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Broken Bodies:

Scandal and the Quest for Salvation in Three Expressionist Dramas

by Robert F. Gross

Perhaps literature and the arts have a permanent function of scandalizing. By readily and insistently representing evil, the artist destroys the conventional and hypocritical image which the righteous are inclined to assume; and so the artist is always accused of perverting man by distorting the image of man (Ricoeur, "Image," 119).

The twentieth century avant-garde has been distinguished by its widespread commitment to the idea of art as scandal, and no avant-garde movement articulated that commitment more clearly in both its plays and manifestoes than German expressionism. "The first task will have to be the destruction of all external form— reasonable attitudes, conventionality, morality, all the formalities of life," writes playwright and polemicist Ivan Goll, and his contemporary Ludwig Rubiner concurred, writing, "We want to bring, for one brief moment, intensity into human life: we want to arouse by means of heart-shaking assaults, terrors, threats, the individual's awareness of his responsibility in the community!" (Sokol, 10,3). The realistic bourgeois drama that dominated the European stage from the middle of the previous century to the early years of the present one had predicated both its structure and its thematic concerns on the middle class division between public and private spheres of behavior, and used the theme of scandal to investigate the moments when transgressions against bourgeois norms threaten to destroy the divisions between public and private life. Marguerite Gautier's profession, Paula Tanqueray's past, John Gabriel Borkman's financial improprieties and his betrayal of Ella Rentheim, Hedda Gabler's destruction of Eilert Lovborg's manuscript—these and many other examples could be adduced to demonstrate the central importance of scandal for the bourgeois realistic drama. But, while these plays structure themselves around the subject of scandal, they do not develop an aesthetic of the scandalous; that is, the plays rarely aim to scandalize. Rather, they try to contain potentially shocking subject matter by presenting it in a controlled and decorous style. The realist drama subscribed to conventionalized canons of verisimilitude, techniques of rational discussion and causal analysis in an attempt to treat these dangerous events in a restrained and "civilized" fashion. In expressionist drama, the use of grotesque and nightmarish images, episodic structure, heightened language, music and dance, exaggerated acting style and *mise-en-scene* all contributed to a form of extended theatrical hyperbole that rejected empirical analysis and middle-class decorum in favor of visionary intensity. The three plays examined in this paper, Walter Hasenclever's *Die Menschen* (*Humanity*) of 1918, Ernst Barlach's *Die echten Sedemunds* (*The Genuine Sedemunds*) of 1920, and Ernst Toiler's *Hinkemann* of 1922, show differing approaches to the treatment of scandal and manifest different religious positions in the scandals they depict. All three, however, have the following element in common; they all agree that the ultimate scandal is modern society's inability to accept the responsibility for the brutality it wreaks upon itself. The image of physical dismemberment, central to all three plays, becomes a

sign of the society's fundamental brutality, irresponsibility, and insensitivity.

I will begin with Ernst Toiler's *Hinkemann*, which, although the last of these three plays to be written, has the clearest ties with realistic dramaturgy in its use of dialect, discussion, and causal structure. Eugen Hinkemann, a worker of greater than usual size and strength, has been castrated in combat during the First World War. His disability, with which neither he nor his society can come to terms, is the scandalous condition which he attempts to keep secret. His greatest fear is that people will find his condition laughable, and indeed, the news of his emasculation does elicit laughter from those who learn of it. The news does not only render him the object of scorn, but also renders his wife Grete vulnerable as an "unclaimed" woman in a male-dominated society. When Hinkemann's supposed friend, Paul Grosshahn (that is, 'Paul Bigcock') learns the news, he laughs and immediately begins to seduce Grete aggressively. "You'd do yourself wrong," he argues, "if you kept faith with a man who's no man" (Toiler, 204).¹ For Grosshahn, the physical fact of virility is the definition not only of gender, but of personhood. An emasculated male cannot be a member of a valid marriage; and Grosshahn notes that both the civil law and Roman Catholic ecclesiastical law concur with him (Toiler, 224). Hinkemann is considered "no man" by his society, and is therefore cut off from the primary social bonds that are represented in this play by marital union. His spouse is reduced to being fair game for any potent male who desires her.

