
5. The Jovial Church: Narrative in Local Church Life

Literary Symbolism

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A story, of all things, mobilizes the disciplines and techniques featured in this book. It is a narrative account, the Wiltshire case study, that here gives anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, and management consultants both reason and instance to use their skills. Story, that most ancient of human reports, has here drawn together those modern methods of inquiry normally parted by their task and jargon. Surely part of seeing how we understand the local church involves our looking at not just our scientific conclusions but also the narrative matrix of that understanding.

Consider how story (that is, the representation of a succession of happenings) permeates the corporate life of a parish and its interpretation. It is the primary medium by which the systemic imperatives of that institution—identity, values, goals, perceptions, and strategies—are communicated among its members, especially when these need emphasis or justification. Just ask of a systemic signal “how come?” and its human transmitter *accounts* for it. It is often these accounts that a social scientist reduces to rules and findings; yet story re-appears when that analyst tries to explain these facts to those who were investigated. Such a basic way of accounting for and to corporate life—the Wiltshire Church story—is examined in this chapter.

Every congregation has a story. Although this narrative aspect of parish life is seldom explored, it can be helpfully probed by ethnography and literary symbolism. The disciplines complement each other. Ethnography explores the pattern of symbols by which

a particular congregation gives meaning to its life and language. Literary symbolism works with these same symbolic components—pattern, meaning, and language—to see how human imagination gives narrative structure to corporate life. Together these disciplines help us consider the full imagery of a local church.

For the observer such study may disclose unexpected dimensions of the symbolic interaction among members and groups within a church, or it may lead to refined comparisons among the lives of different churches. It may enhance an appreciation of the rich cultural complexity of even the average congregation. For the local church itself the full recounting of its story has benefits similar to those found in families who carefully recall and play with their own stories. Narrative can reinforce (as argued above) identities, values, outlooks, and goals. It seems to facilitate corporate discussion of church life: its peculiar, often painful, problems, its needs, its mission.

The Wiltshire story can be analyzed according to its plot, setting, and characterization.

PLOT

The plot of a congregation's story is its history: its consciousness of its struggle as an organization through time and circumstance. A good example of the unfolding plot is seen in the Wiltshire Church case study. In that study a causally connected series of events is related, its progression noted in the study's section headings (Company Church, Sid Carlson Appointed, Growth, Recent Changes, Board Retreat, Housing Proposal, Tensions Increase . . .). As in other plots these events form only a small fraction of the total number of happenings in Wiltshire Church; their recounting as plot is a selective but not arbitrary action. Finding the plot of a church is an imaginative undertaking for the historian but also for the community that lives it out. Both the community and its historian (or case study writer) give significance to only certain events. Both treat certain instances as critical to the struggle for corporate life: certain scenes of strategy and decision, certain times of conflict and response, only some programs and only some results. In that the thickening of these into plot is so evident

in the case study, however, we can move on to those less obvious aspects of the Wiltshire story: its setting and characterization.

SETTING

Wiltshire Church not only has a plot; it also has a world view. Its life is narrated not only by events but also by what it suspects to be really going on in that life. This is the setting of the Wiltshire story: the world and its process as viewed by the participants in the plot.

Full ethnographic inquiry into world view at Wiltshire Church would require months of observation and interview. Since that was not possible, a summary way of analyzing Wiltshire's world view was employed. Members completed a test instrument based in part upon Northrop Frye's typology of literary archetypes. Distinguishing four basic interpretations of the world, this typology has been helpful in development of a questionnaire to differentiate the world views of various congregations. In brief the four world view types (here given their narrative designations) are:

Comedy, in which complications of life are found to be illusory when participants find the right knowledge (or gnosis). Harmony is gained in the end.

Romance, in which life as adventure leads to conflict between hero and antagonist. Struggle, however, results in a sacred union or charisma.

Tragedy, in which a flawed hero suffers the consequences of breaking the canon. Resolution comes in a final submission to that law.

Irony, in which heroes and heroic situations are found by empirical evidence to be all too human. Life is lived without illusion or recourse to the sacred.

