READING AS A CHRISTIAN: A PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR COPING WITH SELECTED PROBLEMATIC PLAYS BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

by

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by

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Summary

This study deals with a possible Christian approach to the study of drama. The first chapter outlines the necessity for a Christian approach. The advantages of this approach are mentioned and it is indicated that this approach offers the critic and reader the most adequate and the freest possible way in which to study drama and related arts.

The second chapter discusses the way in which this approach ought to be used. The nature of art, the various norms and the spiritual base of all art are discussed. The critic's realization of this and the way in which these norms should be applied (in the full knowledge that the spirit of any work of art must be tested by criteria other than mere literary criteria) are shown. There is also a consideration of the semiotic reading strategy which is used to analyze the dramas, since this approach has proved to be the most adequate one to do this as it takes full cognizance of the critical factor of ostension, which is the crucial distinguishing mark of drama as opposed to other forms of literature.

The subsequent chapter deals with A Streetcar Named Desire. An analysis of this play yields the information that it is one of Williams's best plays, if not his best. His best dramatic skills are on display and he gives a most successful revelation of the human nature, mainly due to the fact that he keeps his symbolic devices and emotions in check.

The next chapter chapter deals with Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin roof. This play fails essentially because of Williams's obsessive, over-personalized preoccupation with his characters which leads to a failure to remain honest and objective about them. This leads to over-indulgence, sentimentality and a slide into the melodramatic. Needless to say these tendencies blunt the play and rob it of its power and impact on the reader and audience.

The sixth chapter has the play The Night of the Iguana as its focus. This play, which speaks the most directly about God of all the three plays involved, does not succeed in reaching the heights of A Streetcar Named Desire, because of Williams's notorious failure to remain honest about his characters and a preoccupation with his own existential nausea that spills
over into the play. The play fails dramatically and thematically and therefore does not conform to the norms as outlined for successful drama.

The last chapter gives a summary of the whole work, indicating the necessity for a Christian approach, its advantages and the ways in which it could fruitfully be applied. The three plays under discussion are again briefly discussed and the way in which the approach has been used is shown in recapitulation.
Opsomming

Hierdie werk handel oor 'n moontlike Christelike benadering tot drama. Die eerste hoofstuk dui die noodsaaklikheid van so 'n benadering aan en ook die voordele daarvan en toon aan dat hierdie benadering die leser en kritikus die mees voldoende en enbeperkte manier bied waarmee met literatuur omgegaan kan word.

Die tweede hoofstuk verduidelik die manier waarop hierdie benadering gebruik behoort te word. Die aard van kuns, die verskeie norme wat in ag geneem behoort te word en die geestelike basis van elke kunswerk word belig. Die kritikus se kennis hiervan lei tot die besef dat kuns nie bloot volgens literêre kriteria beoordeel behoort te word nie, maar definitiewe geestelike kriteria ook, aangesien dit 'n geestelike basis het. Die volgende hoofstuk handel oor die leesstrategie wat gebruik word in hierdie werk, naamlik die semiotiese leesstrategie. Die rede hiervoor is dat die semiotiese benadering die belangrikheid in ag neem van ostensie wat alle dramatiese produksies en werk onderlê.

Die vierde hoofstuk behandel een van Williams se eerste werke, A Streetcar Named Desire. Die analise hiervan toon aan dat hierdie drama sekerlik een van Williams se beste, indien nie heel beste drama is nie. Al sy beste dramatiese vermoeëns is sigbaar in hierdie drama en hy laat die leser en gehoor met 'n baie suksesvolle openbaring van die menslike natuur, hoofsaaklik weens sy vermoë om sy simboliese tegnieke en emosies in toom te hou.

Die vyfde hoofstuk handel oor Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, nog 'n bekroonde drama van Williams. Hierdie drama is egter nie dramaties so suksesvol soos A Streetcar Named Desire nie, hoofsaaklik weens Williams se beheptheid met sy karakter wat lei daartoe dat hy hulle nie hanteer met die regte mate van eerlikheid en objektiwiteit nie. Dit lei tot sentimentaliteit en melodrama en blote swak skryfkuns. Nodeloos om te sê beroof dit die drama van meeste van sy trefkrag.

Die sesde hoofstuk bespreek The Night of the Iguana. Weer eens misluk hierdie drama weens Williams se ou probleem van 'n gebrek aan eerlikheid en afstand wanneer dit by sy karakters kom. Sy eie ervarings en vrees is te
duidelik sigbaar in die karakters en veroorsaak dat die dramatiese elemente nie tot hulle volle reg kom nie en Williams hom verlusting in self-bejammering en sy eie paranoia. Boonop misluk die werk dramaties ook.

Die laaste hoofstuk bied 'n opsomming oor die werk. Die noodsaaklikheid van die Christelike benadering, die voordele daarvan en hoe dit toegepas behoort te word, word uitgestip. Al drie dramas word weer kortliks bespreek en daar word aangedui hoe die Christelike benadering gebruik is om die dramas met groot vrug te benader en te ontleed.
Preface

1 Contextualization

This study will primarily aim at proposing a reading strategy based on Christian-reformational principles which should enable the reader to come to terms with some troubling aspects of Tennessee Williams' dramatic works.

Tennessee Williams has long intrigued the reading public and critics alike, and has at times evoked strongly differing reactions, many of these reactions hinging on the alleged lack of "morality" or otherwise in his work. Williams (who died in 1983) was an important playwright, warranting serious attention, but also presenting fundamental problems. Many critics believe that Williams had genuine poetic gifts, and an interesting insight into a particular American milieu (Williams, 1984:iv - Preface). Bigsby (1987:7) maintains that Williams at his best was from the beginning a 'truly original voice'. Bigsby also feels that Williams deals with a spiritual yearning which '[is seen] as being extinguished by the processes of life no less than by those of society' (1987:5).¹

A further important aspect of his work emerges in the statement that in Williams' plays a struggle between cavalier and Puritan strains establishes a tension that is evident throughout the plays (Anon., 1972:413). This statement about the antagonism between puritanism and sensuality (cf. below) confronts the reader with an ambivalence which warrants serious study, for while Williams has also been described as a rebellious puritan, he was vilified, after his death, for having 'disrupted the supposed moral and aesthetic equilibrium of the English-speaking theatre, introducing a note of decadence and melodrama' (Bigsby, 1987:18), and Hobson (1987:49) maintained that he was 'half aflame with poetry, half mad with distorted passion'. It is this fundamental opposition in Williams' work, between unbridled passion and tortured morality, that demands a coherent reading strategy, for in Wolterstorff's terms (1980:173), "it's the 'dirty movies' and

¹ Williams himself has maintained that he wrote to escape from a world of reality in which he felt acutely uncomfortable, and that this formed the foundation of his work (Williams, 1984:vi & xiv).
'filthy books' that catch the bullets", and Williams' work has for too long been the target of righteous puritans - "sadly but pervasively characteristic of Christians in the last century or two [has been] the extraordinary tunnel vision" (Wolterstorff, 1980:173).

Reading, and by logical extension literary criticism, are central and crucial activities of mankind. The complex nature and foundation of the (non-innocent) act of reading are well-explicated by two well-known ideological critics, viz. Catherine Belsey and Terry Eagleton. Belsey (1984:144) states that literary criticism can not be isolated from other areas of knowledge. The concepts of ideology and subjectivity must be accounted for (Belsey, 1980:145). Eagleton (1983:15) is equally right when he says that there is no critical response which is not intertwined, there is no such thing as a 'pure' literary critical judgment or interpretation. From a different paradigm, Pretorius, referring to Olthuis and others (1980:286), maintains that literature is led by its worldview. Criticism is inevitably also led by its worldview, and an important further dimension is added in Wolterstorff's view as to the function of the (especially Christian) critic. He feels that the critic and the artist are in a symbiotic relationship in our institution of high art, as the critic guides us in our contemplation, advising us on "what to look for, what to listen for, what to read for" (1980:31).

From the above quotes from critics with widely differing ideological stances, it is clear that reading is a complex act, determined very strongly by the ideological presuppositions of the reader. Edwards (1987:75) has also maintained that literature has a great deal to do with interpreting the generation it stems from. To understand the generation we live in, to see further into the human condition through literature, we need interpreters - and the problem of this study is located in that the interpreters have to be rightly equipped to engage in fruitful interpretation, as Ryken (1981:122) says, "We need critics who put us into possession of the work of art and show us it as it really is" (cf. also Wolterstorff, 1980:30-32).

It has thus emerged that reading Williams' work is problematic because critics respond to his work in such diverse ways - responses varying from admiration to downright denunciation. His work has been enduringly
popular, however, and it would therefore be important to propose a (reformationally Christian) reading strategy which would help the reader cope with this troublingly diverse response to his work and come to a reasoned assessment.

2 Problem statement

The following problems will be addressed in this study:

* Williams is an important playwright, and it is of great importance that responsible critics should pave the way for a more adequately based understanding of his work, especially in terms of the alleged immoral quality of his work.
* There are serious discrepancies in the reading of Williams' work, resulting from the problematic nature of especially his subject material, which is perceived by a number of critics to be immoral and objectionable, while others applaud his plays for a variety of reasons.
* A balanced, Christian reading strategy, combining aesthetic aspects and issues of worldview, is essential for dealing adequately with Williams' work. The strategy thus developed should stand comparison with other reading strategies based on different, especially atheistic/existentialist worldviews.

3 Aims and objectives

The study wishes to investigate the possibility that a (reformational) Christian reading will enable a reader to cope more adequately with a (problematic) text, such as the texts by Tennessee Williams, which will be studied by way of being exemplars.

The objectives of the study therefore are

* to develop a reading model for coping more adequately with Williams' work. In this process cognizance will be taken of Williams' plays as
good literature (Olthuis, in Pretorius 1980:289), and Wolterstorff's views on fittingness in art (1980:96; 119). This will entail the development and application of a semiotic model of analysis of drama (cf. Mouton, 1989) which takes the most adequate cognizance of drama as a genre, as deals with the play within its fullest context, both literary, theatrical and social; in conjunction with this to develop a reformational Christian reading strategy based on the norms of balance, unity, richness and intensity proposed by Wolterstorff (1980:156-174) as belonging to the realms of artistic and aesthetic excellence and beauty, and supplemented by the model of Van Rensburg (1981); and to apply these strategies to selected plays by Williams.

4 Thesis statement

It is postulated that a reformational Christian reading strategy developed along the lines indicated above will render a more adequate and nuanced reading of the plays of Tennessee Williams than non-referential reading strategies, and help to resolve the seeming impasse of the present critical position with regard to his work. It will also allow extrapolation to other (problematic) texts.

5 Proposed methods

The methods envisaged in this study are the following:

1 The development of the semiotic reading model in accordance with the proposals of Mouton (1989) to deal with the plays as dramatic works of art; and
2 an evaluation of the plays in terms of the reading strategy extrapolated from views proposed by Seerveld (1964), Wolterstorff (1980) and Edwards (1987) and supplemented by Van Rensburg's model (1981) concerning the role of worldview in the perception of message in drama. This is a synthesized interpretative paradigm which involves using the norms and guidelines that God gives in his Word - the rule
of truthful knowledge, which allows us constantly to broaden our horizons and to ensure that our viewpoint remains the freest and most encompassing one. It entails that the critic should constantly test his critical sensibilities against other theories and philosophies by using the rule of truthful knowledge (Gaebelain, 1981:100).

