

It is in this area that art in all its manifestations can assist man in pursuing that which is beautiful and righteous.

While Professor Clark makes a great deal of sense in his proposal to foster greater cooperation between art and religion, it seems to me that he fails in his argument against the market place. To be sure, excesses are always to be deplored whether they occur in art, religion, or the market place. The Savior condemned the Pharisees for their excesses in religion and the moneychangers for their excesses in the market place. At the same time, we find the Savior willing to sit at meat with the publicans and the sinners; we find Joseph and Mary accepting the gifts of the Wise Men; and we find the Savior willing to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's. It is too easy for people in liberal arts to condemn the excesses of the businessman while forgetting the unrighteous conduct displayed by many artists, musicians, and writers. An artist's creation does not justify immorality for him any more than a businessman's success in the market place justifies immorality on his part. We are not likely to eliminate the market place by attempting to reject it. The peace of Walden is possible only if others are willing to work in the market place to provide the supporting goods and services.

I would gladly join hands with Professor Clark and attempt to convince businessmen that profits will not be eliminated if their products are made more beautiful, if their attitudes toward their employees are more benign and if their participation in society is more generous. Success in the market place does not insure a place in the kingdom — nor, on the other hand, does it necessarily deny the kingdom. Evil is not confined to the market place and to the materialism which is an integral part of modern society. By using the products and successes of the market place, it is possible to join with both art and religion in reducing evil wherever it occurs — whether in economic pursuits, in government, or in religion.

LIFE TO THE SPIRIT: A REJOINDER

Marden Clark

My first reaction to Mr. Christmas and Mr. Driggs was to hurry back to my essay to see if I had really said those things. I seemed to be hearing myself through a kind of haze that blurred my original emphasis and tone. My emphasis was that the life of the spirit is a supreme value, that art and religion can cooperate in the nourishing of that life, and that the forces and values I try to define by "market place" oppose art and religion in their task. Re-reading convinced me that my critics do quote my words but that they distort my original emphasis and tone.

But they also catch me in vulnerable spots and raise important issues that deserve an answer. First, however, a note on the genesis of my essay. Two long-time concerns prompted me to write. One was the number of troubled students who came to tell me of their religion teachers warning them that nothing worthwhile could come from their literature classes and that in taking such classes they were jeopardizing their testimonies. I wanted to say something to these students and — indirectly — to their teachers. The other was the growing sense that we Mormons are succumbing rapidly to the very forces of materialism that we so roundly condemn “out there.” Hence my two-fold emphasis.

Now to the objections. Essentially, Mr. Christmas opposes my plea for a merger of the forces of art and religion, Mr. Driggs my attack on the market place. Both find the essay rather melodramatic: Mr. Christmas with his “black beast,” Mr. Driggs with his “good guys” and “bad guys.” More specifically, Mr. Christmas objects that the essay is superficial (the “on the surface” comment in his first paragraph, a nice damning with faint praise), that I distort the history of art, that I perform “semantic handstands,” and that the methods of art and religion are irreconcilable.

Mr. Christmas is right to object to my “dismissing” the rivalry of art and religion as “mere jealousy,” if that is what I do. The jealousy thing was partly a touch of whimsy that apparently didn't come off, partly a response to the local situations, where I fear it has more than whimsical application.

I can plead guilty to a bit of melodrama without seriously jeopardizing either my basic position or tone. Any discussion of complex problems has to over-simplify. And I can only leave it to our readers to judge the superficiality of the essay. Not very much really hangs on what Mr. Christmas calls my “serious distortion of art history,” i.e., that the mutual distrust of religion and art is a comparatively modern thing. But simply that the movement which produced the “growing cleavage” between the two was known as *Christian Humanism* suggests that, whatever the state of their consciences, the artists of the movement generally worked well within the church. I hardly expected, however, to see Sidney used against me in this context. I could hardly ask for a more earnest spokesman than Sidney, who himself was trying to answer essentially the same objections to art that pushed me into writing. Here he summarizes in part his reasons for awarding the laurel to the poet:

. . . since both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto [poetry], the one of “prophesying,” the other of “making” . . . ; since neither [the poet's] description nor his end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners; since therein (namely in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges) he doth not only far pass the historian, but, for instructing, is well-nigh comparable to the philosopher, and, for moving, leaves him far behind him; since the Holy Scripture (wherein there is no uncleanness) hath whole parts in a poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it. . . .