Different local churches live out their plots in the light of these different settings. Each setting, of course, has its peculiar religious dimension. Implied in the comic world view is a *gnostic* framework in which life is dislocated until the truth is realized and union with the ultimate achieved. The romantic world view is as well that of the *charismatic*, involving the lover's search for the

beloved, the excitement and anxiety of the quest, and the mystic sweet communion between God and the person. Within the tragic world view is the *canonic* interpretation of life in terms of its obedience or disobedience to God's ordinances. And the ironic world view reflects the *empiric* understanding of life that rejects any gnosis, quest, or pattern not verifiable through one's own senses, but affirms the integrity of human experience. This four-fold differentiation of world view has proven more useful than the usual liberal-conservative polarity used to categorize the belief of a congregation.

Of the thirty or so churches in the eastern United States tested so far, Wiltshire had the highest ironic and lowest romantic scores yet found. Wiltshire interprets its world as playing out an empiric, not a charismatic, story. Wiltshire's script is ironic. The case study ends not with a gnostic solution, nor in romantic ecstasy or tragic judgment. As does Alan Hyatt in its first sentence, the study instead smiles and shakes its head at its supposed heroes and unfulfilled promises.

CHARACTERIZATION

The third narrative dimension of corporate life at Wiltshire is its characterization. Although closely related to the other dimensions, the character of a congregation is neither the life plot that church follows nor the world it views. It is instead its ethos, its pattern of values. Pastors who have encountered the character of several churches and who, perhaps ruefully, recall their decided differences, term this narrative mode the church's personality.

The narrative form of that personality is imaged in myth. Myths are the primal, yet still powerful, tools by which a people accounts for its value, its character. There is a surprisingly close correlation between a specific myth and the character of a particular congregation, and Wiltshire is a case in point. In this instance the myth is that of Zeus, the father of gods and men.

In her anthology Edith Hamilton relates that myth in the following way:

The Titans, often called the Elder Gods, were for untold ages supreme in the universe. They were of enormous size and of incredible strength. . . . The most important was Chronus, in Latin, Saturn. He

ruled over the other Titans until his son Zeus dethroned him and seized the power for himself. . . .

The twelve great Olympians were supreme among the gods who succeeded the Titans. They were called the Olympians because Olympus was their home. . . . The entrance to it was a great gate of clouds kept by the Seasons. Within were the gods' dwellings, where they lived and slept and feasted on ambrosia and nectar and listened to Apollo's lyre. It was an abode of perfect blessedness. . . .

Zeus became the supreme ruler. He was Lord of the Sky, the rain god and the cloud-gatherer who wielded the awful thunderbolt. His power was greater than all the other divinities together. . . . Nevertheless he was not omnipotent or omniscient, either. He could be opposed and deceived. . . .¹

Both the narrative of Wiltshire Church and that of Zeus are characterized by the following themes:

1. The defeat of the chronic
2. Moral rule
3. Joviality
4. Ultimacy

At Wiltshire these themes appear to develop with the advent of Sid Carlson in 1970. Their interweaving throughout the next decade creates, as in the Zeus myth, a plausible and powerful identification between local life and a sacred cosmos. In the "distress" and "turmoil" reported by church members in recent months, however, we see the ironic unraveling of these themes and their point-by-point repudiation. We shall look first at the symbolic pattern that seems to characterize Wiltshire Church throughout most of the seventies. In the latter part of the chapter we look at what may be its recent deterioration.

Parish Character in the 1970s

The Defeat of the Chronic

Chronus was the tyrant father of the gods, who swallowed his offspring at their birth. As his Latin name suggests, Chronus

¹ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York: New American Library, 1940), pp. 24-27.

was saturnine, heavy, and dull. Although in some accounts the time of Chronus was remembered as a golden age, it was more generally depicted as a time of lengthy and saturnine imprisonment of spirit.

For over a century Wiltshire Church lived in the belly of the Adams Company. "A company church in a company town," the congregation was a virtual subsidiary of the Adams Company; its sandstone skin was that of the company buildings and its physical structure was conceived and maintained by the company head. It was dulled by chronic leadership: "tired old men, ready for retirement" and weighted by a chronic "congregation of elderly people." The later Greeks considered Chronus to be Chronos, Father Time, the old man with the scythe who rounded out the year.

Zeus is the lastborn son of Chronus, who by deception escaped being swallowed by his father (Sid Carlson masquerading as Mr. Mueller?). When strong enough he administers a strong emetic to Chronus ("Sid was probably just the right prescription for this church"), who vomits up his children to begin the Olympian age.

