LITERARY CRITICISM: A READING

(With Introduction and Notes)

Edited by

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CALCUTTA
ORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
DELHI BOMBAY MADRAS

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Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

OXFORD NEW YORK TORONTO
DELHI BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI
KUALALUMPUR SINGAPORE HONG KONG TOKYO
NAIROBI DAR ES SALAAM CAPETOWN
MELBOURNE AUCKLAND MADRID

and associates in
BERLIN IBADAN

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DAS; 1

© Oxford University Press 1985

First published 1985

Forth Impression 1994

[illegible] Library
Acc. No 195287
19/10/94

Printed in India
by Ashutosh Lithographic Co., 13, Chidam Mudi Lane, Ca
and published by Neil O'Brien, Oxford University
5 Lala Lajpat Rai Sarani, Calcutta 70

CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Extracts from *Timber, or, Discoveries*
Ben Jonson 1

From *Preface to Fables, Ancient and Modern*
John Dryden 6

The Pleasures of Imagination
Joseph Addison 19

From *Preface to the Plays of Shakespeare*
Samuel Johnson 25

From *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*
W. Wordsworth 34

From *Biographia Literaria*
S.T. Coleridge 46

From *On Poetry in General*
William Hazlitt 59

The Study of Poetry
Matthew Arnold 66

Function of Criticism at the Present Time
Matthew Arnold 91

From *The Renaissance*
Walter Pater 117

The Function of Criticism
T.S. Eliot 125

To Criticize the Critic
T.S. Eliot 135

Poetry: A Note on Ontology
John Crowe Ransom 150

The Nature of Criticism
Herbert Read 171

The Imagination
I.A. Richards 191

Metaphor
I.A. Richards 202

The Tragic Fallacy
J.W. Krutch 217

Literary Criticism and Philosophy
F.R. Leavis 235
Reality and Sincerety
F.R. Leavis 245
The Sense of the Past
Lionel Trilling 257
From *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?*
L.C. Knights 272
Marvell's Garden
William Empson 294
The Language of Paradox
Cleanth Brooks 315
The International Fallacy
W.K. Wimsatt, Jr & M.C. Beardsley 333
Myth, Fiction, and Displacement
Northrop Frye 349
'Dissociation of Sensibility': Modern Symbolist Readings of Literary History
Frank Kermode 369
Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences
Jacques Derrida 393
From Work to Text
Roland Barthes 413
Notes 421
About the Authors 483

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Faber and Faber Ltd for 'The Function of Criticism' from *Selected Essays* by T S Eliot and 'To Criticise the Critic' by T S Eliot; to Charles Scribner's Sons for 'Poetry: A Note on Ontology' from *The World's Body* by John Ransom (© 1938 Charles Scribner's Sons; renewal copyright © 1966 John Crowe Ransom); to Oxford University Press for 'Metaphor' from *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* by I A Richards (1936); to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. for 'The Tragic Fallacy' from *The Modern Temper* by Joseph Wood Krutch © 1929 by Harcourt Brace Jocanovich, Inc. © 1957 by Joseph Wood Krutch; for 'Myth, Fiction and Displacement' from *Fables for Identity* by Northrop Frye © 1961 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc; and for 'The Sense of the Past' from The Liberal Imagination by Lionel Trilling © 1942, 1970 by Lionel Trilling; to Mrs Q D Leavis and Chatto and Windus Ltd for 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy' from *The Common Pursuit* by F R Leavis, for 'Reality and Sincerity' from *The Living Principle* by F R Leavis, and Chatto and Windus Ltd for 'Marvell's Garden' from *Some Versions of Pastoral* by William Empson; to Cambridge University Press for 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth' from *Explorations* by L C Knights; to Dobson Books Ltd for 'The Language of Paradox' from *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* by Cleanth Brooks; to Methuen & Co Ltd for 'International Fallacy' from *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* by Wimsatt and Beardsley; to Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd for 'The Imagination' from *Principles of Literary Criticism* by I A Richards and for 'Dissociation of Sensibility' from *Romantic Image* by Frank Kermode; to Faber and Faber Ltd for 'The Nature of Criticism' from *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism* by Herbert Read; to Johns Hopkins University Press for 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' by Jacques Derrida from *Structuralist Controversy* ed. by R. Macksey and B. Donato; to Methuen & Co Ltd for 'From Work to Text' by Roland Barthes from *Textual Strategies* ed. by J.V. Harari.

INTRODUCTION

But on giving the matter a little attention, we perceive that criticism, far from being a simple and orderly field of beneficient activity, from which imposters can be easily ejected, is no better than a Sunday park of contending and contentious orators, who have not even arrived at the articulation of their differences.

T. S. Eliot: 'The Function of Criticism' (1923)

Cultural Seismology—the attempt to record the shifts and displacements of sensibility that occur regularly in the history of art and literature and thought—habitually distinguishes three separate orders of magnitude. At one end of the scale are the tremors of fashion that seem to come and go in rhythm with the changing generations, the decade being the right unity for measuring the curves that run from first shock to peak activity and on to the dying rumbles of derivative *Epigonentum*.

M. Bradbury and J. McFarlane in *Modernism* (1976)

The conversation grew more animated on the Tower of Babel, at the moment when the confusion of tongues was imposed. But would anyone say that critical vitality was thereby increased? —Anon.

Quoted by W.C. Booth in *Critical Understanding* (1979)

The general trend of literary criticism since 1945 has been from consensus to diversity, from the dominance of formalistic criticism to a bewildering variety of criticisms which seek to move 'beyond' or 'against' formalism.

A. Alton Litz in *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Literature* (1980)

The object of this anthology is to provide Honours and Post-Graduate students with a knowledge of the development of western—chiefly Anglo-American—criticism from the Renaissance to the present day. This task is not easy in view of the

vastness of a subject which stretches from Plato and Aristotle to Poulet and Althusser, while the time available for its study is at most two academic years. The decision about any satisfactory principle of selection was difficult. In an age when criticism has become a kind of industry—witness the number of books and periodicals published every year—any principle can be challenged. One could make a selection on the basis of eras, genres, concepts or modes—but such an approach might pose problems for the Indian student when the importance of the study of English literature in our country has been declining. In our universities the Departments of English nowadays offer courses on American, European, Commonwealth, Latin American and Indo-Anglian literatures and that has meant the diminution of the contents of English literature. Further, the competence in the use of English, and therefore the capacity to respond to English literature, has declined. Furthermore there is also the problem of cross-cultural communication. In western countries it is not unusual to speak about an age of 'discontinuity' of a 'disinherited mind', of a 'post-industrial' or 'post-modern' culture looking ahead to 'future shock' or to a 'third wave' or an 'electronic revolution' ushering in an 'information society'. This picture emerges powerfully from the empirical and philosophical studies by writers ranging from Freud to Ellul.

The condition of man today portrayed by these authors is unflattering and the apparent withering away of traditional sanctions of human life has created a void that Auden calls 'vast spiritual disorders'. Modernity, as Paul de Man shows à propos of Nietzsche, is an attempt to cut off the meaning of history in order to escape from the burden of the past or Harold Bloom's 'influence of anxiety'. But this fragmentation of history leads to an individualistic interpretation of human activity, including the study of literature. Daniel Bell in his *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* has discussed Nietzsche's *The Will to Power* and described the advent of nihilism in post-industrial society. Bell tells us that 'The real problem of modernity is the problem of belief. It is a spiritual crisis since the new anchorages have proved illusory and the old ones have submerged. This situation brings us back to nihilism; lacking a past or a future, there is only a void. Nihilism was once a heady philosophy, when there was something to destroy and something to put in its place. But to-

day what is there left in the past to destroy, and who has the hope for a future to come?' (pp. 28-9).

This is a depressing conclusion. When practices of extreme individualism arise in a society, a lenient situation is created. A permissive society demolishes all sanctions and restrictions valuable in history. Under its transvaluation of values, nothing has any value, and communication becomes an exercise in futility, ultimately generating what Ihad Hassan calls 'metaphors of silence' or Susan Sontag describes as the 'aesthetics of silence'. In this explication of silence, the modern philosophers of language such as Carnap, Wittgenstein and Ayer, along with existentialists like Heidegger and Sartre can all be linked with Nietzsche who along with Marx and Freud has become a father-figure of recent literary criticism. Rationalism which had governed the progress of western civilization since the 18th century was challenged by Nietzsche in favour of irrationality, whose manifestation is to be seen in writers like Rimbaud or Artaud, or even more conspicuously in art movements like Dadaism and Surrealism. The trend continued with varying fortunes. After the Second World War it has rejected the very centre of western metaphysics and discarded any meaning inherent in a discourse. Once the foundation of culture is undermined, pervasive social maladies like permissiveness (Portnoy's *Complaint, Couples*), violence (*The Naked and the Dead, Clock-Work Orange, Dead Babies*), cruelty (*Saved, Streamers*), drug addition (*The Naked Lunch*) and hippie cult (*On the Road*) become common features of life. The controls of society are interpreted as forms of repression as in Freud and replaced by a kind of reckless freedom.

If the post-industrial or post-modern society of the West manifests such symptoms, it is very difficult for the Indian student to grasp their implication properly because his own society is now in a process of transition from a traditional to a modern one. A vast portion of our country has yet to experience modernization. The metropolitan areas have already been brought into the ambit of the modern cybernetic and video or kitsch culture. But when we think of the general structure of the consciousness of our students, it appears to be largely a product of a rural, agrarian, communal pattern of life in which religion continues to be the most dominant force and its influence on marriage, family

or kinship is till quite strong. With the spread of modern mass media like the cinema, radio, television newspapers and journals the study of literature as a humanistic and humane activity becomes increasingly threatened. The cultural moorings of the Indian student are, however, yet to be sundered completely from what D. Riesman calls the inner-directed values of life.

The crisis generated by the clash of the traditional and modern cultures under the impact of science, technology, materialism and secularism, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, Matthew Arnold wrote his well-known essay, 'Function of Criticism at the Present Time' where he said that the business of criticism was to 'know the best that is known and thought in the world and in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them.' Arnold's view of the performance of criticism required 'disinterestedness' to seemingly underpin the theory of the autonomy of a work of art that was later advocated by the New Critics following Kant and Coleridge. He would have possibly preferred the *vita contemplativa* to the *vita activa* in the realm of literature in an age in which culture was being invaded by anarchy buttressed by philistinism. It is, therefore, obvious why as a critic he should have assigned such a high role to poetry: 'In poetry as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty the spirit of our race will find, we have said as the time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and its stay. The stress is on 'life'—its meaning, validity and truth as revealed in literature. Arnold's approach to criticism was both aesthetic and moral.

Such paramount importance given to poetry or literature was justified at a time when the life-giving waters of religion was gradually losing its importance in Europe and all orthodox traditions and beliefs were being challenged and shaken by the advancement of knowledge, especially in the realm of science. Arnold's view is acceptable to I.A. Richards a pioneer of modern criticism. Richards, who gave us his value theory of the balance of impulses or appetancies as a behaviourist psychologist was

aware of the problems of teaching criticism to Cambridge University students with good academic and cultural background. He discovered to his dismay that most of those students were incapable of distinguishing between good and bad poetry and their criteria of judgment were erratic, eccentric or idiosyncratic, sometimes even downright absurd. That was the beginning of the era of modern criticism or New Criticism as it came to be generally known, as represented by I.A. Richards, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis, W. Empson, J.C. Ransom, A. Tate, C. Brooks, R.P. Blackmur, L. Trilling, R.P. Warren, W.K. Wimsatt, K. Burke and others. They were responsible for paving a 'critical path' amidst the 'chaos' of critical theories noticed Richards by then. The function of modern criticism was to elucidate a discourse—a verbal artifact having an autonomous and autotelic existence—by a close scrutiny. To these critics, the discourse was a linguistic fact as was evident from its linguistic dimension or structure. It was also an aesthetic object because of its formal artistic properties. This artifact was an organisation of verbal symbols or words which when properly organized built up literary experience. By elucidation, the critic helped the reader to understand and enjoy it, and, from this discriminating enjoyment arose a taste for genuine literature as represented by Dante or Shakespeare, Donne or Dryden, Keats or Baudelaire, the criteria being intensity, sincerity, subtlety, density and complexity as revealed by the intricate semantic function or polyvalence of the non-referential or non-discussive language of poetry as distinct from the referential language of science. The New Critics made use of such a distinction to usher in a critical revolution by making the text the centre of attention and not the poet as had been the case with romantic critics like Wordsworth, Hazlitt or Keats. It is this attention to the text that inspite of later modifications and experiments in the wake of structuralism and post-structuralism and other recent theories of literary criticism is still valid enough, although what is meant by the word 'text' has undergone a great change. In place of the written or printed words of an author in a particular form which normally meant a text, we now have a nebulous entity which is a product of both the author and reader. This text undergoes further transformation as each reader produces a strong or weak version of it according to his intelligence and ability. The existence of a text oscillates

between 'writerly' and 'readerly' versions and thereby criticism resembles hermeneutics in the manner of Sleirmacher and Dilthey echoing the practice of Biblical exegesis.

Literary modes alter from age to age as sensibility changes Eliot has pointed out. These changes by diverse forces are generated by the advancement of knowledge. In our age besides science. rapid advancements have occurred in philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, psychology and sociology, all of which have considerably affected the aim, nature and quality of criticism. Changes too were earlier witnessed with the creation of new kinds of poetry by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden and Wordsworth. In our age, Eliot and Pound were responsible for altering the poetic idiom and starting a new kind of criticism which supported the new type of poetry. This poetry was a criticism of life, mainly of our era just as that of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden or Wordsworth had been in their times.

The Second World War generated a new approach to literature for it was believed that after the holocausts of Auschwitz or Belsen there would be no more poetry or as T. Adorno said, 'To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,' just as some years after the First World War Leavis had stated that poetry did not matter to the modern world. During the last three decades it has been argued intelligently and forcefully that the 'doubts, distractions and fears' of modern life, has not been conducive to the growth of major creative works and hence in the opinion of many critics the novel is dead, tragedy is dead, poetry is moribund because the novel has been transformed into an assemblage, drama into happening and poetry into howling. It is quirk of fate that during the post-Second World War there has not been a great poet of the calibre of Valery, Yeats, Pound, Eliot or Stevens to face the challenge of the times and start a genuinely newer criticism. Criticism, tday on the other hand, as Helen Gardner rightly observes, has become the business of professional critics whose controversies however acute and scholarly, do not seem to have increased our love for genuine literature. It is this professional criticism which aroused the unfavourable reaction of Randall Jarrell when he described our age as an age of criticism making an allusion to the fable of King Log and King Stork. The same kind of reaction has been registered by Susan Sontag in her well-known essay, *Against Interpretation* in which

she writes: 'All the conditions of modern life—its material plénitude, its sheer crowdedness conjoin to dull our senses, our capacities (rather than those of another age), that the task of the critic must be assessed. What is important now is to recover our senses.....' (p. 23). This view may be contrasted with that of Ransom in *The World's Body* while discussing the ontology of a literary work he brings out the dehumanizing forces of science which through highly specialized language decimate the world's body, its sensuous opulence. A similar viewpoint is advanced by Tate in his essay 'Man of Letters in the Modern World'. But the tirade against criticism of the liberal-humanistic type is largely a revolt against the ethos of the so-called bourgeois or elite culture which had produced New Criticism. It is, therefore, a reaction against the very foundations of that criticism in course of which it is often forgotten that the differences in human minds can hardly be levelled down even when economic differences in society disappear. The aristocracy of intellect persists in a Solzhenitsyn or Pasternak.

From the Renaissance to our time the course of criticism has exhibited two chief movements classical and romantic. The Renaissance itself was a romantic movement with a classical foundation introduced by the revival of classical learning by the Humanists. A comparison between Sidney and Jonson shows the development of these two movements. Although both critics are governed by classical tenets and rules Sidney's reference to the poet's creative power turning a brazen world into a golden one links him with Plato and Longinus whereas Jonson's respect for rules makes him Aristotelian and Horatian.

Till the end of the 18th century it is the classical movement —art as mimesis—its end being pleasure combined with moral edification, the Horatian formula of *dulce et utile,* that held sway although voices of dissent can be heard in an Addison, a Reynolds or a Hurd. The focus is on the object, the structure, and its edifying effect on the reader or society. Art as an imitation of nature goes back to Plato's *Republic* where it is shown to be a reflection or shadow of reality and since then critics have been discussing the relationship between art and reality without reaching an unanimous conclusion. Plato holds that the universe is an imitation of the eternal ideas and hence it is an appearance or illusion. A work of art is, therefore, an imita-

tion of an imitation and a product of the poet's frenzied mind and so it cannot communicate any notion of reality or truth. The echoes of Plato can be heard today in post-structuralist or post-modern criticism that a literary work is an illusion in that the critic can at best produce a simulacrum of the linguistic artifact.

Aristotle regards a work of art as an imitation and approaches the subject differently by linking imitation with man's natural inclination for it. Hence form, according to him, is not outside the world but inherent in the things themselves. Aristotle accords a higher value to poetry over history, distinguishing between universal and particular truth and naturally, therefore, tragedy which deals with the most profound experiences of life is given the highest place in his taxonomy. This high esteem for poetry became a principal doctrine of the New Critics.

Aristotle's mimesis when combined with Plato's takes us to the whole question of reality and its relationship with art—a subject generating wide and acute controversies, among philosophers, artists and poets ever since, producing such neo-Platonic doctrine as in Sidney that poetry can directly approach the eternal forms and as such it need not be a copy of reality which is removed from it.

Reason which dominated the Western mind till the eighteenth century broke the unity of the human mind. The Cartesian split, which is at the back of the dissociation of sensibility, has been at the root of all Western philosophical efforts to restore the unity of the subjective and the objective aspects of experience, to restore the inheritance of the disinherited mind, to overcome the failure of the mind under the domination of reason to apprehend reality *sub specie aeternitatis* or to see the outer and inner experiences as an undivided whole. In this ontology, F. Kermode's essay on the subject illuminates that 'historical crisis'. The attempt of reason to undermine the human mind by dividing it into the realms of the self and the non-self engaged the attention of philosophers and thinkers like Kant and Hegel or poets like Wordsworth and Shelley who felt that nature with its laws as available to reason was not sufficient to explain reality Hence they searched in the inner recesses of the human mind for a power that would overcome the limitations of reason which separated fact from value and paved the way for an external view of

reality thereby creating various social, economic and political problems which the theories prepounded by reason were unable to solve fully. Shelley's political views in the wake of Godwin's ideas, or Schiller's theory of naive and sentimental poetry or aesthetic education can thus be explained by a reference to the problems caused by the exclusive adherence to reason creating the dichotomy between subject and object, reason and emotion, individual and society which resulted in an impoverishment or dessication of the inner life. If the inner life was to be strengthened and rehabilitated it could be done by looking into the heart, to search for the reasons of the heart which were not available to the head, in short, by introducing a new agent, the imagination, which through its creative power could counter discursive reason and its analytical, fragmenting, divisive power by the force of synthesis and unity. Reason could be left to the objective world of science: imagination would deal with the inner life of man, with the world of art and literature, where out there the imitation of nature or of reality would lose its importance. But this interpretation although generally accepted had areas of dissent. Dr. Johnson's understanding of nature and reason would reveal that in contrast to Pope he was uneasy about the interpretation of reality by reason alone. His criticism of Shakespeare or of the metaphysical poets shows that he was conscious of the broken circle in the human mind. It was with the advent of Kant that the problem of this broken circle or what B. Dobrée calls the broken cistern, was analysed intensively in his *Critiques* of which the *Critique of Judgment* is of seminal importance for the concepts of modern criticism as it points out the synthetic and creative power of the imagination to modify sense data.