The revelation of impotence is, thus, an admission of radical vulnerability and virtual invitation to exploitation, both for husband and wife. Their only possible protection is silence, but the command to be silent proves to be impossible. As human beings they need to articulate their sufferings, frustrations, and alienation, even though these expressions will serve to render them even greater victims than before. The problem is compounded by the fact that their society has given them no way of communicating their suffering. As a tabu subject, emasculation can only be discussed as something grotesque or obscenely laughable. The couple gropes for an appropriate language, but repeatedly falls silent or refuses to articulate their thoughts. When Paul maliciously presses Grete for information about her relationship to her husband, she is at first unable to reply. "May God strike you dumb! And me! And him! And all of us! The word is Hell" (Toiler, 207).² Laboring under such forces of alienation and interdict, language itself becomes a torture rather than a consolation. The society of *Hinkemann* conspires to deprive suffering of a tongue. In order to tell the story of Hinkemann, Toiler must forge a new way of speaking out of the unpromising language of his own society. Toiler emphasizes from the very beginning of *Hinkemann* that his hero speaks in a halting manner, groping for a language appropriate to his suffering.

The society speaks in platitudes that give Hinkemann no consolation. The utopias of liberalism, revolution, and established religion do not address his suffering; they simply ignore it. "You have words, beautiful words, holy words of eternal happiness. The words are only good for

¹ "Schlechtwarst du gegen dich, wenn du einem Mann, der kein Mann ist, die treue halten wolltest."

² "Dass dir Gott die Sprache nehme! Und mir! Und ihm! Und alien! Das Wort war die Holle!"

healthy people!” (Toiler, 225).³ The religious arguments of Sebaldus in particular ring false, because the action of the play shows that the Christians do not really follow the example of Jesus at all. We hear a newsboy hawking papers with the headline “New Spirit in Germany! Rebirth of Moral Feelings! Our Age in the Sign of Christ,” while others shout headlines of civil war, pogroms, strip-tease clubs and the armament business (Toiler, 231-33).⁴ Film star Gun Glanda, we are told, is playing the Savior in a two million mark film epic. Hinkemann himself is reduced to playing the role of a carnival geek, dressing as a strong man and biting the heads off live rats. This ostensibly Christian society worships material power, whether of the body, civil authority, money or armaments. Hinkemann comes to realize the true god of Weimar Germany. He buys a statuette of the Roman phallic god Priapus on Christmas Eve, and bringing it home, sets it up for worship. “There is no God beside you!” he tells it. They lie and deceive and fool themselves that they pray to the Crucified. They pray to you!” (Toiler, 235).⁵ The Christian message has merely been grotesquely distorted by a culture that worships a muscular and brutal version of masculinity.

It is the Jews, rather than the Christians, who retain some dignity in the world of *Hinkemann*. As victims of the so-called “Christian” culture, they share with Hinkemann the status of outsiders, and a vocation of suffering. Two Jews discuss a recent pogrom in Galicia, and the one observes that they are indeed the Chosen People—“chosen to suffer” (Toiler, 231).⁶

Grete, Eugen, and the Jews come to base their identities on their status as sufferers. It is one that elicits our compassion as audience members, and serves to indict the society at large, but it relegates them to passive roles, unable to do anything but suffer. Unlike some of Toiler’s other earlier works, such as *The Machine Wreckers* and *Transformation*, *Hinkemann* substitutes a compassionate presentation of suffering passivity for an incitement to political action.

Through his suffering and humiliation, Eugen Hinkemann’s understanding moves from a meditation on his own suffering to a recognition of a much larger vision of humanity as a single, mutilated body. Hinkemann’s emasculation in the war becomes not only his own, particular and irreducible suffering, but also an image of the mutilation that humanity suffers at its own hands. “We are *one body, one spirit*,” he concludes (Toiler, 246).⁷ All are suffering and crying for redemption. But his alienation is too radical, his despair too great, to act upon this insight. Grete throws herself from a window, and Hinkemann begins to prepare a noose for himself as the final curtain falls. This double suicide, committed on Christmas Eve, is not merely a facile repudiation of all Christian values, but of a Christianity which does not see the image of Christ Crucified in the suffering, exploited, humiliated, and abused.

³ “Worten habt ihr, schone Worte, heilige Worte, vom ewigen Giuck.” Die Worte sind Gut fur gesunde Menschen.”

⁴ “Neuer Geist in Deutschiand! Wiedererwachen sittlichen Empfinden! Unsere Zeit im Zeichen Christi!”