A titanic battle, however, was required before the rule of Zeus was secure. Chronus throws his fellow Titans against the gods. The Titans are followed by the giants and, finally, by the terrifying Typhon. Although shaken and sometimes despairing, Zeus and the gods finally win out. Typhon is buried by Zeus under Aetna, Europe's largest volcano. With Typhon trapped by Aetna, the earth is no longer victimized by chance disaster.

A titanic overthrow occurs with Sid's leadership. Four trustees die in late 1969. "Sid challenged the entire administrative board literally to vote itself out of existence." The church secretary and the choir director leave. He confronts the opposition in their lair and dares them to call the bishop. He purges the church rolls, collapses the double service routine, and restricts administrative board membership. Sid, with support from his bishop and a good number of laypeople, decisively defeats the chronic.

Moral Rule

In addition to the political power his bishop and lay supporters provided, Sid uses extraordinary moral force in "straightening this place out." "I was going to push for what I thought was

correct." Early on Zeus gains a moral personality and is seen as the protector of laws and morals.

Sid presses early against the ethically indefensible postures of Wiltshire Church. From the pulpit he says that they sing as if God is dead, that they are in the pocket of the Adams Company, that membership is trivialized by inclusion of 220 lost members, that the building that houses their children has seventeen fire code violations. He finds fault in both the secretary and the choir director, and they leave. Accusing the average member of giving only twenty-five cents each week to God, he transforms their \$400,000-portfolio complacency into the guilt of indebtedness.

Zeus not only punishes the wrongdoer, he also advises the suppliant. At the topmost peak in Olympus he gathers the other gods for counsel. Mortals gain his advice through divination, the word spoken at his shrines. He is known as an undeviating protector who punishes only those mortals who seek divine prerogatives. In the pulpit, Sid preaches authoritatively to a congregation needing guidance toward "success and survival in the context of the values of the present culture." Sid is not saturnine in his preaching; he is "provocative," speaking directly to the middle-management families of Wiltshire, advising them how to live decent, honorable lives in uncertain times. The business managers of Wiltshire recognize in Sid a person of great management gifts capable of high secular office had he not chosen rather the role of community divine. Sid could make it big, but his obvious sacrifice of material goods gives him instead a pre-eminent moral power.

Like Zeus, Sid exercises this power with pivotal authority. As the maypole, Sid represents the center of human life. Before his tenure the church building did not have a pastor's office, but Sid appropriates the room with the hearth, the central room heretofore tended by the old women. As maypole, Sid marks the *axis mundi*—the world center—in a church building situated at the power center of a town whose citizens manage one of the nation's most potent industries.

As "a man who could take charge of a situation in the best corporate sense," Sid has both the "charm" and moral strength to provide "very direct leadership . . . very emphatic . . . very strong leadership." He is "a one-man show," clearly in charge of a small

board and a part-time, inadequate staff. Only a “small cluster of laypersons in this eleven-hundred-member church make decisions for it,” and these under Sid’s guidance. “Ye God,” Sid says in late 1979, “I was trying to run this place alone—there was no help at all.”

Zeus controls his family and mortals with thunderbolts, inflicting severe penalties on those that displease him. A method of control Sid uses increasingly as years pass is “a pattern of getting people,” exposing them to embarrassment and ridicule if they cross him. “Let no god, let no goddess attempt to curb my will,” Homer quotes Zeus, “or I shall seize him and cast him into darkest Tartarus.”

Joviality

The Olympus of Zeus is, however, a basically happy place. Throughout its days the gods live serenely in merriment and laughter. Listening to the sweet music of Apollo’s lyre and the Muses, they dine on celestial nectar and ambrosia. At night they retire to marvelous dwellings fashioned for each by the cunning Hephaestus. Life under Jove is jovial; Olympus is the land of the blessed.

“If you can’t join Wiltshire Country Club, join Wiltshire Church.” The joviality of this congregation, so attractive to so many in Wiltshire, has two related aspects. In the first place, the church is entertaining: “the best show in town.” Its pastor is described as lighthearted and is pictured in tennis togs. Even in his sermons some see him “playing with ideas.” The music of the church is considered excellent; its pews are comfortable and its welcome, warm.