An intensive reading and analysis of three of Williams' most acclaimed plays, viz. A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and The Night of the Iguana will be done for purposes of illustrating the concepts dealt with in the first part of the dissertation.
CHAPTER 1

Reflections on man, Christianity and the arts

Before the necessity of a Christian approach to literature can be determined, the necessity of literature as an essential part of the life of man must be determined. Literature is a part of culture, thus it follows that the necessity of culture must be determined.

All this forms part of creation made by God to be ruled and enjoyed by man - according to the Bible in Genesis 1.

To fully understand the whole concept of culture the place and destiny of man must be outlined, because without man there would be no culture, and without God there would be no man. The Creator's idea of and purpose with man must be concluded. This is found in the Word of God, which displays, together with the Holy Spirit, the thoughts of God.

1.1 Who is man?

Roper (1979:2) suggests that each civilization is founded on the conception of its members. The view of man determines our society. The way a society thinks about itself, for societies are built by men, will determine its perspective of the whole creation, of life. It will determine how societies live, what they deem as important, how they spend their time and money and energy.

Etchells (1972:45) rightly says that society is rooted in the bond between God and man finding there its final perspective and values.

That is why man has always been groping with questions concerning his origin and destiny. It all refers to man's search for identification, which is largely a search for God. This is also one of the reasons man seems to be constantly displaying a keen desire to acknowledge some superior "other", which refers to the craving for worship and acknowledgment of God as our ultimate fulfilment as Potter (1989:69) so clearly illustrates.
Etchells (1972:19) quotes William Golding as having said that the preservation of the whole human race depends on safeguarding the individual personality as well as the identity of the whole human race. She goes on to say that man's problem is that he is vague about his origins, indeterminate about his race, and doubtful about his personal history, and therefore struggles to cope with life (Etchells, 1972:91).

Huizenga (1981:70) persuasively concludes that the Christian scholar (any scholar for that matter) who seeks a meaningful view of the whole range of human culture sooner or later wrestles with the crucial questions of God's original purpose in creation and with man.

The only way to grasp the real sense and meaning of life and experience the fullness of existence, is by finding God and in Him one's true identity. The Word of God reveals man's true identity, for true knowledge of ourselves is dependent on true knowledge of God (Roper, 1979:3).

1.2 The Word speaks

What does the Bible, the Word of God, say about man? The Word speaks a lot about man, for it was written for man, but the single most important statement it does make about man is found in Genesis 1:27:

so God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God made man for Himself, in His image, unlike the animals and the plants and trees and water. We are His creatures, made by Him, for Him, to be like Him. He is the creator, sustainer and goal of all created reality (Huizenga, 1981:71). This verse clearly states the origin of man and also suggests the purpose and destiny of man: eternal life with God, an everlasting, on-going relationship with the only true god.

The Word reveals our true nature: dependent, responsible creatures made by God, called to live in loving fellowship with our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ (Roper, 1979:3). This indicates man's real concern and purpose in life. Playwrights like Pinter, Beckett and Fugard so vividly
illustrate the hopelessness and lostness of man without God, for in Him alone we find life, truth and freedom. In Christ all values reside, all wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

1.3 Man's place in creation

God decided to place man in a creation, a world, in which man is to rule and reign as God's ambassador, as God's assistant but also as His child. God gave man dominion over this creation and from the start instructed man to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28). This was God's idea from the beginning for man to develop the earth and establish God's reign and majesty on it. This all refers to culture: all that is involved with cultivating and giving form to the creation structure (Roper, 1979:3).

Seerveld (1977:3) reminds us of the fact that man's place in this creation is unique. The mere fact that God chose to make man and place him within a certain structure (earth), with a wondrous prospect of eternal, abundant life, displays God's unequalled love. Therefore He sees it fit to create every human being with different physical attributes, as well as with a different emotional and psychological make-up. Yet He knows us so intimately that He is aware of how many hairs we have on our head, a fact no one else knows.

Man carries with him the sense of his divine origin and dependence on the only and absolute God (Seerveld, 1977:5). Everything he does or means is intrinsically referential of God: that is man's being in the image of God (Seerveld, 1977:5).

1.4 Creation and the Word of God

Man's role in his covenant relationship with God is to rule the world in subjection to the Word of God, cultivating and caring for it as Gen 1:26-28 and 2:15, indicate (Roper, 1979:4). Under man's guidance and dominion creation can be discovered, explored and cultivated to show forth God's glory and to satisfy man.
The Word of God gives man the principles, ideas and knowledge with which he can unlock this wonderful creation and enter into an everlasting relationship with God, the fountain of all life. This rule of God extends to all aspects of creation, both physical and spiritual. Man is called to exercise his God-given dominion over the creation in obedience to the Word of God (Roper, 1979:5).

Man's ultimate touchstone is the Word of God, as the Holy Spirit makes this Word alive in our hearts and lives. The Word of God alone offers man the way to salvation and to godly life. The Bible equips man for every good work, as it instructs, reproves, corrects and informs. By studying the Word of God, and adhering to it, man finds purpose and a destiny. This supplies man with a true identification and sets man up for the most fulfilling and everlasting relationship of his life.

Guiness (1973:317) stresses the fact that abundant life can only be realized in a personal and communal relationship to the living God who is indefinite and personal. The knowledge of Him offers significance to man, as well as fulfilment, grace, freedom, love, joy, peace and adoration (Guiness, 1973:317).

Man's uncertainty about his origin, destiny and significance is all met within a personal relationship with God. Without this relationship man cannot come to grips with himself, his society and his world.

The realization and reality of such a personal relationship with God constitute the basis of life. Being a Christian means becoming more uniquely the self one was intended to be (Etchells, 1972:104). To understand the whole concept and idea of culture, literature and the approach to it, a relationship with God is essential. Only within such a relationship do the artist, critic and the reader grasp the real meaning and essence of art and life.

Brink (in Steenberg 1973:180) says that an important part of the artist's task, specifically that of the writer, is through his work to let the reader know that there is more to this materialistic world than buy and sell, facts, statistics and bread.
This can only be fully done by the artist who has a loving and personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The Word of God offers real and everlasting godly wisdom and understanding, as wisdom begins with knowledge of God (Prov 8:10), which is found in the Word of God. Through the Word man finds himself and his true identity.

1.5 Cultural development in the light of Creation, Fall and Redemption

The true identity and purpose of man have been established. God places man on earth to have fellowship with Him and to serve Him. Unfortunately Adam, the first man, gave this privilege away to the devil, and lost man's standing before God, as Genesis 3 tells us and the world around us confirms it.

This event, commonly known as the fall, wrecked man's ideal life under the protection and rulership of God. This caused man to become a slave of sin and Satan and corruption reigned supreme. So much so that in Genesis 6 God says that He was sorry that He had made man, the same creature He had made in His own image.

The fall certainly is a radical one, causing corruption to the very root of human existence (Roper, 1979:8). Therefore this world is ruled by the god of this world, the devil, Satan, as 2 Corinthians 4 indicates. Culture is also corrupted by the fall, as is everything else. It cannot be neutral as it acknowledges God and believes His Word, or does not.

God did not leave it there though. In His great mercy and love He sent His only Son, Jesus, to come and live on this earth and through His crucifixion reconcile man to God (2 Corinthians 5). This redemption paved the way for man to get to know God and be joined with Him in a new and better covenant as Hebrews tells us. This act of God brought about redemption for man.

The people who accept and believe in this act of redemption by God find that their beliefs, attitudes and hearts are changed. The radically regenerated hearts and minds of people can now in this present world and despite the effects of the fall, put culture, and everything else, to the
wholehearted worship and service of their Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of all (Roper, 1979:8).

Through a living and vibrant relationship with Christ, the lordship and wonderful love of God can again be enjoyed by man. This renewal and redemption enable man, in culture also, to display and enjoy God's glory.

1.6 The cultural mandate

Man's place in this life has been suggested and the conditions in which he lives on this earth have been outlined. The realization and revelation of this to the human heart is essential. Man must know where he comes from, where he is heading and how to get there. Without this knowledge of the meaning and purpose of his existence man is hopeless and unable to experience the joy of living.

How should man then approach culture? Should he? Does culture, and art, warrant study and consideration? Well, as Seerveld (1979:8) so aptly illustrates, it pleased God to make rainbows, to make His creation not just functional but also beautiful. God in His great wisdom considered it fitting and necessary to tell His people to build a temple that is beautiful and of great aesthetic value.

Jesus saw it fitting to tell stories, parables, and David wrote songs and poems. It certainly looks as if God takes art seriously. The Word of God plainly states God's concern with culture, and therefore also art, in Genesis 1, which many people refer to as the cultural mandate. In this chapter God calls man to subdue and control the entire earthly order for the glory of God (Ryken, 1981:59).

The English word "culture" derives from the Latin "colere", which means to till or cultivate the soil. For the Christian culture means that man as image-bearer of his Creator concerns himself with activities that form the nature to his purposes. It also refers to all human effort and labour expended upon the cosmos to unearth its treasures and riches and bring them into service of man for the enrichment of human existence unto the glory of God (Huizenga, 1981:74).
The Christian artist specifically realizes that God endowed man with imagination, a mysterious and wonderful power with which to form new mental images. His Creator put the urge in him to shape and create, but to realize this is all done in recognition of God and for His greater glory (Huizenga, 1981:73).

It is very important to realize that man has the urge to create and shape his world, physically as well as mentally. No other creature has the abilities of man, the wonderful privilege of being able to create and shape so many things in so many different and wonderful ways. This is derived directly from God, for it pleased Him to make man in His image, and He is the great Creator.

Psalm 19 is one of the many scriptural passages in the Bible that offers the reader a clear indication, and assurance, that creation is a revelation of God's will, and that by humbly studying any part of it, Christians are busy discerning God's will for the world as well as acting in obedience (Seerveld, 1979:14).

This is indeed a peculiar privilege for man, his cosmic birthright, granted to him by God (Seerveld, 1977:7). Culture is not a burden laid upon man, no, it is a joy, a channel of worship proper to mankind and something which he is engaged in inescapably (Seerveld, 1977:7).

This mandate is also extended to the New Testament. Jesus calls Christians to discipleship. He calls them to form a community whose whole life is shaped by their Master. He calls for a personal commitment and attachment to the Word of God. In obedience His disciples must expand this nucleus, fellowship with Him, into a world-wide presence, constantly submitting themselves to His lordship in all their doings (Roper, 1979:9).