⁵ “Es ist kein Gott ausser dir. Wie sie sich belugen und betrogen und sich weismachen, sie beten die Gekreuzigten an. Zu dir beten sie!”

⁶ “Auserwahlt fir Leiden!”

⁷ “Em Geist sind wir, em Leib.”

Toiler's depiction of Hinkemann and his dilemma is not only a critique of established Christianity but is also an adumbration of the more recent insights of liberation theologians. In the words of Paul G. King and David O. Woodyard, "The message of the cross is stark and clear. God elects to penetrate our suffering; God is imminent in pain and therefore involved personally in all anguish" (180). The true scandalous obscenity of Toiler's drama is not Hinkemann's physical condition, but the self-mutilating body of society that cries for a redemption that it can barely articulate, let alone achieve. The despair of the ending is only partly mitigated by the suggestion that a true utopian imagination, one that could embrace, rather than reject, suffering, might be the first step toward that redemption. The epigraph of the play, lines spoken by Hinkemann in the final scene, presents this alternative, albeit in negative form. "Those who have no power to dream, have no power to live" (Toiler, 194).⁸ Where will this power come from? Where can healing begin? A true Utopian impulse, a sustaining source of life, is situated here outside of the dramatic action. In *Hinkemann*, neither Toiler nor his protagonist can bridge the discrepancy between the modern world and the ability to dream. It must be seen as an impasse that can only be broken by a movement outside of the world of the play. This problem puts Toiler, the social activist, almost in the position of a Quietest, awaiting the infusion of a divine grace that could resolve the unrelieved misery of the world he depicts.⁹ The last lines of *Hinkemann* convey this awareness of radical passivity and vulnerability, "Each day can bring Paradise, each night the Flood" (Toiler, 247).¹⁰

The figure of the Crucified is again invoked in Ernst Barlach's *The Genuine Sedemunds*. The setting of the play's sixth scene is an old Gothic chapel, now converted to a storehouse. The largest and most impressive object in storage is an old crucifix, one of the arms of which has been restored by a local sculptor in a style far too smooth and academic to fit with the rest of the figure. Barlach's statement is clear; the rough and unpleasant truths of the Crucifixion are met with rejection (storage) and distortion (academic restoration) in the modern bourgeois community in which the play is set. As the elder Sedemunds observes, "Christ this! Christ that! If he were alive today, he'd be thrown in the slammer as a vagrant and an agitator, and rightly so" (Barlach, 243).¹¹

Uncomfortable truths are everywhere suppressed. The shadowy circumstances surrounding Mrs. Sedemund's death have been suppressed by her husband, and her son, a slightly more charming but no less inflexible version of Ibsen's Gregers Werle, wants the facts publicly brought to light. Why does she rest in the family mausoleum, if, as a suicide, she should be buried in unconsecrated ground? The answer is obvious: because Mr. Sedemunds has the means to buy respectability. The local constable summarizes matters plainly and unapologetically: "A good reputation is worth a whole lot more to us than mere righteousness"

⁸ "Wer keine Kraft zum Traum hat, hat keine Kraft zum Leben."

⁹ "Jeder Tag kann das Paradies bringen, jede Nacht die Sintflut."

¹⁰ It is for these very reasons that *Hinkemann* has been poorly received by Marxist critics. For a review of the critical response, see Ossar, 124-127.

¹¹ "Christus hin, Christus her, wenn er heute lebts, wurde er als Vagabund und Aufwiegiel in Nummer Sicht gebracht—und sehr mit Recht."

(Barlach, 263).¹²

The complacency of the town is threatened by the rumored escape of a lion from a traveling circus. Actually, the lion has died from natural causes, been skinned, and the hide purchased by a local eccentric. The death and dismemberment of the lion is a very literalized example of what Harold Bloom would call *kenosis*, or the emptying out, of a trope (84, 97). The world of *The Genuine Sedemunds* is one in which figures that inspire awe and fear are emptied of their sublimity and exist parodically. The fairground painting of a lion springing upon a group of savages causes the eccentric Grude to exclaim, "Look how he overwhelms them, the savage's conscience over us savages" (Barlach, 192).¹³ But the lion is dead, and there is only the rumor of the lion to overwhelm conscience.

