The Dialogue staff apologizes to Eric Woltersdorff for the mistake made in the lay-out of his article. The first two paragraphs of his piece "Dorms vs. Apartments: Living Out the Options" were placed at the end of his article instead of at the beginning where they belonged. Needless to say, this changed the tone and sense of his article drastically.
A journal of Calvin College art and commentary published monthly by the Calvin College Communications Board. Address correspondence to Dialogue, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. Copyright 1977 by the Calvin College Communications Board. Dialogue is printed on 100% recycled paper.

contents

COMMENT
Why Radio at Calvin?
Jan Chapin 4

FEATURES
Language Study and Liberal Arts:
The Interpretation of Reality
Clarence Walhout 6
A Dime a Dozen
Eric Jager 10
Facing the Obligations of Mass Communication
Sher Jasperse 12
Of Centennials and the Holy Grail
Ronald Wells 21
Journalism at Calvin: A Review
Del Nykamp 24
English-teacher Blues
Mary Hietbrink 30
Taxi Driver and the Savage Cinema
Leonard Sweetman 32

FICTION
Johnny Dooley and the Sandlot Boys
Lori Allen 15

POETRY
Connie De Haan 9
Dan Hawkins 9
T. J. De Boer 9

ART
Mary Veenstra 2
Linda Ruiter 8
T. Macyn Bolt 11
Ron Pederson 17
Tim Van Laar 19
Jil Evans 35

Cover by Greg Lidstone
Illustrations by Henry Gysen and Jeff Robinson

Editor
Debbie Ellens

Associate Editors
Rolf Bouma
Dennis DeWinter
Stan Myers
J. Bruce Rockey
Marianne Scholte
T. A. Straayer

Faculty Associate Editors
Ken Kulper
Stanley Wiersma
Robert DeVries
Robert Bolt
Why Radio at Calvin?

Jan Chapin

After close to ten years of silence, WCAL once again went on the air last year, broadcasting to the dining halls via telephone cable, and by the end of the year was transmitting into three of the six dormitories by carrier current. This year, WCAL is again on the air in the six dorms, with hopes of going into Knollcrest East. But the questions are raised, “Why a radio station at Calvin?” “What does it offer?” “What can it offer?” These are the questions to be answered in this article.

First, why radio at Calvin? It is maintained that Calvin is a Christian liberal arts college. According to professionals in radio, a liberal arts background with experience in a college radio station is the best item to have on a résumé for a job in broadcasting. They are not looking for communications majors. Broadcasters feel that a communications major has learned nothing more in a classroom than what a sociology or math major has learned in his experience in a radio station, and that a sociology or math major has a broader knowledge of the rest of the world. Most importantly, however, Calvin is a Christian liberal arts school. The opportunities in Christian broadcasting are limited only by one’s imagination. Since most of the readers of this article are Calvinists, I need not go into great detail as to how the Great Commission applies to all aspects of the world, including radio; nor is it right to wall off a section of the world and hand it to the devil, but rather we are able to renew and transform all of the world. So, obviously, it is our task to renew and transform the world of broadcasting as well, both in commercial radio in this country and in evangelistic outreach in this country and abroad. Some of the advantages of broadcasting as a means of evangelism are as follows:

1. The immediacy and tremendous coverage of radio
   Jesus said “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Radio station HCJB of the World Radio Missionary Fellowship, Inc., in Quito, Ecuador, broadcasts seventy-two hours a day (simultaneous broadcasts) in sixteen languages. With a power of one-half million watts it is heard throughout the world. What better way then this for missionaries to reach many areas closed to their physical presence?

2. Radio’s inexpensiveness
   As far as its audience is concerned, the cost per capita of radio is infinitesimal. For example, not counting overhead, labor hours, and pens and pencils, Chimes is published once a week at a cost of $500. Comparatively, WCAL broadcasts every day at just the cost of electricity. Even comparing budgets, which include overhead and pens and pencils, Chimes’ total budget for the year is $18,000, while WCAL’s budget (including the Knollcrest East expansion) is less than $6,000.

3. Radio’s personalized nature.
   How often do we speak of Walter Cronkite coming into our living rooms every night, or of Paul Harvey coming into our kitchens or our cars? Everett Parker, in Religious Radio: What to Do and How (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948), wrote:

   The experienced broadcaster is talking to one person—or, at most, two or three—sitting in a living room, a kitchen, an automobile. . . . The listener, on his side, has no doubts about his relationship to the broadcaster. It must be a very personal relationship; otherwise, a twist of the radio dial wipes the program out of existence.

   How much more so today. A pastor is no longer limited to the people within a room or a building; potentially he has the world as his immediate audience.

But here and now, what does WCAL have to offer? For one thing it offers experience: a chance to learn by doing, the first step in an exciting and rewarding career of broadcasting! This may sound like a recruiting pitch, but these things are available to participants. And, as has been said, this initial experience is vital to anyone heading for a career in broadcasting, either commercial or evangelistic. But what about the majority, who couldn’t care less about careers in broadcasting? Well, to them it offers a chance to critique those who are learning (the roommate, the person down the hall). It also offers a chance to experience the experimental nature of
college radio. Since WCAL is not a commercial station, it is not competing with Grand Rapids stations. It can be experimental with things like radio drama or new kinds of music; it is limited only by the creativity of the college. WCAL also offers a further outlet to writers, musicians, and actors, none of whom need be regular staff members to have their work performed.

Finally, what can radio offer Calvin in the years to come? All that has been mentioned, and much more. God made us in His image, and hence creative. Radio has come a long way, but is far from finished. If we continue to be creative, it will stay alive and be a vital part of our community. The more we realize that this field is an involved business which God uses mightily, the more training and specialization is demanded of each person working in broadcasting. High quality and creativity has given radio enormous influence. We are called to channel that high quality and creativity to the glory of God.

So why does Calvin have radio? Because it is another method God has given us to take His Word into the world. And if we are to do anything for our Lord, we are to do it as well as possible, which means with training and experience. And if our work is to be significant and worthwhile, we must be well trained, able to compete in the world of technology for the time and attention of those we are seeking to reach through our media. Where better to get that training than at a Christian liberal arts college like Calvin?
Language Study and Liberal Arts: The Interpretation of Reality

Every language interprets reality in a way that is in some degree, large or small, different from the interpretation of every other language. In a recent book on the theory of translation entitled After Babel George Steiner argues that every act of speech and communication, even within a single language, involves interpretation:

Thus a human being performs an act of translation, in the full sense of the word, when receiving a speech-message from any other human being. Time, distance, disparities in outlook or assumed reference, make this act more or less difficult. Where the difficulty is great enough, the process passes from reflex to conscious technique. Intimacy, on the other hand, be it of hatred or love, can be defined as confident, quasi-immediate translation... In short: inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. (p. 47)

Speech is already interpretation, and therefore every use of speech is inescapably interpretative. We "translate" meanings whenever we speak. Except perhaps in special languages such as mathematics and logic, there is no "exact equivalence" in the speech acts of those who communicate. If this is the case, and if it is also the case that liberal education at its very heart is characterized by growth which comes through grappling with alternative interpretations of reality, then the most fundamental value of language study and the one most closely related to a philosophy of liberal education is that such study presents us with alternative ways of seeing or interpreting reality.

The ways in which languages can interpret reality differently may not be obvious, and the argument just stated may therefore initially seem dubious. How, indeed, can languages interpret reality in different ways? Aren't the differences in our interpretations of reality entirely a matter of social, economic, philosophical, religious, or other differences? Can languages themselves, apart from ideological differences, involve alternative interpretations of reality?

Languages do not, of course, present totally disparate interpretations of reality (though it might be observed that neither do differing ideological points of view). Without some common basis of similarity or agreement, no communication at all, whether ideological or linguistic, could occur. The differences I have in mind are smaller and more piecemeal, but nevertheless they are differences which are significant enough to make language study a legitimate part of liberal education. Let us become more specific.

An axiomatic principle of language theory, a principle developed by the French scholar Ferdinand de Saussure at the beginning of this century, is that words are arbitrary signs for what they represent. For example, the word dog has no necessary connection with what it signifies, namely a certain kind of four-legged animal that barks. We could call such an animal a pipi or a snorkor a chien or a Hund. The name is an arbitrary sign: a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But as Jonathan Culler points out, the arbitrariness of the sign in Saussure’s theory implies two things: 1) that the word or sound used to designate a thing is arbitrary, but also 2) that the things that are designated by “equivalent” words in different languages may not be exactly identical. The things that are referred to in one language may not in every sense be the same set of things that are referred to in another language. Or to put it in another way, the things that are referred to by the words of various ordinary languages are not to be thought of as a set of objects which are external to language and which various languages then “name” with different words which mean exactly the same thing. Rather, languages are already interpretations of the things that are referred to: “A language does not simply assign arbitrary names to a set of independently existing concepts. It sets up an arbitrary relation between signifiers of its own choosing on the one hand, and signifieds of its own choosing on the other” (Culler,

Mr. Walhout is a Professor of English.