Cultivating the earth, displaying His glory and wisdom in all our doings, is God's constant concern. God's people are called to join in the ministry of world-wide reconciliation (Seerveld, 1979:32). That calls for living utterly in the response to the Word of God and experiencing the wonderful reality of finding all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom in Jesus Christ (Seerveld, 1979:33).
We are His children, unique, individual, taught to love Him, stimulated to grow to spiritual maturity and challenged to obedience (Etchells, 1972:106). By enjoying this earth, cultivating it and glorifying God and enjoying community with Him, the cultural mandate that God gives to man can be enjoyed fully by all. God's providence enabled the cross, which endows man with the potential to reconcile this world to its Creator and Father in whom alone all truth and fulfilment lay. This is the only way in which man ought to live.

1.7 Art as a gift from God

Art is a way for men and women to respond to God's command to cultivate the earth (Seerveld, 1979:25).

Art is work. It is a whole act of a man or woman, and it embodies the heart, soul, mind and strength of the artist as he or she responds to the world of God around him or her (Seerveld, 1979:27). It involves work, cultivation, energy and strength. It can be regarded in the same light as any other physical work, and that makes it just as part of God's creation and man's cultural mandate, as tilling the fields.

Art has its definite place in this created world, and therefore also its task and meaning which brings about direct ties with life and living (Rookmaaker, 1981:371). It forms part of God's cultural mandate to man, and that makes it work, but art also suggests something beyond the merely earthly and temporal (Huizenga, 1981:69). Art can be seen as a bridge between the natural and supernatural (Huizenga, 1981:69). It carries within it the suggestion of a knowledge of the existence of the spiritual and the infinite.

The realization of this has led writers like Brink to claim that the writer is the conscience of the world (Steenberg, 1973:165). Chris Barnard reinforces this idea by saying that each writing effort must be a quest for answers (Steenberg, 1973:166). Matthew Arnold believed that we should turn to culture to interpret life for us, to console and sustain us (Lewis, 1981:23).
The artist is seen as prophet and priest, carrying the divine "spark" within him or her. For the artist must find meaning in this chaos around us, as Sartre demands (in Steenberg, 1973:167). Gaebelain (1981:99) is right when he says that art at its best can give us contact with greatness. Plato came to the same realization that art is something inspired, brought forth from the imagination fired on by inspiration (in Finke & Davies, 1989:23).

Art is indeed work, but also an activity that stirs the human heart and mind, and leaves the person who enjoys and studies it with a very definite sense of the supernatural. This makes art a very important and very vital field of study. The Christian realizes that art cannot be ignored, it cannot be treated lightly.

Artistic capabilities, inspiration and products, are not merely a neutral discipline. They stir man's imagination and mind. Art, in a very real way, displays man's search for the supernatural, for the indefinite. This furnishes art with a dimension that makes it more than work, more than labour, it lifts art to the level of a discipline that needs careful study and appreciation.

1.8 The usefulness of literature

The necessity of culture has been indicated, as well as the importance of art. What then about literature?

Literature reflects man's quest for meaning, purpose and an effort to bring unity to the fragmented existence through symbol and metaphor (Huizenga, 1981:75). Literature is an attempt to understand the world, and puts us in touch with what is elemental, enduring and universal in the human experience (Howard, 1981:123).

It gives us forms for our feelings and our experiences in life and reflects reality. God called us into this world, and what is good for man is therefore also good for Christians -literature is good (Howard, 1981:125).

Literature certainly has a great part to play in helping man clarify life, leading to a deeper understanding of the human situation and

It allows us to participate more in the human experience. This leads to us enriching our sympathies, sharpening our focus, broadening our awareness, mellowing our minds and ennobling our vision (Howard, 1981:130).

Many great literary works have done precisely this, all opening up areas to us that have been closed. God uses art, literature to communicate various truths and values to us in the Bible, e.g. Psalms, Proverbs, parables, symbols, metaphors and many more. It is certain then that literature has not and will not lose these abilities if it is practised by human beings.

Literature embodies man's concern with his world, the vision of reality as humans perceive it. It becomes be a catalyst for thought, sharpens our discernment and extends our vision (Ryken, 1979:102). Therefore literature remains important as long as it tries to understand the human situation, values, language and meaning (Ryken, 1979:32).

Literature is also instrumental in nurturing beauty. It reveals beauty, which awakens harmony, modulation and resolves discord in us (Frye, 1981:137). This beauty leads to a more harmonious life for man, which must be sought (Frye, 1981:138). The worth of the nurturing of beauty is beyond calculation for it helps to lead us to our real nature and purpose, harmonious living, which is found in God.

Literature does more as it nurtures compassion and understanding. It can break through barriers and bring us into contact with human suffering, agonies, ecstasies and glories. Literature certainly is an unmistakable part of God's creation. It may not be a Jacob's ladder by which we can get to heaven, but it provides an invaluable staff with which to walk on this earth (Frye, 1981:140).

Many before us have realized the worth of literature, and many after us will do the same. With this realization comes the knowledge that unless it be the literature of the Christian faith, it will not help to lead us to the city of God, to His throne (Frye, 1981:140).
Literature helps to reveal the human heart, the human vision and it tells in whose service it stands because literature, like any art, is a consecrated offering to bring honour, glory and power to someone (Seerveld, 1981:390).

1.9 The Christian approach

Culture is part of humanity, it is part of the mandate God gives to man to cultivate the earth. Literature is part of this culture and its worth and the values it imparts makes it an important part of the reality we live in. Christians have to consider literature and give it the attention and treatment it deserves. Literature's power, vision and scope compel Christians to study it and take it seriously.

On the other hand, Christians know that only in Christ and God's Word all truth and riches are laid up. Furthermore they realize that their whole life is under the constant, day-to-day rulership and lordship of Jesus Christ.

A Christian approach to literature, that is, one based on the Bible and a living relationship with Christ, is for the Christian most natural. Despite the effects of the fall, and living in a world that is vexed by sin, the Christian can approach literature in a way that is thoroughly Christian and therefore thoroughly true and effective.

The Christian also realizes that literature has a great deal to do with interpreting the generation it stems from. To understand the generation we live in, to see further into the human condition through literature, we need interpreters (Edwards, 1989:75).

We need critics who put us into the possession of the work of art and show us it as it really is (Ryken, 1981:122). Christians know that it is their duty to examine the forms and order of contemporary society, and this includes literature (Guiness, 1973:377).

The fact that Christianity is rational, absolute and real, gives it the absolute and only claim to the whole truth. God discloses Himself through His Son and all the claims of this revelation can be examined and proven the truth
Christians have absolute integrity towards truth in every discipline (Guiness, 1973:358).

Christians must share this truth in literature as well. They must through critique avoid the mistakes made by others and show the real and true way to the people (Guiness, 1973:365). The Christian artist can bring to this hopeless human situation hope, faith and love (Rookmaaker, 1981:390).

1.10 What does the Christian approach offer the reader?

To fully understand the absolute necessity and indispensability of a Christian approach to literature, it is necessary to take a look at the "advantages" the Christian approach offers us. These are more than advantages - they are essential aspects that are incorporated that no other literary approach can offer. This makes the Christian approach not only unique but vital.

1.10.1 It offers access to all truth

This is the most important aspect of the Christian approach. It has been said that in the Word of God and in Christ all truth is contained. Through a relationship with Christ, which makes one a Christian, this truth is available to us.

Only through Christ is the whole truth available, for He said He is the truth, the way and the life (John 14:6) and that He is the only way to the Father. Non-Christians do not have access to the mind of Christ as I Corinthians 2 so clearly states.

Other approaches to literature fail to take cognizance of the fullness of humanity and therefore dehumanize people (Guiness, 1973:378). Being a Christian means understanding where you came from, why you are on this earth and what you are suppose to do here. Without this knowledge, and acting upon it, a person leads an useless life and will have an agonizing eternity.
Being a Christian means seeing into the real human situation and offering hope and salvation, eternal bliss. With this in mind a Christian can approach a work of art, or create one, and help to reveal the wonderful knowledge and realization of God and His love for that is why we are all here.

The Christian truth stands against and above judging the present situation in the name and authority of God (Guiness, 1973:372). This makes the Christian community always contemporary for it keeps in touch with God. It is able to offer the truth to all and this truth brings freedom (John 8:32). For to know God, and His Son Jesus, whom He sent, is eternal life, and that is always contemporary.

1.1.0.2 It provides us with an ordered personal life from which to judge life

Edwards (1989:69) mentions the fact that the Christian approach offers order and a world full of possibilities to the writer and reader.

Walsh (1981:308) reinforces this idea by stating that the Christian faith gives a writer a sound foundation and an ordering of his own personal life that makes intellectual and emotional sense.

The Christian writer and critic can honestly see himself as God's earthly assistant, carrying on the delegated work of creation, making the creation fuller (Walsh, 1981:308). This reminds the writer and critic, and even reader, that art is not religion nor can it bring about salvation. The Christian faith has the ability to set the work of art in proper proportion, by keeping the artists, critics and readers aware of the fact that art is only part of God's creation, limited without His grace and love.

The worth of such an ordered personal life is beyond calculation. The person who enjoys such a life has a sound foundation from which to approach literature. He senses not only the importance of literature but also the imperative necessity of salvation and sanctification which are found in Christ. As Walsh (1981:308) remarks: Christianity offers us the best pair of eyes with which to scrutinize the many and varied manifestations of nature and culture.
1.10.3 It brings about an awareness of the eternal worth of art

The Christian writer, critic and reader can through the Christian faith sense the eternal worth of art. They can appreciate art as a bridge between the natural and supernatural (Huizenga, 1981:69), great art as a reflection of God, His providence, love, mercy and joy.

Together with this they realize that the work of art isn't everything, it is only part of the greater creation, the greater plan of God. They can realize the fact that having one's name written in the Book of Life is more important than anything else (Luke 10:20). Through the art, practised in the light of the revelation of Christ, it can be comprehended that this world has more to it than money, food, shelter and statistics.

1.10.4 It offers a valid and well-founded philosophical perspective

Van Rensburg (1981:48) concludes that the Christian approach to literature certainly is the most truthful and freest one that exists. It is because of this that Eliot (1981:142) can say that literature cannot be judged solely by literary standards, ethical and theological criteria must also form part of literary criticism.

Christianity offers the most valid philosophical perspective for the writer, critic and reader from which to judge literature. The importance of the lifeview, or philosophical perspective of the person involved with the literary work, cannot be ignored or played down. Literature is always led by its lifeview (Pretorius, 1980:286). Frye (1989:548) agrees and states that an artist's life, historical context and thought are all important for the critic and reader to take into consideration. When a literary work is created or judged, the artist and the critic stand before God as integrated personalities, people with an origin, history, future and destiny.

A person's whole personality is involved when dealing with a work of art (Heyns in Steenberg, 1973:123). The fact that literature is a definite reflection of the spiritual emphasizes this point. Emotional, psychological
and spiritual faculties form part of literature, either when creating it, or when enjoying or judging it. The philosophical perspective of a writer and critic most certainly is involved in their dealing with literature. Popular South African writers like Hennie Aucamp and Daleen Matthee echo this idea when they state that a good writer always has his or her own worldview, or view of life, coupled with their own set of values (Van Blerk, 1993:18). It is therefore inevitable that literary and aesthetic criteria and norms cannot form the only basis for judging literature.