The challenge to the mimetic theories, henceforth, begins to work prominently in the expressive theories of the romantics as the attention shifts from the work to the author who becomes a human creator with imagination, not reason, as his instrument. For the neo-classical critics the laws of nature were supreme as they were revealed through reason so that reason, nature and truth became a triad in the production and criticism of a work of art which has to conform to rules, just as later on the Kantian triad of cognitive, moral and aesthetic principles came to operate in the realm of the human mind to bring about a profound

change in the attitude of the romantic poets and critics towards art and literature. To Wordsworth, therefore, the poet is a man speaking to other men—hence poetry is a mode of human communication. It is 'a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' or 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'—all being activities of the poet for whom the mind of man is of supreme importance. In this process of communication of experience the poet makes use of his imagination which for Coleridge or Shelley becomes the source of poetry or creative activity. To the latter it is the avenue to the revelation of eternal ideas and so the poets are 'nurslings of immortality' and 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. Plato's theory of mimesis has apparently undergone considerable modification as the poet's imagination now becomes capable of modifying reality.

The romantic theory of imagination, however, receives its most comprehensive and acute treatment in the work of Coleridge who can be regarded as the father of modern criticism. He propounded certain seminal principles of criticism which look back to Plato, Longinus, Vico, Kant and is also influenced by writers like Lessing, Schiller, Schelling and the Schlegel brothers. In its acuteness, subtlety and profundity, it anticipates many of the principles of New Criticism in our age including the psychological theories of Freud and the Gestalt school. Coleridge's great distinction is that while he propounded theories he also applied them to actual texts and this led to practical criticism. This is evident from Coleridge's criticism of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* or his criticism of other plays of Shakespeare.

Coleridge does not confine himself to the literary work as an outpouring of the poet's feelings or emotions because he knows that the creative process is an extremely complex and subtle one. He goes to the source of creation, the creative imagination, examines its mysterious constitution and complex functioning and differentiates between fancy and imagination, between primary and secondary imagination and propounds the organic theory of form and the conception of good sense and taste. The poet's imagination as Shakespeare had anticipated, looks from heaven to earth, or perhaps from heaven to hell. Thus sameness with difference, the general and the concrete, the idea and the image —all get fused in the furnace of the poet's imagination or as Coleridge tells us: 'In Shakespeare's poems, the creative power

and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace' and that 'All is growth, evolution, genesis'. This fusion of intellect and imagination, feeling and thought, leads to tensions between contrary modes of experience and in the resulting whole form and content become inseparable. The germ sprouts and grows into a tree which cannot be distinguished from 'the leaf, the blossom or the bole'—the dancer cannot be distinguished from the dance (as Yeats said) or the lamp from the light. It is a reconciliation of nature and art ultimately, and hence this conception of poetry differs from the neo-classical conception of poetry as the imitation of nature—'First follow nature'—and the mechanical conception of form based on rules and the stress on propriety and decorum which were social considerations of refinement. Coleridge's organic theory—a theory of growth—postulates on the other hand, a relationship between the parts and the whole that is integral and results in the 'form of things unknown' which becomes the source of aesthetic pleasure. It is, however, not only the distinction between mechanical and organic form—art as mimesis and art as expression— that makes Coleridge so important for modern criticism but his acute perception of art as a revelation of what Leavis calls the 'living principle'. His philosophical vision as he pointed out to Wordsworth in 1815 required a substitution of *'life* and *intelligence* for the philosophy of *mechanism* which strikes *Death*....' (italics mine) Literary criticism based on such an intellectual and moral vision becomes a criticism of *life* at the deepest level.

The complex ideas of Coleridge were, however, not fully utilized by all the romantic critics. For Hazlitt, Keats, Keble or Carlyle, the poet's emotions and feelings became the main centre of attention, as Keats said, 'the excellence of every art is its intensity which resolves all unpleasant experiences of life.' To Hazlitt it is 'the intensity of feelings that makes up for the disproportion of the objects.' But such intensity of feeling cannot be sustained at length and Coleridge who had spoken about 'predominant passion' in poetry realized that in a long poem such passion could not be sustained throughout. The concept of 'sincerity' in the expression of feelings became a central value term for the Victorian writers like Keble, Carlyle and Arnold. To Arnold the criterion of great poetry is high seriousness which issues from absolute sincerity and for Leavis it becomes an ins-

trument to judge the value of a poem in regard to its perception of life. This 'sincerity' is no mere fidelity to feelings but a clue to an authentic interpretation of life as Trilling has pointed out in *Sincerity* and *Authenticity*.

The concept of intensity of feelings, however, dominates theories of poetry in the romantic age. In its extreme form the poet becomes the idle singer of an empty day or merely a music maker and dreamer of dreams. Thus we come to a stage when poetry aspires to the condition of music as with Pater. The poet or author then can burn with a gem-like flame leaving the business of living to his servants as with Villiers d' Lisle Adams. When the romantic interpretation of poetry reaches this stage, criticism eschews its association with ordinary external life and impressionistic appreciation becomes its chief mode of expression. So Pater's idea of criticism is to know one's impression as it really is. The critic need not be concerned with empirical or analytical procedures to reveal aesthetic form as the complexity and richness of organization. The communication of aesthetic qualities that can capture its original flavour is sufficient to perform the business of criticism. The other mode of criticism was to find genteel moral instruction in a literary work. The vagaries of romantic impressionistic criticism in mistaking the illusory for the real are seen in L.C. Knights' essay, 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?' and from it we can see that the New Critics were quite aware of the 'fictiveness of fiction' before such a theory was propounded by critics like Kermode who took their cue from Vahinger.

Until the end of the First World War, this critical tradition of biographical, historical, didactic and impressionistic criticism was dominant making the study of literature of dubious importance to a world that had witnessed a cataclysm, almost a rupture in history. The War had brought in a traumatic experience, devastating a whole civilization, questioning all values and meanings of life. In such 'an age of interrogation' the symbol of London bridge falling down was more than apt and *The Wasteland* became a symbol of the collapse of all traditional values for a whole generation. In its capacity to telescope the past and present and depict the death-in-life that had been introduced into the world by multifarious uncertainties and crises in practically every sphere of life—political, social, economic and above all,

moral and spiritual—poetry could not possibly continue to be the idle song of an empty day. A new kind of literature in a new idiom was called for in this crisis and that need was fulfilled by the works of Pound, Eliot and Joyce in which new interpretations of time, space and structure were advanced: such interpretations are at the back of modern experiments in painting and literature. To justify their poetry Pound and Eliot produced a new poetics by introducing a new kind of classicism following the directions of Babbit and Hulme as an antidote to the extreme forms of romanticism.

The new poetics which those poet-critics introduced in the 1920's and 1930's was based on concepts like tradition, individual talent, dissociation of sensibility, objective correlative, the image as an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time, *vers libre* among others. This new poetics reacted against the prevalent poetics of impressionism and moral didacticism in trying to see the aesthetic or poetic object as it really is. To achieve this end the critic required a capacity to divest himself of all preconceived notions about poetry in order to allow the text or discourse to speak to him and communicate its message or meaning without the intervention of the critic's passions or prejudices as far as practicable. Criticism of this type was to be directed not upon the poet as was the habit with most romantic critics but upon the literary discourse. The critic's sensitive and trained mind was to play upon the discourse keeping close to the concrete particulars through a detailed analysis of words, lines and passages to see how they were constituted into an organic whole from which the meaning emerged. It was an attempt to make criticism 'scientific' through analytical procedures in an age dominated by philosophers like Whitehead and Russell and it started as a pedagogic exercise by Richards and Leavis. For Richards meaning became an interplay of feeling, sense, tone and attitude, as they emerged from the text and this led to the view that a literary work had a self-sufficient and autonomous existence independent of historical, biographical, sociological and other contexts which were often mistaken for literary criticism. The modern critics also realized that the creative process was shrouded in mystery and so it is not possible for the critic to know fully or accurately what was the original impulse and how it grew before it was transferred to writing and how much of that writing re-

presented the original experience The genesis of criticism is to be found in Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure which is disinterested, unintellectual, universal and which is not to be confused with the pleasure of the senses or of ordinary emotions. A work of art having a unique ontology produces a unique impression. With such assumptions, the 'meaning of meaning' was interpreted to reveal the peculiar identity and integrity of the work or discourse and the aim of the critic was to elucidate this meaning by examining the organization of the words in the text, their arrangement, patterning of varying stresses and tensions so as to expose the density and wholeness of the structure. This new approach to a discourse can be seen in Wimsatt's statement that in literature language draws attention to itself. The discourse, therefore, is 'a verbal composition, through being supercharged with significance, takes on something like the character of a stone statue or porcelain vase. Through its meaning or meanings the poem is. It has an iconic solidity. Thus in a sense the poem is a paradox through the quality of extra significance or hyperverbalism thus becoming anomalous among verbal expressions. The poem has not an abstractly meant or intended meaning, but a fullness of actually presented meaning' (*The Verbal Icon,* 1970, p. 231). The understanding of these meanings requires a capacity to read the text intelligently and sensitively and such understanding, as Eliot says, comes to the same thing as to enjoy it for the right reasons. The critic's business then is to scrutinize, explore, explicate and interpret the text to help the reader to understand and enjoy it. The centre of attention is the literary work which appears, as it were, to have an independent existence as an object—a mysterious product of language, imagination and the sense of beauty which are the exclusive gifts of man.

The tenets of this criticism are not wholly original. Behind the conception of a work of art and the special quality of the aesthetic experience or pleasure, besides Kant and Coleridge and the German philosophers like Schelling or Schiller as has been pointed out before, one can also discern the ideas of H. Bergson and B. Croce. Bergson rejects materialism, differentiates between corporeal memory and pure memory, between intellect and intuition and ascribes to intuition the province of life and enduring awareness and finally equates intuition with expression.

In his theory of the *elan vital* he presents a strong reaction to the scientific and mechanical conception of life by distinguishing between theoretical and practical activities of the spirit. He points out that aesthetics is the science of sensuous intuition which cannot be separated from expression thereby making art synthetic and organic, a manifold synthesis of form and content, of intuition and expression, of expression and beauty.

The conception of an organic form as a source of aesthetic pleasure can also be noticed among the Russian formalists who regard literature as a verbal artifact which keeps aloof from ideological concerns. It is the poem, not the poet, which is their main concern and in order to perceive the total form and its significance they aim at analyzing the distinguishing features like rhyme, rhythm, euphony, metre and imagery.

The hyperverbalism of poetic or literary language, a key concept of the New Critics, can also be linked with the theories of the French symbolists who stressed the purity of poetry by excluding sentimentality and rhetorical outbursts. In such poetry language functions indirectly by its suggestiveness, the evocative power of its symbols and not by direct statements. To achieve this goal the symbolist poets use language in such a manner as to go beyond the denotative meaning of words. The idea of a poem being a complex amalgamation of suggestiveness, verbal music and novelty of imagery requiring consummate subtlety on the part of the reader in responding to it can be seen in practice in the French technique of *explication de text.*

As the New Critics went about their business of close reading, analysis and interpretation of the text, they formulated different concepts of criticism or poetics. Thus we come to Richards' theory of irony and equilibrium, Blackmur's theory of language as gesture, Empson's theory of ambiguity, Brooks' theory of paradox as also of the heresy of paraphrase, Tate's theory of tension, Wimsatt's theory of verbal icon and M.C. Beardsley's theories of intentional and affective fallacies. The main direction of criticism came to be practical, that is the elucidation or 'demystification' and enjoyment of the text with the help of the analytical tools which pointed out the dense organic growth and wholeness of a discourse. The pervasive influence of this criticism for nearly three decades can be seen from books like *The Use of Poetry and the the Use of Criticism, Reading and Dis-*

crimination, Practical Criticism, Interpretation in Teaching, Understanding Poetry, Understanding Drama, Understanding Fiction, The Fields of Light and journals like *The Criterion, Scrutiny, The Kenyon Review, The Sewanee Review, The Hudson Review* and *Partisan Review*. These illustrate what Hayden White, in *In Search of Theory* designates as normal criticism, that is, criticism which believes that the critic can illuminate a text and assess its value by focusing his attention upon the text the objective existence of which is taken for granted. As numerous readers were initiated into this critical activity they 'scrutinized', 'explored' or 'explicated', 'compared' and 'contrasted' the texts and discovered for themselves new heights and depths, saw how the parts were organized into a whole, how congruence and coherence lay in the relationship of the texture and the structure and ultimately how the value of the work inhered in its density, complexity and totality. How worthy and exciting this business of criticism was in its heyday can be gathered from the remarks of A. Walton Litz: 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,/But to be young was very Heaven!' Wordsworth's younthful enthusiasm over the French Revolution could not have exceeded the joy of discovery felt by countless students when they first picked up *Understanding Poetry*. No one brought up on Brooks and Warren can ever forget the excitement of following the editors through their close analyses of individual poems, or even the greater excitement of using their models as a basis for new readings.' (*Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, 1979, p. 56).

By the end of the First World War the crisis in Western culture as has been pointed out before had necessitated a new voice in poetry, a new classicism under which poetry was required to be dry, austere and ironical to counter the excesses of nineteenth century romanticism. The Second World War produced an even greater crisis in Western culture which again seems to have necessitated a revaluation of literary values. This time it is a swing back to the romantic mode which can be seen in the surrealistic poetry of Dylan Thomas or in the confessional poetry of Lowell, Plath and Berryman, or in the new lyricism of Shapiro and Larkin or in the anarchism of Fertinghetti and Ginsberg. The fiction of Beckett, Musil, Sartre and Camus or the metafiction or surfiction of Nabokov, Pynchon, Barth, Barthleme,

Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute or the drama of Genet, Adamov, Albee or Ionesco belongs to the same category. The work of the Beat writers or the Angry Young Men—the exhibition of a counter culture or the production of a literature of exhaustion and entropy—is intrinsically a form of romantic agony that Praz had described with reference to some nineteenth century writers. Authors like R. Poggioli, T. Roszack, and M. Calinescu, R. Ellman and L. Fiedelson have dealt with the implications of modern and avant-garde tradition and culture in depth. After reading them one can understand why New Criticism and its objectives would have become unacceptable to the new generation who required a new poetics to justify their literature characterized by anomie, alienation, loneliness entropy and absurdity. A literature issuing from the vision of an absurd universe can be propped up by a criticism that by eschewing meaning also embraces the dimensions of absurdity.

New Criticism, therefore, can be said to have reached its peak in the period *entre deux guerres*. But even in its heyday there were voices of dissent. Yvor Winters, for example, did not accept the heresy of paraphrase; Ransom's theory of the relation between texture and structure, the former being a tissue of irrelevancies, was not acceptable to all the New Critics in as much as texture as the system of plurisigns or depth language—as pointed out by T.C. Pollock and P. Wheelwright respectively—was the key to the functioning of language as gesture as conceived by Blackmur. But the most conspicuous shortcoming of New Criticism was said to be its ahistoricism which meant a kind of romantic isolationism or an indirect kind of art for art's sake against which ironically the New Critics, themselves had revolted. In the actual practice of many of these critics ahistoricism is, however, not really at work. When Eliot, for example, writes about tradition, he evidently uses the word in a historical sense both in its diachronic and synchronic aspects. Lionel Trilling exhibits a serious concern with history to understand 'the cultural significance' of literature as can be seen from his essay 'The Sense of the Past'. The Southern critics in America in contemplating the relationship between literature and culture performed their critical task in a historical framework. In making comparisons, these critics made use of literary history and in books like *The Well-Wrought Urn, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, Literary*

Criticism: *A Short History, New Bearings in English Poetry, Revaluation, The Great Tradition* and *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson,* they wrote perceptive critical histories of literature. Their other claim that they sought to severe criticism from other extraneous considerations like biography, psychology, sociology and politics to keep its integrity intact to consider literature *qua* literature has also to be accepted with reservations. This doctrine implied that a writer lived in an ivory tower and had no connection with his environment, his race, milieu and moment. On the other hand, when Leavis criticized the technologico-Benthamite culture or when the New Critics revolted against positivism, they were very much aware of the social and cultural matrix of literature. In a critic like Burke, politics, history and psychology play an important role as does Freudianism in the criticism of Trilling, Read and Empson but the New Critics were wary of walking into the trap of positivistic sciences by depending on them exclusively and denying the privileged status that art had achieved since the time of Kant and Coleridge. These other subjects, e.g. psychology or sociology, were of peripheral help only and not of core significance as with, say, the Marxist critics like G. Hicks or C. Caudwell. Such wider contexts of New Criticism can be seen in the later editions of *Understanding Poetry or American literature*: *The Makers and the Making* or the *Pelican Guide to English Literature* in which historical, biographical and other extrinsic factors like the background of the age have been accepted for help in critical understanding to get out of the cell without windows or doors as Brooks points out in *A Shaping Joy*. But in all such cases the aesthetic consideration remains primary or central so that these extrinsic considerations do not usurp the whole attention of the reader. It is only when they develop a reductive tendency to regard paradox or tension or ambiguity as the only means of genuine critical understanding that the wider context vanishes and such assertions become as untenable as doctrines like intentional or affective fallacy all of which introduced an element of rigidity or monolithism into this criticism in its later stages. This type of criticism could be effective only in the study of shorter literary forms like the lyric or the short story and not in relation to longer forms like the drama or the novel. But when we look at *Understanding Drama* or *Understanding Fiction* or Brooks'

study of Faulkner or Leavis' criticism of fiction in *The Great Tradition* or *Dickens the Novelist* it can be seen that this method of close reading also works in the larger discourses. To say that such close reading can succeed only in intensive writings like those of Henry James or D.H. Lawrence is not quite true. If for Leavis the Jamesian novels become dramatic poems, in a neo-Aristotelian critic like R.S. Crane, this method of close textual study succeeds admirably as in the excellent study of the novel *Tom Jones.*

Some of these shortcomings have been sought to be overcome to give New Criticism a continuing relevance by Murray Krieger who continues to uphold very forcefully its main tradition. Krieger is a neo-apologist for poetry, of the worth and validity of the tenets of New Criticism generally. By the time he wrote his *Theory of Criticism* and *Poetic Presence and Illusion* he has come to accommodate the new viewpoints of the structuralists and post-structuralists to some extent and tried to be as liberal an interpreter as possible of the business of criticism by making meaning available from the total context of the discourse itself. Krieger points out that the poet brings with him his milieu showing that he is what his society and its history, his language and literary heritage have made of him. He subscribes to the concept of the uniqueness of the discourse, its autonomy and self-sufficiency in the tradition of Kant and Coleridge and in *The New Apologists for Poetry* strongly defends poetic experience as exclusive and primarily aesthetic. The creative uriter's imagination miraculously transforms ordinary language and produces an object that interposes itself between the mundane, and burdensome affairs of life and the reality that is an abyss of horror, terror and mystery and affords a glimpse into another order of reality in which contradictions are resolved into a contextual unity of formal beauty. Thus this miracle expects criticism to build a bridge to connect the insular study of literature with the mainland of man's social and historical existence. This bridge is erected by what Krieger calls 'thematics' which is related to Elisco Vivas's distinction between the 'subsistent', 'insistent' and 'existent', levels of a poem. The poet functions mainly at the insistent level whereas for the reader it is a movement among all the three. In course of his development Krieger has made his contextualism more broad-based in his essay, 'Both Sides Now',

in which he accepts both illusion and reality, or absence and presence, as constituting the poetic reality, the symbolic relationship between the signifier and the signified, the 'apparently contradictory combination of presence and the awareness of illusory emptiness or unsubstantiality of identity and distinctness, of self-enclosure and openness.' Thus the poetic structure in which reality is more important than illusion is simultaneously open and close, or both extramural and intra-mural in the functioning of the words. Krieger, by this approach, succeeds in compromising with the theory of absence of the structuralists and post-structuralists like Barthes and Derrida and believes criticism to be a richly meaningful and rewarding pursuit of the human mind, in contrast to the virtues of silence that have been advocated by the practitioners of what Hayden White calls absurdist criticism. The validity of this criticism can be further seen in Gerald Graff's sober and perceptive presentation of it in *Literature Against Itself*.