Clarence Walhout
Saussure, p. 23).

Since this concept is not altogether a familiar one, it will be worth our while to listen further to Jonathan Culler's discussion of the notion that a word is not simply a “name” given to some wholly independent object:

From what I have said so far about signifier and signified, one might be tempted to think of language as a nomenclature: a series of names arbitrarily selected and attached to a set of objects or concepts. It is, as Saussure says, all too easy to think of language as a set of names and to make the biblical story of Adam naming the beasts an account of the very nature of language. If one says that the concept 'dog' is rendered or expressed by dog in English, chien in French and Hund in German, one implies that each language has an arbitrary name for a concept which exists prior to and independently of any language.

If a language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. One would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. If language were like this the task of learning a new language would also be much easier than it is. But anyone who has attempted either of these tasks has acquired, alas, a vast amount of proof that languages are not nomenclatures, that the concepts of signifieds of one language may differ radically from those of another. (Saussure, p. 21)

If language is a system of signs whose essential function is to interpret and not simply to designate meanings, how may the differences between languages at the level of interpretation be seen? A few isolated sentences taken out of context from the book Semantics: A New Outline by F. R. Palmer will also illustrate the point:

It may seem obvious that foot is appropriate to mountains, or eye to needles, but a glance at other languages shows that it is not. In French the needle does not have an eye... and in many languages the mountain does not have a foot. (p. 86)

In Classical Greek there is a superordinate term to cover a variety of professions and crafts, 'carpenter,' 'doctor,' 'flute player,' 'heirloom,' 'shoemaker,' etc., but none in English. The nearest possible term is craftsman, but that would not include doctor, flute player or heirsman. (p. 76)

Where English talks of a 'thickness gauge' Japanese talks of a 'thinness gauge.' (p. 80)

... in many languages a different term [for being married] is used for husband and wife, quite often the active form of the verb for the husband and the passive form for the wife—John 'marries' Mary but Mary 'is married' to John. (p. 3)

Many languages have noun classes that function grammatically like the gender classes of the Indo-European and Semitic languages. (p. 123)

Some classical languages—Sanskrit, Greek and Arabic—had, in addition [to singular and plural], dual—referring to two objects. Other languages, e.g. Fijian and Tigre (Ethiopia), have distinctions of 'little plurals' and 'big plurals' too. (p. 124)

It is not necessary to multiply examples further. But we may add one related observation: when we contemplate the fact that four or five thousand languages are now in use and the likelihood that an equal number have disappeared (cf. Steiner, Alter Babel, p. 51), then the credibility of the view that languages articulate diverse ways of experiencing and interpreting reality can only be enhanced. Indo-European languages, in spite of differences, are much closer to one another than the languages which represent over one hundred different language families and thousands of diverse cultures. If we find among German and English, French and Spanish, a lack of exact equivalencies, how much more so in languages which emerge from cultures and language families even more remote from one another in their structural and semantic patterns? Walter Ong in a discussion of our Western tendency to "spatialize" time writes:

English, like modern Western languages generally, is impoverished in qualifiers derived directly from time, such as old and young or enduring or permanent. The Hopi Indians, Benjamin Whorf has explained in Language, Thought, and Reality... do not think of today as a part or section of the time-mass designated yesterday. They do not picture today as 'next' to yesterday (as on our calendars) but rather think of time in terms of its perpetual 'getting later.' (The Presence of the Word, p. 44)

One of the most important values of language study in a liberal arts college is that such study can increase one's awareness of the diverse ways in which our common experiences have been interpreted. We find even in the study of languages alternative ways of looking at reality:

... the communication of information, of ostensive and verifiable 'facts,' constitutes only one part, and perhaps a secondary part, of human discourse. The potentials of fiction, of counterfactuality,
of undecidable futurity profoundly characterize both the origins and nature of speech. . . . They determine the unique, often ambiguous tenor of human consciousness and make the relations of that consciousness to 'reality' creative. . . . Through language, we construct what I have called 'alternatives of being'. . . . To a greater or lesser degree, every language offers its own reading of life. (Steiner, After Babel, p. 473)

The various disciplines in the college curriculum are justified in a liberal arts program because each in its own way forces us to grapple with alternative ways of looking at and interpreting the realities of our experience. And that is what the study of languages can do also. If the study of languages does not seem to entail, as most other disciplines do, the grappling with ideological issues, yet it does—or can—help us to see that at every level of experience, even in our everyday use of such an ordinary thing as language, we are engaged in a constant process of interpreting the world in and around us.
Drummer from the Gutter

With an orchestra from yesterday
he strikes his sticks upon the tar
to the imagined notes inside a bar
that tell which pulse to play.
He times his beats to a mongrel’s bay
or the bellow of a car,
and receives his wage in a broken jar
from the gutter where he lay.
Dawn ‘til dusk the drummer pounds
unnoticed by the crowd;
but to the wise his taps are loud:
for on the Ave. of the Americas resounds
the death roll of a people.

Connie De Haan

Dead Souls in Typewriters

Shots upstairs
in smooth rhythm
as if from an automatic rifle.

Figures typed.
A soul wounded
bleeds on the page
in diluted colors—
blue without oxygen.

When it is done
only a fragment
of the soul is left;
the rest lost
somewhere between the fingers
and the ribbon.

T. J. De Boer
A Dime a Dozen

Eric Jager

The fifty-cent word isn't worth much anymore. The multisyllabic term with a Latin ancestry and a fancy ending used to have clout when slipped adroitly into conversation or writing. But no longer. Many long, technical terms are now common currency, thanks to popularized science, bureaucracy, and the advertising industry. Despite protests from word-watchers, word-peddlers continue to debase the language.

The collegiate sphere is hardly immune to the problem of word-inflation. In fact, academia itself begets a great quantity of highfalutin prose. To be sure, the exchange of complex ideas demands sophisticated terminology; however, the abundance of such rhetoric tempts some to imitate the form without the substance. In college writing there is often less by coining and circulating new ways of saying the same old things.

The following examples of word-inflation and language abuse all come from Calvin College publications of the past year.

Audio-visual's concept attempts to circumvent uni-sensory approaches to learning. It does not rely on one sense, or on one teaching method. Rather, it is a total learning experience based on multi-sensory education.

A concept can exist in the mind—or even in a higher realm, according to Plato—but certainly not within the Audio-Visual Department. Circumvent should be circumcised from the sentence, for it draws attention to itself and away from what is being said. And the pseudo-technical uni-sensory merits dismissal along with its equally pretentious cousin, multisensory. Such words distract the reader and obstruct communication. The writer seems to have relied on sense no more than his concept did. The inept word choice makes the mention of a total learning experience simply ludicrous: after reading three sentences one has learned nothing.

But if the message intended transmits to the hearer's brain through more than one medium, and consequently through more than one sense, its accuracy and vividness is greater; hence retention of it.

This pseudo-sentence must be scanned several times before the message intended transmits to the brain; it is the height of irony to speak of accuracy and vividness in a sentence possessing neither. What's more, words such as transmit and brain lend a clinical tone to the subject, and medium conjures up the atmosphere of a séance. These interfering echoes do nothing but detract from what is already a catastrophe of composition.

As Americans create issue by issue, this new experience-cognition of our situation must be instilled in all who study economics. If a name be necessary to legitimize the situation, call it "Americonomics," for it cannot ultimately be contained by any other concept.

The phrase as Americans create issue by issue suggests a bunch of breeding rabbits. But the impact of experience-cognition sends us from the field back into the laboratory. Experience-cognition is an inflated substitute for (I think) understanding. Ironically, it prevents just that. One hears of instilling pride, but the thought of instilling experience-cognition turns the stomach like ill-flavored cough medicine. As for the second sentence, it is exceedingly doubtful that merely a name can legitimate anything. And the invented Americonomics is, of course, an unforgivable gaucherie. Both sentences are garbage—my disgust cannot ultimately be contained by any other concept.

Such facts as the achievement-orientatedness and empiricalness of most Americans might well be incorporated into future economic theory. The previous two variables barely toy with the immense maze of varied input needed to formulate future economic theory and decision.

Adding needless syllables is a favorite diversion of those who abuse words. The pretentious will choose orientate over orient every time. What happened here is that a novice added ness to the already inflated orientated, and then parked another long word in front. The term like achievement-orientatedness puts a lot of strain on a hyphen. Hook up another word, like empiricalness, and the sentence gets really heavy—so heavy that it fails to move.

In the debris which purports to be a second sentence, one finds what were previously facts mysteriously transformed to variables. The meaning of barely toys is anybody's guess; it merely adds a childish note to the pseudo-technical tone. The mention of a maze is apt in this meaningless mess. Variated input could describe anything from cake ingredients to the contents of a trash container. One can only say that these are two sentences, full of sound and rather dreary, signifying nothing.