When a writer creates a work of art, his or her philosophical perspective plays an important role in the creation of the work of art. Writers have very often been hailed as prophets, as people who have the insight and ability to accurately judge and reflect their generation, their societies.

Brink (in Steenberg, 1973:166) emphasizes the writer's quest for truth, his task to examine and test all accepted things to determine their validity for his particular time. He goes on to say that the writer must constantly test all knowledge, values, to verify, to diagnose and to heal and to keep on asking more and more piercing questions (Brink in Steenberg, 1973:166). Like Sartre, Brink believes the writer is the one who must find and establish meaning in this chaos (Brink in Steenberg, 1973:167).

All these things elevate the writer to the privileged position of prophet, seer and healer. If the writer has the privilege to have this position, then certainly the reader and critic must have the privilege to test the writer's vision, to determine the truth of his or her vision and to ask piercing questions. The writer cannot claim to be an interpreter of reality and then not be tested to determine if he or she is interpreting reality truthfully.

Truth is knowable in this reality (Steenberg, 1973:263), and what is more this truth will set us free (John 8:32). The truth will then prove itself to be the truth as it offers freedom and life. The writer who is rooted in the truth of the revelation of Christ will offer the reader and critic a positive way in which to evaluate modern literature (Clark, 1982:75). For a viewpoint determines what one sees, not necessarily what is to be seen (Guiness, 1973:338).
The Christian philosophical perspective is the only true and lasting perspective. It has proven its validity and necessity. The Christian critic and reader, or any critic or reader for that matter, must have this philosophical perspective embedded in their hearts and lives.

With this perspective creation can be enjoyed and cultivated as it should be (Rookmaaker, 1981:390). Man's origin, his place in creation, his life here on earth and his eternal destiny can only be fully grasped by the Christian writer, critic and reader.

The effects of the fall are all around us, and Christians realize that sin and the god of this world, Satan, are always at work to blind people's minds and hearts to the wonderful truth of the Word of God (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Many people do not share the Christian view of reality, and many never will, but the Christian knows that it is the only truthful view of reality there is.

They also know that this view must constantly be tested, refined and updated (Van Rensburg, 1981:48) and then it will display its relevance and necessity. Artists all display man's absolute need for spiritual meaning (Clark, 1982:83). The Christian philosophical perspective offers real and lasting spiritual meaning - this makes it essential.
1.10.5 *It offers the fulfilment of the individual personality*

The Christian approach allows through its infinite spaces a safeguarding of the individual personality, and allows development to its full potential, which is crucially important consideration. In this way a person can come to terms with life, its demands and challenges. The person who has a sound foundation from which to develop his or her individual personality will be able to confront life and conquer.

Literature is mainly concerned with human issues, with man in this present reality, with the spiritual meaning of life. Consequently the individual personality of each human being becomes important. The Christian, who has the assurance of coming to terms with his or her individual personality, has the compassion and insight to truthfully evaluate the quest for meaning and order that literature displays.

Christianity seeks the fulfilment and redemption of the individual and therefore does not aim at bypassing or ignoring individuality (Walsh, 1981:311). Through Christ each is more himself than ever, but a redeemed self, oriented to turn with love to God and his creatures. Christianity is concerned with the fulfilment of personality, not its negation (Walsh, 1981:311).

This allows the Christian writer, critic and reader to make greater sense of the heights and abysses of human drama (Walsh, 1981:312). Honest compassion and insight are cultivated which lead to a greater appraisal and appreciation of literature which is needed and must be fostered.

1.10.6 *It offers a community to be embedded in and to draw sustenance from*

A Christian makes art while thinking of his neighbours in love, helping them and using his talents not only on his own behalf but in theirs also (Rookmaaker, 1981:372). The Christian knows that art is a consecrated offering to someone and therefore a ministering to the community (Seerveld, 1981:390). This community compels the writer, critic and reader to establish relationships, to stay in constant contact with the people in the
community (Walsh, 1981:309). It offers the Christian an audience, but much more, a community.

The firmer the sense of community the less fearful a person will be to throw himself into society as a whole. He will be enabled to love it more, study it more with compassion and interest, and not be limited by fear of being absorbed and destroyed by it (Walsh, 1981:310).

The idea of discipleship, illustrated by Christ, is strengthened by a person's realization of the importance of a community and his access to such a community. Being His disciples we can in this way do so much more in extending His kingdom and rulership on this earth.

The believer knows that he or she is there to make God's truth known in love to this world (Seerveld, 1977:13). The Christian is called to spread God's Word, to make disciples of all men (Matthew 28). This great commission is carried out by people who are rooted in a community and know they can draw from this community but also deposit into it the riches of the gospel of Christ.

The writer, critic or reader who has the revelational knowledge of belonging to a community and being able to draw from it as well as deposit into it, has a far greater impact on the world around him and therefore has a very great advantage above the person who does not have this knowledge.

1.10.7 *It increases the value of literature by the nurturing of beauty, understanding and compassion*

Literature has a very important part to play in nurturing beauty. This is not literature's chief end but it contributes significantly to it.

Beauty is actually the result of the creative activity of God, artistic beauty being a humanly created revelation (Frye, 1981:137).

Art reveals beauty to us, it illuminates the aspects of life that we often ignore (Frye, 1981:137). When man creates art he creates a revelation of something of this world or this life.
This brings about proportion and harmony. Christopher Fry (in Frye, 1981:137) claims that the part that the logic of beauty plays here on earth is beyond calculation. This is because it awakens harmony, modulation and helps to resolve the discord in us. This makes it essential to the health of individuals and societies (Frye, 1981:138).

Beauty, when it expresses itself in terms of a true goal, nurtures a more and more harmonious life for man (Frye, 1981:138). This is what is to be sought. As God's creatures we must live in obedience to His Word and a great part of it is to reveal and appreciate the beauty of this life.

The Christian approach supplies man with the knowledge and wisdom that he is God's creature and lives only to please Him and have fellowship with Him. The Christian can that more easily then reveal the beauty of God through His creation. The Christian, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will be able to promote a more harmonious life for man. He or she can do this because they know the origin, essence and purpose of beauty. The beauty that stems from God can be revealed by them, and the arts is an excellent playground for this.

The Christian approach also fosters understanding and compassion. It must be remembered that literature deals with the human situation, man's problems, questions, fears and joys. Without compassion and understanding literature fails to grasp the extent and nature of human suffering and human dilemmas. What would Macbeth be without compassion and understanding? What would any great novel be without it? Literature needs it and Christianity offers it. The latter can offer it because it has the ability to see the deepest into the human situation, it contains eternal wisdom and salvation, it can offer hope, solutions and joy. Redemption and renewal form the backbone of Christianity and man needs it desperately.

1.10.8 It offers the realization of the need for criticism

This advantage of the Christian approach is crucial. The effects of the fall are evident. It has created two types of people: sinners and Christians. The
first group involves the people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour, and live a lifestyle of sin and disobedience to God.

The second group recognizes Jesus as their saviour and God as their master, and although they sin, it is the exception and not the rule, for through the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit they live a lifestyle of obedience to God. This world system unfortunately is ruled by Satan (2 Corinthians 4) and dominated by the first group, which means that sin and evil are rampant.

Christians need to be alert and aware of the enemy's attacks, for we are engaged in a battle against Satan and his evil forces (Ephesians 6). Therefore literature is not neutral, it is either in service of God or Satan (Seerveld, 1981:390).

T.S. Eliot (1981:153) rightly states that there is a gulf fixed between ourselves and the greater part of contemporary literature and this is because twentieth century art has forgotten its source (Marchak, 1981:393).

Criticism, a critical awareness of and accounting for what one does, is crucial. The critic's task is to "put the reader in possession of the work of art" (Ryken, 1979:122) and see it as it really is.

With this knowledge the reader can then determine whether the work of art adheres to the framework of the Christian faith which is the ultimate test for the Christian reader (Combrink, 1981:240).

Christians must be aware of and concerned about the fact that their literary experience affects their moral behaviour and spiritual life (Ryken, 1979:177). Eliot (1981:153) underlines this point when he stresses that the duty is upon all Christians to consciously maintain certain standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the world and that by these standards and criteria everything we read must be tested.

Plato realized the power and influence of literature and therefore suggested that it should be curbed and controlled (Finke & Davies, 1989:6). He even strongly advocated banishing artists from the ideal state. Christians do not promote this, for they know that art is part of God's gift to mankind.
However, they also realize that they are involved in a battle for the minds and hearts of people, a battle that compels them to constantly evaluate their actions and thoughts and to make sure that it is in line with the Word of God.

Van Rensburg (1981:36) is correct when he says that as Christians we need consensus as to the aim, nature and method of art as an aesthetic portrayal of the ethical qualities of life.

God demands of us to be led by His Spirit and disclose the mind of Christ for this world. Without a sound, proven Christian approach to art this will not be done within the artistic sphere. Through criticism the mistakes that others have made can also be avoided (Guiness, 1973:365), and in our lifetime we can know the truth and experience the freedom it gives.

Guiness (1973:317) claims that the re-examination and rediscovery of the truth of historic Christianity hold the key to revitalization and renewal of the world we live in.

Sound Christian criticism will materially help us to understand our generation and to offer hope, salvation and love to everyone.

Christianity has absolute integrity towards truth in all discipline (Guiness, 1973:358). This truth must be unlocked, shared and spread to show the people how great and wonderful is the God they serve. In the arts this is done by committed Christian writers, critics and readers.

1.11 Conclusion

A Christian approach to literature is not an alternative, it is a necessity. Without such an approach to literature the full scope, depth and riches of literature can never, in the eyes of the Christian reader, be appreciated and fully shared.

As Rookmaaker (1975:250) concludes: "God has called us to bear witness to Him at a crucial point in history. It is not only exciting and interesting to
be a Christian now, but it is a great privilege and responsibility. And it is vital."
CHAPTER 2

2.1 The Christian approach

The approach that is proposed in this work finds its basis in the Christian faith. The Christian approach proposed here is one that is considered to be literarily as well as philosophically sound.

Pretorius (1980:291) rightly indicates that Eliot says that a work of art affects us wholly as human beings. Pope says that true judgement affects the whole man (in Sowerby, 1988:13) which Seerveld (1981:390) echoes by stating that art tells what lies at the heart of man. Literary critics through all generations have realized, and still do that art comes from the inside of man, it is a product of his thoughts, desires, longings and needs.

Horace says that the man who has managed to blend profit with delight in art wins everyone's approbation, for he gives his reader pleasure at the same time as he instructs him (Dorsch, 1965:22). Rookmaaker (1981:371) adds to this by stating that art has direct ties with life, living, joy and the depth of being human. Walhout & Ryken (1991:289) refer to this joy and shalom as the aim of the Christian's critique. Plato, despite some objections to poetry, realized that we can gain much if we find art a source of profit as well as pleasure (Dorsch, 1965:13). These statements by fundamental literary critics of the Western world all indicate that they have realized that art is not just something neutral, developing from a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum, so does art. It always has a source, an inspiration which determines its spirit which ultimate decide if it is truthful, profiting and wholesome. As critics and readers we need to determine and illustrate this.