The elder Sedemunds makes the comparison of Christ and the lion explicit, as he stands by the crucifix: "There is the lion, there he hangs, and it is worse, much worse, than when he roars or bites" (Barlach, 244).¹⁴ The silent figure on the crucifix overwhelms the conscience much more than any words or actions. For the irony of *The Genuine Sedemunds* is that the conscience cannot be stilled by silencing the figures that reveal the fear and guilt that lurk beneath complacency. The figure of Christ challenges the conscience despite all of our efforts to banish and distort it, and the rumor of the lion terrifies as much as the lion could. Grude presents the lionskin to his fellow townspeople along with the lesson that he draws from it; "Dead is not dead; how could death frighten us, if it were dead? How?" (Barlach, 251).¹⁵ Death is not simple negativity; it is a powerful presence which overwhelms the conscience, and attempts to silence it are doomed to frustration. The cause of Mrs. Sedemunds' death is not stifled by her respectable resting-place, and scandals repeatedly surface despite the community's insistence on presenting the appearance of respectability.

When the images of the sacred have been emptied out, they can only be invoked through irony and parody. The elder Sedemunds elects himself to lead the townspeople out of what he has described as the "Hell" of the storehouse, by arranging a grotesque parody of Christ leading the souls out of Hell, complete with the accompaniment of an organ grinder. The procession leads, however, not to Paradise, but to the local cemetery. The parody cannot achieve transcendence, but only a heightened sense of mortality and human limitations.

The repression of sacred images, best exemplified in the relegation of the crucifixion to the storehouse, has very specific social results. The crippled Sabine is a social pariah in the town, viewed as a figure of dangerous numinous power. Mrs. Grude, a pillar of respectability, suspects that the handicapped woman is a demon. We learn that Sabine is actually so lonely that she has considered a pact with the devil as a means of overcoming her isolation. By marginalizing those who suffer, the society itself invites those people to oppose them. All suffering, whether the

¹² "Em guter Ruf gilt uns einen Humpel mehr als genaue Gerechtigkeit."

¹³ "Sieh, wie er über sie kommt, das Kafferngewissen über uns Kaffern."

¹⁴ "Da ist der Lowe, da hangt er, und das ist schlimm, schlimmer, als wenn er brüllte oder bisse."

¹⁵ "Tot ist nicht tot, wie konnte der Tod schrecken, wenn er tot wäre, wie?"

spiritual agony of Mrs. Sedemunds before her suicide, the social alienation of Grude, or the physical suffering of Sabine, is criticized by Barlach.

It is, rather, only through an acceptance of the reality of death and suffering that makes true hope and joy possible. It is Grude, the man who understands that dead is not dead, who makes Sabine a fellow conspirator in his false rumors about the lion. At the end of the play, Grude and his pregnant wife dance amidst the cemetery's gravestones; "Right over the graves, and down the middle of the horror, right down through with out feet in the ditch" (Barlach, 265).¹⁶ Such behavior, Mrs. Grude reminds her spouse, is considered inappropriate and unseemly, but both Grude and Barlach understand that marriage and fertility are best celebrated against the background of *memento mori*. The scandalous truth in *The Genuine Sedemunds* once properly understood, is not only a cause for perturbation but a cause for celebration as well. True art and religion violate the proper silences and observances of bourgeois culture and thus release and proclaim the true dimensions of human existence. Like Grude, the Lion, and Christ, they are dangerous, outrageous, and completely bereft of respectability.

Walter Hasenclever's *Humanity* presents much less of a thematic treatment of scandal. Life in the contemporary metropolis of Weimar Germany has shattered bourgeois preoccupation with respectable exteriors that so dominated the small-town citizens of *The Genuine Sedemunds*, and depraved and vicious behavior takes place openly. Scenes of violence, lust and unbridled greed are commonplace. Only unwed pregnancy seems to carry with it some social stigma. Rather, by presenting lurid scenes of violence and vice without the characters showing fear or remorse, Hasenclever presents the audience with a series of shocking episodes of moral depravity. The script is far more disrupted and disruptive than either *Hinkemann* or *The Genuine Sedemunds*. It is composed of short, disjuncted episodes, punctuated by speeches of only a few words in length. There is no discussion, no rational analysis of thematic material, and far fewer causal links between actions. The tempo is rapid, the rhythms are jagged, the emotional intensity is high, the images are violent and grotesque. The role of art, Hasenclever wrote, is not to please, but disturb (Raggan, 121). The text itself aspires to the condition of scandal.