Words should not be meaningless, for when language signifies nothing, ideas die for want of expression. Word-inflation must be stemmed. Fifty-cent words must not be robbed of their value. Would that word-peddlers of today heeded advice of long ago: A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver (Proverbs 25:11).
Facing the Obligations of Mass Communications

The launching of the first U.S. communications satellite, Telstar I, on July 11, 1962, marked the beginning of an era in the field of communications. President Kennedy hailed the event as the key that could unlock the door to universal communication and accord—a tremendous new pathway to an empathic world.

Today, as a result of multiplying technological capabilities, that dream of a truly global communications network is leaping and bounding toward realization. If the world transformed by the marvels of science, in this area as well as others, is not the rosy one anticipated, that has not repressed the technologist’s urge to develop more and more sophisticated tools or, for that matter, the social scientist’s belief in the potential held out by these tools for achieving international understanding.

Questions about the positive and negative implications of old or new communications systems for human society are obviously difficult ones to answer. But channels and methods of communication do play an increasingly influential role in our society on a community, national, and worldwide basis. To the extent that we are unaware of that role or unable to understand or control it, it becomes increasingly problematic. Concerns about the responsibilities of the press in a democratic society, the impact of television on its viewers, or the rights of nations to transmit radio broadcasts across national borders are all aspects of that problem. And these represent only the more specific and immediate concerns that have grown out of a whole range of general issues involved with the uses of communications systems, questions about purposes, effects, prospects for the future.

It hardly seems necessary to say that, as Christians committed to furthering God’s redemptive work in our culture, we cannot ignore these issues, although their complexity may mislead us into thinking that they are simply “beyond us.” Complex they are, as are all of the global concerns with which Christians have, to varying degrees, become involved. Here is yet another problem, or another part of the problem, that demands our attention and analysis.

In order to encourage thoughtful evaluation of the role of communication and communications systems in our society, I wish to offer a few broad considerations that may serve as background to such study.

Mass communication systems are important only because of the people who use them and the messages they transmit. We must avoid being overwhelmed by, or overly enamored of, the technology that makes such communication possible. The danger inherent in technological “progress” unaccompanied by scrupulous attention to humanitarian goals and values is well known to us. Progress in the area of communications is no exception to this. If we cannot all understand the technology of modern communications systems, we can all be aware of its limitations. In addition to this, we can encourage cogent analysis of the means of communication by members of the Christian community who do possess a knowledge of the sciences involved.

The mass media do bring people closer together, in the sense that they
Sher Jasperse

increase what people know about each other. As the global communications network evolves, this process of familiarization occurs more and more on an international level. An assumption underlying the development of international mass media is that this increasing contact will facilitate better understanding and more harmonious relationships among the peoples of the world. In the past two decades the concept of "the international free flow of information and ideas" has become a popular one among national leaders, diplomats, and others. The United Nations Declaration on Freedom of Information (drafted 1959, not yet approved) and other multinational documents stress the contribution that communication among citizens of different countries can make to the establishment of world peace and security.

But to the extent that this flow of information between nations has been achieved, it has not always resulted in the kind of understanding and acceptance that its proponents hope for. The very inability of some nations to agree even about what this "free flow" constitutes—in regard to such matters as the rights of journalists working in foreign countries or the regulation of communication satellites—indicates the serious nature of the obstacles blocking the way to a genuinely open system of international communication. In spite of these problems, opening channels of communication between nations remains a priority item in the realm of international negotiations.

Major portions of the Helsinki agreements adopted in 1975 give evidence of this.

IV

Mass communications do affect international diplomacy and affairs. Under some circumstances they become the actual catalysts for events. The media are thus powerful agents of social action and change. Mass communications can play a significant part, for example, in the course of East-West relations or the development of Third World Countries.

Given this, the need to assess the possible impacts of the media in different situations and to use the media responsibly at all times becomes especially clear. Furthermore, the media's potential for constructive influence in the arenas of local, national, or world events demands a creative interest and participation in these communication processes on the part of the Christian community.

V

Media systems throughout the world can be classified according to whether they operate under an authoritarian or a libertarian system of government. Communist nations typically represent those countries in which only government-controlled press and broadcasting systems can exist. Mass media in the United States and most West European nations thrive, in the main, independent from their governments.

But regardless of these national political orientations, the governments of almost every established nation boast of constitutional freedoms granted to their national media. The pertinent question is not whether the media are free, but how much or what kind of freedom they have. Observe, for example, the manner in which Soviet scholar Yevgeny Prokhorov describes press freedom in the Soviet Union:

Freedom of the press means a journalism that serves social progress, the lofty and objectively genuine ideals of humanity as revealed and formulated by Marxist theory.... Freedom of Soviet journalism is a principle that presupposes a clear realization of the duties imposed on every journalist if he wishes fittingly and effectively to implement the freedoms he has been provided with—the freedom of creativity, freedom to study and explore our reality, freedom of criticism, and freedom of democratic discussion of those problems of social life that have matured.

In the United States, the broad freedoms promised to the media by the First Amendment have been upheld, during most of American history, to an almost amazing degree, when compared with many other nations. Government control of the press and broadcasting systems lies mainly in the domain of the courts, and the courts have traditionally assumed a favorable attitude toward
the media. Today, for example, it is nearly impossible to successfully prosecute a defamation suit against an American newspaper.

When mass media systems are viewed from a worldwide and long-range perspective, however, it appears that there is movement toward the authoritarian end of the continuum of media-government relationships; in other words, there is a trend toward greater government control of mass communications. As governments or individual citizens become dissatisfied with media performance, deploring, for example, negativity, lack of responsibility, or poor quality, they are more inclined to see restrictions on the media in a positive light. A completely free system of mass communications, many say, is nothing more than anarchy. John C. Merrill, professor of journalism at the University of Missouri, speaks of this emerging attitude:

There are those among us, and they are growing in number very rapidly, who extol harmony over dissonance, adaptation over competition and friction, social stability and viability over social disharmony and contention. And they are wise enough to see that the communications media play a large part in social conflict... they have set about to change the whole meaning of press freedom so that autonomous journalism will be considered irresponsible whereas “socially controlled” journalism will be both “free and responsible.”

The emphasis in this kind of thinking, then, is on the need for the media to exercise responsibility. There is unquestionably something to be said for this idea of the media bearing a certain responsibility to their society; as Christians we should be the last to want to separate freedom from responsibility. But there is also room to question the extent to which media responsibility should be a legislated, or government-enforced, phenomenon. If government control is the direction in which we choose to move in reforming the media, we must prepare for fundamental changes in the nature of our mass communications system. If not, then we must be among those members of our society who are willing to help produce that element of responsibility; we must become, in that case, responsible participants in the communications processes. We must strive to become good communicators—in terms of the press, for instance, good writers and readers. We must engage in continuous and thorough critique of the media.

This critique on the part of citizens can take many forms, and it does not always presuppose the need for a special background or education in order for criticisms to be accurate and realistic. The other day I ran across a comment on journalism by Oscar Wilde:

As for modern journalism, it is not my business to defend it. It justifies its own existence by the great Darwinian principle of the survival of the vulgarest.

Wilde, through this clever non-defense, takes a deft, if minor stab at the press. We, for our part, are perhaps only beginning to discover the ways in which we can critique and influence the media. The concept of “the media,” of course, encompasses everything from the organization newsletter to the numerous telecommunications satellites that now orbit our earth. We are given great latitude in the area of communications within which to select our own objects of critique and participation; in order to become effective in this endeavor, it is essential that each of us does so.
I can still remember the first time I saw Johnny Dooley. It was at our sandlot league. See, we have a group of guys that get together two or three times a month and play a game of sandlot baseball. They're all my age, about twenty-four, but most of them are married. It's a chance for them to get out of the house and have a little fun. I'm the catcher. I'm not real great but I'm adequate, I guess.

Anyway, that's where I first saw Johnny Dooley. I was retrieving one of the many wild balls that Wiley, the pitcher, continually flings over my head, when I saw him. He was standing behind the rotted wooden backstop, a rather small kid who looked undernourished. He was wearing blue jeans that were too big and bulged over his knees and fell over his shoes, dragging in the dust, and brown hair with blonde streaks through it. What got to me was his face. He was watching us with a look of adoration, and awe, and complete absorption. He regarded me solemnly.

"Hi," I said congenially, smiling.

"Hello," he replied. I could see he wasn't very talkative so I returned to the field and crouched down for another of Wiley's pitches, but I could feel the boy's eyes burning a hole in my back. All through the rest of the game I felt him staring at me, and it made me so nervous that I missed some important throws at home. Even Wiley noticed it when we packed up to leave.

"What's eating you?" he asked. "Your plays were even dumber than usual tonight."

"Gee, thanks," I retorted sarcastically. Wiley was insulted.

"So you want a real honest-to-goodness baseball pitch, huh," he ground out tightly through his lips. "Okay, I'll give you one." I half rose.