This validity, however, has been found to be wanting by at least four types of criticism since the middle of this century and these are 'existential', 'phenomenological', 'myth' or 'archetypal' and 'structuralist' with its more recent development, 'post-structuralist', or 'deconstruction'. But the brief tenures of these types of criticism—all theoretical chiefly—reveal their limitations. In some ways they are interconnected in spite of their differences.

Existentialism as a philosophical movement can be traced back to Kierkegaard with his concepts of sickness and dread but in the post-Second World War situation the influence of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Marcel and Jaspers became quite strong. The differences amongst them lie in the atheistic and Christian interpretation of existence or the existential view of life. They make a distinction between essence and existence, holding that existence precedes essence thereby questioning the kind of ontology that had become quite prominent in European idealistic philosophy especially from the time of Berkeley. Such a reaction to life was quite expected at the end of the Second World War with its soul-shattering vision of horror and violence. The Vietnam war added another dimension to that experience. Against such a background of catastrophe the conception and the vision emerging in an absurd universe could naturally result in the production of a literature that contemplated

such absurdity and reacted to life through nausea, despair and dread as in Beckett, Camus or Sartre. Heidegger and Sartre are the main spokesmen of this new vision of life. Such meaninglessness or chaos of life had been perceived by Nietzsche and the same meaninglessness or nothingness or a hole-in-being is expounded at length in terms of abstruse metaphysical arguments by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* and the concepts presented in it are at work in his literary theories presented in *The Psychology of Imagination, What is Literature?* and *Situations.*

Existentialist criticism has generally been confined to abstruse philosophical disquisitions on the nature of literature and except for debatable discussions about the psychology of the literary imagination, does not seem to have left much lasting effect on the practice of criticism as such except for the vogue of terms like angst, absurdity, nothingness, intentionality, *en-soi, pour-soi,* freedom and choice condition. It has only helped to strengthen a mood of nihilism.

On the other hand, when we come to Heidegger's assertion that existential analysis can only be attempted through phenomenological method, the search for being behind appearance, or the intentionality behind all consciousness, we come to the criticism of consciousness—the revelation of the hidden cogito in consciousness as practised by Georges Poulet and other critics of the Geneva school. Criticism once more goes back to the poet or his mind as was the vogue in the romantic era.

If Husserl is the founder of phenomenology, its active propagators in the realm of criticism are Merleau-Ponty in France and Georges Poulet in the United States. It is Poulet's migration to the United States and his association with J. Hillis Miller that brought phenomenological criticism or the criticism of consciousness into prominence there and it is seen in its theoretical aspect most prominently in Poulet's *Studies in Human Time* and *The Interior Distance.* Husserl claims that the ultimate source of all rational statements is to perceive that prime consciousness which presents the given immediately. The fundamental rule in the phenomenological method is to get at the things themselves as they are presented to our consciousness. The phenomenon has to be accepted as it is and the method is to catch hold of the object as it is presented to our consciousness and elucidate it. But in grasping the object the phenomenologist tries to discover

its *eidos* or essence by a suspension of all judgment or *epoche* so that pure consciousness is attained through intentionality. Such a consciousness is an insulation against all accidental, individual and contingent elements which are bracketed when it emerges. It is this pure intentional consciousness whose object is *eidos*. Poulet claims that he is concerned with the Cartesian cogito and as he describes the cogito in his works it appears that although he might have begun with the cogito, as his thoughts develop his cogito becomes the Husserlian pure intentional consciousness or living voice in course of his search within himself for the presence of a transcendent space in consciousness one that is not filled with the presence of objects. As Poulet says, 'There is no human activity possible except it proceed forth from a given space in which that activity is born, develops and takes form. For the thoughts of man as for the works of God, there is only one way of arriving at existence: it is to find, ready to receive them, a vacant interior milieu, a spiritual place...' (*The Interior Distance,* p. 76). It is with the help of this consciousness that the creative process can be comprehended. The critic's business is to seize that consciousness of the artist and communicate its working to the reader. The critic opens himself out to the artist by making himself transparent as it were by an act of self-dis possession. Then the cogito of the author takes hold of the critic and a perfect rapport is established between them. This aspiration to base criticism on the revelation of the pure consciousness which Poulet describes as the other side of the moon is extraordinarily romantic, reminiscent of the theories of pure poetry like Abbe Bremond's. Our consciousness, if Poulet's interpretation is correct, is beyond language and beyond reason. Language mediates between this consciousness and our everyday affairs and so can only interrupt it imperfectly by means of signs which become 'differance' in Derrida's sense of both 'differ' and 'defer'. Books or texts will not lead to this consciousness because it is a language without communication. Thus the critics of consciousness exhibit a concern with the problematic nature of the literary artifact as an object because literature for them is a form of consciousness to know which the complete *ouevre* of the author is to be taken into account. Poulet's 'Phenomenology of Reading', therefore goes beyond the conception of formalism which was central to New Criticism. In listening to the voice of the

author through his works these critics take the works as a self-contained human expression and thereby indirectly accept an extended form of autonomy which they discard overtly. The single voice dispenses with genres that might have been practised by the author but when these critics seek to discover patterns of themes in the voice, it is again a tacit acceptance of formalism. Thus they seem to be an inconsistent in their approaches which have been variously described as 'existential', 'genetic', 'thematic' and 'ontological'. Moreover when they refuse to evalute literature as good or bad the usefulness of such criticism becomes doubtful. From this viewpoint, it resembles myth criticism and structuralist criticism.

Dissatisfaction with New Criticism is also voiced by Northrop Frye who regards this criticism as exhibiting 'a limited historical context and an ironic provincialism.' He formulated a theory of myth to relate literature to our primordial consciousness as Jung had done or as Poulet was trying to do. If Krieger formulates a transcendental concept of contextuality which incarnates a complex of values, beliefs, ideas and knowledge in an extended kind of organism, Frye formulates a theory of myth which, while being related to Spengler, Frazer, Malinowski, Jung, Cassirer, Langer and others, advocates of a symbolic theory of language. It is an attempt to have a unified theory of knowledge the aim of which is to discover the universality of literary discourse like the 'hero' of Lord Raglan. Frye, therefore, like Yeats in *A Vision*, creates a vast design of human creative powers to separate the literary discourse from meanings that are associated with non-aesthetic functions like religion, social action or political change. To him myth is a universal, integral element of literature. Through this conceptual framework or scheme he induced a survey of literary works and genres to reveal interconnecting principles turning the discourse into an order of words conceived by the inmagination. Frye is not concerned like the New Critics with the analysis of discrete works but with the discovery of a grand design that incorporates romantic, comic, tragic and ironic modes. Accordingly, the critical act includes commentary and interpretation but excludes judgment. He uses myth as the integrative element by distinguishing allegorical knowledge from archetypal knowledge which is akin to Colridge's distinction between allegory and symbol. Literature, then, is a kind of myth-making and

it provides man, in the absence of the integrating and healing power of religion, and in a world that is disjointed and fragmented or is 'a panorama of futility and anarchy' as Eliot said, with a sheet anchor that he can hold on to. In *The Critical Path* Frye says that man lives in two worlds—one, of nature or his objective environment and the other, of his imagination, of desire, hope, belief, fantasy—the stuff of literature—and for that man uses metaphorical or poetic language—that language being mythical, not logical. Through it he explores a different realm, the being or as Mircea Eliade puts it, 'The function of myth is to reveal models and, in so doing, to give a meaning to the world and human life. It is through myth that the ideas of reality, value and transcendence slowly dawn. Through myth, the world can be apprehended as a perfectly articulated, intelligible and significant Cosmos' (*Myth and Reality*, p. 145).

The fragmented mind of modern man has been the subject of discussion by philosophers, anthropologists and psychologists; and literature has been accepted especially in the wake of Bergson, Croce, Cassirer and Langer as a mode of recovering a unified consciousness and Frye seeks a similar awareness through the mythic imagination in the *Anatomy of Criticism* in which he makes use of the cycles of seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter—to correspond to literary forms like comedy, romance, tragedy and satire. Nature which had been attenuated by science and positivism is thus revived as a live agent linking the past and the present through literature. In *The Critical Path*, he offers a serious discussion on the role of literature in our age showing how myths of concern which differ from myths of freedom are related to criticism and the critic has to establish a link between present culture with its past heritage. Literature is not by itself a myth of concern but it presents the language of concern, the total range of imaginative possibilities, the encyclopaedic vision of man's life and fate and as such myths in literature are disinterested and a source of perennial joy. Although Frye differs with the New Critics and discards evaluation, myth as he conceives it is itself a mode of evaluation. When Frye says that his book *Anatomy of Criticism* (p. 18) is an annotation on Eliot's thesis that the existing monuments of literature are not the sundry collection of the writings of individuals but that they form an ideal order, he subscribes to a fundamental tenet of the New

Critics, especially that of Eliot, but his criticism, inspite of all its range and depth, becomes reductive and its utility is circumscribed by the scheme or framework.

If anthropology helped Frye with this unified vision it provided Levi-Strauss with another vision of unity through the conception of a system of structures. His attempt to formulate a unified theory of 'human sciences' introduces a paradox in that a 'scientific' approach is made to the humanities which would ordinarily be an anathema to Frye. The quest of Structuralism is to have 'a unified field theory' as Hartman suggests. It has been perhaps the most formidable challenge to traditional criticism as well as to New Criticism. Levi-Strauss went to Saussurean linguistics to discover kinship patterns in anthropology. Saussure thought that a scentific study of language would be possible only if some delimitation could be applied to the infinite range of the productive possibilities in a language and so he distinguished between synchronic and diachronic approaches to language introducing the conception of *langue* and *parole* i.e., language as a total system and the individual speech phenomenon which for Noam Chomsky become competance and performance. A descriptive analysis of language leads to the sign which has two components, the signifier and the signified, which are united by associative bonds in our brain but have no connection with the real world or life, the relationship being wholly arbitrary. So a sign has no substantive meaning, it being only a form. The sign obtains its meaning through the linguistic system of which it forms a part and so in any language there are only differences without positive terms.

Structural poetics is the outcome of structural linguistics which had studied language to discover in it a system of signs—semiology or semiotics—and such prominent figures as Roman Jakobson, Tzvetan Todorov, Noam Chomsky and Jean Piaget have surely enlarged our understanding of the nature of language and the manner of its working. It is, however, from France that the maximum contribution to structural poetics has emerged in the works of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and their influence has spread far and wide as is evident from the number of books and periodicals that have been devoted to the subject or from the contribution of eminent Anglo-American critics like Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, Jonathan Culler, E. Donato, Robert Scholes

and Stanley Fish who have been engaged in wide ranging and often bitter controversies with critics like Rene Wellek, W.H. Pritchard, M.H. Abrams, W.C. Booth, H.D. Hirsch, Gerald Graff and Murray Krieger who are now regarded as traditionalists. In course of these developments, the 'velocities of change' have been overpowering and we have passed from structuralism to post-structuralism finally arriving at a scene that, to use Hartman's phrase can be described as 'criticism in the wilderness'. Further implications of this matter can be seen in A. Kazin's 'Whatever Happened to Criticism?' (*Commentary,* February, 1970) and G. Graff's 'Who Killed Criticism?' (*American Scholar,* Summer 1980). To be capable of responding to this scene one has to know some of the main ideas or tenets of structuralism and post-structuralism. We may begin with Roland Barthes. Barthes shows us how language is a system of relations, propounding in the process his theory of semiology or semiotics which exhibits different phases of development from structuralism to post-structuralism. According to him literary language is the domain of *ecrivain,* not *ecrivant,* a distinction reminiscent of the distinction between scientific and literary uses of language made by the New Crtics. According to the latter use the text or discourse is charged with meanings that vary from the literal to the symbolic and archetypal revealing in the autonomous world of the text heights and depths or what Harry Levin describes as *O Altitudo* and *de profundis* in his interpretation of a single scene from *King Lear.* Such examples can also be cited from the highly perceptive and sensitive studies of Shakespeare by L.C. Knights in his *Some Shakespearean Themes* or Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire* or Maynard Mack in his study of *Hamlet* or Ian Watt in his study of the first paragraph of *The Ambassadors.* These critics, who are not structuralists, can produce such acute and rich interpretations on the basis of a poetics that believes in the capacity of language to reveal hidden truths about human life. In *The Meaning and Truth in the Arts,* J. Hospers, has shown that there is a truth value in the arts for which reason it has continued to be a central human activity. On the other hand when we take up the study of Baudelaire's 'Les Chats' by Jakobson and Levi-Strauss we encounter a very different set of assumptions about meaning and truth in literature with which they are not concerned. Their quests are only formal relationships in the text.

Structuralism aimed at systematizing the variants in the several ways of reading a text by developing a synchronic model from among all such readings and confining its attention to the relation among the micro units of the discourse, by relating the infrastructure to the suprastructure, the parole to the langue. As Chomsky says, 'If speakers can employ an ability in apprehending the structure of any sentence in the infinite set of sentences of a language without information about settings and without significant variation from speaker to speaker, then that ability is properly the subject matter of a synchronic theory in linguistics.' (Foder and Katz, *The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, p. 52).

In discovering the unified system by relating Chomsky's surface and deep structures to one another, criticism which is a discourse upon discourse becomes a metalanguage as the critic in examining the structural relationship in the discourse tries to discover the intent of the author and his achievement. This relationship between the latent and the manifest contents is exhibited through the structural relationships and the critic's business is to examine and present these relationships and thus structuralism becomes an operational technique, a methodology and criticism becomes a commentary.

When we came to the later Barthes in *S/Z*, we notice a considerable shift in his position as he discards the idea of a model text from among the several texts that are built up in the process of analysis and interpretation and moves in the direction of the self reflexive discourse that Derrida has defined. He rejects the exclusive nature of the literary text bringing all of it under the generic term *ecriture*, (for Lacan, *ecrit*). The privileged status of literary discourse which the critics in the Kant-Coleridge tradition had accorded to it is thus 'devalorized' and the ontology of a literary work is found to be a chimera by the structuralists for whom the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and as such the sign does not refer to anything real and it achieves meaning diacritically. And so 'language is a form and not a substance' without the plenitude of presence that the post-Kantian critics had thought of. The text can be peeled off like an onion to reveal at the end that there is nothing left except perhaps tears as was found by Peer Gynt. As such all that the critic can do is to look at the play of the signifiers and arrange

them into a model or structure of relationships as Barthes does with Racine's *Phedre*. He says, 'the goal of all structuralist activity, whether reflexive or poetic, is to reconstruct an "object" in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning (the "functions") of the object.' And in building this model the critic only produces a *simulacrum* of the object akin to Plato's conception of art as an imitation of the unreal. This is achieved by the technique of decomposition or deconstruction and then reconstruction and so criticism becomes an *activity* or *play* also. Thus the critic makes something new by such activity and so criticism also becomes a creative activity although confined to the simulacrum only. But here by making use of his intellect the critic can produce something that has an anthropological value 'in that it is man himself, his history, his situation, his freedom and the very resistance which nature offers to his mind.' Such a broad spectrum hypothesis has manifold implications and is a challenge to one of the principal tenets of New Criticism regarding the autonomous nature of a literary work as a structure of meanings and it is not surprising that critics who have regarded New Criticism as a 'poetics of failure' or who found it to have reached 'a point of exhaustion' should have evinced so much interest in the new poetics which has been given added prominence by Derrida and his followers. Derrida goes to the extreme of this approach to literature as void by expanding the concept of *erasure* and *mise-en-abyme* in his examination and reappraisal of the concept of presence or centre in Western metaphysics through meaning as embedded in language. He tries to show in his writings which are generally extremely abstruse and difficult that the copula 'to be' which signifies being or presence is actually a supplement (as in a distionary or a telephone directory) or an attempt to compensate for a primordial nonpresence but that supplement is an addition only. It is of the exterior and its business is to demystify the conception of presence, that is to say, this conception of presence has all along been the pursuit of a great illusion, a point of view that can be linked with the ideas of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre. Heidegger tells us that human existence has no ground as it originates from the abyss of nothingness. As such the very being of human existence is an anticipation of nothingness through death: so nothingness is being without being. For Nietzsche human existence is an illusion and the universe is as much

an illusion as God is. And to Sartre being means that it only exists, it does not have being or essence nor has it acquired being as there is no ground for being. So man who is being-in-itself consists in nothingness and so he is a useless passion.

It is this conception of reality a emptiness or void that can be perceived in the concept of *mise-en abyme* of Derrida. Our very idea of reality is structured by our language and that linguistic discourse, so far as meaning is concerned, appears to be a bottomless hole. The discourse when analysed reveals only absences. The reader has to regard it perhaps as an illustration of system engineering in which the parts are fitted to one another, here the signifiers, to reveal *how* the system works and *not what* it says or how valuable it is. The critic's business is to deconstruct the structure and exhibit the interrelationships by understanding the functioning of the signs and producing valid models of 'input-process-output or intake' as in system engineering. Deconstruction and reconstruction then in the absence of any concern with meaning and value or truth, become akin to the playing of word games. To look at the practice of this criticism in Barthes or Derrida is to be seized of only differences as our attention shifts from the abstract model within the text to the signifying surface of the text, that is from the signified to the signifiers. From the objectivity of the text as accepted by the New Critics, the shift of attention is towards a self-reflexive model of the text that is governed by its own conditions. And as we have to concern ourselves with the absence or blanks, the perception of the literary process becomes a reification or at best a mythification of that absence. Any quest for meaning or truth in a discourse would, therefore, amount to a kind of madness as the very primacy of the linguistic model prepared by the critic would expose a structure of uncertainty at the very root of meaning. This turns literature to only semiotics, a system of signs in which being is not in its content or message or meaning but in the system itself. As Barthes says it is by acknowledging itself as no more than a language or metalanguage that criticism can be both subjective and objective, historical as well as existential. This game with words can also be compared, as in Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, with the attempt of the archaeologist to uncover a site by turning up different layers of the earth's surface to find only 'traces' and no final object

buried underneath because there is no underneath, or bottom. The critic discovers only the traces of the accretions of grafts in the form of interpretations or readings that have buried the text and so as J.V. Harari observes rightly, 'There is no present text in general and there is not even a past present text, a text which is past as having been present. The text is not thinkable in an originary or modified form of presence.' (*Textual Strategies,* p. 37). The text is replete only with differences and traces of traces. In this enactment of the text, the sign becomes a field for the free play of signifiers as can be seen from Derrida's seminal essay, 'Structure, Sign and Play' in which he points out that as there is no origin or centre outside the discourse for establishing boundaries for the play of linguistic signifiers, each sign in itself is not the thing or presence that offers itself to interpretation but the interpretation of other signs: a centre diminishes the structurality of the structure by positing an objective reality. This account of Derrida takes us back to Frye or the New Critics for whom a centre is a necessity in order to prevent criticism—whether archetypal or contextual—from becoming a will-o-the-wisp or an endless labyrinth without an outlet. Poulet extricates himself from this prison house of language by the thread of Ariadne. But for Derrida the presence or the centre must be banished from the critic's purview as he tries to cope with the endless free play of the signifiers and experiences what Barthes calls *jouissance* or Derrida describes as *errance joyeuse.* Criticism then resembles stochastic or aleatory devices for decoding messages which proceeding from the mind of the author are encoded in the signifiers which are then decoded and then recoded into supersigns as criticism and fed back to the self-reflexive system because the text as a linguistic system cannot be subverted by criticism which is also a linguistic construct or another *parole.* The earlier conception of Barthes of criticism as metalanguage now vanishes into the post-structural abyss and literary criticism emerges chiefly as text-processing, the cue being taken from the philosophical assumptions of modern science and mathematics including mathematical logic. If *jouissance* is to be available from the text under such conditions one has perhaps to think of the interpretation of reality as advanced by H.R. Pagel in *The Cosmic Code* in which he states the paradox that nothingness contains all being and not from what John Barth describes

in *Gravity's Rainbow* as 'the insanely endlessly diddling play of a chemist whose molecules are words.'