This disjunction of the text is homologous with the dismembered body that is at the center of the action. At the beginning of the play, the protagonist, Alexander, arises from a grave. He is met by the Murderer, who hands him a sack, informing him "The head is in the sack" (Hasenclever, 12).¹⁷ and descends into the grave. Alexander, sack in hand, wanders into the metropolis and witnesses its depravity. The decapitation is the first of a series of violent images, including murders, suicides, beatings, and the stripping of a corpse. Through much of this, Alexander carries the sack unaware of the murdered person's identity. It is not until the fourth act that Alexander opens the sack and discovers that the head is, in fact, his own. The following dialogue ensues between himself and his head:

ALEXANDER: My head!

¹⁶ "Gerade uber Graber durch, mitten zwischen dem Grauen durch, fort mit ihm unter unsere Fusse in die Grube!"

¹⁷ "Der Kopf ist im Sack."

THE HEAD: My body.
ALEXANDER: I've been murdered?!
THE HEAD: The murderer lives.
ALEXANDER: He is forgiven.
(A GUST OF WIND)
ALEXANDER: He lies in the grave.
THE HEAD: Atonement!
ALEXANDER: I live in his place.
(Hasenclever, 84)¹⁸

Alexander not only recognizes himself in the corpse, but also assumes the guilt of the murderer. It is a double recognition scene, in which the protagonist recognizes his identity with two opposed roles. Through the medium of Alexander, murderer and victim achieve a common being.

No sooner is this essential identity realized than Alexander is arrested as the murderer and is put on trial for his own decapitation. The courtroom meets his declaration of identity with laughter and jeers, breaking into tumult when he exclaims: "All are murderers" (Hasenclever, 90).¹⁹ They react to Alexander's prophesying with scorn. Like the burghers of *The Genuine Sedemunds* and the workers of *Hinkemann*, the city dwellers of *Humanity* refuse to listen to the voices that testify to their moral turpitude and proclaim a larger and more compassionate vision of humanity. They judge Alexander to be Other, and send him to a mental institution, (which is, interestingly enough, the same fate voluntarily chosen by Grude and the young Sedemunds in Bariach's play), an action which both physically ostracizes him and robs his pronouncements of any meaning. The society cannot bear for the truth to be spoken. This incapacity to listen becomes an incapacity to be healed of their violence, which is ultimately a violence aimed against themselves.

Like Hinkemann, Alexander has come to a recognition that all people are "one body, one spirit" and that both suffering and responsibility are shared by everyone, and, like Hinkemann, his recognition makes him even more of an outcast in his society. Unlike Hinkemann, however, Alexander is able to transcend the recognition of common dismemberment through a belief in the power of love as expressed through vicarious suffering. Love is presented in the play as the

¹⁸ ALEXANDER: Mein Kopf!
DER KOPF: Mein Leib.
ALEXANDER: Ich bin gototet?!
DER KOPF: Der Morder lebt.
ALEXANDER: Ihm ist verziehn.
(Windstoss)
ALEXANDER: Erliegt im Grabe.
DER KOPF: Suhne!
ALEXANDER: Ich lebe fur ihn.

¹⁹ "Alle sind Morder."

miraculous anomaly, the redemptive force that inexplicably appears in the infernal city. Alexander and the impoverished maiden Agathe fall in love, and she is willing to take his place in the prison. As the guards and parson come to take her to execution, she smiles, the room darkens, the sky lightens and chorales are heard in the distance. This lush, operatic treatment of Agathe's death and transfiguration stands in abrupt, almost embarrassing, contrast to the scenes that surround it, and show Hasenclever to be much more heavily reliant on a sentimentalized Christian iconography without the bracing corrective of Barlachian irony.

Alexander returns to the cemetery, where he meets his killer again. Handing him the empty sack, Alexander descends into the grave. The killer stretches out his arms in the dawn and exclaims "I love!!" (Hasenclever, 98).²⁰ Love leads to vicarious atonement and that atonement, in turn, leads to an increase in love. Alexander's journey, then, creates microcosm for the salvation of humanity. Hasenclever himself noted that the entire action of the play was the progression from the first line of the play, the Murderer saying "I have killed" (11)²¹ to the final line, the Murderer's joyous "I love" (Raggam, 125).