"Hey, wait a minute!" I protested. "Remember he's just a little--"

Wham! I couldn't believe it. Wiley had thrown him his fastest pitch, and the kid had dropped it neatly beyond second base. We were stunned, to say the least. Wiley's mouth dropped two feet. Johnny smiled.

"That was a good pitch," he complimented. Wiley went after the ball, muttering under his breath.

"You haven't by any chance played baseball before, have you?" I asked him.

"Yes, at school," Johnny said. "And little league. I have a four seventy-five batting average." Wiley pitched him a few
more balls, and each time the kid put them past the infield. Then he politely thanked us and left.

Wiley was in a sour mood. Having an eleven year old wallop some of his best pitches into the outfield was not a happy experience. As he packed his trunk, he kept shaking his head, repeating over and over, "I'm telling you, the kid's a pro!" He still couldn't believe it. I slammed the trunk of my car shut and smiled at him angelically.

"Maybe we could get him to replace you," I said sweetly. "He's got a better batting average." That scored. Wiley left in a huff.

The kid came to most of our games that year. I never really got used to his eyes staring at my back, but I missed him if he wasn't there. And afterwards, me and Wiley or one of the other guys would pitch him a ball or two.

The next year, though, he didn't come. After three games I got used to his not being there. I figured his folks must have moved away, or else forbidden him to hang around such rough characters. I never really thought about him much after that, except when Wiley struck out.

Then, oh—it must have been about five years later—I saw something in the paper about Whitewater High School's baseball team. I wouldn't have read it except the big headline said— "John Dooley puts Whitewater past Ridgeland, 4-3." The kid had slammed a home run with two on base in the ninth inning. I felt a grin spread over my face. I was as proud of him as if he were my own son. I decided that I would get to a Whitewater game sometime.

I called up Wiley and asked him if he wanted to go with me. "Johnny who?" he asked.

"Dooley. Remember that little kid who used to hit your—"

"Yeah, yeah," he interrupted. "Now I remember. Okay, just this once."

"Swell," I said. "You can pick me up at 5:30." I hung up before he could say anything else.

I immediately recognized Johnny. He looked exactly the same, except he was taller and had put on a little weight. When he came to bat I made a fool of myself.

"Come on Johnny!" I yelled. "Home run!" I acted like someone who had never played baseball before in their life. Wiley moved away from me a little.

Johnny turned around to see who was shouting, and when he saw me, his face broke into a grin and he shook his head. That made me feel good, that he still remembered me. I made up my mind that no matter what, I would get a hold of him before I left.

"You played a super game," I told him as we walked toward Wiley's car. Wiley didn't say anything.

"Thanks," Johnny said. "I try to do my best, uh—"


"Tanny?" he began, looking puzzled.

"Short for Thomas Daniel," I said.

"Oh," Johnny murmured faintly. He gave me a strange look.

"So," I began, anticipating a vacuum of silence. "What have you been doing with yourself lately?" I felt ridiculous saying that. It was so obvious.

"Mostly playing on the school team," he replied. "I'm trying to get experience."

"For what?" asked Wiley. Johnny laughed.

"To play on your sandlot league, what else?" Wiley began to warm up to him slightly.

"Oh sure," he said. "How come you never came to any more games?"

Johnny's face became red and he dropped his eyes. He shifted awkwardly and put his hands in his pockets.

"Well, you know," he muttered. "You know how little kids are—"

"It's okay," Wiley replied helpfully, realizing that Johnny really didn't have a reason.

"Well," I began again, seeing another dead silence coming. "We'd better get going. We'll see you around sometime, right?"

"Yeah, sure," said Johnny, recovering a bit of his former jubilation. "Make sure you come to another game."

"Yeah, we will!" When we got to the car I turned around and looked at him. He was walking away jauntily, with a faint, reminiscent smile on his face. Maybe he was thinking about us.

I never really had the time to get to another Whitewater game. Everything just piled up on me, and it was a long time before I saw Johnny again. That was about a year ago, and I haven't seen him since. He must have been twenty or twenty-one, I'd say.

I had stepped into a small restaurant for some lunch, and was biting into my sandwich, when all of a sudden he came out of the kitchen with a large, dripping gray mop. I didn't choke or anything, but it did give me quite a shock. The lettuce fell right off my sandwich.

He halfheartedly swabbed the mop around on the tile floor, then, turning around to dip it in a bucket of greasy water, he caught sight of me. He just stood there, and the mop dripped slowly. He turned red, and gestured awkwardly to the bucket.

"Just a summer job," he said defiantly. "Just until college, you know."

Yeah, I knew. This town was too small for the college and big league scouts to pay much attention to it, and any outstanding athletes either had to work for years just to get to college, or they stayed in the town and gradually faded from memory. I know. I went through that myself.

The kid had a lot of pride. Just a summer job until college. But it's October.
Artist's Statement

My sculpture is a visual and physical exploration of the idea of flotation. It has become progressively less concerned with a finished surface quality—one of the primary preoccupations of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sculptors. The shrinkage marks, ungrounded welds, ragged edges, and rust are records of the process the sculptures went through to arrive at their final stage of development.

The drawings activate the two-dimensional space in the same way that sculpture activates the three-dimensional space—through the use of horizontal and diagonal linear elements that seem to float in the picture plane.

Rather than concentrating entirely on the objects and the spaces within the confines of each sculpture and drawing, I want the spectator to be aware of the space around and between the sculptures and drawings.

Ron Pederson
Artist's Statement

Three concerns characterize my work in the past few years: light, ambiguous spatial relationships, and tension between shapes and edges. I consider the real heart of painting to be the interaction of light and surface. In these paintings, I try to work as closely to that activity as possible. They consist of strips of wood with color applied to one side and the rest painted white (or the color of the wall). The pieces are installed so that the color is reflected onto the wall with available light. The painted color surface is never visible but is present only as a somewhat mysterious color source. The painted surface is not the painting—the painting is the light on the wall. I am trying to activate the wall surface—to energize that surface with light and color. As light in the room changes, the paintings change.

Tim Van Laar
Of Centennials and the Holy Grail

Ronald Wells

In Britain's West Country, about 110 miles from London, one finds the town of Glastonbury, and in it, Glastonbury Abbey, the shrine made famous by generations of pilgrims during the Middle Ages. The main relic of the shrine, now in ruins, is supposed to have been the holy grail—the cup used by Jesus for the wine at the Last Supper. Legend has it that Joseph of Arimathea brought it to England in the first century. Stories abound in Glastonbury of the miraculous acts done because of the holy grail, and, in former times, pilgrims came in their thousands to receive a blessing from God via the chalice. To a North American visitor, especially if he be a Protestant, such touching piety may be historically interesting, but, as a religious matter, not very compelling. Yet, as I had to remind myself, people in search of the mythic wholeness ought to be understood in the context of their quest, not belittled because we, as more “objective observers”, see things more “clearly.”

During the past two years, living in the United States in 1976 and in Britain in 1977, I have witnessed two peoples celebrating themselves and their nations. The American Bicentennial was a more intense affair than the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, because the latter reflected merely on twenty-five years and focused on the life of one person, while the former reflected on two hundred years and focused on the origin-myth of a people. Despite these differences, the Bicentennial and the Jubilee shared an important theme: Americans and Britons on their respective pasts, and affirmed in confessional statements the worth and work of their forefathers in shaping and preserving their noble histories. Americans affirmed their Americanness, Britons affirmed their Britishness. Books and articles were written, speeches and sermons were given on, respectively, “characteristically American” or “traditionally British” ideas, manners, attitudes, and mores. One seemed to see two societies searching, with earnest piety, for those things which made them distinctive, those things which set them apart from other nations, those things worthy of affirmation in the difficulty and confusion of the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Times of national celebration are, perhaps by their very nature, times of turning inward, of seeking origins, and of affirming the worth of those origins and history. Yet, in the process, a nation's perception of itself as sharing with other nations a common “western” heritage is largely lost. Neighboring countries, especially if they are smaller, must bear with the chauvinistic displays that accompany such celebrations; short visits to Canada during the Bicentennial and to Ireland during the Jubilee were bracing tonics for one who had grown slightly weary of national pilgrimages in search of a national holy grail. American pilgrims came to Lexington, Concord, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington to touch the shrines of American nationality and to wonder at the mighty acts done in those places. British pilgrims came to London and Windsor to touch the British shrines and to marvel at the truly remarkable woman who is the symbol of their nationality. In each case, most of the pilgrims went away satisfied, with their nationality honorably affirmed, and with the worthiness of their distinctiveness assured. At those moments those individuals were not citizens of the world, but supplicants at an altar of limited, if satisfying, nationality.

During 1976 I participated in yet another celebration, the centennial of Calvin College and Seminary. That celebration evidenced some similarities with those noted above: books and articles were written, speeches and sermons were given in which the Christian Reformed community affirmed the worth of the actions of their forefathers, done so long ago. Pilgrims came to solemn assemblies and joyful parties to see the shrines and to touch each other.