The post-modern theories of criticism are actually theories of language and logic rather than literature and indicate the pervasive concern of twentieth century philosophy with the nature of language in course of which the nature of logic and its relation to mathematics were examined by authors like Frege, Husserl, Whitehead, Russell and the early Wittgenstein for whom language was primarily logical in character. The empiricists and rationalists have held that signs represent ideas which can stand in semantic contrast or contradiction to other ideas without depending upon the contrasts of communication or to external references. From mediaeval times when the educational system was based on the study of the trivium comprising grammar, logic and rhetoric, philosophers have tried to understand and explain the nature of language and till the present century the thrust has been in the direction of the primary importance or precedence of logic over rhetoric. The relation of logic to rhetoric is behind the use and the interpretation of signs and in studying it philosophers of language have tried to examine their relative priority, to ascertain the nature of ideas, the relation of ideas to time and space, concepts like *sinn* (Frege) and *bedetung* (Husserl), and the controversy has neither subsided nor is it likely to. In this welter of theories, Derrida and his followers seem to have accorded the rhetorical aspect of meaning greater significance than the logical. The stance of Derrida shows that the role of utterances in actual discourse points towards meaning; and so logic is dependent upon or derivative from rhetorical considerations. Deconstruction, therefore, helps us to reject any idea of a transcendental signified or transcendental phenomenology. Whatever be the philosophical worth of such views, in so far as literary criticism is concerned their value has to be regarded with extreme reservations because of the continuing controversy over the claim of scientific discourse itself as Thomas Kuhn has shown in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* arguing that scientific theories are products of the conventions or paradigms of scientific communities and do not point up to any abstract criterion of truth. This can be joined with the controversy over the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions.

These theories of criticism, therefore, can presently be interpreted as a part of the ethos of nihilism and absurdity. Nietzsche banished God from the universe and transvalued the main course of Western metaphysics based upon reason. This is tantamount to a rejection of the history of Western cultural life which through art and literature has been man's quest for truth in diverse ways. Charles Morris said long ago that human culture was 'a web of sign-sustained and sign-sustaining activities, and an aesthetic sign was, therefore, an iconic sign whose designation was a value.' One could also like to refer to R. Carnap and De Witt Parker in this context to contract their views with those of the post-modern critics to note the primacy of the void after the centre has been removed. To contemplate this nihilistic approach despite all the arguments to the contrary—is often mind-boggling reminiscent of the dilemma of the hero in *The Princess Cassamassima* to resolve which he blows himself up. Critics like Foucault, a psychoanalyst, and Althusser, a Marxist, who visualize an undifferentiated culture tend to confuse economic activity with the intellectual. At the level of the mind qualitative differences cannot be erased and so they are likely to persist in the products of the mind.

This very brief and cursory account of the developments in criticism given above will show that to react against New Criticism or modern criticism which relied on practice, the post-modern developments have been chiefly theoretical, often of a highly abstruse kind because of their epistemological or ontological concern. When Wellek and Warren brought out their *Theory of Literature* in 1956 New Criticism was in a stage of decline and since then we have had the works of Gadamer, Habermas, Ingarden, Iser, Wienford, Lotman, Dillon, Olsen, Riffaterre, Rosenblatt, Gorben, Schmidt and others dealing with the further developments in the field of critical theory, semiotic, structuralist, hermeneutic, phenomenological, psychoanalytical, post-structuralist or deconstruction and Marxist. Theories have been classified by Abrams as mimetic, expressive, pragmatic and objective which often overflow into one another and take two directions those that deal with the nature of literature and the others with its process. In Clive Bell, Roger Fry, Croce, Bergson, Heidegger, Husserl, Richards, Bloom, Sartre, Frye, Derrida, it is the nature of literature or art, or the being of

the discourse that is dealt with primarily and such criticism whether accepting or rejecting the importance of meaning—for Bloom 'meaning' is equivalent to 'moaning' and it is not clear why this is so unless it means a failure of intelligence to grasp the best among probable meanings—deals with the ultimate value and significance of literature in relation to human existence. Such criticism still looks at the discourse, as a reality for the time being at least, a fiction, an 'as if' or as 'a local habitation and a name' given to nothingness: that habitation and name imply a form and pattern. A discourse can be regarded as the fictiveness of fiction as pointed out by Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending* which is similar to Stevens's idea of supreme fiction but it is a fiction that explores life and reality in different guises all the same. That is why it is still being argued that this conception of the fictiveness of fiction is valid in the context of the other fine arts or even in a linguistic artifact. One seldom studies literature for nursing mere illusions by escaping from reality.

The other approach concentrates on the discourse as a process applying the procedures or the inductive methods of empiricism like observation and experiment and verification, to build operational models for criticism. And so we have the discourse as a methodological field for the application of new textual strategies like 'decidability' 'indeterminacy' 'delimitability' 'informativity' among others to render the description as scientific or objective as possible. These concepts are based on the modern developments in science, logic and mathematics. They are often too abstract and difficult and beyond the comprehension of an average graduate student or any teacher. The concept of 'decidability', for example, would elude any reader who is not thoroughly conversant with the mathematical theories of Gödel. Likewise 'informativity' and 'indeterminacy' would require sufficient knowledge of modern information theories and the physics of Heisenberg respectively. Whether the polyfunctionality of the text yields up all its secrets to the new techniques or not, this very abstract and scientific approach to a discourse—a human discourse in which the author as a man speaks to other men— intensifies the process of dehumanization which was noticed by Ortega Y. Gasset long ago and stressed of late by Wylie Sypher in *The Loss of Self in Modern Literature and Art*. Such loss is inevitable in a technological age in which language is constantly being denuded

of its purity and vitality by process like appreciation, degeneration, specialization and generalization and this has been discussed by critics like Owen Barfield, Donald Davie, Allen Tate and J.C. Ransom from different angles. So when the latest postmodern theoreticians invoke the concepts of advanced logic, mathematics or even cybernetics in the field of literary criticism to make it an exact science. One feels that from here it is not too great a distance to computerize poetry or the computerization of literary criticism itself. Unfortunately a computer does not possess the subtle and complex psychological and cultural developments of human beings. The binary model of Saussurean linguistics, therefore, appears as a step in the path of criticism to climb down into the darkness of the abyss that Frank Lentricchia has noted in *After the New Criticism.* If criticism becomes an obfuscation, instead of an illumination, its communicative function is undermined and mystification overpowers the discourse as can be seen in the pages of *Oxford Literary Review, Diacritics, Georgia Review, Critical Quarterly, New Literary History, Sub-stance, Glyph* and *Poetics.* It is not surprising, therefore, to note J. Culler's perplexity in the face of his earlier enthusiastic advocacy of structuralist theories in his recent book, *On Deconstruction* in which he characterizes the current critical scene as a Bartholomew Fair and reminds one of I.A. Richards' observation more than half a century ago: 'A few conjectures, a supply of admonitions, many acute isolated observations, some brilliant guesses, much oratory and applied poetry, inexhaustible confusion, a sufficiency of dogma, no small stock of prejudices, whimsies and crochets, a profusion of mysticism, a little genuine speculation, sundry stray inspirations, pregnant hints and random *apercus*: of such as these, it may be said without exaggeration is extant critical theory composed.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 6). A most perceptive account of deconstruction criticism and its value is to be found in Christopher Norris's *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice.*

All this excessive preoccupation with literary theory during the past three decades has, however, led some philosophers to question the very relevance of theory to literary criticism. Thus Morris Weitz in *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* and *Problems in Aesthetics,* tells us that it is the business of poetics to *describe, interpret, explain* and *evaluate* and not pro-

pound a theory, since a theory in poetics is logically impossible. Weitz examines the criticism of *Hamlet* offered by Bradley, Wilson, Campbell, Stoll, Schucking, Fergusson, Alexander, Harrison, Charlton and Tillyard and points out that each of these critics can answer the question, 'Why is, or what makes *Hamlet* or Hamlet tragic?' but not what is the nature or tragedy? Each of these critics regards his answer as a true statement about *a* or *the* tragic property. The very fact that there is so much disagreement among these critics on the nature of tragedy seriously calls into question the possibility of arriving at a complete or irrefutable theory of tragedy. The critics seize hold of some common element only but cannot seize hold of a set of necessary and sufficient properties because a true theory is logical, not factual. Any attempt to formulate a theory of tragedy involves a statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions of the concept and it becomes a violation of the logic of the concept. Joseph Margolis in *The Language of Art and Art Criticism* holds a similar view as does M.H. Abrams 'What's the Use of Theorizing about the Arts?' in *In Search of Literary Theory*. It is true that theoretical criticism has clarified many concepts and advanced our knowledge beyond the point that prevailed when Richards made his observations but the fact remains that a conceptual framework that will answer all the questions about the nature and function of literature and can be subjected to verification and repetition as in science has not been possible till now presumably as Wittgenstein pointed out in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics,* 'What belongs to a language game is a whole culture' and a factual description of the latter on a universal and permanent basis is very unlikely. A more recent theory, pointed out by Krieger in his *Theory of Criticism* 'leads away from the unique powers of literature as an art' (p. xii). In that case theory becomes a disservice to the reader and much of recent critical theory, therefore, can be regarded as 'anaesthetic' using the term of F.C. Crews.

The reaction to the theories of existentialism, phenomenalism, myth and archetype, structuralism and post-structuralism may be judged by two statements, one by Alton Litz which has been cited in the context of the usefulness of the analytical tools and methods of New Criticism generating new perceptions from relevant and rigorous reading of the text. This was precisely

what was done by Leavis, Blackmur, Brooks or Knights. These critics tried to bring out the 'full performance of the text' accepting the relationship of the signifier to the signified as one of presence or plenitude. From this point of view Leavis's essay on the relationship between philosophy and criticism included in this anthology is quite significant. Philosophy can help the reader to a certain extent to understand the deeper shades of meaning in a text but it cannot be a substitute for literary criticism. This can be noticed when in the context of the strong emphasis on philosophy that we find in recent theoretical criticism, we come across the doubt expressed by E. Donato—because of the wide and serious differences among the modern theorists of structuralism—asking himself 'whether the concept of structuralism has any validity and whether such a thing as structuralism ever existed?' (*Sub-stance,* 7, 1973). The situation as it obtained at the end of the 70's can be seen from the articles published under the general title, 'The Profession of Letters' in *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 10, 1982, to which eminent American and British scholars have contributed. The general impression offered by George Watson can be quoted here: 'The long, solemn imposture of what passes for "modern literary theory" may now be reaching its point of turn. I hope it is. Its more recent pronouncements, certainly, have a pale, autumnal air, as of a vogue whose heyday is acknowledged to have passed. Its following is no longer exactly young: its voice is no longer as shrill or as ardent as it was. All that leaves something like a silence to be filled. . . .' A moderate tone is also audible in Hartman's article 'How Creative Should Literary Criticism Be?' in *The New York Times Book Review* of April 5, 1981.

This is quite understandable if we look at the fact that the structuralist and post-structuralist critics, while postulating the theory that language is incapable of meaning, are themselves engaged in this ceaseless production of texts or discourses which are surely meant for communicating some meaning instead of lapsing into silence which, as Ihab Hassan has shown in *Paracriticism,* ought to be the logical outcome. That only means that the nexus between the signifier and the signified, is inseparable in man's life on this planet. It is such an assumption that Ransom had in his argument about the ontology of a poem in which the signifiers are charged with meanings that human beings recog-

nize and use for the communication of their most valuable experiences of life. It is also pertinent to state that the whole history of human civilization is contained in its literary history which, if meaningless, would not have been there. It is for this reason that the later Wittgenstein advises us to 'look and see' whether a theory of language works and becomes meaningful in actual life. The history of literature shows that it does.

As one looks at the growth and development of post-modern criticism one can perceive a continuity of the main concepts of the New Criticism in that the post-modern critics, inspite of their vehement denial are now accepting that very autonomy and objectivity of a literary artifact and then striving to go 'beyond' it by searching for a more comprehensive or fluid meaning or abstract conception of form. The New Critics made use of rhetorical devices in their textual analysis to arrive at meaning. The revelation of tropes like metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche or imagery and irony as pervasive elements in a discourse by the post-modern critics points to the continuity of that tropological or rhetorical tradition with subtler insights and refinements while primarily depending on close reading and rigorous analysis as can be seen in J.H. Miller's recent book, *Fiction and Repetition*. While apparently rejecting a discourse as a structure of meanings in favour of relationships, these critics actually show their concern with larger dimension of meaning by revealing the usefulness of criticism as praxis that for example, distinguishes between highbrow or elitist and mass culture and opts for newer kinds of knowledge that are available from disciplines like psychology, sociology, or economics or politics. As such there is a larger concern with knowledge as an instrument of change for a greater concern with humanity in the modern world in the wake of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud. From that point of view a Walter Benjamin or an Antonio Gramsci or a Herbert Marcuse can be relevant for us and it is interesting to see that even while subscribing to praxis, Marcuse upholds the autonomy of art in *The Aesthetic Dimension*. In other words the concern for the so-called 'human sciences' is an attempt to explore the possibility of continuity in an age of discontinuity and hence the strategy to eliminate the referential function of literature that it is not about reality but about itself disappears in actual practice, but at the same time, the new rigorous discipline

of analysis in deconstruction and reconstruction opens up before us new possibilities of order or ideas of order in a world that appears to be without order. It is only when there is a strident assertion in some quarters in spite of those implications, that meaning is not possible that this criticism becomes self-contradictory and defeats the very purpose of criticism as a humanistic and humane activity and rancorous politics befouls the academic atmosphere by recourse to critical dogma.

Against this background it is not theoretical but sound practical criticism—the *analysis* or *description, interpretation, explanation* and *evaluation* of the text—that still seems to be the most acceptable business of literary criticism for the innumerable students who study literature in our country or the teachers who teach them. In this humanistic endeavour criticism becomes both a hermeneutic and heuristic activity. From that point of view criticism develops, sharpens and enriches critical understanding not by 'knowledge that' which is theory but 'knowledge how' as termed by Gilbert Ryle in *The Concept of the Mind*. This has been the concern of practical criticism from the time of the New Critics.

The knowledge gained from literature through close analysis of the texts by 'exploration' or 'scrutiny' or 'explication' is ultimately an exploration and affirmation of *life* 'at the remove of form and meaning' as Blackmur says, as revealed in the works of Shakespeare or Donne, or Milton, or Tolstoy or Dostoevsky or Bellow or Mann or Hesse. This exploration can reveal man's intense and valuable experiences, his joy and sorrow, love and hate, hope and despair, dream and failure, and in the process make us intimately acquainted with 'the nature and destiny of man,' to use the words of Reinhold Niebuhr. The most striking example of the capacity of literature to explore human life emerges from tragedy, the interpretation of which is perhaps the most powerful challenge to the critic's intellectual, emotional and moral capacity. It is a vision of life that encompasses the whole universe through verbal structures and can be realized as much through the study of *Oedipus Rex* or *King Lear* or *Crime and Punishment* as through a single poem like 'To His Coy Mistress' or 'The Sick Rose', or 'A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal' or 'Ode to a Nightingale' or 'In Time of the Breaking of Nations', or The Wasteland' or the tenth 'Duino Elegy'.

If criticism, instead of being concerned with man's life and fate in this universe as revealed in the verbal artifacts which are the products of the creative imagination, becomes preoccupied with arguments 'pro' and 'contra' about the latest literary fads introduced somewhere in the world, be it Paris or Geneva, or Bonn, then the common reader that Dr. Johnson or Virginia Woolf thought of is hardly benefited, and the blandishments of Hartman's 'Whore of Babylon' entice him. The Anglo-American tradition in criticism from the Renaissance to the present day has built up a tradition based chiefly on ampirical canons and commonsense. It does not fit in well with the recent continental theories and practices which have been the principal cause of the present confusion. The evidence for it can be seen in R. Scholes's attempt to use the structuralist theory in the criticism of a poem, 'Elegy' by W.S. Merwin which consists of one line only—'Who should I show it to?' This criticism has been discussed with devastating irony by E.D. Hirsch in *The Sewanee Review* of Summer 1983. Hirsch writes: 'Scholes goes on for three pages about this trifle, including such nonsense as: 'To make a poem of this text the reader must not only know English, he must know a poetic code as well: the code of the funeral elegy as practiced in English from the Renaissance to the present time.' While I do not deny the importance of allusion and even of 'intertextuality', nevertheless to suggest that a knowledge of the elegiac tradition ('the code of funeral elegy') will in any way make this trifle more of a poem is absurd.' The same kind of pitfall in the theory of the 'readerly text' which banishes the author has been detected by Helen Gardner in Stanley Fish's interpretation of Herbert's 'The Flower' and Donne's 'Deaths Duell' in her recent book, *In Defense of the Imagination.* In *Validity in Interpretation,* E.D. Hirsch correctly perceives that 'the discipline of interpretation is the foundation of all valid criticism.' The lack of such discipline makes the criticism of Scholes and Fish look ridiculous. If New Criticism in its later phase became ossified by terms like ambiguity, paradox, tension, texture, structure etc. the structural and post-structural criticism has exhibited similar trends with terms like ecriture, differance, decentring, double bind, deconstruction, aporia, *mise-en-abyme* etc.

