

On the June '78 Administrative Faculty retreat, as we were speaking about communicating the [biblical] Story and the use of story to transcend without neglecting the pedestrian ways of attacking the "-isms," I bespoke the need for balance: story, without the guard and guide of analytic thinking, falls captive to sentimentality and/or ideology.

A propaganda institute will not be concerned for balance, but an educational institution will.

An educational institution which is also seen as instrument of a worldview, such as the biblical, will be perpetually in danger of falling into one or the other or both of these traps: the Bible may be sentimentalized, as in most so-called "Bible-schools," and/or ideologized as a revolutionary document converted into a handbook for social-change action. Either distortion requires severe eisegesis, modernizing Jesus into yogi or commisar, romantic or political militant.

Achieving and maintaining this balance is, I believe, the central intellectual task of Christian theological education in our time. But deeper still is the type of spirituality it will require, a type so humble before God as to defeat and/or outwit the blindnesses and arrogances of sentimentality and ideology and their consequent tyrannies of process and structure.

Four days after the retreat I happened to be reading a book on story that speaks to this very polar temptation of sentimentality/ideology: Randel Helms' TOLKIEN'S WORLD (HM/74). Hear pp.76f: "The world of fantasy is a world of desire fulfilled, of beauty past describing, of goodness and wickedness past defiling or redeeming: a world in clear and perilous danger of sliding into merest wish-fulfillment and sentimentality. The author of a successful fantasy will need a strong self-discipline, analagous to but opposite from that required of the realistic author. Realism...has its own kind of sentimentality (as in Socialist Realism, where character and incident serve not their own purposes but that of ideology), and the greater the sentimentality, the closer 'realism' slides toward fantasy. Just as realism can degenerate into fantasy, so fantasy can degenerate into realism." Since the realistic ontology is cause-and-effect, the realistic author "must, to maintain his credibility, make clear...how his events could have happened....Fantasy stands upon a different theory of reality" but equally principled: what the fantasist makes happen must "accord not with his daydreams nor with his own world's laws of common sense, but with the peculiar laws of the sub-created cosmos."...How this speaks to theological education in general and to liberation theology in particular could form the substance of a year-long faculty mutual continuing education.

The rest of this thinksheet intends only to suggest only one frame for handling the above project--pursuant of the 1st principle of pedagogical heuristics, which is "When you can diagram, do." The diagram is one version of one of the two orientations of my cube, the other dimension being the polarity of "God: divine/demonic" and "Nature-Society."

"L" and "R" are the brain hemispheres, and "mind" [the analytic power] and "psyche" [the holistic-synthetic power] are my usual usages. Whereas my usual use of "spirit" is the decisional power, here it includes the decisional sphere, the cosmos-world with an internal logic for decision-making (as in Sun Moon's DIVINE PRINCIPLE, which adds the other pole, viz. this-worldly economic-social-political plausibility and so has great persuasive power)...The vertically written words are my terms for the basic literary categories of the Bible....For examples, put Tolkien at the diamond's top and Marx at its bottom....Biblical storytelling will be truly biblical only when all the diagram's factors, + one's personal story and that of one's family and folk, are included.