Pope goes on to indicate that the root idea of art is the sacred function to throw the universal into a clear radiant light, and the sacred duty of the artist is to render and express his vision with emphatic clarity (Sowerby, 1988:16).

Edwards (1989:3) speaks immediately to us when he says that we need interpreters of our generation and of the world, and since art ties in with life because it is about life, it must be evaluated in the way the Christian
approach proposes. For then it will be successful in revealing the world, the human heart and the society we live in, which will result in art maintaining its rightful place in the world we live in. This place is one of a discipline offering life, hope, insight and even prophetic revelation to the world.

The Christian approach realizes this, it understands that art, because of its very spiritual base and foundation, must be evaluated spiritually as well as literally. An artist is indeed a man who can perceive intently, virtually live into, prehend and coherently express, disclose symbolically meanings open to him within himself or discovered in things outside himself (Seerveld, 1968:40). Therefore this approach suggests that a critic or reader evaluates a work of art with the given norms, structures and guidelines given for art, while keeping the Christian framework, God's idea and plan for this world as revealed through the Scriptures, in mind. This is the only way that art will be dealt with adequately, because it keeps in mind the very fundamental and vital principle and realization that art is an offering, stemming from the heart to bring glory to someone and that spirit that art is born from must be tested. Necessary to the practice of Christianity is not only action but also proclamation (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:191). We are called to act upon the world and speak about its conditions and speak with authority and security rooted in biblical witness (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:191). In doing this the critic and the reader honour the nature of art as the ability to really appreciate and truly evaluate art.

Failing to do this will result in an inadequate criticism of art, for one would fail to grasp the essential concept of art being spiritually based. On the other hand the critic realizes that art cannot be judged spiritually only. Tied to this is the evaluation stemming from literary norms, structures and values. For the Christian critic the concept of "shalom", or peace which is at its highest enjoyment, comes in here as well (Wolterstorff, 1980:79). This is done in order to proclaim shalom, to bear better witness to the kingdom of God, to teach and learn that which is essential, to praise that which persists (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:197).

For the Christian seeks this joy and peace, in all dimensions of life, and in literature especially it is found within a literarily sound work of art with a
solid spiritual base. The Christian critic fully recognizes that both dimensions are found within a good work of art, both dimensions are essential for good art to exist. It is like the two legs of a person, both are needed to maintain a balanced walk.

In the approach proposed here the Christian view forms the foundational framework, the philosophical point of departure, with the semiotic approach the reading strategy with which to deal adequately with the plays. The Christian view is the foundation that needs to be laid and the semiotic reading strategy constitutes the building blocks with which to complete this structure.

I consider the Christian view to be the most adequate approach to literature. It must be kept in mind that literary criticism is as much a personal matter, as much the product of a personal sense of life and belief, as literature itself (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:301). Literary criteria remain essential and vital to the Christian critic, the same as with any other critic. On the other hand the Christian critic views the work of art from another, and I personally profess, more adequate, position than the non-Christian could ever do.

Van Rensburg (1981:45) indicates this very clearly by means of a simple sketch (see Appendix A).

The Christian playgoer, and by implication the reader, has the advantage of being constantly testing and trying his prejudices against the rule of truthful knowledge, thus moving from point X to Y (on the diagram), the Christian can then appreciate the truth and evaluate everything within the larger whole (Van Rensburg, 1981:45).

As Van Rensburg (1981:45) points out, the Christian can see further and therefore make a better judgement and evaluation of the work of art. This is so because he or she has the advantage of the freest and most truthful idea of reality and literature. The Christian has the Christian framework which to use to understand the world he or she lives in. Literature will also be judged according to its adherence to this Christian framework (Combrink, 1989:7).
This framework is not restricting or inhibiting but rather offers the critic the best pair of eyes (Walsh, 1981:308). It all helps to illustrate the worth and viability of this approach.

So the idea of the Christian approach is not to evaluate a work of art on two different levels, the spiritual and literary. The idea is not to use a religious, moralistic and didactic approach to determine the worth of art. The idea is that God who made everything, including art, has laid down certain guidelines for art, spiritual as well as literary, which the Christian critic discovers and adheres to. Furthermore the Christian knows that the whole world, the human race as well as art, have been made to his glory, and therefore art must also be to His glory and that implies what pleases Him, which is possible to know and do since He is a God who reveals Himself.

The Christian emphasis or character of the approach proposed here is always in the back of the mind of the Christian critic. It is always there to use as touchstone, as measuring tape, but it does not dislodge the need for literary criteria and norms that literature must be measured by, it only helps to enrich it and give it its proper place.

2.2 The spirit of a work of art

Now that something of the foundation of this approach has been determined the way in which it is applied must be considered.

Rookmaaker (1975:236) says that the spirit of a work of art determines its character. Seerveld (1981:389) agrees with this, while Mollenkott (1981:188) says that each work of art deserves to be judged on the basis of its author's purpose. Huizenga (1981:69) suggests that art forms a bridge between the natural and spiritual realms and that art suggests something of the eternal giving it a quality akin to the religious.

Roper (1979:7) illuminates this key issue even further by defining a work of art as an object that has been culturally formed by man so that it embodies an aesthetically coherent symbolic objectification of an imaginative insight into certain meaning aspects of some features or reality. This definition very
adequately indicates to the reader and the critic the character of art, helping them to understand it better.

Firstly, the fact that art is formed culturally means that a critic must take into account the "world" the work of art stems from. This points to the different cultural modes at work in the work of art, the cultural conventions, ideas and beliefs that the artist deals with. Furthermore art embodies an aesthetically coherent symbolic objectification of an imaginative insight into some aspects or features of reality.

To determine whether a work of art is aesthetically coherent norms have to be applied to evaluate the extent to which the work of art succeeds in being aesthetically coherent. Here aspects like unity, fittingness, internal richness and complexity and the like come to the fore. If a work of art doesn't display these aesthetically coherent norms it fails as a good work of art, even if it is Christian art.

Fortunately it doesn't end there. The question of the imaginative insight into aspects of reality is just as important. For the Christian realizes that art comes from the heart and is always in the service of something. The imaginative insight into reality that the work of art displays can be referred to as the intention of the artist, the spirit in which the work of art has been made. The artist's view of reality, which ultimately means his world view, or perspective of life, will feature in any work of art, and the Christian knows this, for he knows art comes from an imaginative insight, from the spirit of a person.

Seerveld's definition (1981:390) supplements this by indicating that art is a symbolically significant expression of what lies in a man's heart, with what vision he views the world, how he adores whom. He says that art tell-tales in whose service man stands because art itself is a consecrated offering, a disconcertingly undogmatic yet moving attempt to bring honour and glory and power to something.

The condition of man's inescapable relationship to God, the temper of that deep underlying religious focal point to a man, is what makes him a man,
determines his stand. Since this stand is consciously as well as unconsciously articulated, this quietly guides the focus of the entire man and therefore casts a decisive spell over and through what the artist produces (Seerveld, 1968:42).

Roper (1979:18) adds to this by stating that art depends upon the spirit, the wisdom and understanding of reality that is symbolically objectified in the treatment of the subject.

Ryken (1981:155) provides a conclusive thought to the effect that perspective is what literature is all about and this perspective indicates the spirit of a work of art.

This perspective stems from what is referred to as the world behind the work (Wolterstorff, 1980:89), thus the spiritual world from which the artist stems, just as every human being does. The spirit of the work of art is the essential and very vital aspect that must be considered by the Christian critic.

The character and nature of art that have been indicated in the statements by Roper and others clearly reveal that art is an offering, a spiritual, symbolic objectification, therefore the spirit within which it has been done and the spirit that emanates from it must be evaluated. The Christian critic also knows that art must be aesthetically coherent, displaying unity, internal richness and complexity, fittingness, balance and symmetry. If it doesn't display these aspects it fails to be a good work of art, just as it fails ultimately as a work of art if it displays an inadequate view of reality, or a corrupt world view.

2.3 How is the spirit of a work of art determined?

The spirit of a work of art has to be determined. But how? This is determined by evaluating various aspects of the play. Aspects like the tone, dramatis personae, balance, thematic content and other aspects which all form a cumulative idea or spirit reflected by the work of art.
This cumulative spirit that emanates from the work of art is determined by evaluating the various aspects in a thorough and literarily sound way with the Christian viewpoint always in mind. Aspects like fittingness, unity and internal richness and complexity must be displayed by the work of art. Rookmaaker (1975:228) comments that an artist's insight must be full and rich, with a good view on reality and the scope and meaning of what truth is (Rookmaaker, 1975:237). The key concepts are balance and symmetry, which Wolterstorff (1980:167) refers to as "fittingness".

This is the foundation of good art for it allows all the different elements of the work of art to come to its full potential. This results in a balanced, literarily and philosophically sound critical product.

Seerveld's definition of art, as the symbolic objectification of certain meaning aspects of a thing, subject to the law of coherence, underlies the fundamental idea of coherence, balance and symmetry (Seerveld, 1968:40).

Gaebalain (1981:100) ties in with this when he stresses that art should display durability - a lasting quality of truth. Added to this unity must be sought. That refers to an inner coherence (Gaebalain, 1981:101). This coherence (balance) and unity are evident in a work of art of great stature. Coupled with this the work of art must display validity - a world view that is true (Schaeffer, 1981:88). Here again the Christian viewpoint comes to the fore, the Christian framework being the ultimate test (Combrink, 1989:7). The work of art's openness to the sweep of reality which Seerveld (1968:111) refers to is incorporated here, for the Christian view doesn't avoid reality, it welcomes it.

Rookmaaker (1975:238-242) adds to this by referring to various norms that a work of art can and must be measured against. These are honour, righteousness, purity, loveliness and excellence and praise.

Honour refers to the fact that the various aspects must fulfil the function that they have to perform. Righteousness reflects on justice being done to each element, harmony or balance. The idea that must stem from the work of art
is that the various aspects or elements have been used in the best possible way. Gaebalain (1981:103) refers to it as *inevitability*.

**Purity** displays the artist's intention. The key concept here is artistic honesty as Lawrence (1956:143) stresses. Does the artist honestly seek to breed understanding, love and make the truth known in love?

**Loveliness** deals with the inner beauty realized in a work of art through the utilization of sound, rhyme, unity, diversity, richness, shape and colour. Wolterstorff (1980:165) refers to this as internal richness and complexity. The form must be suited to carry the message of the work of art (Schaeffer, 1981:93). Horace refers to this as decorum, and sees it as a guiding and dominating principle. This doctrine of fitness, or literary propriety, calls for every aspect of the work to be appropriate to the nature of the work as a whole (Dorsch, 1965:23).

Aristotle and Homer felt that the artist should impose form and order on the undifferentiated matter and random chaos of life enabling us to see through the particular to the universal (in Sowerby, 1988:15). The critic must determine if the artist succeeds in this and literary propriety must be determined. Interesting is to note that a very great literary critic like Aristotle also realized the critic's inevitable task of determining if the artist succeeds in creating order from chaos and revealing the universal, the truthful thus, to us, which is just another indication that the Christian approach understands this truth and copes with it. Excellence and praise refer to much the same aspects as loveliness.