The understanding and appreciation of man's fate is a spiritual and humane activity and as such it has axiological connotations which can start on the most elementary level and rise to the most complex with increasing maturity of the mind and refinement of the sensibility. The influence of a serious study of literature with appropriate discriminating power is profound but indirect involving as it does our entire being in the process. A theory of value from this point of view becomes necessary to adumbrate because it is possible to respond to a literary work or discourse in terms of aesthetic, moral and spiritual values and critical practices, both past and present, furnish us with sufficient evidence for it. Any theory of value in literature involves an interaction between the author, the text and the critic or reader and could be subject to the analysis, awareness, assessment, alteration and finally an affirmation of life in a moral and spiritual sense. But that affirmation or 'courage to be' as Tillich would have it, need not be an end activity on the basis of any narrow doctrine or dogma. The act of reading a text by a sensitive and well-informed reader produces a concurrent activity of evaluation and judgment as can be seen from the criticism of Eliot, Leavis, Richards, Brooks, Empson, Wimsatt, Trilling, Blackmud or Krieger. It is here that analysis becomes a highly discerning and perceptive act of synthesis of both reason and imagination as has been pointed out by R.L. Brett in *Reason and Imagination* and by J. Bronowski in *The Poet's Defence*. One of the shortcomings of the New Critics was their reaction against the heresy of paraphrase. Paraphrase results in abstraction no doubt but to extract the sense of a discourse without considering its logical structure is, to say the least, a surrender of human reason. But the logical structure is only a small part of the total realized form which requires a simultaneous perception of the structure and the texture on the part of critic. Paraphrase or logical abstraction is only a partial initial step in analysis. As Eliot, Blackmur, and Leavis, in their criticisms—comparisons and contrasts involving the works of the writer and the works of other writers both past and present ensue—reveal how tradition develops and how literature becomes a universal human activity. The awareness of tradition is a meaningful response to the past as can be seen from the essay of Trilling included in this anthology. This historical sense or the sense of

tradition, helps in evaluation but more than that, it reveals history as a continuity and not as break as some recent critics like Paul de Man would like to have it in order to be 'modern'. From this angle tradition becomes a process of ordering our responses to the discourse, and evaluation leads us to discrimination among different kinds of discourse, great, good and bad. What popular culture today can do to discrimination can be seen in D. Thompson's *Discrimination and Popular Culture.* It is apparent that literary values cannot be separated from social values and criticism as an expression of cultural life will always reflect the meaning that the social system accepts as desirable. But when that cultural life is eroded by the invasion of mass medii in the form of advertisement and propaganda, social value itself becomes unstable and in such a situation the function of criticism is to make us aware of this loss. An idea of the prevalent situation can be formed from G.T. Polleta's *Issues in Contemporary Literary Criticism.*

Some of the current problems of criticism can perhaps be overcome if we refer to W.B. Gallie's *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding,* in which he has presented a useful theory in his essay, 'Essentially Contested Concepts' according to which criticism cannot have one single right meaning or definition, no last word: it can at best have a relative value, relative to the time and circumstances in which it is produced. And so Gallie demonstrates that literature or art can be approached by features like an internal complexity, the relation of parts to the whole, modifiability in the light of changing circumstances, its use both aggressively and defensively against other uses, its deviation from an original exemplar whose authority is accepted by other uses of the concept. If we take these criteria into account we arrive at a pluralistic mode of criticism which is a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic approaches as defined by Wellek and Warren with the understanding that the extrinsic considerations will be limited to the validation of the intrinsic consideration, and such an approach, subject to the tests of intelligence, maturity and subtlety, can result in a criticism that would escape from the charge of narrowness that has been levelled against the New Critics. It could be wide, comprehensive and deep at the same time, and a combination of what S.C. Pepper calls contextualistic and formalistic criticisms, the practice of which may take us

over the abyss of nothingness to the apprehension of such modes of awareness as may, according to Eliot, 'promote the understanding and enjoyment of literature' in the best sense. That is also the plea of Helen Gardner in *The Business of Criticism.*

The present age which has been described as an age of vandalism by R. Nisbet the forces of irrationality appear to be stronger than those of rationality and sanity on account of which the meaning and value of human life are being constantly threatened. Changes occur so fast as to wipe out any conception of permanence in terms of human values. That seems to be the burden of Foucault in *The Order of Things* (p. 386) when he refers to the phenomenon of mutation in the human species which is of recent origin and that man 'would be erased like a face, drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.'

This gloomy prophecy when seen against the diachronic view of history as presented by Toynbee or Will Durrant, or by the synchronic view of history as presented by Hayden White may not be accepted by everybody. If man is the measure of history he both creates history and is created by it. It is his former capacity that is eminently visible in the realm of art which can stop the process of time by transcending it as Mircea Eliade has pointed out in his discussion on myth. For this reason the Arnoldian function of poetry and criticism—poetry performing the rituals that once belonged to the realm of what anthropologists call the sacred complex of god-nature-man assumes utmost importance in the present desacralized universe. Criticism can can never hope to be perfect because of the limits to the powers of human understanding through an imperfect, chargeable, ever-changing and duplicitous medium like language and hence the Arnoldian ritual can only be partial. The function of the Word, which was in the beginning, has been taken over by the word in its later manifestations as an incarnation of meaning. This point has been very forcefully made out by Krieger in his defence of literature in *Poetic Presence and Illusion* and ably demonstrated in *The Tragic Vision.* From this angle literature is of immense value for man's survival and the protagonist's letter to God in Bellow's *Herzog* and the crushing burden of the muchness of the world on Albert Corde in *The Dean's December,* reinforce our need to understand our place in a universe which we did not make and the meaning of which becomes increasingly

inscrutable in the wake of the latest discoveries of sciences like physics and biology. Such an endeavour, through the study of literary works that have defied the annihilating process of time, helps us to perceive and recover our essential worth, nobility and dignity as human beings. How that nobility and dignity have been eroded by the forces of modern civilization has been described by J.W. Krutch in his seminal essay, 'The Tragic Fallacy'. From that point of view the study of genuine literature—literature that exhibits the Arnoldian high seriousness, can still be regarded as the first and last of all knowledge. The discriminating study of such literature can help us in perceiving the splendid image of man conjured up by Pico della Mirandolla in his essay, 'On the Dignity of Man' or by Michael Angelo's 'Portrait of Adam' symbolizing man's freedom, dignity, spirituality in the deepest sense in contrast to the deracinated 'invisible', 'underground', 'dangling' or 'one dimensional' man of the modern age. Such a vision of man seeks to do away with the quotodian considerations of religion, nationality, class, creed, sect and other such narrow and degrading distinctions and, therefore, Arnold was amply justified in saying that 'culture seeks to do away with classes.'

To make criticism respond to life through literature the student has to be an adept at discriminate and subtle reading of the text. The process may begin at the level of observing the phonemes and morphemes but as it goes over to the syntactical levels that is from surface to deep structures, and the student perceives the poet's struggle with words, rhythms and rhymes, the struggle between sentence patterns and metrical patterns; he discerns the pressure of the author's feelings, emotions and thoughts behind the words which come to life enabling the text to have a unique character and enact its meaning as in, say, *The Divine Comedy, Macbeth* or *War and Peace* or *Sound and Fury.* As he listens intently and carefully to the voice of each author transmitted through the text he can recognize its uniqueness so that he does not mistake a sonnet of Shakespeare for one of Sidney or a novel of James for one of Lawrence. As this awareness comes to the student he is filled with genuine aesthetic pleasure. This becomes possible when order is revealed amidst chaos that ordinary everyday existence is. This realization settles down in memory and operates in the cognitive domain becoming

an avenue of truth, that is, in the best Arnoldian sense a criticism of life, an interpretation of the meaning and value of life as it has emerged from the intense experience of the life of a writer who perhaps being at the most conscious point of his age dreaming on things to come becomes a source of wisdom as is the case with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare or Tolstoy. In fact Dante in his journey from 'Inferno' to 'Paradiso' sought the help of a poet to guide him. It is that kind of wise guidance that the critic ought to provide for the reader in his journey through the labyrinth of the text whether it is 'writerly' or 'readerly' in order to grasp the very textuality of the text, which being a human activity has ultimately to yield up the essence of humanity. This is a humanistic vision that can link Pico della Mirandolla with Marx, Marcuse and Foucault to show a universal human life emerging from the text through reverberations of meaning, as much from Sophocles as from Soyinka, as much from *Medea* as from *Mother Courage*. Then the humanistic vision ceases to be an elitist or bourgeois or high brow affair as is contended today by some critics, because it is charged with compassion being the contemplation of man's mortality and mutability—'the poor bare, forked creature' struggling to overcome his bondages to exhibit his essential dignity through his moral freedom. Such a vision of the infinite possibilties of life comes to the reader as a kind of epiphany and the intense experience of a moment becomes that of a life time thereby transforming the phenomenal into the noumenal. This is the resonance of great literature signalling its universality and timelessness.

A discourse is like a stone dropped into a pool; it stirs up ripples that spread out to the banks and then come back to the origin or the centre. It is a movement to the exteriority of our contingent 'life of telegrams and anger' or of 'the twittering world', to the spirit of the age and the world view, and also to the interiority of 'the still centre'. Once criticism is able to perform such a task of uniting 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal' meanings as Frye advocated, the reader—and here the task principally relates to the young, inquisitive reader—the hungry sheep who look up and are not fed as Walter Jackson Bate has pointed out in an article in *The Harvard Magazine* (Sept.-Oct. 1982)—will be fed and satisfied—aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually. It would then perhaps be possible for them, in view of

the brevity of human life and the staggering amount of ecriture that is produced every year, to lay aside their Maclean in favour of Milton, Donleavy in favour of Dostoevsky and Cartland in favour of Camus. Such experiences with students are not rare in the lives of serious and able teachers of literature. Criticism, therefore, is ultimately a training of a discriminating sensibility that can go straight to a text and enjoy it for the right reasons instead of being bogged down by criticism or metacriticism.

As we move inexorably towards a culture that is going to be dominated by micro-electronics, bio-technology, robotics and computer applications, the nihilism that Bell has pointed out is likely to be intensified notwithstanding the arguments to the contrary as advanced by, say, M. Polanyi in his Arthur Stanley Eddington Memorial Lecture in 1960 under the title, 'Beyond Nihilism'. In such a situation literary criticism as a humanistic activity becomes all the more important. Doubts about the future value of the classic have already been expressed by critics like Graham Hough and Frank Kermode. And Irving Howe wakes us up to the possibility of a 'literature that will be as absolute as the sun as unarguable as orgasm, and as delicious as a lollipop'. It is, therefore, often difficult now to transmit the meaning or significance of a poem like 'Prothalamion' to the new generation of students in the face of the breakdown of the institution of marriage for which reason perhaps Eliot uses the word 'copulation' to describe the marital life of Swerney or to evoke a genuine response to a painting like 'Pieta' when motherhood has lost its original connotation.

The critical study of literature is the principal task of a teacher. He would do well to remember J.H. Rosenfield's words in *Daedalus* (Summer, 1969): 'EDUCATION FAILS if it leaves untouched the basic values held by the student. By this I mean his ethical sense, his power of intellectual analysis, his capacity for emotional reactions, his spiritual life. These lie close to the fundament of his character, and few means of communication reach that so effectively as the fine arts. When the experience of a work of art takes place at the fullest potential of its power, when it involves the man's rational faculties as well as his intuitive wordless reactions to the eloquence of form then his capacities to feel and understand are expanded, he learns to transcend his limited sell.' (p. 837).

In Malamud's *God's Grace* the protagonist Calvin Cohn, after the destruction of the world by a thermo-nuclear holocaust explains to the chimp Buzz that to be human is to be responsive to and protective of life and civilization. The creative artist and the critical thinker are at one in this endeavour.

EXTRACTS FROM *TIMBER, OR DISCOVERIES*

BEN JONSON

SHAKESPEARE

I REMEMBER, THE PLAYERS have often mentioned it as an honour to *Shakespeare*, that in his writing, (whatsoever he pennd) hee never blotted out (a) line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifie mine owne candor, (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory (on this side Idolatry) as much as any.) Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent *Phantsie;* brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd: *Sufflaminandus erat*; as *Augustus* said of *Haterius*. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of *Caesar*, one speaking to him; *Caesar thou dost me wrong*, Hee replyed: *Caesar did never wrong, but with just cause*: and such like, which were ridiculous. But hee redeemed his vices, with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be praysed, then to be pardoned.

THE FUNCTION OF THE POET

A *Poet* is that, which by the *Greeks* is call'd *Kap' ezokhen, o Poietes*, a Maker, or a fainer: His Art, an Art of imitation, or faining; expressing the life of man in fit measure, numbers, and harmony, according to *Aristotle*: From the word *poiëin* which signifies to make, or fayne. Hence, hee is call'd a Poet, not hee which writeth in measure only; but that fayneth and formeth a

fable, and writes things like the Truth. For, the Fable and Fiction is (as it were) the forme and Soule of any Poeticall worke, or *Poeme.*

A POEM AS DISTINCT FROM POESY

A *Poeme,* as I have told you, is the worke of the Poet; the end, and fruit of his labour, and studye. *Poesy* is his skill, or Crafte of making: the very Fiction it selfe, the reason, or forme of the worke. And these three voices differ, as the thing done, the doing, and the doer; the thing fain'd, the faining, and the fainer: so the *Poeme,* the *Poesy,* and the *Poet.* Now, the *Poesy* is the habit, or the Art: nay, rather the Queene of Arts: which had her Originall from heaven, received thence from the *'Ebrewes,* and had in prime estimation with the *Greeks,* transmitted to the *Latines,* and all Nations, that profess'd Civility. The Study of it (if wee will trust *Aristotle*) offers to mankinde a certain rule, and Patterne of living well, and happily; disposing us to all Civill offices of Society. If wee will believe *Tully,* it nourisheth, and instructeth our Youth; delights our Age; adornes our prosperity; comforts our Adversity; entertaines us at home; keeps us company abroad, travailes with us; watches; divides the times of our earnest, and sports; shares in our Country recesses, and recreations; insomuch as the wisest and best learned have thought her the absolute Mistresse of manners, and neerest of kin to Vertue. And, wheras they entitle *Philosophy* to bee a rigid, and austere *Poesie*: they have (on the contrary) stiled *Poesy,* a dulcet and gentle *Philosophy,* which leades on, and guides us by the hand to Action, with a ravishing delight, and incredible Sweetnes. But, before wee handle the kindes of *Poems,* with their speciall differences: or make court to the Art it selfe, as a Mistresse, I would leade you to the knowledge of our *Poet,* by a perfect Information, what he is, or should bee by exercise, by imitation, by Studie; and so bring him downe through the disciplines of *Grammar, Logicke, Rhetoricke,* and the *Ethicks,* adding somewhat, out of all, peculiar to himselfe, and worthy of your Admittance, or reception.

First, wee require in our *Poet,* or maker, (for that Title our

Language affordes him, elegantly, with the *Greeke*) a goodnes of naturall wit. For, wheras all other Arts consist of Doctrine, and Precepts; the *Poet* must bee able by nature, and instinct, to powre out the Treasure of his minde; and, as *Seneca* saith, *Aliquando secundum Anacreontem insanire, jucundum esse*: by which hee understands, the *Poeticall Rapture*. And according to that of *Plato, Frustra Poeticas fores sui compos pulsavit*: And of *Aristotle; Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixturâ dementiae fuit. Nec potest grande aliquid, & supra caeteros loqui, nisi mota mens.* Then it riseth higher, as by a devine Instinct, when it contemnes common, and knowne conceptions. It utters somewhat above a mortall mouth. Then it gets a loft, and flies away with his Ryder, whether, before, it was doubtfull to ascend. This the *Poets* understood by their *Helicon, Pegasus,* or *Parnassus;* and this made *Ovid* to boast:

Est, Deus in nobis; agitante calescimus illo:
Sedibus aethereis spiritus ille venit.

And *Lipsius,* to affirme; *Scio, Poetam neminem praestantem fuisse, sine parte quâdam, uberiore divinae aurae.* And, hence it is, that the comming up of good Poets, (for I minde not *mediocres,* or *imos*) is so thinne and rare among us; Every beggerly Corporation affoords the State a *Major,* or two *Bailiffs,* yearly; but, *solus Rex, aut Poeta, non quotannis nascitur.* To this perfection of Nature in our *Poet,* wee require Exercise of those parts, and frequent. If his wit will not arrive soddainly at the dignitie of the Ancients, let him not yet fall out with it, quarrell, or be overhastily Angry: offer, to turne it away from Study, in a humor; but come to it againe upon better cogitation; try an other time, with labour. If then it succeed not, cast not away the Quills, yet: nor scratch the Wainescott, beate not the poore Deske; but bring all to the forge, and file, againe; tourne it a newe. There is no Statute *Law* of the Kingdome bidds you bee a *Poet,* against your will; or the first Quarter. If it come, in a yeare, or two, it is well. The common Rymers powre forth Verses, such as they are, (*ex. tempore*) but there never comes from them one Sense, worth the life of a Day. A Rymer, and a *Poet,* are two things. It is said of the incomparable *Virgil,* that he brought forth his verses like a Beare and after form'd

them with licking. *Scaliger,* the Father, writes it of him, that he made a quantitie of verses in the morning, which afore night hee reduced to a lesse number. But, that which *Valerius Maximus* hath left recorded of *Euripides, the tragicke Poet,* his answer to *Alcestis,* an other *Poet,* is as memorable, as modest: who, when it was told to *Alcestis,* that Euripides had in three daies brought forth but three verses, and those with some difficultie, and throwes; *Alcestis,* glorying hee could with ease have sent forth a hundred in the space; *Euripides* roundly repli'd, Like enough. But, here is the difference; Thy verses will not last those three daies; mine will to all time. Which was, as to tell him, he could not write a verse. I have met many of these Rattles, that made a noyse, and buz'de. They had their humme; and, no more. Indeed, things, wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age. The third requisite in our *Poet,* or *Maker, is Imitation,* to bee able to convert the substance, or Riches of an other *Poet,* to his owne use. To make choise of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very *Hee*: or, so like him, as the Copie may be mistaken for the Principall. Not, as a Creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but, that feedes with an Appetite, and hath a Stomacke to concoct, divide, and turne all into nourishment. Not, to imitate servilely, as *Horace* saith, and catch at vices, for vertue: but, to draw forth out of the best, and choisest flowers, with the Bee, and turne all into Honey, worke it into one relish, and savour: make our *Imitation* sweet: observe, how the best writers have imitated, and follow them. How *Virgil,* and *Statius* have imitated *Homer*: how *Horace, Archilochus;* how *Alcaeus,* and the other *Lyricks*: and so of the rest. But, that, which wee especially require in him is an exactness of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man, not alone enabling him to know the *History,* or Argument of a *Poeme,* and to report it: but so to master the matter, and Stile, as to shew, hee knowes, how to handle, place, or dispose of either, with *elegancie,* when need shall bee. And not thinke, hee can leape forth suddainely a *Poet,* by dreaming hee hath been in *Parnassus,* or, having washt his lipps (as they say) in *Helicon.* There goes more to his making, then so. For to Nature, Exercise, Imitation, and Studie, *Art* must bee added,

to make all these perfect. And, though these challenge to themselves much, in the making up of our Maker, it is Art only can lead him to perfection, and leave him there in possession, as planted by her hand . . .

FROM PREFACE TO *FABLES, ANCIENT AND MODERN*

JOHN DRYDEN

BUT TO RETURN: Having done with *Ovid* for this time, it came into my mind, that our old *English* Poet *Chaucer* in many Things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the Side of the Modern Author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them: And as I am, and always have been studious to promote the Honour of my Native Country, so I soon resolv'd to put their Merits to the Trial by turning some of the *Canterbury Tales* into our Language, as it is now refin'd: For by this Means both the Poets being set in the same Light, and dress'd in the same *English* Habit, Story to be compar'd with Story, a certain Judgment may be made betwixt them by the Reader, without obtruding my Opinion on him: Or if I seem partial to my Countryman, and Predecessor in the Laurel, the Friends of Antiquity are not few: And besides many of the Learn'd, *Ovid* has almost all the *Beaux*, and the whole Fair Sex, his declar'd Patrons. Perhaps I have assum'd somewhat more to my self than they allow me; because I have adventur'd to sum up the Evidence: But the Readers are the Jury; and their Privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the Cause: Or, if they please to bring it to another Hearing, before some other Court. In the mean time, to follow the Thrid of my Discourse, (as Thoughts, according to Mr. *Hobbs*, have always some Connection), so from *Chaucer* I was led to think on *Boccace*, who was not only his Contemporary, but also pursu'd the same Studies; wrote Novels in Prose, and many Works in Verse; particularly is said to have invented the Octave Rhyme, or *Stanza* of Eight Lines, which ever since has been maintain'd by the Practice of all *Italian* Writers who are, or at least assume the Title of *Heroic Poets*: He and *Chaucer*, among other Things, had this in common, that they refin'd their Mother-Tongues; but with this difference, that *Dante* had begun to file their Language, at least in Verse, before the time of *Boccace*, who likewise receiv'd no little Help from his master *Petrarch*; But the Reformation of their Prose

was wholly owing to *Boccace* himself; who is yet the Standard of Purity in the *Italian* tongue; though many of his Phrases are become obsolete, as in process of Time it must needs happen. *Chaucer* (as you have formerly been told by our learn'd Mr. *Rhymer*) first adorn'd and amplified our barren Tongue from the *Provencall*, which was then the most polish'd of all the Modern Languages; But this Subject has been copiously treated by that great Critick, who deserves no little Commendation from us his Countrymen.