I agree that the semantic problem gets in the way. It always does in such discussions. But too much pausing for semantic analysis can sponge up a lot of rhetorical energy — as I risk doing here. Any word or metaphor picks up its complex of meaning from both its large context of general usage and

its immediate context of sentence, paragraph, and total work. I can hardly understand Mr. Christmas's difficulty with "enrichment" and "life of the spirit." In isolated passages, yes. "No enrichment, no art" obviously poses difficulties outside the context of the essay. I work largely with twentieth-century literature. I am only too aware that much of it, like its counterparts in painting, music, and sculpture, sounds on first hearing dissonant, cacophonous, ugly. But this is seldom our final impression on closer acquaintance — that is, if it is art. I would almost let the little aphorism stand as a definition of art. For I consider the artistic process a process of ordering, defining, giving meaning to — even enriching — experience. I certainly do not mean the word merely as a semantic pun.

Nor "life of the spirit." If one can really read through the broad context of allusion and example and still have real questions about what the phrase means to me in the final paragraphs, then I must confess failure — and frustration. A concept at once so vital and so delicate as "life of the spirit" hardly yields to denotative analysis.

With "market place" I am in deeper trouble. Alas! I fear I do expect too much of my little metaphor, trying to make it exclude the legitimate functions of supplying and distributing human needs and yet include materialism in all its manifestations. Exploitation is the key. But my summary distinguishes three levels: the money changers, i.e., the exploiters of both art and religion; the emphasis on things and gadgets; and the broader philosophical materialism, i.e., logical positivism and its concomitant beliefs in economics, history, and Religion. The first is exploitation by definition; the other two are frighteningly capable of exploitation. To clarify I can here only point to the extremes. I would hope with Mr. Driggs that most business and industry is close to the legitimate end of the scale. I hardly think of Herman Crismon as exploiting me when he services my car at his Texaco station — though the past of the oil industry itself may not bear too close an inspection. Close to the other end of the scale, and in a context most Mormons will find almost too familiar to be very useful in argument, we all recognize the essential evil in the continued promotion of tobacco and liquor in the face of the already amassed evidence of the harm they do. Mormons know the men behind such promotion as "designing men in the latter days." Just such exploitation of human weakness in the name of luxury or salvation but for the sake of profit or power I try to catch in the elastic net of my market-place metaphor. It is only a step beyond this legal exploitation to the illegal traffic in dope or to the exploitation of whole peoples in the name of dialectical materialism. And I must assure Mr. Driggs that I will not feel better about it if The Association for the Promotion of Tobacco announces tomorrow a ten-million-dollar grant for the support of indigent writers — or Mormon missionaries.

One final word on the semantic problem. "Merger" was obviously the wrong word, except as it suggests pooling of resources to get the job done. "Fraternity" comes closer to the kind of cooperation I envision between art and religion. Perhaps I got trapped by my own borrowing from the literal market place.

With that market place I have little quarrel, except that it lends itself so easily to exploitation, to cheapening, and to precisely the reading of history which Mr. Driggs gives, a reading that tends to see social and, though indirectly, even artistic and religious salvation in economic terms. I distrust that

reading. Except as it makes possible my books, my recordings, my reproductions of great paintings, and as it keeps my body alive and comfortable during my quest (I agree with Mr. Driggs that it does all these and I am grateful to it), even this literal market place can have little to do with my salvation. Salvation is internal and personal, not external and social or economic — though again the external and social and economic can help.

And a final note about my essay being “in orbit” around the generalities. I could not take space to document references to Marxism or TV or Madison Avenue or even Dr. Peale. I felt that at least with these and other such forces I could trust simply to allusion and to common experience. But, for me, unfortunately these forces refuse to remain mere generalities. They are great and powerful — some of them even awesome — forces in our world. And they all, I insist, oppose the deepest life of the spirit, some by direct attack, some by subterfuge, some by simply offering the cheap substitute in the name of the genuine.

All this says, of course, that I do not believe the methods of art and religion so irreconcilable as does Mr. Christmas — though “methods” are not really what I want to reconcile. At the extremes some kinds of art obviously cannot be reconciled with at least formal religion. And, whatever, I want no dictation from religion — or anything else — to the artist. But both can and do minister to the life of the spirit.

In spite of my sometimes querulous tone, I appreciate the close attention Mr. Christmas and Mr. Driggs have given my essay. I have had to disregard many of their objections. But they have forced me to take another look at the essay and at the position it develops. That look has caused misgivings along the way. But it has increased my concern about the “market place” as enemy to the life of the spirit and reinforced my belief in the supreme importance of that life and in the art and religion as its supreme nourishers.