Mr. Wells is a Professor of History.
in acts of reaffirmation of the heritage. Inevitably perhaps, it was also a time of looking inward, and especially of asking questions on the theme of the institution's distinctiveness. Even prior to the centennial there were some persons, protectors of a perceived orthodoxy, who repeatedly engaged in ongoing conversations about Calvin's distinctiveness, and who required many others to consider the ways in which Calvin might be more "distinctively Reformed."

Even though I am a full, participating member of the Calvin College and CRC community, the fact that I have been so for only eight years did not afford me as full an emotional involvement in the celebrations and affirmations as it did for others. Even so, I was unprepared to hear what one celebrant expressed as his greatest fear for Calvin's second century—that it and the CRC might abandon its distinctiveness in favor of an ecumenical attitude. Later in 1977, at Glastonbury Abbey, when one recalled those who had come in search of the holy grail, one had the feeling of having been there before.

Those enamored of the methodology of "antithesis" may ask: "Well, if you don't believe that Calvin should be "distinctively Reformed," what should it be, just another college which formerly had a religious heritage?" I would believe that to be a great loss. Let me affirm the sentiments that John Kromminga expressed on the evening the Dutch ambassador visited. He said something like, "We have no intention of abandoning our Dutch and Calvinistic heritage." I assume that we all agree with such expressions, and that no member of the Calvin community, whether the CRC be his natural or adoptive church home, would advocate Calvin abandoning its heritage. At the same time one must also recall that the Christian church in 1977 is a small minority in the world, and as such, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide an effective witness. We need the combined strengths and possibilities of cooperation across denominational lines. The necessity for ecumenicity seems obvious, thus the burden of proof falls upon those who advocate separation rather than on those who advocate cooperation.

Regarding the Reformed tradition at Calvin College, I would assume that all persons agree that our life, thought, and practice should be consistent with the Reformed heritage. To be "consistently Reformed," however, is not necessarily to be "distinctively Reformed." Were we to continue, as we presently are, to be "consistently Reformed," we could also be "inclusively Christian" and be able to affirm both positions with equal sincerity. However, were we to try to be more "distinctively Reformed," it would probably be at the price of achieving a measure of isolation from the greater possibilities of effective witness and service in cooperation with members of the Body of Christ found within other communions. In the best of all possible worlds I would hope that Calvin College would continue to affirm its own hundred-year heritage as part of the Reformed tradition, while at the same time affirming a desire for greater cooperation with Christian churches and institutions wherever they may be found. This dialectical method would not find Calvin becoming less Reformed but would enrich the heritage by coming in contact with the thoughts and practices of other Christian traditions which Reformed churches have ignored to their cost. Let me emphasize that I do not suggest some feckless compromise in which all parties would become homogeneous. The suggestion here is a dialectical relation of creative tension in which Reformed are Reformed, and for example, Lutherans are Lutherans, but that we agree to try to emphasize our common values, in pursuit of our common gospel, rather than to emphasize the points of our mutual distinction.

If there ever was a time when the various Christian traditions could afford the "luxury" of defining minute differences which separated them (the 17th century confessions come to mind) that time has passed. The difficulties in Western Europe in the 17th century concerned which branch of Christianitv
would be successful in a particular region. The Western world of the last quarter of the twentieth century operates with a value system opposed to Christianity. In order to be effective for the Gospel in this kind of world we must learn how to forge partnerships with persons of diverse Christian traditions. If we are to take our place in the struggle, we must recognize and value the other brethren similarly engaged. Since we shall surely work together with them in God’s service and praise in the kingdom which is to come, it seems reasonable that we be eager to begin the partnership now.

If we at Calvin could begin to keep in dialectical tension a self-conscious, consistently Reformed perspective while at the same time seeking the common ground with other Christians, we could begin to develop more fully our potential for witness and service. On the other hand, to try to grasp for an illusive “distinctiveness,” especially at this time in history, would, in my view, lessen that potential. Having observed the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, I have little desire to participate in the search for the holy grail elsewhere.
For the past four years Calvin faculty members have been formally considering journalism as a possible addition to the curriculum. To date no program has been approved. Two documents, outlining similar programs, are in the hands of the Educational Policy Committee. It has not made a decision about them, although the Committee has indicated that it favors introduction of a program. The following is a review of what has happened, an explanation and an evaluation of those events, and observations about future possibilities.

I. Review of Actions

Two different departments with two different approaches to this topic have contributed to the discussion of journalism at Calvin. These two approaches are linked to two different terms—journalism and mass communication. Initially these two strands were developed separately; then they were joined for a time. Unfortunately, the present condition seems to be a deterioration into a frayed combination of the two.

One strand has developed within the English Department which has long provided prospective journalists with literature courses and a small number of writing courses. But in 1973 the English Department established a subcommittee to make new recommendations. The subcommittee recommended

... that the English Department offer a two-course sequence for students interested in a career in journalism. The first would be a specialization of and substitution for the present English 332. . . .

The second course would include a brief history of journalism together with an examination of such problems as theories of the press, responsibility of the news media, and relationship to governmental bodies. There would be much practical experience in and emphasis on the techniques of news writing, reporting, copy editing, and newspaper organization and publication. . . .

In short, the English Department favored a very small journalism program.

The other strand was developing within the Speech Department. In 1967, the Speech Department introduced a new course, Theory and Practice of Radio and Television Broadcasting. By 1972 this course was expanded in title and scope. It became Mass Communication, a study of various mass media—including the print media. The use of "mass communication" reflected the extension in subject matter and indicated that the mass media were being studied as communication.

These two strands intertwined within the Calvin community. Faculty had informal exchanges—sharing ideas, new publications, and the like. Thus, when the two-course journalism sequence was proposed by the English Department, Tom Ozinga, a Speech professor specializing in mass communication, asked his English colleagues to consider ways to include journalism for the electronic media. In response to a joint request from these persons, Dean Van den Berg appointed a Journalism Study Committee (hereafter JSC) on June 14, 1974. The JSC had three members from each department, with T. Ozinga as chairman. The JSC mandate was to "advise the administration and the faculty as to the place of journalism at Calvin College."

The JSC met regularly throughout the summer of 1974. Although there were major differences of opinion within the JSC, it met its November 1 deadline, submitting a comprehensive report (hereafter JSC Report) to the Dean and Educational Policy Committee (hereafter EPC).

Oral and written exchanges between the EPC and JSC produced initial modifications of the program. At the request of the Dean, the JSC submitted a condensed, modified proposal in October, 1975. In April and May, 1976, the EPC stated that it "favored the introduction of a Program," but it also wanted a more substantial explanation of the theoretical basis for the program (communication theory) and a clearer indication of how this theoretical basis was informed by a Reformed Christian perspective. In October, 1976, the Dean appointed T. Ozinga and D. Nykamp from the Speech Department to write position papers during the Spring semester in response to the EPC requests. Two members of the EPC, P. De Vos and T. Rottman, were appointed as reactors. They assisted Ozinga and Nykamp by explaining more thoroughly the objections of the EPC and by responding critically to the writers' initial drafts.

On April 1, 1977 (the EPC deadline), copies of their work were submitted to the EPC, the JSC, and the English and Speech Departments. This report, "A Proposal for a Mass Communication Program" (hereafter '77 Proposal), was intended to be a way to remove objections to a mass communication program. Instead, it created major new objections. The EPC took no action in 1977.

II. Comparison and Contrast

The '77 Proposal was intended to be a natural extension of the JSC report. The Proposal expanded and modified the Report in light of problems discerned by the EPC and in accordance with certain insights obtained during the concentrated efforts that were required to produce the Proposals (the writers had each been granted a...
Three major developments in substance were added: they were 1) an articulation of a Christian view of man as communicators, 2) a modification of the definition of communication and the assumptions present in that definition, together with the implications of that modification for the study of mass communication, and 3) a review and suggested modification of the existing communication program. Some details of the JSC Report proposed program were eliminated, many were left unchanged, and others were added.

The second and third of the major additions to the substance of the JSC Report were particularly controversial. Both additions were outgrowths of the changed definition of communication as a field of study. The JSC Report described communication as a "process through which persons convey thoughts, feelings, information, and the like" (p. 8). The '77 Proposal took a more restrictive view: "Communication, as defined for this paper, occurs when persons co-act through interrelated code systems" (p. 28). Restricting the range of communication in itself was non-controversial but the concept of coaction produced objections. Unfortunately, it is precisely at this point that the '77 Proposal is most ambiguous and most easily open to multiple interpretations.

Coaction came to be the shorthand for a particular value dimension—that Christian communication should seek to maximize mutual responsibility for mutual benefit. Mutual responsibility was contrasted to an attitude that is often associated with some types of persuasion: frequently persuaders seek to obtain results that favor their goals quite apart from the potential impact on those who are to be persuaded and apart from their own decision-making responsibilities. Many readers assumed that this emphasis on the need for mutual responsibility and the corresponding attack on certain kinds of persuasion constituted a total rejection of persuasion. This misinterpretation was partially caused by imprecise language in the Proposal and by incomplete development of the concept of mutual responsibility.