For these Reasons of Time, and Resemblance of Genius, in *Chaucer* and *Boccace*, I resolv'd to join them in my present Work; to which I have added some Original Papers of my own, which whether they are equal or inferiour to my other Poems, an Author is the most improper Judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the Mercy of the Reader: I will hope the best, that they will not be condemn'd; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old Gentleman who, mounting on Horseback before some Ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desir'd of the Fair Spectators, that they would count Fourscore and eight before they judg'd him. By the Mercy of God, I am already come within Twenty Years of his Number, a Cripple in my Limbs, but what Decays are in my Mind, the Reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the Faculties of my soul, excepting only my Memory, which is not impair'd to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What Judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and Thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only Difficulty is to chuse or to reject; to run them into Verse, or to give them the other Harmony of Prose. I have so long studied and practis'd both, that they are grown into a Habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old Gentleman's Excuse: yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no Grains of Allowance for the Faults of this my present Work, but those which are given of course to Human Frailty. I will not trouble my Reader with the shortness of Time in which I writ it, or the several Intervals of Sickness: They who think too well of their own Performances, are apt to boast in their Prefaces how little Time their Works have cost them; and what other

Business of more importance interfer'd; but the Reader will be as apt to ask the question, Why they allow'd not a longer Time to make their Works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an Opinion of their Judges as to thrust their indigested Stuff upon them, as if they deserv'd no better?

With this Account of my present Undertaking, I conclude the first Part of this Discourse: in the second Part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the Drought, I must touch the same Features over again, and change the Dead-colouring of the Whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which savours of Immorality or Profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to my self of any such Intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent Expression, or a Thought too wanton, they are crept into my Verses through my Inadvertency: If the Searchers find any in the Cargo, let them be stav'd or forfeited, like Counterbanded goods; at least, let their Authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandise, and not of my own Manufacture. On the other Side, I have endeavour'd to chuse such Fables, both Ancient and Modern, as contain in each of them some instructive Moral, which I could prove by Induction, but the Way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the Reader's Trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm, with a safe Conscience, that I had taken the same Care in all my former Writings; for it must be own'd that, supposing Verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet if they contain anything which shocks Religion, or Good Manners, they are at best, what *Horace* says of good Numbers without Good Sense, *Versus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae.* Thus far, I hope, I am Right in Court, without renouncing to my other Right of Self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accus'd, and my Sense wire-drawn into Blasphemy or Bawdry, as it had often been by a Religious Lawyer in a late Pleading against the Stage; in which he mixes Truth with Falsehood, and has not forgotten the old Rule, of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the Thrid of my Discourse with the first of my Translations, which was the first *Iliad* of *Homer*. If it shall please God to give me longer Life, and moderate Health, my Intentions are to translate the whole *Ilias*; provided still, that I meet with those Encouragements from the Publick, which may enable me

to proceed in my Undertaking with some Cheerfulness. And this I dare assure the World beforehand, that I have found by Trial, *Homer* a more pleasing task than *Virgil*, (though I say not the Translation will be less laborious). For the Grecian is more according to my Genius, than the *Latin* poet. In the Works of the two authors we may read their Manners, and natural Inclinations, which are wholly different. *Virgil* was of a quite, sedate Temper; *Homer* was violent, impetuous, and full of Fire. The chief talent of Virgil was Propriety of Thoughts, and Ornament of Words: *Homer* was rapid in his Thoughts, and took all the Liberties, both of Numbers and of Expressions, which his Language, and the Age in which he liv'd, allow'd him: *Homer's* invention was more copious, *Virgil's* more confin'd: So that if *Homer* had not led the Way, it was not in *Virgil* to have begun heroic poetry: For, nothing can be more evident than that the *Roman* poem is but the second part of the *Ilias*; a Continuation of the same Story: and the Persons already form'd: The manners of *Aeneas* are those of *Hector* superadded to those which *Homer* gave him. The Adventures of *Ulysses* in the *Odysseis* are imitated in the first Six Books of Virgil's *Aeneis*: And though the Accidents are not the same, (which would have argu'd him of a servile copying, and total Barrenness of Invention) yet the Seas were the same, in which both the *Heroes* wander'd; and *Dido* cannot be deny'd to be the Poetical Daughter of *Calypso*. The Six latter Books of *Virgil's* Poem are the Four-and-twenty *Iliads* contracted: A Quarrel occasion'd by a Lady, a Single Combat, Battles fought, and a Town besieg'd. I say not this in derogation to *Virgil*, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just Praise: for his *episodes* are almost wholly of his own Invention; and the Form which he has given to the Telling makes the Tale his own, even though the Original Story had been the same. But this proves, however, that *Homer* taught *Virgil* to design: And if Invention be the first Virtue of an Epick Poet, then the *Latin* Poem can only be allow'd the second Place. Mr. *Hobbs*, in the Preface to his own bald Translation of the *Ilias*, (studying Poetry as he did Mathematics, when it was too late), Mr Hobbs, I say, begins the praise of *Homer* where he should have ended it. He tells us that the first Beauty of an Epick Poem consists in Diction, that is, in the Choice of Words,

and Harmony of Numbers: Now, the Words are the Colouring of the Work, which, in the Order of Nature is last to be consider'd. The Design, the Disposition, the Manners, and the Thoughts, are all before it: Where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the Imitation of Humane Life; which is in the very Definition of a Poem. Words, indeed, like glaring Colours, are the first Beauties that arise and strike the Sight; but if the Draught be false or lame, the Figures ill dispos'd, the Manners obscure or inconsistent, or the Thoughts unnatural, then the finest Colours are but Daubing, and the Piece is a beautiful Monster at the Best. Neither *Virgil* nor *Homer* were deficient in any of the former Beauties; but in this last, which is Expression, the *Roman* poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the Poverty of his Language, by his Musical Ear, and by his Diligence.

But to return: Our two Great Poets, being so different in their Tempers, one Choleric and Sanguine, the other Phlegmatic and Melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several Ways is that each of them has follow'd his own natural Inclination, as well in Forming the Design, as in the Execution of it. The very Heroes shew their Authors: *Achilles* is hot, impatient, revengeful, *Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer*, etc. *Aeneas* patient, considerate, careful of his People, and merciful to his Enemies; ever submissive to the Will of Heaven, *Quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur.*

I could please my self with enlarging on this Subject, but am forc'd to defer it to a fitter Time. From all I have said, I will only draw this Inference, That the Action of *Homer* being more full of Vigour than that of *Virgil*, according to the Temper of the Writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the Reader. One warms you by Degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his Heat. 'Tis the same Difference which *Longinus* makes betwixt the Effects of Eloquence in *Demosthenes* and *Tully*. One persuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the Second Book, (a graceful Flattery to his Countrymen); but he hastens from the Ships, and concludes not that Book till he has made you an Amends by the violent playing of a new Machine. From thence he hurries on his Action with Variety of Events, and ends it in less Compass

than Two Months. This Vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my Temper: and, therefore, I have translated his First Book with greater Pleasure than any part of *Virgil*: But it was not a Pleasure without Pains: The continual Agitations of the Spirits must needs be a Weakening of any Constitution, especially in Age: and many Pauses are required for Refreshment betwixt the Heats; the *Iliad* of its self being a third part longer than all *Virgil's* Works together.

This is what I thought needful in this Place to say of *Homer*. I proceed to *Ovid* and *Chaucer*; considering the former only in relation to the latter. With *Ovid* ended the Golden Age of the *Roman* Tongue: From Chaucer the Purity of the *English* Tongue began. The Manners of the Poets were not unlike: Both of them were well-bred, well-natur'd, amorous, and Libertine, at least in their Writings, it may be also in their Lives. Their Studies were the same, Philosophy and Philology. Both of them were knowing in Astronomy, of which *Ovid's* Books of the *Roman* Feasts, and Chaucer's Treatise of the *Astrolabe*, are sufficient Witnesses. But *Chaucer* was likewise an astrologer, as were *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Persius*, and *Manilius*. Both writ with wonderful Facility and Clearness; neither were great Inventors: for *Ovid* only copied the *Grecian* Fables, and most of *Chaucer's* stories were taken from his *Italian* Contemporaries, or their Predecessors: *Boccace* his *Decameron* was first publish'd, and from thence our *Englishman* has borrow'd many of his *Canterbury Tales*: yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written in all probability by some *Italian* Wit in a former Age; as I shall prove hereafter: The Tale of *Grizild* was the Invention of *Petrarch*; by him sent to *Boccace*, from whom it came to *Chaucer*: *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a *Lombard* author; but much amplified by our *English* Translator, as well as beautified; the Genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an Invention than to invent themselves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our Manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from *Boccace* before I come to him: But there is so much less behind; and I am of the Temper of most Kings, *who love to be in debt*, are all for present Money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: Besides, the Nature of a Preface is rambling; never wholly out of the Way, nor in it. This I have learn'd from

the Practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to *Ovid* and *Chaucer*, of whom I have little more to say.

Both of them built on the Inventions of other men; yet since *Chaucer* had something of his own, as *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Cock and the Fox*, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our Countryman the Precedence in that Part: since I can remember nothing of *Ovid* which was wholly his. Both of them understood the Manners; under which Name I comprehend the Passions and, in a larger Sense, the Descriptions of Persons, and their very Habits: For an Example, I see *Baucis* and *Philemon* as perfectly before me, as if some ancient Painter had drawn them; and all the Pilgrims in the *Canterbury* Tales, their Humours, their Features, and the very Dress, as distinctly as if I had supp'd with them at the *Tabard* in *Southwark*: Yet even there too the figures of *Chaucer* are much more lively, and set in a better Light: Which though I have not time to prove, yet I appeal to the Reader, and am sure he will clear me from Partiality.

The Thoughts and Words remain to be consider'd, in the Comparison of the two Poets, and I have sav'd my self one half of that Labour, by owning that *Ovid* liv'd when the *Roman* tongue was in its Meridian; *Chaucer*, in the Dawning of our Language: Therefore that Part of the Comparison stands not on an equal Foot, any more than the Diction of *Ennius* and *Ovid*; or of *Chaucer*, and our present *English*. The Words are given up, as a Post not to be defended in our Poet, because he wanted the Modern Art of Fortifying. The Thoughts remain to be consider'd: And they are to be measur'd only by their Propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the Persons describ'd, on such and such Occasions. The Vulgar Judges, which are Nine Parts in Ten of all Nations, who call Conceits and Jingles Wit, who see *Ovid* full of them, and *Chaucer* altogether without them, will think me little less than mad for preferring the *Englishman* to the *Roman*: Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say that the Things they Admire are only glittering Trifles, and so far from being Witty that in a serious Poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for Love, describe his Passion like *Narcissus*? Would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*, and a Dozen more of such Expressions,

pour'd on the Neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were Wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor Wretch was in the Agony of Death? This is just *John Littlewit*, in *Bartholomew Fair*, who had a Conceit (as he tells you) left him in his Misery; a miserable Conceit. On these Occasions the Poet should endeavour to raise Pity: But instead of this, *Ovid* is tickling you to laugh. *Virgil* never made use of such Machines, when he was moving you to commiserate the Death of *Dido*: He would not destroy what he was building. *Chaucer* makes *Arcite* violent in his Love, and unjust in the Pursuit of it: Yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: He repents not of his Love, for that had alter'd his Character; but acknowledges the Injustice of his Proceedings, and resigns *Emilia* to *Palamon*. What would *Ovid* have done on this Occasion? He would certainly have made *Arcite* witty on his Deathbed. He had complain'd he was farther off from Possession, by being so near, and a thousand such Boyisms, which *Chaucer* rejected as below the Dignity of the Subject. They who think otherwise would, by the same Reason, prefer *Lucan* and *Ovid* to *Homer* and *Virgil*, and *Martial* to all Four of them. As for the Turn of Words, in which *Ovid* particularly excels all Poets, they are sometimes a Fault, and sometimes a Beauty, as they are us'd properly or improperly; but in strong Passions always to be shunn'd, because Passions are serious, and will admit no Playing. The *French* have a high Value for them; and, I confess, they are often what they call Delicate, when they are introduc'd with Judgment; but *Chaucer* writ with more Simplicity, and follow'd Nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my Knowledge, been an upright Judge betwixt the Parties in Competition, not meddling with the Design nor the Disposition of it; because the Design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of *Chaucer* in particular.

In the first place, As he is the Father of *English* Poetry, so I hold him in the same Degree of Veneration as the *Grecians* held *Homer*, or the *Romans Virgil*. He is a perpetual Fountain of good Sense; learn'd in all Sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all Subjects: As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a Continence which is practis'd by few Writers, and

scarcely by any of the Ancients, excepting *Virgil* and *Horace*. One of our late great Poets is sunk in his Reputation, because he could never forgive any Conceit which came in his way; but swept like a Drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the Dishes were ill sorted; whole Pyramids of Sweet-meats, for Boys and Women; but little of solid Meat, for Men: All this proceeded not from any want of Knowledge, but of Judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the Beauties and Faults of other Poets; but only indulg'd himself in the Luxury of Writing; and perhaps knew it was a Fault, but hop'd the Reader would not find it. For this Reason, though he must always be thought a great Poet, he is no longer esteem'd a good Writer; and for Ten Impressions which his Works have had in so many successive Years, yet at present a hundred Books are scarcely purchas'd once a Twelvemonth: For, as my last Lord *Rochester* said, though somewhat profanely, *Not being of God, he could not stand.*

Chaucer follow'd nature every where; but was never so bold to go beyond her: And there is a great Difference of being *Poeta* and *nimis poeta*, if we may believe *Catullus*, as much as betwixt a modest Behaviour and Affectation. The Verse of *Chaucer*, I confess, is not Harmonious to us; but 'tis like the Eloquence of one whom *Tacitus* commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*: They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it Musical; and it continues so even in our Judgment, if compar'd with the Numbers of *Lydgate* and *Gower* his contemporaries: There is the rude Sweetness of a *Scotch* Tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who publish'd the last Edition of him; for he would make us believe the Fault is in our Ears, and that there were really Ten Syllables in a Verse where we find but Nine: But this Opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an Error, that common Sense (which is a Rule in every thing but matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the Reader, that Equality of Numbers in every Verse which we call *Heroic*, was either not known, or not always practis'd, in *Chaucer's* age. It were an easie Matter to produce some thousands of his Verses, which are lame for want of half a Foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no Pronunciation can make otherwise.

195287

FROM PREFACE TO *FABLES, ANCIENT AND MODERN*

We can only say, that he liv'd in the Infancy of our Poetry, and that nothing is brought to Perfection at the first. We must be Children before we grow Men. There was an *Ennius*, and in process of time a *Lucilius*, and a *Lucretius*, before *Virgil* and *Horace*; even after Chaucer there was a *Spenser*, a *Harrington*, a *Fairfax*, before *Waller* and *Denham* were in being; and our Numbers were in their Nonage till these last appear'd. I need say little of his Parentage, Life, and Fortunes: They are to be found at large in all the Editions of his Works. He was employ'd abroad, and favoured by *Edward* the Third, *Richard* the Second, and *Henry* the Fourth, and was Poet, as I suppose, to all Three of them. In *Richard's* time, I doubt, he was a little dipped in the Rebellion of the Commons; and being Brother-in-Law to *John of Ghant*, it was no wonder if he follow'd the Fortunes of that Family; and was well with *Henry* the Fourth when he had depos'd his Predecessor. Neither is it to be admir'd, that *Henry*, who was a wise as well as a valiant Prince, who claim'd by Succession, and was sensible that his Title was not sound, but was rightfully in *Mortimer*, who had married the Heir of *York;* it was not to be admir'd, I say, if that great Politician should be pleas'd to have the greatest Wit of those Times in his Interests, and to be the Trumpet of his Praises. *Augustus* had given him the Example, by the Advice of *Maecenas*, who recommended *Virgil* and *Horace* to him; whose Praises help'd to make him Popular while he was alive, and after his Death have made him Precious to Posterity. As for the Religion of our Poet, he seems to have some little Bias towards the Opinions of *Wycliffe*, after *John of Ghant* his Patron; somewhat of which appears in the Tale of *Piers Plowman*: Yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the Vices of the Clergy in his Age: their Pride, their Ambition, their Pomp, their Avarice, their Worldly Interest, deserv'd the Lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his *Canterbury Tales*: Neither has his Contemporary *Boccace*, spar'd them. Yet both those Poets liv'd in much esteem, with good and holy Men in Orders: for the Scandal which is given by particular Priests, reflects not on the Sacred Function. *Chaucer's Monk*, his *Canon*, and his *Fryar*, took not from the Character of his *Good Parson*. A Satyrical Poet is the Check of the Laymen, on bad Priests. We are only to take care, that we

involve not the Innocent with the Guilty in the same Condemnation. The Good cannot be too much honour'd, Nor the Bad too coarsely us'd: for the Corruption of the Best becomes the Worst. When a Clergyman is whipp'd, his Gown is first taken off, by which the Dignity of his order is secur'd: If he be wrongfully accus'd, he has his Action of Slander; and 'tis at the Poet's Peril, if he transgress the Law. But they will tell us, that all kind of Satire, though never so well deserv'd by particular Priests, yet brings the whole Order into Contempt. Is then the Peerage of *England* anything dishonour'd when a Peer suffers for his Treason? If he be libell'd, or any way defam'd, he has his *Scandalum Magnatum* to punish the Offender. They who use this kind of Argument seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserv'd the Poet's Lash; and are less concern'd for their Publick Capacity, than for their Private: At least, there is Pride at the bottom of their Reasoning. If the Faults of Men in Orders are only to be judg'd among themselves, they are all in some sort Parties: For, since they say the Honour of their Order is concern'd in every Member of it, how can we be sure, that they will be impartial Judges? How far I may be allow'd to speak my Opinion in this Case, I know not: But I am sure a Dispute of this Nature caus'd Mischief in abundance betwixt a King of *England* and an Archbishop of *Canterbury*; one standing up for the Laws of his Land, and the other for the Honour (as he call'd it) of God's Church; which ended in the Murther of the Prelate, and in the whipping of his Majesty from Post to Pillar for his Penance. The Learn'd and Ingenious Dr. *Drake* has sav'd me the Labour of inquiring into the Esteem and Reverence which the Priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: Yet I must needs say, that when a Priest provokes me without any Occasion given him, I have no Reason, unless it be the Charity of a *Christian*, to forgive him: *Prior laesit* is Justification sufficient in the Civil Law. If I answer him in his own Language, Self-defence, I am sure, must be allow'd me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp Recrimination, somewhat may be indulg'd to Humane Frailty. Yet my Resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have follow'd *Chaucer* in his Character of a Holy Man, and have enlarg'd on that Subject with some Pleasure, reserving to my self the Right,

if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of Priests, such as are more easily to be found than the *Good Parson*; such as have given the last Blow to Christianity in this Age, by a Practice so contrary to their Doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time.

