often has not participated in the needed healing and changing, in the way that it could and should. Many theatre practitioners, though, do see their work as a vehicle for something more; as a way of working, as actors, to speak restoration or reconciliation into a situation in need. Theatre, even as pure entertainment, does have a place in the healing process.

God calls all of mankind into the vertical relationship with Himself and the horizontal relationship to His creation. He creates a covenant, which is sacred, with man; and desires that humans should then approach the rest of his creation in the same manner that he has demonstrated. Yet, instead of the heightened sense of awareness that this covenant relationship would bring to our inter-human connections, some fail to observe the subtleties and possibilities that God would have us see. They miss relational opportunities that are there. There is something truly human that they have

lost. Sayers and Berry have argued that we have lost a sacred (sacramental) attitude towards work, which the vocational approach would give us. I would extend this further: many have lost the deep sense of vocation in all aspects of life; the primary place in which this vocational quality is lost is in relationships; and one symptom of the loss of vocation is the attitude towards work.

In Chapter Three we discovered that humans are meant to be beings in communion, in relationship with the Divine Holy Other, the fleshly human Other, and the material created Other. People have, in many ways, lost sight of the fact that they are supposed to exist in this state of being. Their activity pushes them into contact, and conflict or connection, with these three aspects or branches of the Other. More often than not, this activity is what we call work. When humans approach relationships with the Christian perspective, many will find that other aspects of life, including work, are affected by the Christian call to love. The Christian faith, with its emphasis on love, then becomes a very important factor in the approach to relationships. It is shown in the love towards God, and then in the relations with the creation. People are to practice loving relationships with families, friends, and neighbours, and the stranger at the gate. Then there is the difficult task of loving enemies, blessing and not cursing them and helping them when they need it. This approach to relationship shapes and defines the Christian. All people need to learn about the demands, difficulties and disciplines of love; and the Christian can bring much to the notion of love as part of the human way of life. Theatre can play a part in our practice of love in all relationships, not merely as the *eros* form that has so often been the emphasis in modern society, but rather as both *fileo* and *agape.*

4.2. The Creative Imagination in Christian Life

We have seen now that the creative imagination often explores what it is to be human and to live a life. Furthermore, as we have seen, the use of our creative imagination in representation, mimesis and imitation is part of our ontology as humans; and one of the many things that it does is to explore and reveal the heart of relationships, our relationships to the Divine, the human and the non-human.

In Sayers' opinion, the Christian church, in all of its denominations, could learn from the actor's ability to set aside differences and follow their calling to tell the

story. We can observe from Sayers that the actor's imaginative connection to the work of conveying narrative could help us in the way that we, as Christians, approach our witness to the Gospel. Humans are called to be a part of the greatest story ever, which should fill them with passion and excitement. They are called into an opportunity to point to the Creator in His creation. The Gospel is not mere entertainment, but it has a life to it that should infuse us with energy. The actor's imaginative use of role play can offer any the opportunity to experience moments of freedom. In that freedom comes the vocation to be the individual human that God calls any person to be; with a creative imagination that enables them to view life from different angles, reshape things in their imagination, and thus, be even more present in life's roles.

5. ACTING AS A "PROPER JOB" AND A VOCATION

The title of this dissertation has been *A "Proper Job"?: Acting as Work and Vocation in Theological Perspective, with Particular Reference to Dorothy L. Sayers.* When discussing the craft of acting, it was evident that the activity involved was creative, hard work, and that there were those whose disposition and desires drew them towards the work as a profession. But what if we ask again whether it is proper, and whether it is a vocation?

The term proper has many meanings; but even so, we are in a position to see by now that it can hardly suggest the range and variety of good values in theatre and acting, which we have uncovered and explored. We have gone beyond "proper." For instance, we have shown, especially in this chapter that acting has a purpose in society, and serves the human community. It deals with the human and daily living on many levels. It has the capacity to search deep emotional human traits and truths; and it can satisfy Man's need for play and leisure. Our search here has also uncovered that, for the worker, acting takes study, skill, and practice.

There is also a different kind of question, which we (especially following Sayers) have raised. Is acting proper in the way that it is executed, is it good work? The idea of properness here has to do with integrity, execution, or truthfulness, all of which have been discussed as important to work of all kinds. In particular, the actor

deals with truthfulness and accuracy in portrayal; and in the interpretation and use of the script.

Yet another type of question also arises. Is the job "proper" in the sense that it is moral or ethical? This question is very pertinent to the Christian; but it applies to all manner of work: we have found that everyone encounters ethical and moral choices and situations in almost any profession or line of work. Thus, for instance, the actor faces moral choices in the use of his training and technique to portray the human, even when he must portray immorality on stage or screen. Again, it is in the nature of being human that our lives are meant to signify beyond ourselves. It is just so with acting, but it is not necessarily always the transcendent which it signifies. The very depth of these choices makes Christian involvement relevant.

We have found in this dissertation that the call to all of humanity to be in relationship with God involves many levels of vocation. The Christian has accepted this many-levelled call. In viewing acting as a "proper job" (and, as we have seen, much more), we have focused on the part of vocation that is work. As Man, he interacts with God's creation; he begins to recognize a means of serving that is best suited for him; and this can become his work. But we have extended this picture. We have discovered, especially with Sayers, that a view of work that considers it as a greater part of God's call to all of humanity to service in community, gives divine purpose to every task. All work has a place in society, giving all people a human purpose in life. It is the same with the actor.

The actor who is Christian recognizes, as other Christians do, his call by God into relationship with Him and with creation. But the person who is an actor has the difficult job of dealing with what it is to be human. In dealing with the human as his job, he also, in a subtle and indirect way, whether he recognizes it or not, represents the vocation of the Other whom he portrays. For the sake of the audience as Other, he takes on the task of presenting his piece of the narrative puzzle, in order that the audience can be given the entire narrative. Again, the actor may be called to portray the human struggle, whether in comedy, drama or tragedy, as an Other who is affected by the world as it is: sometimes good, sometimes evil and sometimes indifferent.

There is all manner of evil in life and living; and acting, by its very nature, struggles with this reality.

The actor, whether he is Christian or not, will be faced with the same dilemmas; but the presence of Christ in the world of the theatre can initiate subtle changes in plays and performances, and in the manner in which the actor interacts with others involved in the project. It is in keeping especially with Sayers' views, that when the actor is Christian, his faith will not extrude beyond the role, unless the role is specifically meant to do so. The secular actor, too, should not interfere with the effect of a part if he is portraying it truthfully. Therefore, like the priest performing the sacraments regardless of his moral state, the role can be portrayed well whether the actor is playing a character from the church or the world, good or evil.

The Christian actor can also serve in other ways. Individuals whose lives demonstrates a strong work ethic and technical standard, and who also exude a love for their fellow Man and a joy in living, will have a positive effect on the profession. If that individual is also strong in his or her relationship with Christ, then they could have a better chance, not only of healthfully surviving the demands of the acting profession, but also of touching the lives of other individuals in a positive life-giving manner.

Acting, therefore, is work. It is also a possible vocation. And, for a Christian as for others, it is a "proper job."

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