The JSC Report did not deal with mutual responsibility. Little is said directly about what constitutes distinctively Christian communication, except that there are in most communication theories certain assumptions about the nature of man. The Report also urged Christians to make "sensitive value choices" which bring about "mutually beneficial ways of relating to one another within the context of "love your neighbor as yourself." (p. 9). Indeed, this lack of development here was, in part, why the EPC wanted more to be written about a possible Christian perspective.

Section Five of the '77 Proposal was another source of difficulty. We wrote this section, "Communication Curriculum," because the EPC found it difficult to determine how mass communication and journalism were related to communication. They were also uncertain about what forms of communication were currently taught or being contemplated as future subjects. Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>JSC Report (11/74); 12/74 and 10/75 modifications</th>
<th>'77 Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>The Liberal Arts Core</td>
<td>The Liberal Arts Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Theory Context</td>
<td>11/4: 2 courses from 4 options (1 English; 3 Speech)</td>
<td>Eng. and Sp. 100 listed only in the core requirements. 3 other requirements: Introduction to Comm. Theory (Speech 150), Semantics (250), and a choice of 1 from Persuasion and Argumentation; Linguistics omitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/74: 3½ courses (Eng. and Sp 100 listed as part of this requirement); Introduction to Comm. Theory required; choice of 1 course from the original 4.</td>
<td>4 required. Mass Communication Theory added. Film deleted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Communication Theory</td>
<td>4 required, including Film</td>
<td>4 required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Communication and Journalism Competence</td>
<td>4 required Titles and descriptions vary from version to version, but no major shifts are intended at any point.</td>
<td>4 required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognate Requirements</td>
<td>11/74: None specified. 12/74: 4-6 in other department(s). 10/75: 5 in 1 discipline.</td>
<td>5 courses—location and type left flexible, according to student need, with faculty advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Course</td>
<td>11/74: 1 10/75: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Interdepartmental committee, rotating chairman; program adviser for routine administration.</td>
<td>4 options listed; none recommended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The JSC had made several modifications of their original proposal in December, 1974 and October, 1975 in response to suggestions from the EPC. In all of these JSC decisions journalism courses are part of a mass communication program set within the context of communication. But the JSC Report treated communication as an interdisciplinary venture, unlike the '77 Proposal which treated it as a separate discipline. Further, the '77 Proposal increased the number of communication theory courses to three, required both INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY (Speech 150) and Semantics (Speech 250), decreased flexibility within this section, and deleted LINGUISTICS. In mass communication theory the total number of courses remained the same, but a course in theory was added and the film course dropped. This deletion was not an opposition to study of film, but reflected awareness that the current structure and goals of the course were not wholly appropriate for a prospective student of mass communication (a decision made in consultation with the film course instructor). Study of film is included as part of the TECHNICAL MEDIA USE course and may be included in an internship. The other changes are self-evident from the chart and need no further commentary.

III. Objections to the '77 Proposal

Several changes initiated in the '77 Proposal elicited objections. Objections from the Speech Department arose from concern about the apparent rejection of persuasive communication and other aspects of the Christian perspective on communication. In addition, some members were concerned about the recommended changes in existing courses.

More extensive objections came from the English Department. Their reaction culminated in a request that EPC table the '77 Proposal until a counterproposal could be presented by the English Department. These objections are significant; they are (in my words) as follows:

1. The number of communication theory and mass communication theory courses has been inadvisely increased.
2. Communication should not be viewed as a discipline. In the '77 Proposal communication was unwisely elevated from a minor contextual role to a disciplinary framework.
3. Communication theory and mass communication theory are not liberal arts in orientation. They give more attention to medium than to message.
4. Loosening the cognate requirements is a weakening of the program.
5. The '77 Proposal does not provide adequate emphasis upon writing.
6. The study of literature as appropriate training for journalists is omitted.
7. The film course should not be deleted.
8. The entire proposal is based upon an inappropriate philosophical foundation.

(It should be noted that some of these objections were expressed by representatives of the English Department both in JSC meetings and before the EPC. Others were formally presented in a memorandum to the EPC dated April 26, 1977.)

The significance of objection one is based upon objection two. Although members of the English Department had accepted communication theory as an appropriate context for the study of mass communication and journalism, this acceptance had been with stated reservations. In retrospect, it is also apparent that they viewed the previously accepted communication courses as providing some general background but lacking systematic, disciplinary dimensions. Moreover, according to the memo from the English Department to the EPC, communication differs greatly from traditional disciplines where...
emphasis should be on the product of thought—logical thoroughness, disciplined expression—not on a study of processes or techniques” (emphasis added). Disciplines, apparently, that focus upon products such as works of literature and philosophical writings are to be considered as more valuable than disciplined, theoretic studies of processes. Communication as a discipline focuses not only upon products (messages) but also upon the processes whereby the messages are originated, organized, shaped, transmitted, received, and responded to—a study that should not, if my interpretation is correct, be given emphasis as it is not in the liberal arts tradition.

Objection four, that loosening the cognate requirements is a weakness, appears to be related to the previous objection. If study of communication is not a satisfactory, disciplinary study it is imperative for journalists to study a more legitimate discipline—thus the need for a five-course cognate in one discipline. Given the objections to communication, it is essential to have such a cognate requirement if the student is to obtain the essence of Calvin’s disciplinary education.

Objections five through seven need no amplification. Objection eight is in some ways the most serious. The heart of this objection appears to be based upon a belief that the requirement that Christian communication emphasize mutual responsibility precludes the use of persuasive communication. The contention is that persuasive communication should not be eschewed because it embodies a “fundamental end of liberal education (and of responsible communication): the logical, informed instruction of persons who need leadership by well-educated representatives of the arts and sciences who are skilled in persuasion and learned in their disciplines. Mutuality in communication is one, but only one, of many modes; persuasion is yet another mode, no less valuable.”

IV. Responses

Any response to objections of this nature must of course remain incomplete in this short essay. Fully expressed responses would involve several intricate, involved distinctions not easily conveyed in a few words. Nonetheless, an outline of my responses may help us move closer toward an agreeable resolution.

First, the specific number of courses in any area of the proposed program is open to change. The specific details of the ’77 Proposal are not sacrosanct; indeed, we might ourselves wish to suggest changes. The second objection isn’t as easily covered. It depends upon a particular view of the disciplines. We argued in the ’77 Proposals that communication was a discipline much like geology. Geology differs in kind from its related disciplines of physics and chemistry but is nonetheless a discipline.

The third objection—that communication and mass communication studies are not properly within the realm of the liberal arts—may constitute a far broader indictment than its authors intended. We who are professional students of communication quite obviously differ with the English Department. It might be useful in any attempt to explore this difference for our courses to be examined thoroughly to discern whether or not they do stand within the liberal arts tradition. We would gladly have such an examination take place. Furthermore, several disciplines at Calvin study process; it seemed to us that a number of the social sciences are similarly process disciplines.

The fate of the fourth objection, the cognate flexibility, depends primarily upon the resolution of objections two and three. In addition, we believed it desirable to allow students to get at least an introductory understanding of more than one content area so that they
might be more prepared to report knowledgeably in more areas. Moreover, if the disciplinary or contextual base of communication theory were deleted in favor of a five-course cognate disciplinary basis, it would require that each student himself integrate the knowledge that he has obtained through relevant core courses without the aid of an instructor who is attempting to integrate those materials to teach through the study of communication and mass communication. Removal of this integrating force from the program itself would place a major and—we think—inappropriate burden upon the student. Integration is better accomplished within the disciplinary framework of communication and mass communication theory.

Objection five, regarding writing skills, need not be an issue. There is near unanimity of opinion on the importance of gaining writing skills. At no time have any suggested writing courses been deleted from the programs. Objection six, the omission of the study of literature, is essentially a pedagogical issue. Once there is agreement on the desired goals for a program one must ask what is the most appropriate way to obtain those goals. Can one best understand what is needed for work as a competent journalist, broadcaster, or television worker if he studies literature intensively? Clearly the study of literature is valuable both to practitioners and critics of the media. Yet it remains to be proven that study of literature is a superior way of providing sufficient understanding and competence in mass communication and journalism.

The seventh objection also need not be an issue. All agree on the importance of film in the media. We need further discussion on how best to approach this area. Finally, objection eight: as previously indicated, the '77 Proposal was inadvertently weak regarding the role of persuasion. Many interpreted the Proposal to suggest that abandonment of persuasion—which was not the intention of the authors. Although the claim that we propose to reject persuasion in its entirety is understandable, that claim is erroneous. We intend, however, to begin the study of the area with an initial dominant emphasis on the need for seeking mutual responsibility among the communicators so that they may seek their mutual benefit, rather than initially emphasizing concern for finding the available means of persuasion. What constitutes responsible communication may include persuasive communication nonetheless. But we need to explore this issue further, and preferably together, to be able to determine what sorts of disagreement may still remain.