In the mean while, I take up *Chaucer* where I left him. He must have been a Man of a most wonderful comprehensive Nature, because, as it has been truly observ'd of him, he has taken into the Compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various Manners and Humours (as we now call them) of the whole *English* Nation, in his Age. Not a single Character has escap'd him. All his Pilgrims are severally distinguish'd from each other; and not only in their Inclinations, but in their very Physiognomies and Persons. Baptista Porta could not have describ'd their Natures better, than by the Marks which the Poet gives them. The Matter and Manner of their Tales, and of their Telling, are so suited to their different Educations, Humours, and Callings, that each of them would be improper in any other Mouth. Even the grave and serious Characters are distinguish'd by their several sorts of Gravity: Their discourses are such as belong to their Age, their Calling and their Breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his Persons are Vicious, and some Virtuous; some are unlearn'd, or (as *Chaucer* calls them) Lewd, and some are Learn'd. Even the Ribaldry of the Low Characters is different: the *Reeve*, the *Miller*, and the *Cook*, are several Men, and distinguish'd from each other, as much as the mincing Lady Prioress, and the broadspeaking, gap-toothed Wife of *Bath*. But enough of this: There is such a Variety of Game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my Choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the Proverb that *here is God's Plenty*. We have our Forefathers and Great Grand-dames all before us, as they were in *Chaucer's* days; their general Characters are still remaining in Mankind, and even in *England*, though they are call'd by other names than those of *Monks*, and *Fryars*, and *Canons*, and *Lady Abbesses*, and *Nuns*; for Mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though every thing is alter'd. May I have leave to do my self the Justice, (since my Enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good Poet, that they will not allow

me so much as to be a Christian, or a Moral Man) may I have leave, I say, to inform my Reader, that I have confin'd my Choice to such Tales of Chaucer, as savour nothing of Immodesty. If I had desir'd more to please than to instruct, the *Reeve*, the *Miller*, the *Shipman*, the *Merchant*, the *Sumner*, and, above all, the *Wife of Bath*, in the Prologue to her Tale, would have procur'd me as many Friends and Readers, as there are *Beaux* and Ladies of Pleasure in the Town.

THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION

JOSEPH ADDISON

I

...Divisum sic breve fiet opus. Mart.

I SHALL FIRST CONSIDER those pleasures of the imagination, which arise from the actual view and survey of outward objects: and these, I think, all proceed from the sight of what is great, uncommon, or beautiful. There may, indeed, be something so terrible or offensive, that the horror or loathsomeness of an object may overbear the pleasure which results from its greatness, novelty, or beauty, but still there will be such a mixture of delight in the very disgust it gives us, as any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous and prevailing.

By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of any single object, but the largeness of a whole view, considered as one entire piece. Such are the prospects of an open champaign country, a vast uncultivated desert, of huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of waters, where we are not struck with the novelty or beauty of the sight, but with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many of these stupendous works of nature. Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at anything that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them. The mind of man naturally hates everything that looks like a restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy itself under a sort of confinement, when the sight is pent up in a narrow compass, and shortened on every side by the neighbourhood of walls or mountains. On the contrary, a spacious horizon is an image of liberty, where the eye has room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on the immensity of its views, and to lose itself amidst the variety of objects that offer themselves to its observation. Such wide and undetermined prospects are as pleasing to the fancy, as the speculations of eternity or infinitude are to the understanding. But if there be a beauty or un-

commonness joined with this grandeur, as in a troubled ocean, a heaven adorned with stars and meteors, or a spacious landscape cut out into rivers, woods, rocks, and meadows, the pleasure still grows upon us, as it arises from more than a single principle.

Everything that is new or uncommon raises a pleasure in the imagination, because it fills the soul with an agreeable surprise, gratifies its curiosity, and gives it an idea of which it was not before possessed. We are, indeed, so often conversant with one set of objects, and tired out with so many repeated shows of the same things, that whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to divert our minds, for a while, with the strangeness of its appearance: it serves us for a kind of refreshment, and takes off from that satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary entertainments. It is this that bestows charms on a monster, and makes even the imperfections of nature please us. It is this that recommends variety, where the mind is every instant called off to something new, and the attention not suffered to dwell too long, and waste itself on any particular object. It is this, likewise, that improves what is great or beautiful, and makes it afford the mind a double entertainment. Groves, fields, and meadows, are at any season of the year pleasant to look upon, but never so much as in the opening of the spring, when they are all new and fresh, with their first gloss upon them, and not yet too much accustomed and familiar to the eye. For this reason there is nothing that more enlivens a prospect than rivers, jetteaus, or falls of water, where the scene is perpetually shifting, and entertaining the sight every moment with something that is new. We are quickly tired with looking upon hills and valleys, where everything continues fixed and settled in the same place and posture, but find our thoughts a little agitated and relieved at the sight of such objects as are ever in motion, and sliding away from beneath the eye of the beholder.

But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to anything that is great or uncommon. The very first discovery of it strikes the mind with an inward joy, and spreads a cheer-

fulness and delight through all its faculties. There is not perhaps any real beauty or deformity more in one piece of matter than another, because we might have been so made, that whatsoever now appears loathsome to us, might have shown itself agreeable; but we find by experience, that there are several modifications of matter which the mind, without any previous consideration, pronounces at first sight beautiful or deformed. Thus we see that every different species of sensible creatures has its different notions of beauty, and that each of them is most affected with the beauties of its own kind....

As the fancy delights in everything that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, so is it capable of receiving a new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus any continued sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of water, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place that lie before him. Thus if there arises a fragrancy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasures of the imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than when they enter the mind separately: as the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of their situation.

II

Quatenus hoc simile est oculis, quod mente videmus. Lucr.

I at first divided the pleasures of the imagination, into such as arise from objects that are actually before our eyes, or that once entered in at our eyes, and are afterwards called up into the mind, either barely by its own operations, or on occasion of something without us, as statues or descriptions. We have already considered the first division, and shall therefore enter on the other, which, for distinction sake, I have called the secondary pleasures of the imagination. When I say the ideas we receive from statues, descriptions, or such like occasions, are the same

that were once actually in our view, it must not be understood that we had once seen the very place, action, or person which are carved or described. It is sufficient, that we have seen places, persons, or actions, in general, which bear a resemblance, or at least some remote analogy with what we find represented. Since it is in the power of the imagination, when it is once stocked with particular ideas, to enlarge, compound, and vary them at her own pleasure.

Among the different kinds of representation, statuary is the most natural, and shows us something *likest* the object that is represented. To make use of a common instance, let one who is born blind take an image in his hands, and trace out with his fingers the different furrows and impressions of the chisel, and he will easily conceive how the shape of a man, or beast, may be represented by it; but should he draw his hand over a picture, where all is smooth and uniform, he would never be able to imagine how the several prominencies and depressions of a human body could be shown on a plain piece of canvas, that has in it no unevenness or irregularity. Description runs yet further from the things it represents than painting; for a picture bears a real resemblance to its original, which letters and syllables are wholly void of. Colours speak all languages, but words are understood only by such a people or nation. For this reason, though men's necessities quickly put them on finding out speech, writing is probably of a later invention than painting; particularly we are told, that in America when the Spaniards first arrived there, expresses were sent to the Emperor of Mexico in paint, and the news of his country delineated by the strokes of a pencil, which was a more natural way than that of writing, though at the same time much more imperfect, because it is impossible to draw the little connexions of speech, or to give the picture of a conjunction or an adverb. It would be yet more strange, to represent visible objects by sounds that have no ideas annexed to them, and to make something like description in music. Yet it is certain, there may be confused, imperfect notions of this nature raised in the imagination by an artificial composition of notes; and we find that great masters in the art are able, sometimes, to set their hearers in the heat and hurry of a battle, to overcast their minds with melancholy scenes and apprehensions of deaths

and funerals, or to lull them into pleasing dreams of groves and Elysiums.

In all these instances, this secondary pleasure of the imagination proceeds from that action of the mind, which compares the ideas arising from the original objects, with the ideas we receive from the statue, picture, description, or sound that represents them. It is impossible for us to give the necessary reason, why this operation of the mind is attended with so much pleasure, as I have before observed on the same occasion; but we find a great variety of entertainments derived from this single principle; for it is this that not only gives us a relish of statuary, painting and description, but makes us delight in all the actions and arts of mimicry. It is this that makes the several kinds of wit pleasant, which consists, as I have formerly shown, in the affinity of ideas; and we may add, it is this also that raises the little satisfaction we sometimes find in the different sorts of false wit; whether it consist in the affinity of letters, as in anagram, acrostic; or of syllables, as in doggerel rhymes, echoes; or of words, as in puns, quibbles; or of a whole sentence or poem, to wings, and altars. The final cause, probably, of annexing pleasure to this operation of the mind, was to quicken and encourage us in our searches after truth, since the distinguishing one thing from another, and the right discerning betwixt our ideas, depends wholly upon our comparing them together, and observing the congruity or disagreement that appears among the several works of Nature.

But I shall here confine myself to those pleasures of the imagination which proceed from ideas raised by words, because most of the observations that agree with descriptions, are equally applicable to painting and statuary.

Words, when well chosen, have so great a force in them, that a description often gives us more lively ideas than the sight of things themselves. The reader finds a scene drawn in stronger colours, and painted more to the life in his imagination, by the help of words, than by an actual survey of the scene which they describe. In this case the poet seems to get the better of Nature; he takes, indeed, the landscape after her, but gives it more vigorous touches, heightens its beauty, and so enlivens the whole piece, that the images, which flow from the objects them-

selves, appear weak and faint, in comparison of those that come from the expressions. The reason, probably, may be, because in the survey of any object we have only so much of it painted on the imagination, as comes in at the eye; but in its description, the poet gives us as free a view of it as he pleases, and discovers to us several parts, that either we did not attend to, or that lay out of our sight when we first beheld it. As we look on any object, our idea of it is, perhaps, made up of two or three simple ideas; but when the poet represents it, he may either give us a more complex idea of it, or only raise in us such ideas as are most apt to affect the imagination.

It may be here worth our while to examine, how it comes to pass that several readers, who are all acquainted with the same language, and know the meaning of the words they read, should nevertheless have a different relish of the same descriptions. We find one transported with a passage, which another runs over with coldness and indifference, or finding the representation extremely natural, where another can perceive nothing of likeness and conformity. This different taste must proceed, either from the perfection of imagination in one more than in another, or from the different ideas that several readers affix to the same words. For, to have a true relish, and form a right judgment of a description, a man should be born with a good imagination, and must have well weighed the force and energy that lie in the several words of a language, so as to be able to distinguish which are most significant and expressive of their proper ideas, and what additional strength and beauty they are capable of receiving from conjunction with others. The fancy must be warm, to retain the print of those images it hath received from outward objects; and the judgment discerning, to know what expressions are most proper to clothe and adorn them to the best advantage. A man who is deficient in either of these respects, though he may receive the general notion of a description, can never see distinctly all its particular beauties; as a person, with a weak sight, may have the confused prospect of a place that lies before him, without entering into its several parts, or discerning the variety of its colours in their full glory and perfection.

FROM *PREFACE TO THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE*

SAMUEL JOHNSON

OTHER DRAMATISTS can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: Even where the agency is supernatural the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world. Shakespeare approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigencies, but as it would be found in trials to which it cannot be exposed.

This, therefore, is the praise of Shakepeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to censure of critics who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis and Rymer think his *Romans* not sufficiently *Roman;* and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon; and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident; and if he

preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. History requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious but despicable, he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comic and tragic scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of tragedy and comedy, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost

all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and low cooperate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatic poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition, divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion, constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies today, and comedies tomorrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous con-

clusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra,* than in the history of *Richard the Second.* But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquility without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticism of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable and useful; and the grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the public judgment was unformed; he had no example of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: He therefore indulged his natural disposition; and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but in his comic scenes, he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes, there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation

or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comic scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable. The adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dies, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comic dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth.

Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation. His characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and, in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he

should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the Gothic mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his Arcadia, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine. The reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality and reserve; yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion which exigence forces out are for the most part striking and energetic; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatic poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recom-

mend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have never less reason to indulge their hopes of supreme excellence, than when he seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. He is not long soft and pathetic without some idle conceit or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller; he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the

sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities, his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and of critics.

For his other deviations from the art of writing I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour than that which must be indulged to all human excellence: that his virtues be rated with his failings. But from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled: he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature: But his plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of the expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

FROM *PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS*

W. WORDSWORTH

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECT, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon

themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose.* Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose.* If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguished these

Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by

men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechnical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently, there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense: but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict

myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;

The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other

distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the words of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general gounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common

among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion;

he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him, and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or Frontiniac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgement the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his

studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed; the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions whch we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us,

and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man. It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

FROM *BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA*

S. T. COLERIDGE

I

DURING THE FIRST year that Mr Wordsworth and I were neighbours our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally acompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in *this* sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the

wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote the *Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie*, and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published; and were presented by him, as an *experiment*, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of style that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of *real* life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being; had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk

at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr Wordsworth's admirers. They were found too not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its *religious* fervour. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions and of alarm at their consequences, produced an eddy of criticism which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface, in the sense attributed to them and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves. Mr Wordsworth in his recent collection has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed. At all events, considering it as the source of a controversy in which I have been honoured more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with his, I think it expedient to declare once for all, in what points I coincide with his opinions, and in what points I altogether differ. But in order to render myself intelligible I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my ideas, first, of a poem; and secondly, of poetry itself, in *kind* and in *essence*.

The office of philosophical *disquisition* consists in just *distinction*; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical *process* of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity in which they actually coexist; and this is the *result* of philosophy. A poem contains the

same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible, that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by metre, or by rhyme, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months:

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November, etc.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm superadded, whatever be their contents, may be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial *form*. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths; either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may *result* from the *attainment* of the end; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the *ultimate* end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the proper ultimate end; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the Bathyllus even of an Anacreon, or the Alexis of Virgil, from disgust and aversion!

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle *these* to the name of Poems? The answer is that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in it-

self the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If metre be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole* as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word; and in few instances has this been more striking than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem which is rhyme, or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterize the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections, I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a *legitimate* poem, I answer, it must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influence of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand, to a series of striking lines or distichs, each of which, absorbing the whole attention of the reader to itself, disjoins it from its context and makes it a separate whole, instead of a harmonizing part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which

the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air; at every step he pauses and half recedes, and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward. '*Praecipitandus est liber spiritus*,' says Petronius Arbiter most happily. The epithet *liber* here balances the preceding verb; and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Bishop Taylor, and the *Theoria Sacra* of Burnet, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradistinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah (indeed a very large portion of the whole book) is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth, was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever *specific* import we attach to the word, poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, or ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved *in keeping* with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of *one*, though not a *peculiar*, property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in the preceding disquisition on the fancy and imagination. What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were)

fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects, a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. 'Doubtless,' as Sir John Davies observes of the soul (and his words may with slight alteration be applied and even more appropriately, to the poetic IMAGINATION):

> Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns
> Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,
> As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
> As we our food into our nature change.
> From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,
> And draws a kind of quintessence from things;
> Which to her proper nature she transforms
> To bear them light on her celestial wings.
> Thus does she, when from individual states
> She doth abstract the universal kinds;
> Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates
> Steal access through our senses to our minds.

Finally, GOOD SENSE is the BODY of poetic genius, FANCY its DRAPERY, MOTION its LIFE, and IMAGINATION the SOUL that is every where, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.

(*Chapter XIV*)

II

In the application of these principles to purposes of practical criticism as employed in the appraisal of works more or less

imperfect, I have endeavoured to discover what the qualities in a poem are which may be deemed promises and specific symptoms of poetic power, as distinguished from general talent determined to poetic composition by accidental motives, by an act of the will, rather than by the inspiration of a genial and productive nature. In this investigation I could not, I thought, do better than keep before me the earliest work of the greatest genius, that perhaps human nature has yet produced, our *myriad-minded* Shakespeare. I mean the *Venus and Adonis*, and the *Lucrece*; works which give at once strong promises of the strength, and yet obvious proofs of the immaturity of his genius. From these I abstracted the following marks, as characteristics of original poetic genius in general.

1. In the *Venus and Adonis*, the first and most obvious excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majesic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant. The delight in richness and sweetness of sound, even to a faulty excess, if it be evidently original and not the result of an easily imitable mechanism, I regard as a highly favourable promise in the compositions of a young man. 'The man that hath not music in his soul' can indeed never be a genuine poet. Imagery (even taken from nature, much more when transplanted from books, as travels, voyages and works of natural history); affecting incidents; just thoughts; interesting personal or domestic feelings; and with these the art of their combination or intertexture in the form of a poem, may all by incessant effort be acquired as a trade, by a man of talents and much reading who, as I once before observed, has mistaken an intense desire of poetic reputation for a natural poetic genius; the love of the arbitrary end for a possession of the peculiar means. But the sense of musical delight, with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learnt. It is in these that *poeta nascitur non fit.*

2. A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer

himself. At least I have found, that where the subject is taken immediately from the author's personal sensations and experiences, the excellence of a particular poem is but an equivocal mark, and often a fallacious pledge, of genuine poetic power. We may perhaps remember the tale of the statuary, who had acquired considerable reputation for the legs of his goddesses, though the rest of the statue accorded but indifferently with ideal beauty; till his wife, elated by her husband's praises, modestly acknowledged that she herself had been his constant model. In the *Venus and Adonis* this proof of poetic power exists even to excess. It is throughout as if a superior spirit, more intuitive, more intimately conscious even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement which had resulted from the energetic fervor of his own spirit in so vividly exhibiting, what it had so accurately and profoundly contemplated. I think, I should have conjectured from these poems, that even then the great instinct, which impelled the poet to the drama, was secretly working in him, prompting him by a series and never broken chain of imagery, always vivid and, because unbroken, often minute; by the highest effort of the picturesque in words, of which words are capable, higher perhaps than was ever realized by any other poet, even Dante not excepted; to provide a substitute for that visual language, that constant intervention and running comment by tone, look and gesture, which in his dramatic works he was entitled to expect from the players. His *Venus and Adonis* seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by the most consummate actors. You seem to be told nothing, but to see and hear everything. Hence it is, that from the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader, from the rapid flow, the quick change and the playful nature of the thoughts and images; and, above all, from the alienation and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter aloofness of the poet's own feeling from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst; that though the very subject cannot but detract from the pleasure of a delicate mind,

yet never was poem less dangerous on a moral account. Instead of doing as Ariosto and as, still more offensively, Wieland has done, instead of degrading and deforming passion into appetite, the trials of love into the struggles of concupiscence, Shakespeare has here represented the animal impulse itself, so as to preclude all sympathy with it, by dissipating the reader's notice among the thousand outward images and now beautiful, now fanciful circumstances, which form its dresses and its scenery; or by diverting our attention from the main subject by those frequent witty or profound reflections, which the poet's ever active mind has deduced from, or connected with, the imagery and the incidents. The reader is forced into too much action to sympathize with the merely passive of our nature. As little can a mind thus roused and awakened be brooded on by mean and indistinct emotion as the low, lazy mist can creep upon the surface of a lake, while a strong gale is driving it onward in waves and billows.

3. It has been before observed that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant; or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit,

Which shoots its being through earth, sea and air. In the two following lines, for instance, there is nothing objectionable, nothing which would preclude them from forming, in their proper place, part of a descriptive poem:

Behold yon row of pines, that shorn and bow'd
Bend from the sea-blast, seen at twilight eve.

But with a small alteration of rhythm, the same words would be equally in their place in a book of topography, or in a descriptive tour. The same image will rise into a semblance of poetry if thus conveyed:

Yon row of bleak and visionary pines,
By twilight glimpse discerned, mark! how they flee

From the fierce sea-blast, all their tresses wild
Streaming before them.

I have given this as an illustration, by no means as an instance, of that particular excellence which I had in view and in which Shakespeare, even in this earliest, as in his latest, works surpasses all other poets. It is by this, that he still gives a dignity and a passion to the objects which he presents. Unaided by any previous excitement, they burst upon us at once in life and in power.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye.
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 33rd)

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come—
* * * *
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage:
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And Peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My Love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rime,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.
(Sonnet 107)

As of higher worth, so doubtless still more characteristic of poetic genius does the imagery become, when it moulds and colours itself to the circumstances, passion or character, present and foremost in the mind. For unrivalled instances of this excellence the reader's own memory will refer him to the *Lear*, *Othello*, in short to which not of the 'great, ever living, dead man's' dramatic works? *Inopem me copia fecit.* How true it is to nature, he has himself finely expressed in the instance of love in Sonnet 98:

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud pied April drest in all its trim

Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing;
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him, etc.