These are norms that Rookmaaker (1975:238-242) feels the work of art must display and must be measured against and this ties in very handsomely with the ideas of balance, symmetry and coherence that have been mentioned.

In the end the critic draws a cumulative impression from the work of art by judging whether it displays an inner coherence, balance and symmetry. These refer to justice being done to all elements, allowing them to fulfil their functions and a firm impression that all the elements and aspects have been used in the best possible way. This will result in an inner beauty, harmony
and strength in the work of art which will only help to promote it and elevate it to good art.

Wolterstorff (1980:164) feels that in the end the work of art can be evaluated according to three main aspects: fittingness and intensity, internal richness and complexity and unity. The artist's intention, which will stem from his world view, will be added to this and will help the critic to make a sound judgement as to the worth and impact of the work of art.

The Christian critic thus has the advantage of being able to evaluate a work of art according to the most important aesthetic norms: balance, unity, fittingness and intensity, and internal richness and complexity, as well as realizing that every work of art has a world behind it, a world the artist brings into the work of art that displays his or her beliefs, ideas and view of reality. In this way the Christian artist is the most adequately fitted to evaluate art and give it its proper place in the world we live in.

The critic's task is adequately indicated by Steenberg (1972:466) when he states that the critic, especially the Christian critic, must look at the intention of the work of art with the Christian framework as yardstick and with a clear realization that art is a transformed visionary process engaged in by human beings. The Christian literary critic must judge in the name of Christ, if not it will judge us as Christians (Seerveld, 1968:117). The Christians must be taught to expect, recognize and handle the different issues at stake, literary as well as religious, and not shy away from it or judge it superficially (Seerveld, 1968:118).

To do this adequately the critic must constantly seek to broaden his or her horizon through the continual trying of his or her ideas against the rule of truthful knowledge as discovered in the light of the revelation of the Scriptures and in his or her contact with life (Van Rensburg, 1981:45). Christian criticism is based on integration, the integration of literature or literary theory and Christian truth and experience (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:298). This means that the Christian critic will work from within a clear acceptance of the Christian doctrine and morality, but with the realization that he or she will be influenced by other theories and ideas, that
their criticism will stay distinctively different (Walhout & Ryken, 1991:299).

In the Christian approach there is the beautiful fusion of the realization of determining a work of art's spirit and worth by using the principles of the Christian faith coupled with the norms and structures of literary criticism. No one can do without the other in the Christian approach, just as art cannot do without this very same realization, and this makes this approach inevitable. As art is an offering, stemming from the heart to bring glory to someone, that spirit that art is born from must be tested. In doing this the critic and the reader honour the nature of art and has the ability to really appreciate and truly evaluate art.

2.4 Method

The viewpoint that the Christian approach is grounded in the Christian faith implies that it is constantly tested against the rule of truthful knowledge and that it broadens the horizons of the critic and the reader, as Van Rensburg (1981:45) so rightly states. The Scriptures form the framework for this view which it uses to determine a work of art's worth.

Furthermore the critic derives from the literary criteria that he or she uses a cumulative impression as to the literary worth and the value of the work of art.

*Synthesized* with the insights derived from the revelation given in the Scriptures the Christian critic or reader now has a more adequate and truthful view from which he or she evaluates art. This viewpoint allows literary criticism to adequately deal with the undeniable facts that art is a human product, culturally determined and carrying within it the unmistakable sense of a consecrated offering to bring glory to something or someone (Seerveld, 1981:390).

The Christian approach realizes that man who creates art is essentially a spiritual being, someone who has his or her heart fixed on a certain belief, god or upper being. Therefore art doesn't come from nowhere, it comes
from the heart and mind of man. It is obvious from the subject matter artists use. Art has the ability very profoundly to indicate what lies in a man's heart and the Christian approach realizes this better than any other literary approach. Etchells (1973:45) indicates this convincingly by saying that society is rooted in the bond between God and man, finding its final perspective and values in God.

Even Brink (in Steenberg, 1973:165) says that the artist is the conscience of the world. This elevates the artist to a privileged but very responsible position. Brink (in Steenberg, 1972:166) goes on to say that the artist must examine and test all accepted things to determine their validity for this particular time.

The Christian approach assimilates this fact and therefore professes that the critic, who is the interpreter of the work of art, realizes that the Christian faith is able to deal most adequately with this fact.

The Christian approach is thus able to determine and evaluate the spirit behind a work of art which is revealed through the cumulative impression a critic or reader derives from it by using literary criteria as well as spiritual evaluations. As Wolterstorff (1980:31) states, the critic, from a position of insight and intuition, tells you what to look for, to listen for, to read for.

To arrive at this final evaluation of the work of art, the critic has to apply the reading strategies generally considered current and valid within the limits of the subject discipline. It is therefore proposed that a semiotic reading strategy must be used to evaluate the drama because this strategy most adequately keeps cognizance of the fact that, true to the essential, inherent nature of drama, ostension underlies the production and text of any play. The notion of ostension lies at the heart of drama, best accounting for the interaction between the written text and the production of the text. It allows the critic and the reader or viewer to realize that the play is written to be produced and literary criticism must take this into account in order to account fully for the impact that the dramatic work has as a dramatic work. The subsequent section will therefore deal with the semiotic approach to a
"reading" of drama as the one allowing most fully for the special nature of drama.
CHAPTER 3

Drama theory

In this chapter, a critical overview will be provided of the central tenets of a semiotic reading of drama in order to provide the reader with the central notions to be used as a reading strategy considered best in support of the total reading strategy encompassed within the Christian approach to drama.

3.1 Ostension

The unique nature of drama requires a unique way in which this genre must be approached. Too many critics and scholars have ignored the unique nature of drama and therefore literary criticism in drama in most cases has not encompassed the full scope of drama.

Mouton (1989:5) stresses the fact that an inadequate approach to judging and evaluating the drama text has been followed by most critics up to now and this has impoverished appreciation of the genre. A drama is written with the idea of being performed (Mouton, 1989:7). This means that stress is placed on the practical tie between the drama text and the production and on the fact that the text is written with the idea of being produced. A historical study of drama texts must also be incorporated within such a study of drama (Mouton, 1989:7).

These three aspects must be carefully considered when dealing with drama. The practical tie, or bond, between the text and the production means that the playwright knows that he or she is always limited by temporal and spatial considerations. The playwright does not have the same freedom and is not allowed the same luxuries that the novelist is allowed. The playwright works with limited space and time, and has to consider various practical aspects that the novel writer does not need to do.

The play's inclination to be performed creates the very complex relationship between text, actors and the audience. With a novel, or poem, this is not the case, since actors do not play a part in reading novels or poems, nor does an
audience of two hundred or three hundred people as only the reader and the text are involved at a given moment (Mouton, 1989:12).

A historical overview of the text and the drama text in itself is indispensable (Mouton, 1989:13). A study of all the different dramatic periods and different dramatical conventions, furnishes the critic with some very relevant and necessary background information.

Stage conventions, the part the audience plays in drama in various historical periods, technical changes and improvements and the publication and distribution of drama texts are only some of the aspects that come into consideration when studying drama (Mouton, 1989:14).

These aspects are all very important in drama criticism, and many critics have realized this, but the problematic relationship between the drama text and the production has still not been resolved. Semioticians like Elam, Serpieri, Segre and Alter have through their studies stressed the importance of addressing the problematic relationship between the drama text and the production.

Semiotization involves the showing of objects and events (and the performance at large) to the audience, rather than describing or defining them, according to Elam (1980:29-30). This 'primitive' form of signification that drama uses is known as ostension, and this underlies all productions. The audience are able to see and hear the presented characters, the presented space and the presented objects - this is ostension, or presentation (Mouton, 1989:18).

Ostension distinguishes drama from all other genres. It influences the diction of characters so that in drama the language has a very definite and indispensable deictic aspect. It influences the aspect of time in drama, causing drama to deal with the here and now, the present reality (Mouton, 1989:21). Segre (1980:40) illustrates the fact that the concept of ostension allows for the a clear distinction between the narrative text and the drama text, since the latter omits the use of an intermediary person, and leaves the drama text without a narrator.
Alter (1981:113) agrees with the idea that ostension underlies the production process, and indicates that between the drama text and the production there are various differences which must be kept in mind. All this is due to the fact that all productions are underlaid by the aspect of ostension or presentation found only in drama (in the widest sense of the word).

3.2 The theatrical sign

Semiotics is a science that involves the study of the production of meaning in society - that means interest in the processes which create signification, as well as the processes that generate and convey meaning (Elam, 1980:1).

All that is on stage is a sign, and this makes the theatrical production so unique and complex (Mouton, 1989:37). So many different signs are sent to the audience that it is necessary to distinguish between visual and auditory signs (Mouton, 1989:38). Furthermore the practical function of the object on stage is always subject to the specific meaning which it is given in a play. This process is called "semiotization of the object", allowing "non-literal signifiers or sign-vehicles the same semiotic function as literal ones" (Elam, 1980:8).

The theatrical sign can function as a sign of a sign, e.g. the costume of a character can refer to his personality, thus as a sign of a sign (Bogatyrev in Mouton, 1989:39). The theatrical sign can be dynamic, a certain space can be recalled by auditory signs and not the customary visual signs. An example of this is found in The Cherry Orchard where the sound of an axe chopping wood refers to the space of the cherry orchard outside the house.

The theatrical sign can also convey the three well-known sign functions: iconic, indexical and the symbolical. The first one presents the object by similarity, e.g. the body and the voice of the actor as the basic icon (Kott, 1969:19).

The second one refers to an index relating to the object either by cause-and-effect or through continuity with the object itself or with a quality of it
The costume of the actor can be an indication of his age or profession.

The symbolic sign function is where the symbol is described as a sign where the relationship between sign-vehicle and signified is conventional and unmotivated; no similitude or physical connection exists between the two (Elam in Mouton, 1989:45).

The most common example of this is where the sign is a linguistic sign, and this will be found especially in the drama text (Elam, 1980:22).

Elam (1980:22) gives a very detailed account of all the different codes and signs that are found within the theatrical production, and this indicates the complexity of drama. The signs that have been briefly discussed are the signs that are found within drama and that convey meaning. Semioticians are concerned not only with the different theatrical sign systems and codes, but they also try to indicate the underlying relation between these systems and codes within the framework of the whole production (Mouton, 1989:54).

3.3 The theatrical production as communication process

The relation between the signs and codes of theatre and the theatrical communication process is concerned with four different aspects.

The first one is the notion that the production is described as a communication process (Mouton, 1989:54). Eco's simple model of communication paved the way for such a notion.

The idea is that the production is "sent" by a variety of senders (playwright, director, actor, and other), the production itself forms the "message" and it is received by the audience. Elam (1980:36) has a similar model which explains the communication process.

The theatrical production contains an abundance of senders, channels, codes and conventions.
There are more sources of communication in a production, for example the playwright, the director, actors, costume designer, set designer and so forth (Mouton, 1989:56).