The blessing of Jove, however, also brings kindness and compassion. A second aspect of the joviality of Wiltshire is its ministry of “love” and “acceptance.” Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are manifested in their jovial natures. More than any other minister in town, Sid reaches out to the single people, the widowed and divorced. The church over which he presides is not just the best show in town, it is also an Olympian “sanctuary” that “provides nurture and caring for those who must go out of the sanctuary and do battle” in a tough outside world. Many echo the blessing that

one parishioner finds in Sid's preaching: "through Sid's sermons I am aware that I am not alone, that I am strong enough to take care of my problems, that there is hope, that there is a God and my many friends in that church who care."

Loving many gods and mortals, Zeus peoples the world with his offspring. Wiltshire Church membership doubles during Sid's tenure.

Ultimacy

The Greek gods are like humans in most ways, except that the deities enjoy superior stature, strength, and beauty and through their veins flows the ichor that makes them immortal. Though subject to the contingency of fate, gods live and do as they please, beholden neither to mortal need nor to some more final deity. The gods of Olympus are not themselves spiritual, that is, inspired by or aspiring to some nature beyond their own.

The stature, strength, and, indeed, beauty of Wiltshire Church are superior to those of others. Its members are the "people with the financial power and clout." The district superintendent sees it as the "strongest church in the district"; it pays its pastor more than does any other Methodist church in the conference. Its "highly select group of people" inhabit a building remarkably more attractive than "the struggling wooden church on the edge of town" that is the usual lot of Methodists in this region.

There is also in Wiltshire Church the inference of immortality. The membership tends to be young, "with relatively few older people." Although over 50, Sid looks perhaps fifteen years younger and, according to his district superintendent, is immune to the ritual death of the denomination's appointment system. The church, moreover, is "child-oriented," the perpetuation of its being, its moral rule, and joviality assured in its very strong church school.

And, like inaccessible Olympus, Wiltshire is a place apart from human society, a Shangri-la, a town with a drawbridge mentality nestled between the ridges.

These intimations of its own ultimacy reinforce the general disregard that Wiltshire Church shows toward any system of church, society, or doctrine beyond its own. There is a lack of concern for the world beyond Wiltshire Church. Neither Sid nor the church

takes responsibility for working with the denomination's district and conference. Sid, in fact, is "really turned off by Methodism." Nor does the church find that it has "a primary responsibility to be present in, active in, or related to the world outside the community of the church." With candor, Sid reports that he has "minimal interest in impacting major social and economic problems in the community."

A similar independence is expressed by the congregation toward orthodox Christian doctrine. Sid says that he addresses "a secular, agnostic congregation of people" who are biblically illiterate and theologically unread: "people who wish they could believe the message of the Christian church but really find it difficult to do." New members at Wiltshire face little indoctrination; they are oriented in a single session. In a congregation that seems to celebrate its present ultimacy there is little emphasis on adult education.

The world view test instrument completed in spring 1981 by Wiltshire Church members confirms their basically empirical understanding of a here-and-now world. No congregation that has used this instrument gave as few charismatic interpretations to its questions as did Wiltshire Church. In the narrative of this congregation, God does not break into life from some more ultimate source. Spirituality, insofar as it represents a personal relationship with a more ultimate being, is not widely practiced in Wiltshire Church.

The Challenge to Character

An absence of overt spirituality does not, however, imply that Wiltshire Church is irreligious. If the above retelling of the congregation's story according to the myth of Zeus is anything more than my fantasy, it would suggest that Wiltshire Church, secular as it might seem, is in fact expressing through its word and deed a fundamental form of human piety. In playing out the social drama that is at least similar to that which the Greeks told as the story of Zeus, this congregation makes its particular sense of existence, its corporate commitment to a cosmos whose verities its behavior reflects. Rather than stay at home, the people of Wiltshire Church gather, worship, plan, gossip, play, and fight in a complex, engrossing narrative whose pattern has a recognizable mythic counterpart.

Recently, however, “some have commented on the lack of clarity about the goals and direction of the church.” The pattern that characterized the parish in the 1970s appears to be breaking down, its basic structure challenged with such pointedness that the congregation may be approaching a crisis in meaning. In part this crisis may reflect the ironic disenchantment that time and contradictory experience bring to any sacred pattern; in part the crisis may be the result of the subversion of religion worked by the kerygma in Wiltshire’s own Word and Sacrament. While its causes are unclear, the point-by-point relation between the crisis as reported and the previous pattern seems significant.

