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My Many Selves

Wayne C. Booth

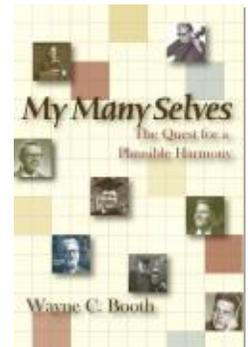
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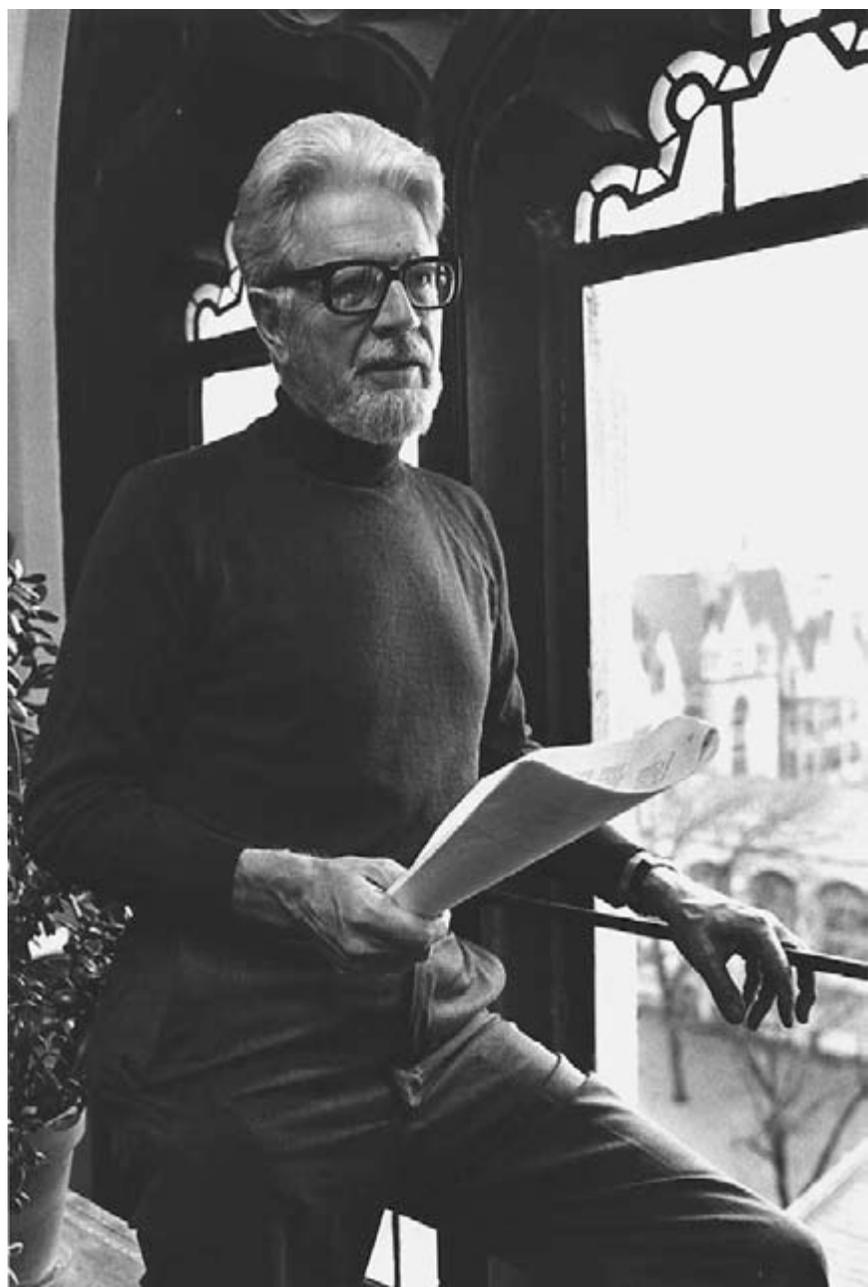
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The Quest for a Plausible Harmony

Wayne C. Booth

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*It has amazed me that the most incongruous traits should exist in the same person and for all that yield a **plausible harmony**.¹ I have often asked myself how characteristics, seemingly irreconcilable, can exist in the same person. I have known crooks who were capable of self-sacrifice, sneak-thieves who were sweet-natured and harlots for whom it was a point of honour to give good value for money.*

—Somerset Maugham, *The Summing Up*

[I would] portray myself entire and wholly naked.

—Montaigne, *Essays*

[Dorian Gray] used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the Ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable, and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead.

—Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

There are two minds with two distinct natures, one good, the other bad. They really are evil themselves when they entertain these evil doctrines. . . . If there are as many contrary natures as there are wills in someone beset by indecision, there will be not two wills but many.

—St. Augustine, *Confessions*

I wonder if I will ever overcome my faults (lazyness, conceit, vague dishonesty, crudeness, etc.) to become a truly integrated individual. . . . I find myself very complex, psychologically, strange to say.

—Wayne C., College Sophomore, April 1940

1. Emphasis added.