The senders are the actors' bodies, voices, set objects like lamps, sound equipment, projectors (as in Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*). The message (the production) which the audience receives is often hindered by noise. All this is involved in the communication process.

The communication process between the actors and the audience contains another communication process, that of the fictional characters in a fictional world (Mouton, 1989:57).

The second aspect involves time within the production and the influence it has on the theatrical communication process. Drama has to do with the present reality and the audience cannot stall time but are swept away by the course of events taking place in front of them (Mouton, 1989:58).

Therefore the role of the audience as receptor in the theatrical communication process is very important. The role of the audience can vary from active to passive. The audience is influenced by other members of the audience as well as by the actors who are also reciprocally influenced by the audience (Mouton, 1989:61). The social framework within which the theatrical production is placed is another aspect of the theatrical production as communication process that must be considered. Drama has a very strong social tendency and must always be accessible to the audience, the latter must see the presented fictional world against the background of the social reality (Mouton, 1989:62).

The social conventions of society must be kept in mind and the whole production set-up cannot be dealt with in isolation from the social aspects that influence it.

The creation of the drama text is looked upon as an important beginning of the theatrical communication process.
The playwright and the audience must use this information about the theatrical communication process to grasp how it works and the importance of it in order to gain greater insight into the role of the drama text within this process (Mouton, 1989:64).

3.4 Two worlds: the stage (characters/players) and the audience (spectators)

Ostension (presentation) forms the core of drama. This implies that within the drama text and the theatrical production two different levels (fictional and presentational) can be distinguished.

The audience and the actors find themselves in two different worlds, the audience in a real world and the actors in a fictional world. The fictional world is shown physically to the members of the audience (ostension) who experience a fictional world but are constantly reminded that they are still in the real world, the here and now, the present reality (Mouton, 1989:82). A semiotician like Elam grasps this but goes further, to come to grips with that which really underlies the nature of the theatre world. A theatrical contract between the players and the audience that implies an agreement between the two groups that the events that take place in the theatre are not real but only "make belief" forms the foundation of drama (Mouton, 1989:84). This contract must constantly be renewed because in drama the illusionary vision of the stage is often shattered by audience participation or by an actor enacting himself as well as another character (like in Ek Anna van Wyk), or an actor stepping out of the character ...

The fictionality of the drama world is linked to the idea of ostension, and this relation (implied in the text and realized in the production) distinguishes the specific nature of the fictionality in the drama which leads to the realization that drama is a unique genre (Mouton, 1989:86).
3.5 Dramatis personae

Now that the fictional nature of drama has been determined the dramatis personae (dramatic characters) can be discussed.

Customarily the dramatis personae are dealt with from either a psychological perspective or in terms of the functions which the dramatic characters display or according to the fairly recent approach of the semiotician, to incorporate the relation between the actor and the dramatic character (Mouton, 1989:89).

The psychological approach concerns itself with the question of how the character is created and how he comes to life. Questions are asked like: are we dealing with an individual or a type? How does the audience or reader get to know the character? Can the audience identify with the character? This method treats a character's life or a play as a case history (Styan, 1975:23).

Four main techniques to create character are used, viz. prior knowledge of the character, e.g. a historical figure, a second technique which involves signs outside the text, e.g. the character's name which can reveal some of his characteristics, the character's own dialogue and actions also characterize him, and the fourth aspect is the judgements and comments other characters make about the character (Mouton, 1989:91).

The second manner in which the dramatis personae are dealt with concerns the actantial model which has been adopted by Greimas. In his study Greimas distinguishes the actant, the character and the actor (Mouton, 1989:95).

The actant refers to the specific function which is fulfilled, this is usually the character. It can also be an abstract unity, e.g. love, so the actant can be realised in more than one character (Mouton, 1989:95).

Greimas goes on to illustrate three different oppositional relationships: the subject and the object, the sender and the receiver and the helper and the
opponent (Mouton, 1989:96). The subject refers to some thematic force, e.g. love, the object refers to what the character is searching for, e.g. happiness. The sender and receiver refer to the group who receives what the character searches for as well as the arbiter or judge of these events. The helper is the person or persons who aid the protagonist and the opponents oppose him (Mouton, 1989:96).

The third way in which the dramatis personae are dealt with paves the way for a totally new and fresh approach to drama. Here the fact that the relationship between the actor and the character is distinguished by the audience's experience of the theatrical production, is stressed (Bogatyrev, 1983:48). The audience are almost always aware of the fact that the character is played by an actor, and that the production is based on the theatrical contract between the actors and the audience which implies that the drama production is only "make belief".

The fictional drama world is created by all three groups, the dramatic characters, the actors and the audience (Passow, 1981:238). The author drafts a unique system of literary signs, the play. The actors transpose this system of literary signs into a system of theatre-signs comprising verbal and non-verbal elements.

The audience observe this dramatic information, apperceiving and structuring it, understanding, experiencing and finally making it part of their personal fund of aesthetic knowledge (Passow, 1981:238). This element involves a process that is irrevocably coloured since it stems from personal opinion and subjective experience. The individual's presuppositions will be involved in this process and here each person's ideological mindset comes to the fore. It is inevitable and should always be kept in mind by readers, the members of the audience, critics and artists - in fact by everyone. All three the different groups have an important, yet different role to play in the creation, transfer and assimilation of the fictional world (Mouton, 1989:98).

The audience and the actors are involved in a constant contract, as has been mentioned, that fixes the idea of the character portraying a fictional world firmly in the mind of the character as well as the audience. This allows for
five different possibilities within the mutual relationships between the actor, character and the audience.

These are, according to Passow (1981:239): "scenic interaction within the 'make-believe world' (fictitious scenic interaction) and the interaction of the audience with this 'make-believe world' (audience-stage interaction in the field of fiction). Furthermore it encompasses the interaction of the members of the theatre company among each other (real interaction on stage) as well as the interaction of the audience with the actors (real audience-stage interaction) and the interaction within the audience".

This underlying interaction between these three groups (characters, actors, audience) within the two different worlds (fictional and physical reality) forms the foundation of the theatrical production (Mouton, 1989:100).

The actor has, according to States (1983:360), three different pronominal modes with relation to himself, the audience and the character. The self-expressive mode concerns the actor's desire to act, to indicate his talent. The collaborative mode involves the actor's recognition of the audience's presence. The representative mode fixes the idea that the production deals with the fictional world peopled by its fictional characters (States, 1983:371).

The strong link between the drama text and the theatrical production compels the drama critic to keep these aspects constantly in mind. The interaction between text and production is inevitable and often it is impossible to clearly distinguish between the two, therefore the relationship between character, actor and audience must be considered by drama critics.

3.6 Time in the drama text and in the production

Drama always deals with the present reality (Mouton, 1989:110). The fact that drama is underlaid by ostension (presentation) and that the characters speak directly to the audience, unlike the narrative text, ensure that drama deals with the present reality (Mouton, 1989:112).
In the production a distinction is drawn between the production time and the presented time. The first one is the actual time it takes to enact the drama on stage, usually in the region of two to three hours. The latter refers to the time in the play which elapses during which the events take place. This can differ from an evening to several years (Mouton, 1989:114).

During the production the elapsing of a long period of time can be indicated by various techniques: make-up, costumes, time lapses between acts and even when a character gives the audience a direct and clear indication with regard to the fictional time, e.g. stating that two or three years have passed (Mouton, 1989:114).

The drama text is bound to the limitations of the production time. All the events and actions must take place within the two or three hours allotted for the production. This relation between the presented time and the fictional time causes the greatest interaction and influences the whole structure of the drama (Mouton, 1989:116).

The order and tempo of a drama can differ because of various aspects. The audience can be involved greatly in the play if they constantly have to rearrange their perceptions of the order of the play because of techniques like flashbacks, time lapses and references to the future. This reconstruction of the lapse of time in the drama often has to be done by the audience or readers (Elam, 1980:120). It is therefore neccessary to indicate the difference between the plot (sjuzet) of the narration and the reconstructed chronological order of the story (fabula). The tempo can differ as well. The characters' dialogue, intervals, or lack thereof, between dialogue and events and other aspects can all influence the tempo of the play (Mouton, 1989:117).

The role of time in drama involves many different facets. All the aspects of the fictional world are influenced by it, the physical events which take place within a certain time with its own lapse of time and tempo; the dramatis personae which are put within a certain fictional time and who experience it subjectively; the dramatic diction which through its deictic references shows it ties with the present, and the structure of the drama world which is greatly influenced by the handling of time (Mouton, 1989:119).
3.7 Space in the drama text and the production

The main difference between the experience of space in the text and the production is that the reader experiences space in the drama text on a flat linear level, while the audience see it physically and three-dimensionally (Mouton, 1989:122).

On stage mimetic space and diegetic space are distinguished. The first one refers to that which is made visible to the audience and represented on stage. The latter refers to that which is described and referred to by the characters in relation to themselves and their inhabited world. Mimetic space is transmitted directly, while diegetic space is mediated through the discourse of the characters, communicated verbally and visually (Issacharakoff, 1981:215).

This distinction again takes us back to ostension and the fact that the physical limitations of time and space which the play is subject to, cause the audience to experience the presented space just as a part of the fictional world (Mouton, 1989:123).

In the drama text, spatial information refers to either the fictional space or to the production space. Information about the fictional space can be given through direct references to it by the characters, or through the didascalia (Mouton, 1989:124). Information about the production space can be given through the didascalia or the characters and it refers to the presentation on stage (Mouton, 1989:125).

Within the production the study of space is far more extensive than within the text. This is so mainly because of the fact that we have to do with presentation within the production, a physical space (stage) stands for a fictional space (Mouton, 1989:127). The audience find themselves in a space that is adjacent to the fictional space, the auditorium.

This relationship between the audience and the actors is fundamental for drama. Passow (1981:237) maintains that theater studies received an
impetus from the insight that a performance must be considered a collaboration between actors and audience. The actor, from within the framework of the actual stage, acknowledges the space of the audience (Mouton, 1989:128). Southern (1964:26) states that the essence of the theater is the impression made on the audience by the performance.

The drama production is a social event and it therefore involves certain conventions, both theatrical and social, which are honoured by the audience (Mouton, 1989:129).

The theatrical contract between the audience and the actors implies that the audience accept all that happens in the fictional space as fictional and not as real (Mouton, 1989:129). Each character, as portrayed by an actor, exists within a specific space, uses this space (through gestures and body movements) and projects from this space the relationship(s) he has with the other characters (Mouton, 1989:131).

The audience on the other hand do not passively stare at the world, or space, that is represented before them, they are actively involved with it, recreating it through their imaginations. This space that the audience create is called the "virtual space" (Elam, 1980:67).

3.8 Diction in the drama text and the production

Two dramatic aspects which are most influenced by the diction of drama are the dramatic person and the dramatic action (Mouton, 1989:133).

Character, dialogue and action are very closely related because characters reveal a great deal through their speech.