Undoubtedly these responses do not remove the objections. My hope is, as should be clear, that the objections are now seen as somewhat less formidable than they may have initially appeared to be.

V. Remaining Options

Despite the delay, Calvin appears to be committed to the development of some program in this area. The urgency of such a development is not based solely upon the requests for courses from interested students, important as those requests may be. Whatever the history of our discussions in recent years, and whatever the differences among those involved in the discussions, each day newspapers are printed and read, television programs are produced and make an impact upon audiences, and other media continue to proliferate. No one can deny either the reality or the significance of the media in our culture. Calvin must address itself to that reality. The questions are how it should do so, who should do it, what tools should be used, and why should these choices be made?

Prior to choosing, Calvin must identify clearly what goals it seeks to meet in this
area. When those goals are established, the choices may be clearer.

One option would be to pull together aspects of the different programs into a loose confederation. Such a program would provide students with access to the different emphases, although it would preclude an in-depth study in any one. (Some EPC responses to the JSC Report suggested that this characteristic was a failing in that document.)

A second option would be to implement the 1973 recommendations from the English Department and provide a few technically-oriented courses to supplement the students' general college program with a major in an appropriate discipline.

Option three might be for the English Department to develop a full-fledged journalism program. This program could be based upon the discipline of literature and might possibly even include attention to some aspects of the electronic media.

A fourth option, relatively common in American universities, is to allow for two or even three different types of programs. For example, a journalistic program based either upon literature or upon technical skills could be one type of program, complemented by a program of mass communication, and possibly a program in the advertising and public relations uses of the media.

Option five is to develop an integrated, discipline-based program in mass communication. This program might be based upon communication theory, like the program of the '77 Proposals. Or it could be based upon another disciplinary foundation.

VI. Supportive Conditions

When Calvin does attempt to decide among these and other options, it will be important that several conditions be provided. First, there must be some structure(s) for extended, in-depth analysis of the relevant issues. To splice such discussions informally between classes and regular study is difficult at best. Second, other persons should join members of the English and Speech Departments in becoming involved. The issues that must be considered involve those typically addressed by psychology and sociology, philosophy and theology, business and political science, and the fine arts. Third, participants in these discussions must have adequate time not only to research and write from their own areas of interest, but also to develop a more thorough understanding of less familiar territories.

Finally, any discussion that is to produce general agreement must occur with the awareness that new programs do not inherently constitute an indictment of the past. If such an indictment is presumed it causes an environment inappropriate to careful decision-making. Moreover, the implications of any new program in terms of the impact on current programs need consideration. Unless there is an increase in the total number of students new programs tend to take students out of current programs. Faculty activities are thereby also affected.

The Educational Policy Committee has declared a moratorium on new developments until the current review of the 4-1-4 is completed. Members of the respective departments have returned to the immediate demands of internal affairs connected to the 4-1-4 review. T. Ozinga, who chaired the JSC and was the only member of the Speech Department trained in mass communication and journalism, is engrossed in his new efforts as Director of College Relations. Understandable as this situation is, the mass media continue to function each day and each hour in our society, affecting each of us in ways that few, if any, fully understand.
English-teacher Blues

It's gray-early in the morning; there's coffee in my cup
The morning d.j.'s hawking first-edition news and noise
Well, I hear but I don't listen—
I'm like an engine missin' pistons—
I got those Monday-morning English-teacher red-pencil blues.

This is just the first of the several fractured verses of "Red Pencil Blues," a not-quite song that I composed one recent morning when I felt that queasy mixture of anticipation and dread always produced by a stack of freshman English papers. Quite a change from what I felt when I first began teaching last year. Filled with a graduate student's naive enthusiasm, remembering the way I had pored over my Heath's Handbook when I was an aspiring-and perspiring-writer in English 100 class, I began the semester with high spirits. The joy of crafting a concise sentence, the pleasure of knowing how semicolons mean, the delight of exploring the inexhaustible variety of the English language—all these I would impart (notice the loftiness of this verb, matching the loftiness of my ideals) to my students. My students! They would understand the importance of writing well and would write eagerly, carefully—and sometimes brilliantly.

But my dreams were quickly shattered. Hardly anyone in my classes but me seemed to think that writing was worthwhile, much less enjoyable. Every new writing assignment met with groans and was fulfilled, for the most part, with banality and a dispiriting disregard for mechanics. I racked what was left of my brain. Where had I gone wrong?

It occurred to me, then, that writing was not really "fun," as I had been pretending. It could be rewarding, yes, but it gave its rewards stingily, only after the writer had struggled repeatedly with ideas, phrasing, and mechanics—and sometimes not even then. Perhaps Hemingway best described the inevitable agony of writing when he said, "Let's say that [the would-be writer] should go out and hang himself because he finds that writing well is impossibly difficult. Then he should be cut down without mercy and forced by his own self to write as well as he can for the rest of his life. At least he will have the story of the hanging to commence with."

Unfortunately, high schools make writing even more difficult than it should be for today's prospective college student. Optional grammar classes, six-week studies of everything from Shakespeare to science fiction, classes in which the writing required sacrifices form on the altar of feeling—all of these high school shenanigans undermine the serious study of the English language. (What puzzles me is the "why" behind all of this academic catering so prevalent in high schools today. Doesn't the 'mental appetite of a high school student too often dictate what he wants instead of what he needs?!) To me the teaching of "feeling" writing seems the worst injustice, since writing that "comes from the heart," like the "feelies" in Huxley's Brave New World, is simply a matter of wallowing in sensation. The torment of literary craftsmanship disappears; pouring torrents of undisciplined emotions onto a page becomes the goal. With this criticism I don't mean to align myself with the stuffy schoolmarms who have come before me—those women of iron whose severe buns, tight-lipped grimaces, and chilly eyes have entombed English for scores of students past. Of course there should be emotional expression in writing, but feeling and form must work together—the feeling should not be allowed to obliterate the form.

Sadly, what makes writing even more certainly an endangered species of communication is society's perennially successful sale of the American Dream. That this year's freshman crop seems, on the whole, ready to embrace the status quo is nothing new. Even the anti-establishment students of the late sixties and early seventies—despite their impassioned denunciation of "the
system"—found that purchasing the necessities of The New Life (blue jeans, stereos, and health foods) made them faithful consumers much like the conformists they scorned. If today's students differ from the generation of students before them, maybe it is in their more open belief in the creed of the comfortable income. This makes many of them not so much students as technicians of learning, pragmatists born of an age that equates learning with money-making. Most of them want the product of their education to be a "good" job—good meaning, in the American-Dream sense, well-paying. The logical question is, then, what profiteth it a man (or, these days, the profession-seeking woman) to understand the joy and pain of writing well? The pragmatists' answer is obvious: freshman English audiences must all be held captive, and the elaborate yawn is the most frequent response to everything from hyphens to Hemingway. If these potential success stories can, with a rudimentary understanding of their language, conjure up a shopping list, make out a check, and scribble an occasional inter-office memo (the more artfully illegible the better), why must they make a painstaking investigation of writing?

Certainly the situation is enough to make any English 100 instructor Ogden-Nash his teeth. (Why is it that students find ludicrous The thought of behaving studious?) But the alarm needs to be sounded beyond the confines of the classroom, because today's young pragmatists have contracted a pernicious disease, something I would call "media-ocrity." Marshall McLuhan has warned us that the media—the spoken words and instant pictures of radio and television—will dwarf the importance of the written word; in Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury has made a similarly dire prediction, imagining a time when books would be outlawed, when huge wall-sized TV screens would dominate our homes and fill our empty minds with the vacuous doings of "the family." Though the media has for years been indicted as one of the major culprits in our crisis of literacy, today's students demand that we belabor the point even further. For we must admit that students today are the media generation, bred on a steady diet of tasteless cartoons, bland rehashes of Ozzie and Harriet, and insubstantial crime shows thick with sex and violence. Since most of these programs have a predigested quality, students raised on them have been taught to want those things that are immediately perceptible and easily decipherable. Reading for pleasure—for the beauty of language, for the serious enjoyment of the angst evident in any good piece of writing—is fast becoming a lost art. And writing for pleasure—for the pleasure of wrestling with thoughts, of pinning them, with much bittersweet struggle, to the page—is almost unheard of.

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall," Robert Frost once wrote. For students today that "wall" has become the written word. It no longer is the key that will unlock for them some of the finest communication that they and others will ever make (I use make here in the creative sense); it is now an obstruction, something to be mistrusted and disliked, an anachronism in today's world of instant words, instant pictures, and instant ideas.