This interpenetration of the salvation of the individual and the salvation of all causes certain difficulties for Hasenclever. Although Alexander, Agathe and the Murderer are saved through their common redemption, the inhabitants of the metropolis definitely are not. The salvation of the individual is presented as a synecdoche for the salvation of all, but the action of the play redeems the part without redeeming the whole. Hasenclever's treatment of Alexander and Agathe stands in strong contrast to his treatment of the other characters, and presents a strong dichotomization between active, evil characters, and passive, virtuous victims. Although Hasenclever's thematic statements hint at the salvation of all humanity, his dramatic strategies unflinchingly separate the sheep from the goats.

All three of these plays, *Hinkemann*, *The Genuine Sedemunds*, and *Humanity*, are examples of plays that fulfill Ricoeur's idea of "scandalous" art. Both formally and thematically, they oppose themselves to bourgeois canons of respectability and decorum, which are presented as grotesque and violent. The whole bourgeois ideology is regarded through a hermeneutic of suspicion, which scrutinizes the dominant expressions of the society for the slightest sign of self-interest (Cormie, 168-179).

The proclamation of the artist is set in opposition to that dominant ideology. Like Eugen Hinkemann, the three playwrights are looking for a theatrical language that will articulate the sufferings of the exploited and oppressed. They pursue the mission articulated by Paul Ricoeur in his recent study of narrative:

We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on its full force when we refer to the necessity to save the history of the

²⁰ "Ich liebe!!"

²¹ "Ich habe getotet."

defeated and the lost. The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative (*Time and Narrative* 1, 75).

In treating the dominant ideology with suspicion and taking up the cause of the oppressed, these writers are led to distort and fragment speech, and experiment with unorthodox dramatic structures. They see the creation of a new dramaturgy as a social and religious imperative. Toiler, Hasenciever, and Barlach all ally the proclamation of the artist with that of the religious prophet, and show the animosity and fear that both artist and prophet elicit from the public, leading to their persecution and alienation. The artist/prophet in his wounds or dismemberment, whether Hinkemann, Christ the Lion, or Alexander, testifies to a common need for healing and forgiveness in the human body, and the refusal to contemplate the image of physical suffering and brokenness only serves to insure the continuing cruelty and hypocrisy of the society. The heroes are radically estranged from their societies. Hinkemann prepares to kill himself, Grude and the young Sedemunds elect to retire to a mental institution, Alexander is institutionalized and condemned to death, finally finding his way back to the grave. Yet, ironically, it is these figures who have the fullest understanding of how closely human beings are bound together through suffering and a common experience of finitude. *They* are the ones the society most needs to hear. Bariach, Toiler and Hasenciever all see the role of the artist-prophet as set against his/her time, defying its superficial proprieties and interdictions in order to speak the disturbing truths that could save it. The very intensity of their social and spiritual awareness sets them against their time. They share a common perception that salvation is not achieved alone but through a common set of responsibilities, seen most clearly in the figures of the suffering and oppressed. Again, this can be seen as an adumbration of current liberation theology and its analyses of how human freedom is actualized. To quote from King and Woodyard again, "Becoming free is a process of living *in*, living *above*, and living *against* one's circumstances" (26).

I find it strange to be writing of the notion of scandal as a basic mode of artistic and religious proclamation in such an eminently respectable situation as the pages of an academic journal, an institution whose conventions are far more allied to the bourgeois sensibilities and conventions of Pinero and Ibsen than the intense proclamations of Hasenciever, Barlach and Toiler. It makes me wonder to what extent the theatrical and academic activity, in its strongly institutionalized and respectable middle-class context in contemporary American life, dares to live *in*, *above* and *against* its circumstances. In our current cultural setting, artists and educators are all under too much pressure to assume what Ricoeur has called "the conventional and hypocritical image which the righteous are inclined to assume" ("Image," 119). The shared vision of these plays challenges and disturbs me in my work, provoking an examination of conscience. I find them speaking out against me and the institutional evasions and pressures of which I am a part. I cannot dismiss the call to scandal, and cannot help but notice how easily I evade that call. It leads me to believe that anyone dedicated to the study of the relationship of religion and drama can only ignore the scandal of suffering at the risk of trivializing the topic s/he sets forth to examine.

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