The non-verbal action of the characters often seems to carry more validity than the dialogue, however. This may be due to the fact that it is very difficult for the playwright to accurately reveal the true thoughts and feelings of the characters (Mouton, 1989:134).
It is generally felt that the character's non-verbal gestures and actions reveal his true and genuine feelings (Mouton, 1989:134). Action and dialogue are so closely associated that it is impossible to say that the one determines the other.

In the drama text the dialogue and didascalia are the aspects concerned (Mouton, 1989:135).

The didascalia contain characters's language usage (diction), and the manner in which they pronounce it. Also within the didascalia are contained metalingual aspects (how the words are pronounced) as well as non-linguistic aspects (gestures, facial expressions, body motions) (Mouton, 1989:135).

During the production the didascalia are enacted and the visual and auditory nature of these will have a very great influence on the audience's perception of the character (Mouton, 1989:136). The convention of dramatic diction is a fixed one. Although the diction of the drama is accessible to the general audience it often shatters the conventions of ordinary language usage (Mouton, 1989:137).

Dialogue is the most common form of dramatic diction while other forms like monologues are also found. Within the production two different communication axes are distinguished: the internal communication axis and the external communication axis (Mouton, 1989:138). When the internal communication axis is in operation the actor mainly enacts the role of the character within a specific communication situation.

When the external communication axis is in operation the actor is representative of the fictional character for the audience, but he can at the same time, through the usage of certain techniques, communicate directly with the audience as the fictional character or himself (Mouton, 1989:139).

During the production of realistic plays (where the illusion-shattering techniques are not used) the actors enact the characters which are represented in the internal communication situation on stage and are
constantly in subtle interaction with the audience, in other words the external communication situation (Mouton, 1989:140).

In the drama text the reader can recreate the character through the internal communication situations which are at work during the reading process. The reader can also read the play as an implicit audience in an implicit external communication situation (Mouton, 1989:140).

During the production of plays which use illusion-shattering techniques like monologues and direct references, the actors enact characters that are involved in the internal as well as external communication processes while in subtle interaction with the audience (Mouton, 1989:140). The usage of techniques that establish direct interaction between the audience and the actors, affirms the fact that the text and the production are closely linked (Mouton, 1989:141). In the reading of a drama text that uses illusion-shattering techniques the same methods will be used as with the drama text of more realistic plays.

The functions of dramatic diction are manifold. Pfister (1977:151-167) mentions six different functions. The referential function is concerned with diction that gives information about the fictional drama world, e.g. characters and their histories. The phatic function refers to diction that creates contact between the speaker and the listener. The appellative function is where the speaker wants to persuade his listeners. The emotional function is where the speaker reveals his own emotions.

The metalingual function involves a situation where the diction of the character is discussed. The final function is the poetical function where figures of speech are used. These functions can be found on the external as well as the internal communication axes.

A semiotician like Elam considers three aspects important when dealing with dramatic diction. The deictic orientation of dramatic diction is central. This indicates that we're dealing with the present reality (Elam, 1980:152-153).
The ways in which the dramatic diction tries to create a fictional world is another important aspect. The dramatic language (diction) carries information concerning the dramatic world at large, according to Elam (1980:148).

Dramatic diction as action is the last aspect that Elam (1980:162,163) distinguishes. He indicates that there are three different actions: locutionary action (meaningful utterance which respects phonology, morphology), illocutionary action (to perform an action through an utterance) and perlocutionary action (to achieve something through an utterance). The dramatic language utterance often differs from the general utterance because of its very dramatic nature. The function and necessity of the dramatic interval must also not be neglected when discussing dramatic diction (Mouton, 1989:153).

Semiotic studies have placed a lot more stress on the dramatic utterance itself and not just its function and role, which widens the scope of literary criticism concerning drama.

3.9 Dramatic action in the drama structure

Six elements are involved in dramatic action: an agent, his intention in acting, the act or act-type produced, the modality of the action (manner and means), the setting (temporal, spatial and circumstantial) and the purpose (Elam, 1980:125).

Pfister (1977:276) distinguishes between actions that are shown and actions that are told. The actions that are shown have to do with visual and auditory aspects and must be interpreted by the audience. Actions that are told are only verbally experienced by the audience.

When the drama structure is looked at it is clear that the relation between drama text and production must receive much more scrutiny. The drama structure compels the playwright to be economical. The strong time and spatial limitations that are imposed on the playwright are the most important aspects that must be considered (Beckerman, 1970:40).
A drama has a beginning, middle and an end when its time aspect is considered. The play can have an early point-of-attack or a late point-of-attack (Levitt, 1971:26,27).

The first approach allows for inclusiveness, nearly the whole story is included in the play. The second approach allows for concentration on a situation (Levitt, 1971:26,27).

The middle of the drama is concerned with the extension and enlarging of the play. The sequence of the play is restructured by the audience/reader themselves. Here the fabula and sjuzet are dealt with. Elam (1980:119) distinguishes between the two and states that the fabula is "the basic storyline of the narrative", comprising the "narrated events themselves in their logical order, abstracted by the reader or critic from the sjuzet or plot, which is the organization in practice of the narration itself". The tempo can be varied according to various techniques, e.g. a series of short scenes or numerous repetitive actions or words (Mouton, 1989:160-1).

The dénouement of the play determines to a great extent the satisfaction or dissatisfaction the audience or readers experience after the play. Levitt (1971:53) distinguishes between two different laws concerning the dénouement of the play. These are the satisfactory continuation of the dramatic actions and the satisfactory closure of the dramatic actions. The first law is in operation from the start of the play and it leads to the anticipation of a satisfactory closure of the dramatic actions, while the second law sees the play having an open-ended dénouement.

Pfister (1977:320) goes on to indicate two different drama forms: the closed drama form, where all loose ends are tied, and the open drama form where some loose strands are always dangling.

Space is also structured within the dramatic actions, when certain actions are remembered (spatial images). Certain figure configurations are created within a drama, they refer to the mutual spatial relationships which different characters are involved in (Mouton, 1989:163).
Using these different concepts and ideas the critic can evaluate the drama more meaningfully and structure it better when he/she deals with the dramatic actions of the drama.

3.10 Didascalia

Didascalia include everything which is neither dialogue nor soliloquy, such as the drama titles, character lists, epilogues, prologues, stage directions and the like (Savona, 1982:26).

The director approaches the text and didascalia in different ways. The written linguistic signs can be confirmed by the production signs, they can be strengthened, they can be limited, undermined or neglected (Mouton, 1989:169).

The didascalia have different functions. The title can be a key to understanding the play. The character list is an easy way of identifying the characters and it can be informational. The character list also has a certain structuring function since it indicates the importance of the character within the fictional world (Mouton, 1989:171).

The stage directions can be seen as instructions concerning the time and place of events, actions, movements, entrances and exits, sound effects, stage properties, costumes, or setting (Levitt, 1971:36). The verbal stage directions can also help to introduce a character and indicate the off-stage action (Levitt, 1971:36).

The set of written stage directions can also perform the function of a narrator. This is so insofar as it names, describes, or identifies diegetic space and time, and also frequently indicates the various actions inscribed in the narrative sequence: exit, return, duel, murder, suicide, etc. The interaction between the utterances of the characters and the written stage directions (that is gestures, movements, facial expressions) can furnish the reader with important information about the character and the fictional world in general (Mouton, 1989:174).
The information the didascalia supply as regards character, time and space, divided into visual and auditory aspects, is meaningful.

Visual information about the character's physical stature and outward appearance can be given in the didascalia. Information about the character's physical appearance, e.g. dress, make-up, is also supplied by the didascalia. Facial expressions, which carry certain information, are also furnished by the didascalia. It can support the character's words or undermine it. Gestures and movements are given by the didascalia that concern the character itself, or that influence other characters, for example, physical contact (Mouton, 1989:175-84).

Gestures and movements that take place are performed during a group action and are also part of the didascalia. The functions of such actions vary, they place stress on certain aspects or directly involve the audience. The entrances and exits of characters are also explicitly stipulated by the didascalia (Mouton, 1989:186).

Auditory information with regards to the fictional character can either describe his voice or any other sounds that the character produces (Mouton, 1989:187). The fictional time and space can also be given visual as well as auditory shape by the didascalia.

During the production the didascalia are enacted for the audience to see and hear. Some aspects of the didascalia, like the character list of dramatis personae, are part of the production so that the distinct separation between text and production can become less apparent (Mouton, 1989:195).
3.11 The audience in the production and the implicit audience in the text

The audience's role within the production can be classified in three different groups. The first group is the semiotics group that sees the audience as a participant in the theatrical communication process. The second group is reception-aesthetics which studies the audience's reception and reaction of the drama. The third group focuses on the audience's experience of the production within the greater context of the sociological situation of the time (Mouton, 1989:197).

The semiotic approach acknowledges that the audience's influence and experience of the drama influence the actors. This approach also points out that every member of the audience is influenced by the rest of the group and that the audience become a unit (Nicoll, 1962:20).

The audience become emotionally involved in the play but never lose sight of the fact that they are experiencing a fictional world that does, however, find its roots in reality (Mouton, 1989:199). The audience are aware of that they dealing with a fictional as well as a represented level in drama, and therefore their reaction will be on a continuum between emotional involvement and an objective state of mind, the so-called "double action" (Passow, 1981:239).

The drama text has to do with an implicit audience. The reader of the drama text has only his skills of imagination with which to create a mental presentation of the fictional world of the drama (Mouton, 1989:203). Hayman (1977:intro) feels that the talent for forming vivid impressions of theatrical action must be fostered with the reader. By being more alert to the technical problems the directors and actors have in bringing the words to theatrical life and to the psychological process of translating printed dialogue and stage directions into mental action, this can be done. The reader finds himself outside the text while the implicit audience is found within the text.
The reader can read the text with the idea of getting to know the fictional world which the drama deals with, or to get information about the implied production potential of the drama or to read the text with the reader himself as the implicit audience, that means he reads the text as if it is performed in front of him (Mouton, 1989:204).

If the audience, implicit audience and the reader are all regarded, differences as well as similarities are found. There are four different levels to consider: the representational, emotional, the intellectual and the aesthetic levels.

For the audience the actual, physical presentation of the play is the most important aspect. The visual and auditory experiencing of the play can influence the audience fundamentally. With the reader it is not the same, as he has to construct his own visual and auditory world (Mouton, 1989:212).

On the emotional level the fact that the audience deal with a fictional character as well as a actor will influence them emotionally while with the reader this is not so pertinent.

Certain plays, like The Glass Menagerie, indicate to the reader and the implicit audience certain theatrical actions so that they are constantly aware of the fact that they are dealing with two different worlds (Mouton, 1989:214).

On the intellectual level the reader may have an advantage over the audience. The audience can much more easily become emotionally involved in the play and evaluate the play emotionally rather than intellectually or critically (Mouton, 1989:215).

The audience can experience aesthetic pleasure from the fictional worlds as well as the representational world. The reader only has access to the fictional world.

The drama critic should be a competent reader as well as a competent viewer of the drama.
Résumé

In view of the outline provided in chapter 2 and the discussion of the semiotic reading model, it is now proposed to read the three plays by Tennessee Williams, keeping cognizance of the notions proposed in chapters 2 and 3.