The Return of the Chronic

Time catches up with Sid. He passes fifty and is “more anxious about retirement.” The “exciting upward movement” of the church, its membership spurt, and its economic potency seem to slacken. The time of Chronos, the old man with the scythe, has not yet returned, but there are signs of its coming.

The Collapse of Moral Rule

Earlier the moral arbiter, Sid is now the accused in moral judgments. In his letter of resignation from the administrative board, its chairman cites two basic causes of disturbance, the more intractable being “the seemingly un-Christian behavior of our minister.” Whatever the nature of that behavior—it is elsewhere identified both as leading to “personal charges” and as “a recurring pattern of attacks by the pastor” on congregational “victims”—it undermines the theme of moral rule.

In 1980 Sid, moreover, “pushes for something for myself for the first time in ten years.” He wants a private home somewhere other than at the *axis mundi*. He seeks to get away from the singular, central role he plays as maypole: “the senior pastor has by his own decision withdrawn from his usual directive leadership style.”

The Decline of Joviality

“Earlier sermons used to be upbeat, uplifting, warm—something to stand by you all week. Now—no more humor, joy. There

used to be a lot of laughter.” Division regarding the appropriateness of enlarging the church building and the “emotion-laden issue” of alternate housing make this a time of “distress” or “turmoil” rather than joviality.

Earlier emphasis was placed upon the accepting, commiserative ethos of Wiltshire Church. Now, an aspect of the congregation’s distress is its unfulfilled need for a nurturing community. Opposition now is met with “contempt, not dialogue.” “We are far from being a redemptive fellowship in part because we are full of fear.”

The Repudiation of Ultimacy

Tempers flare. Someone formerly considered superior in stature and beauty is profaned. Sid witnesses his own demystification: “They don’t give a goddamn about me.”

Less *ad hominem* is the apparently growing concern that the church is “not spiritual enough,” that there is a reality beyond that expressed in the church that is not sufficiently acknowledged. A similar argument against the prevailing sense of local ultimacy focuses on increased involvement of the church in social issues.

NARRATIVE IN UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CHURCH

Congregations are imprisoned in prosaic self-description. Pick up virtually any parish report or church announcement, listen to almost any sermon or church board meeting, and note how statistics and program titles bind the language by which the local body is described. Public talk about a congregation is caught in a convention of numbers and tags. Although this body is called to the eloquence of theology and urgency of human need, its formal words about itself are usually a drone of data concerning money and membership and meetings.

This mumble is not merely dull, it is also evasive. By picturing itself in mechanistic terms (numbers and programs also describe washing machines) the congregation avoids semantic inference of either God or people. This prison of self-description is thus a fortress. Its fix on meetings, money, and membership walls out the implication of the group in human suffering and hope. Talking about one’s church in terms that picture neither the pain nor the

promise of the world is not only dull, it is also immoral.

Now narrative is a tool that springs the church from such bonds. It undermines cliché by relating what people see and do in their complex shaping of life. It literally tells the rest of the story, which is that part forgotten in the rush to reduce corporate experience to controlled data. Narrative recovers the metaphors that connect local to larger events; it represents the recurrent drama of humanity; it evokes the microcosm. It shows that structure of human imagination. For a surprising number of people, involvement in a local church embodies their week's most sustained imaginative activity. For these the congregation is a stage upon which the world story is played out live. For them, church life is not just a program but also a history whose plot members both relate and inhabit. What is worth telling about a church is first its story.

Using narrative does not, however, necessarily build up one's expertise about congregations. In reaching behind and beyond controlled data, narrative loses the latter's certainty. Because, as Northrop Frye reports, story tells the "and then" rather than the "hence" in life description, its form is never final. As the story unfolds, its telling is an account to be retold, not a conclusion to be pronounced. In finding and telling the story one does not inevitably become an authority regarding congregations in general, any more than an ethnographer of a particular people is thereby qualified to assess all others.

Neither ethnography nor literary criticism is therefore the most helpful to congregational understanding when it comes to (a) explaining, as do psychology and sociology, why a particular pattern of behavior occurs in a local church, or (b) judging, as would theology and ethics, how acceptable that pattern is, or (c) changing the pattern, as might organization development. The strength of both ethnography and literary criticism lies rather in their capacity to explore this pattern; to understand its meaning among those people who undertake it. In describing anthropology, Clifford Geertz talks of its uncovering what Max Weber termed a society's "webs of significance." In combining ethnography and literary criticism we are most concerned with finding the webs of meaning that shape the culture of a particular people. The culture of, for instance, Wiltshire Church may require the sort of expla-

nation, judgment, and modification that other disciplines provide more abundantly. But if any information from other disciplines is to be conveyed to the church itself, it must be through the symbols and signals that ethnography and literary criticism explore.