How to re-establish the primacy of the written word—that is the puzzle facing every responsible teacher today, whether or not he teaches English. To convey the idea that there is a joy that only writing can generate is no easy task. It becomes the problem of saying what e.e. cummings said so eloquently in his poem "Grasshopper":

\[
\text{r-p-o-h-e-s-s-a-g-r} \\
\text{who} \\
\text{a)s w(e loo)k} \\
\text{uponwogath} \\
\text{PPEGORHRASS} \\
\text{eringinto(o-aThe):1} \\
\text{eA} \\
\text{S} \\
\text{(r) rlInG} \\
\text{.gRrEaPsPhOs)} \\
\text{rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly} \\
\text{.grasshopper:} \\
\]

To capture the aliveness of words, to reveal their energy and agility, to show that words—and even the pieces of punctuation that marshalls them—can disassemble and reassemble themselves in a dazzling display of vitality and meaning—this is truly the heart of writing, the hard-won beauty that only a writer can know.
Taxi Driver is a film which is marked by violence, racism, sexism, and bigotry which characterize both the main character in the film and the society within which the film takes place.

When one examines the main character in the film, the taxi driver Travis Bickle, one recognizes that he is, in no sense of the word, a hero. Neither is he an anti-hero. He is simply the main character in the film: he plays a role which constitutes an important ingredient in proclaiming the film's message. He is a useful device in achieving the film's objectives.

From the beginning to the end of the film Travis Bickle is portrayed as someone whose entire demeanor is pathological. He is unable to relate meaningfully to anyone, male or female. His associations with his peer group, other taxi drivers, are formal. In these relations, which are played out, in the main, in a cafeteria, there is no hint of intimacy between Travis and the other cab drivers. Travis has no family relations in the film. He finds it difficult—in fact impossible—to relate to females. He attempts to relate to one woman who presents a striking contrast to the other female characters in the film: Betsy. Betsy, who is the image of purity, innocence, and goodness, rebuffs Travis. Only after repeated requests does she finally accept a "date" with him. In striking contrast to the actions of Betsy's peer—who takes her to a dance which

Leonard Sweetman

Mr. Sweetman is a Professor of Religion and a faculty member on the Film Council.
nice girl like her should not be in a business like prostitution. But Iris, who is worldly-wise and not a nice girl at all, failed to understand his intentions. When her cigarette was burned down to the end, she said, his “time” was finished. In this scene Travis is presented as ambivalent. Is he impotent or is he morally sincere in his desire to persuade Iris to return to her home? Or is a combination of these two perhaps closer to the truth than either one of them in isolation from the other? Is another option available? Is his conduct here, as elsewhere, simply pathological? The film does not answer these questions. What the film does is to use this scene to prepare the place and the circumstances of the gory denouement. Consequently, when Travis’s plan to assassinate the presidential candidate aborts, he retreats immediately to the bordello where he kills three people—in one of the bloodiest scenes ever filmed in a feature motion picture. When one is flushing moral scum down the toilet it doesn’t matter whether he does it to the presidential candidate or to the pimps and prostitutes and pushers.

The data which have been presented, in summary, demonstrate well the pathological character of Travis Bickle’s conduct and person. His character does not change throughout the entire film. No one can mistake him for a merely eccentric person; he is a sick man.

A second factor which must be taken into consideration when one evaluates this film is the city itself—midtown Manhattan, the area around Times Square and 42nd Street. Travis describes this area as a “moral cesspool.” Pushers, pimps, and prostitutes ply their trades openly in this area. The cinematographic techniques which are used in order to give content to the “moral cesspool” are very effective. We look at the “moral cesspool” through the windows of the taxi which have been made blurred by rain. This rain may cause us to see the city in a surrealistic framework, but it cannot purify what we view. The city is eerily seen through the blurred windows of Travis’s cab. Flashing lights off camera, moreover, have a mesmerizing effect in the interior of the cab as it cruises through midtown Manhattan for fares. The garrish neon lights of the Times Square district make it look sinister. This sinister character is furthermore enhanced by the clouds of steam which billow from the sewers and surround the cab. All of these factors produce an apocalyptic scene worthy of Hieronymous Bosch.

We see the city from the point of view of Travis Bickle, and this enables us to understand the racism which characterizes this film: we are seeing what Travis Bickle sees. The “moral cesspool” image of the city frequently comes to a focus in black people. A large black male walks through the crowd on a narrow street in one scene. No one pays attention to him, but we hear him as he talks to himself. He snarls, “I’ll kill her. I’ll kill that bitch!” In another scene a group of black teenagers throw garbage at Travis Bickle’s cab as it rides in front of them. In still another scene we can see in the background three black youngsters who are teasing a black prostitute. (Is torturing a more appropriate term here?) She attempts to drive them away by hitting them with her purse.3 The first person whom Travis Bickle kills in the film, moreover, is a young black man attempting to hold up the small store of a white man. This scene seems to be a visual cliche about racism.

One does not hear Travis himself make racist comments; the remarks come from his peers. We are seeing the city and hearing its sounds, however, through the eyes and ears of Travis. The racism which is visible and audible borders on pathological conduct or is pathological conduct.

A word is necessary, too, about the obvious sexism which is expressed in the film. In the prostitutes we see the obvious exploitation of women. The attitudes which are expressed by the “managers” of Iris, by the peers of Travis, and by Travis’s own conduct in their relationships with women, reflect the attitudes of male supremacy and female subservience. This sexism, along with the racism which has already
been described, represents Travis's point of view. It is important, at this point, to state this matter more precisely. The racism and sexism represent Travis's point of view in part, but they are also realistically representative of the city whose violence spills out in bizarre events. We are meant to recognize that the viewpoint of Travis Bickle is not completely without foundation; that the city is a place of violence; that violence does characterize the people who live in the city; that the violent do prey on one another. Violence is endemic to the inhabitants of the city in the apocalyptic scene which the film presents to us.

This comment sets the stage for the last two scenes in the film. These two scenes are integral elements in the film. We are entitled to think that these scenes destroy the film, that they make the film trite, or that they seem to constitute at best sophomoric sociological comments on contemporary society. The two scenes, however, may not and cannot be eliminated from our reading of the film.

The bloody shoot-out closes with an overhead shot of the whole gory mess and a tracking shot of the bloody trail which the hunter and the hunted left behind them. Then the film cuts to the penultimate scene in which Travis is neither a patient in a hospital for the criminally insane, nor a criminal under arrest and in the custody of the police. Instead, he is heralded by the police, the press, and the parents of Iris as a liberator, a hero. He killed a Mafia leader and liberated the twelve-year-old Iris from those holding her in servitude. The news clippings and a letter tacked to the wall of his apartment tell the story.

Are we to assume that the Secret Service agents who saw Travis's crude attempt to assassinate the presidential candidate are so incompetent that they do not recognize the photographs of the "hero" which are planted on the front pages of the newspapers? Are we to assume that the arsenal of guns and ammunition which Travis carried with him generated no police report, that the police have no charges to make against one who carries concealed weapons? Once more, it seems evident that the film must make its point with hyperbole. In a film that has saturated us with visual hyperbole in defining the most important character as pathological, hyperbole is perhaps the only technique that can make a legitimate point. The conclusion lies at hand: the film is stating that the city's people are so violent that they cannot recognize the difference between sickness and heroism.

In the final scene Travis is driving his taxi cab once more. The bullet wounds have healed, but the psychic wounds remain. Society has not changed either. We see a repetition of scenes from the beginning of the film. Travis drives his taxi aimlessly through midtown Manhattan. He cruises for fares and is hailed by Betsy. Apparently she has been looking for him. As Travis drives Betsy around with no apparent destination, she attempts to re-establish a relationship with him, but Travis now rejects Betsy. With this rejection the viewer is inclined to suspect that the future will be a repetition of the past, that the pathological violence which brewed in Travis and erupted in the senseless homicides will erupt again. Both the taxi driver and society seem doomed to enact the grisly drama once more. The sick have not been healed. No healing seems available to either society or the taxi driver.

Paul Schrader, in an interview published in The Grand Rapids Press in 1976, stated that Travis is not a hero, and is not an anti-hero. He is merely the main character in the film. Schrader's statement lends credence to the reading of the film Taxi Driver which has been proposed in this article: the film states that the city's people are so violent that they cannot recognize the difference between sickness and heroism.

In the final scene Travis is driving his taxi cab once more. The bullet wounds have healed, but the psychic wounds remain. Society has not changed either. We see a repetition of scenes from the beginning of the film. Travis drives his taxi aimlessly through midtown Manhattan. He cruises for fares and is hailed by Betsy. Apparently she has been looking for him. As Travis drives Betsy around with no apparent destination, she attempts to re-establish a relationship with him, but Travis now rejects Betsy. With this rejection the viewer is inclined to suspect that the future will be a repetition of the past, that the pathological violence which brewed in Travis and erupted in the senseless homicides will erupt again. Both the taxi driver and society seem doomed to enact the grisly drama once more. The sick have not been healed. No healing seems available to either society or the taxi driver.

3 Cf. Note #1.