Church leaders interested in these explorations find them useful in addressing such perplexities in ministry as (a) *communication*, as between the language of the pulpit and that of the pew; (b) *concepts*, the force and form of ideas, fears, and dreams shared by churchgoers; (c) *conflicts*, the messages conveyed in particular tensions and fights; (d) *initiation*, patterns of socialization by which new and young members gain entry; and (e) *commitment*, what it means to be marginal or involved in local church life.

What then presents these issues powerfully to the congregation itself is more likely story than theory. Although ethnographers may by observation and interview gather in their minds what they find to be the more abstract themes of a church, their subsequent talk within that culture about these themes tends to assume narrative form. Narrative historical accounts were often the source of these cultural themes, and story is often the framework that carries their import on-site. Story is not then just the play of children nor the protoscience of primitives. It is the mastery of metaphor by which a group interprets its common life. Any ongoing ministry in a church relies upon story in its attempt to interpret its life. It is not just sermons that need illustration; all of corporate life needs imaging for its communication.

Once one begins to sense the power of narrative in congregational life one finds it everywhere. It constitutes the news that members share about their common life. A large part of that news is gossip. In one of the best of ethnographies of a congregation Samuel Heilman shows how gossip—that is, stories about other members—is essential for corporate existence. Heilman even demonstrates the presence of four layers of gossip, increasingly private and potent, that enrich activities and relationships in a congregation. Stories of origin and narrative explanations of behavior also define life together, as do schemes for the future and reports of the past. Introductions, confessions, testimonies, and other accounts further tie individual lives to the group story. Even jokes serve the common narrative pattern, their telling deemed

tasteful if they somehow advance the common story. Longer sequences of group behavior such as fights and social events have a dramatic framework that holds actors, plot, props, and setting. Added to all of the above is the more consciously storied nature of divine worship: its liturgical drama, its Scripture, hymns, sermons, and symbols. From its conception to its death the local church exists by the persistent imaginative construction of its members.

Some hints about finding and telling a congregation's story:

- a. Begin with ethnographic practices such as those featured in Melvin Williams's chapter. By participant observation and interview seek information about how this congregation makes sense of life and death and makes use of space and time. Learn how the group orders itself through patterns of submission and dominance. Consider the categories that underlie its systems of belief and value.
- b. Although events in this local church have their parallels elsewhere, resist the satisfaction of pointing out these similarities as one's most significant "finding." That is the habit of outside observers, and it does little to deepen an apprehension of a group's unique idiom.
- c. As that local idiom becomes more clearly defined, note how it is expressed in modalities of imperative, indicative, and subjunctive speech. These have narrative counterparts in the three aspects of story described earlier in this article: plot (the imperative behavior of a church that effects its history), setting (its indicative actions that constitute its world view), characterization (its subjunctive stance that forms its ethos).
- d. Discover the narrative that gives life to these aspects. In the history of human imagination the range of narrative options was determined fairly early and is preserved in the world's mythology. The local story and its primal counterpart touch each other in four basic ways. Both concern a form of murder or other extinction that results in an integration of participants. Both display a style of behavior deemed essential for survival as a group, and both promote a dominant mood for that life. And both seek a similar outcome.

The congregation's story is the access of that local church to human history. It is here and nowhere else that corporate life is related as event and inference. Either God's call and the world's cry sound in what this church tells as its own story, or it as a body does not hear them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RELATED READING

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957.

The range and interrelationships of Western literature described in ways that suggest symbolic options in the social construction of reality.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Ethnography as entry into the conceptual and conversational worlds of a people. "Doing ethnography is like trying to read a manuscript" (p. 10).

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. New York: New American Library, 1940.

The major Greek, Roman, and Norse myths told clearly.

Heilman, Samuel C. *Synagogue Life: A Study in Symbolic Interaction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973, 1976.

Heilman uses a "dramaturgical framework" in this ethnographic approach to a congregation.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974.

A study of social dramas in the life of a community.