Scarcely less sure, or if a less valuable, not less indispensable mark... will the imagery supply when, with more than the power of the painter, the poet gives us the liveliest image of succession with the feeling of simultaneousness!

With this he breaketh from the sweet embrace
Of those fair arms, that held him to her heart,
And homeward through the dark lawns runs apace;
Look! how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye.

4. The last character I shall mention, which would prove indeed but little, except as taken conjointly with the former; yet without which the former could scarce exist in a high degree and (even if this were possible) would give promises only of transitory flashes and a meteoric power, is DEPTH and ENERGY of THOUGHT. No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. In Shakespeare's poems, the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. Each in its excess of strength seems to threaten the extinction of the other. At length in the drama they were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other. Or like two rapid streams that at their first meeting within narrow and rocky banks, mutually strive to repel each other, and intermix reluctantly and in tumult, but soon finding a wider channel and more yielding shores, blend and dilate, and flow on in one current and with one voice. The *Venus and Adonis* did not perhaps allow the display of the deeper passions. But the story of Lucretia seems to favour, and even demand, their intensest working. And yet we find in Shakespeare's management of the tale neither pathos nor any other dramatic quality. There is the same minute and faithful imagery as in the former poem, in the same vivid colours, inspirited by the same impetuous vigour of thought, and diverging and contracting with the same activity of the assimilative and of the modifying faculties; and with a yet larger display, a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection; and lastly, with the same perfect dominion, often

domination, over the whole world of language. What then shall we say? Even this: that Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no automation of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it; first studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive wedded itself to his habitual feelings, and at length gave birth to that stupendous power by which he stands alone, with no equal or second in his own class; to that power which seated him on one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain, with Milton as his compeer, not rival.

While the former darts himself forth, and passes into all the forms of human character and passion, the one Proteus of the fire and the flood; the other attracts all forms and things to himself, into the unity of his own ideal. All things and modes of action shape themselves anew in the being of Milton; while Shakespeare becomes all things, yet for ever remaining himself. O what great men hast thou not produced, England! my country! truly indeed—

> Must we be free or die, who speak the tongue,
> Which Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold,
> Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
> Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold!
>
> (Wordsworth)

(Chapter XV)

FROM *ON POETRY IN GENERAL*

WILLIAM HAZLITT

THE BEST GENERAL notion which I can give of poetry is, that it is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting an involuntary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it.

In treating of poetry, I shall speak first of the subject-matter of it, next of the forms of expression to which it gives birth, and afterwards of its connexion with harmony of sound.

Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions. It relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind. It comes home to the bosoms and business of men; for nothing but what so comes home to them in the most general and intelligible shape, can be a subject for poetry. Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature itself. He who has a contempt for poetry, cannot have much respect for himself, or for anything else. It is not a mere frivolous accomplishment (as some persons have been led to imagine), the trifling amusement of a few idle readers or leisure hours—it has been the study and delight of mankind in all ages. Many people suppose that poetry is something to be found only in books, contained in lines of ten syllables, with like endings: but wherever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of a wave of the sea, in the growth of a flower that 'spreads its sweet leaves to the air, and dedicates its beauty to the sun,'—there is poetry, in its birth. If history is a grave study, poetry may be said to be a graver: its materials lie deeper, and are spread wider. History treats, for the most part, of the cumbrous and unwieldy masses of things, the empty cases in which the affairs of the world are packed, under the heads of intrigue or war, in different states, and from century to century: but there is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man, which he would be eager to communicate to others, or which they would listen to with delight, that is not a fit subject for poetry. It is not a branch of authorship: it is 'the stuff of

which our life is made.' The rest is 'mere oblivion,' a dead letter: for all that is worth remembering in life, is the poetry of it. Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness, are all poetry. Poetry is that fine particle within us, that expands, rarefies, refines, raises our whole being: without it 'man's life is poor as beast's.' Man is a poetical animal: and those of us who do not study the principles of poetry, act upon them all our lives, like Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who had always spoken prose without knowing it. The child is a poet in fact, when he first plays at hide-and-seek, or repeats the story of Jack the Giant-killer; the shepherd-boy is a poet, when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers; the countryman, when he stops to look at the rainbow; the city-apprentice, when he gazes after the Lord Mayor's show; the miser, when he hugs his gold; the courtier, who builds his hopes upon a smile; the savage, who paints his idol with blood; the slave, who worships a tyrant, or the tyrant, who fancies himself a god;—the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all live in a world of their own making; and the poet does no more than describe what all the others think and act...

Poetry then is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind 'which ecstasy is very cunning in.' Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightenings of the imagination. The light of poetry is not only a direct but also a reflected light, that while it shows us the object, throws a sparkling radiance on all around it: the flame of the passions, communicated to the imagination, reveals to us, as with a flash of lightning, the inmost recesses of thought, and penetrates our whole being. Poetry represents forms chiefly as they suggest other forms; feelings, as they suggest forms or other feelings. Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. It describes the flowing,

not, the fixed. It does not define the limits of sense, or analyse the distinctions of the understanding, but signifies the excess of the imagination beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feeling. The poetical impression of any object is that uneasy, exquisite sense of beauty or power that cannot be contained within itself; that is impatient of all limit; that (as flame bends to flame) strives to link itself to some other image of kindred beauty or grandeur; to enshrine itself, as it were, in the highest forms of fancy, and to relieve the aching sense of pleasure by expressing it in the boldest manner, and by the most striking examples of the same quality in other instances. Poetry, according to Lord Bacon, for this reason, 'has something divine in it, because it raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity, by conforming the shows of things to the desires of the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to external things, as reason and history do.' It is strictly the language of the imagination; and the imagination is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thoughts and feelings, into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power. This language is not the less true to nature, because it is false in point of fact but so much the more true and natural, if it conveys the impression which the object under the influence of passion makes on the mind. Let an object, for instance, be presented to the senses in a state of agitation or fear—and the imagination will distort or magnify the object, and convert it into the likeness of whatever is most proper to encourage the fear. 'Our eyes are made the fools' of our other faculties. This is the universal law of the imagination.... We compare a man of gigantic stature to a tower: not that he is anything like so large, but because the excess of his size beyond what we are accustomed to expect, or the usual size of things of the class, produces by contrast a greater feeling of magnitude and ponderous strength than another object of ten times the same dimensions. The intensity of the feeling makes up for the disproportion of the objects. Things are equal to the imagination, which have the power of affecting the mind with an equal degree of terror, admiration, delight, or love. When Lear calls upon the heavens to avenge his cause, 'for they are old like him,' there is nothing extravagant or impious in this sublime identification of his age

with theirs; for there is no other image which could do justice to the agonizing sense of his wrongs and his despair!

Poetry is the high-wrought enthusiasm of fancy and feeling. As in describing natural objects, it impregnates sensible impressions with the forms of fancy, so it describes the feelings of pleasure or pain, by blending them with the strongest movements of passion, and the most striking forms of nature. Tragic poetry, which is the most impassioned species of it, strives to carry on the feeling to the utmost point of sublimity or pathos, by all the force of comparison or contrast; loses the sense of present suffering in the imaginary exaggeration of it; exhausts the terror or pity by an unlimited indulgence of it; grapples with impossibilities in its desperate impatience of restraint; throws us back upon the past, forward into the future; brings every moment of our being or object of nature in startling review before us; and in the rapid whirl of events, lifts us from the depths of woe to the highest contemplations on human life. When Lear says of Edgar, 'Nothing but his unkind daughters could have brought him to this;' what a bewildered amazement, what a wrench of the imagination, that cannot be brought to conceive of any other cause of misery than that which has bowed it down, and absorbs all other sorrow in its own! His sorrow, like a flood, supplies the sources of all other sorrow. Again, when he exclaims in the mad scene, 'The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me!' it is passion lending occasion to imagination to make every creature in league against him, conjuring up ingratitude and insult in their least looked-for and most galling shapes, searching every thread and fibre of his heart, and finding out the last remaining image of respect or attachment in the bottom of his breast, only to torture and kill it! . . .

One mode in which the dramatic exhibition of passion excites our sympathy without raising our disgust is, that in proportion as it sharpens the edge of calamity and disappointment, it strengthens the desire of good. It enhances our consciousness of the blessing, by making us sensible of the magnitude of the loss. The storm of passion lays bare and shows us the rich depths of the human soul: the whole of our existence, the sum total of our passions and pursuits, of that which we desire and that which we dread, is brought before us by contrast: the action and

reaction are equal; the keenness of immediate suffering only gives us a more intense aspiration after, and a more intimate participation with the antagonist world of good; makes us drink deeper of the cup of human life; tugs at the heartstrings; loosens the pressure about them; and calls the springs of thought and feeling into play with tenfold force.

Impassioned poetry is an emanation of the moral and intellectual part of our nature, as well as of the sensitive—of the desire to know, the will to act, and the power to feel; and ought to appeal to these different parts of our constitution, in order to be perfect. The domestic or prose tragedy, which is thought to be the most natural, is in this sense the least so, because it appeals almost exclusively to one of these faculties, our sensibility. The tragedies of Moore and Lillo, for this reason, however affecting at the time, oppress and lie like a dead weight upon the mind, a load of misery which it is unable to throw off: the tragedy of Shakespeare, which is true poetry, stirs our inmost affections; abstracts evil from itself by combining it with all the forms of imagination, and with the deepest workings of the heart, and rouses the whole man within us.

The pleasure, however, derived from tragic poetry, is not anything peculiar to it as poetry, as a fictitious and fanciful thing. It is not an anomaly of the imagination. It has its source and groundwork in the common love of strong excitement. As Mr Burke observes, people flock to see a tragedy; but if there were a public execution in the next street, the theatre would very soon be empty. It is not then the difference between fiction and reality that solves the difficulty. Children are satisfied with the stories of ghosts and witches in plain prose: nor do the hawkers of full, true, and particular accounts of murders and executions about the streets, find it necessary to have them turned into penny ballads, before they can dispose of these interesting and authentic documents. The grave politician drives a thriving trade of abuse and calumnies poured out against those whom he makes his enemies for no other end than that he may live by them. The popular preacher makes less frequent mention of heaven than of hell. Oaths and nicknames are only a more vulgar sort of poetry or rhetoric. We are as fond of indulging our violent passions as of reading a description of those of others. We are

as prone to make a torment of our fears, as to luxuriate in our hopes of good. If it be asked, why we do so? the best answer will be, Because we cannot help it. The sense of power is as strong a principle in the mind as the love of pleasure. Objects of terror and pity exercise the same despotic control over it as those of love or beauty. It is as natural to hate as to love, to despise as to admire, to express our hatred or contempt, as our love or admiration.

> Masterless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes.

Not that we like what we loathe; but we like to indulge our hatred and scorn of it; to dwell upon it, to exasperate our idea of it by every refinement of ingenuity and extravagance of illustration; to make it a bugbear to ourselves, to point it out to others in all the splendour of deformity, to embody it to the senses, to stigmatize it by name, to arm our will against it, to know the worst we have to contend with, and to contend with it the utmost. Poetry is only the highest eloquence of passion, the most vivid form of expression that can be given to our conception of anything, whether pleasurable or painful, mean or dignified, delightful or distressing. It is the perfect coincidence of the image and the words with the feeling we have, and of which we cannot get rid in any other way, that gives an instant 'satisfaction to the thought.' This is equally the origin of wit and fancy, of comedy and tragedy, of the sublime and pathetic. When Pope says of the Lord Mayor's show,—

> Now night descending, the proud scene is o'er,
> But lives in Settle's numbers one day more!

—when Collins makes Danger, 'with limbs of giant mould,'

> —Throw him on the steep
> Of some loose hanging rock asleep:

When Lear calls out in extreme anguish,

> Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
> How much more hideous shew'st in a child
> Than the sea-monster!

—the passion of contempt in the one case, of terror in the other, and of indignation in the last, is perfectly satisfied. We see the thing ourselves, and show it to others as we feel it to exist, and as, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to think of it. The

imagination, by thus embodying and turning them to shape, gives an obvious relief to the indistinct and importunate cravings of the will.—We do not wish the thing to be so; but we wish it to appear such as it is. For knowledge is conscious power; and the mind is no longer, in this case, the dupe, though it may be the victim of vice or folly...

THE STUDY OF POETRY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

'THE FUTURE OF POETRY is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry.'

Let me be permitted to quote these words of my own, as uttering the thought which should, in my opinion, go with us and govern us in all our study of poetry. In the present work it is the course of one great contributory stream to the world-river of poetry that we are invited to follow. We are here invited to trace the stream of English poetry. But whether we set ourselves, as here, to follow only one of the several streams that make the mighty river of poetry, or whether we seek to know them all, our governing thought should be the same. We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry 'the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science;' and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge': our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind

relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge' offered to us by poetry.

But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment. Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: 'Charlatan as much as you please; but where is there not charlatanism?'—'Yes,' answers Sainte-Beuve, 'in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the glory, the eternal honour is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being.' It is admirably said, and let us hold fast to it. In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is the glory, the eternal honour, that charlatanism shall find no entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable. Charlatanism is for confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true. It is charlatanism, conscious or unconscious, whenever we confuse or obliterate these. And in poetry, more than anywhere else, it is unpermissible to confuse or obliterate them. For in poetry the distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance. It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. In poetry, as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay. But the consolation and stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life. And the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-

sound, true rather than untrue or half-true.

The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can. A clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, is the most precious benefit which we can gather from a poetical collection such as the present. And yet in the very nature and conduct of such a collection there is inevitably something which tends to obscure in us the consciousness of what our benefit should be, and to distract us from the pursuit of it. We should therefore steadily set it before our minds at the outset, and should compel ourselves to revert constantly to the thought of it as we proceed.

Yes; constantly, in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read. But this real estimate, the only true one, is liable to be superseded, if we are not watchful, by two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate, both of which are fallacious. A poet or a poem may count to us historically, they may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves, and they may count to us really. They may count to us historically. The course of development of a nation's language, thought, and poetry, is profoundly interesting; and by regarding a poet's work as a stage in this course of development we may easily bring ourselves to make it of more importance as poetry than in itself it really is, we may come to use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticizing it; in short, to overrate it. So arises in our poetic judgments the fallacy caused by the estimate which we may call historic. Then, again, a poet or a poem may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves. Our personal affinities, likings, and circumstances have great power to sway our estimate of this or that poet's work, and to make us attach more importance to it as poetry than in itself it really possesses, because to us it is, or has been, of high importance. Here also we overrate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated. And thus we get the source of a second fallacy in our poetic judgments—the fallacy caused by an estimate which we may call personal.

Both fallacies are natural. It is evident how naturally the study of the history and development of a poetry may incline a man to pause over reputations and works once conspicuous but now obscure, and to quarrel with a careless public for skipping, in obedience to mere tradition and habit, from one famous name or work in its national poetry to another, ignorant of what it misses, and of the reason for keeping what it keeps, and of the whole process of growth in its poetry. The French have become diligent students of their own early poetry, which their so-called classical poetry, the court-tragedy of the seventeenth century, a poetry which Pellisson long ago reproached with its want of the true poetic stamp, with its *politesse stérile et rampante*, but which nevertheless has reigned in France as absolutely as if it had been the perfection of classical poetry indeed. The dissatisfaction is natural; yet a lively and accomplished critic, M Charles d'Héricault, the editor of Clément Marot, goes too far when he says that 'the cloud of glory playing round a classic is a mist as dangerous to the future of a literature as it is intolerable for the purposes of history.' 'It hinders,' he goes on, 'it hinders us from seeing more than one single point, the culminating and exceptional point; the summary, fictitious and arbitrary, of a thought and of a work. It substitutes a halo for a physiognomy, it puts a statue where there was once a man, and, hiding from us all trace of the labour, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures, it claims not study but veneration; it does not show us how the thing is done, it imposes upon us a model. Above all, for the historian this creation of classic personages is inadmissible; for it withdraws the poet from his time, from his proper life, it breaks historical relationships, it blinds criticism by conventional admiration, and renders the investigation of literary origins unacceptable. It gives us a human personage no longer, but a God seated immovable amidst His perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus; and hardly will it be possible for the young student, to whom such work is exhibited at such a distance from him, to believe that it did not issue ready made from that divine head.'

All this is brilliantly and tellingly said, but we must plead for a distinction. Everything depends on the reality of a poet's classic character. If he is a dubious classic, let us sift him; if he is a false classic, let us explode him. But if he is a real classic, if

his work belongs to the class of the very best (for this is the true and right meaning of the word *classic, classical*), then the great thing for us is to feel and enjoy his work as deeply as ever we can, and to appreciate the wide difference between it and all work which has not the same high character. This is what is salutary, this is what is formative; this is the great benefit to be got from the study of poetry. Everything which interferes with it, which hinders it, is injurious. True, we must read our classic with open eyes, and not with eyes blinded with superstition; we must perceive when his work comes short, when it drops out of the class of the very best, and we must rate it, in such cases, at its proper value. But the use of this negative criticism is not in itself, it is entirely in its enabling us to have a clearer sense and a deeper enjoyment of what is truly excellent. To trace the labour, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures of a genuine classic, to acquaint oneself with his time and his life and his historical relationships, is mere literary dilettantism unless it has that clear sense and deeper enjoyment for its end. It may be said that the more we know about a classic the better we shall enjoy him; and, if we lived as long as Methuselah and had all of us heads of perfect clearness and wills of perfect steadfastness, this might be true in fact as it is plausible in theory. But the case here is much the same as the case with the Greek and Latin studies of our schoolboys. The elaborate philological groundwork which we require them to lay is in theory an admirable preparation for appreciating the Greek and Latin authors worthily. The more thoroughly we lay the groundwork, the better we shall be able, it may be said, to enjoy the authors. True, if time were not so short, and schoolboys' wits not so soon tired and their power of attention exhausted; only, as it is, the elaborate philological preparation goes on, but the authors are little known and less enjoyed. So with the investigator of 'historic origins' in poetry. He ought to enjoy the true classic all the better for his investigations; he often is distracted from the enjoyment of the best and with the less good he overbusies himself, and is prone to overrate it in proportion to the trouble which it has cost him.

The idea of tracing historic origins and historical relationships cannot be absent from a compilation like the present. And naturally the poets to be exhibited in it will be assigned to those

persons for exhibition who are known to prize them highly, rather than to those who have no special inclination towards them. Moreover, the very occupation with an author, and the business of exhibiting him, disposes us to affirm and amplify his importance. In the present work, therefore, we are sure of frequent temptation to adopt the historic estimate, or the personal estimate, and so forget the real estimate; which latter, nevertheless, we must employ if we are to make poetry yield us its full benefit. So high is that benefit, the benefit of clearly feeling and of deeply enjoying the really excellent, the truly classic in poetry, that we do well, I say, to set it fixedly before our minds as our object in studying poets and poetry, and to make the desire of attaining it the one principle to which, as the *Imitation* says, whatever we may read or come to know, we always return. *Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad unum semper oportet redire principium.*

The historic estimate is likely in especial to affect our judgment and our language when we are dealing with ancient poets; the personal estimate when we are dealing with poets our contemporaries, or at any rate modern. The exaggerations due to the historic estimate are not in themselves, perhaps, of very much gravity. Their report hardly enters the general ear; probably they do not always impose even on the literary men who adopt them. But they lead to a dangerous abuse of language. So we hear Caedmon, amongst our own poets, compared to Milton. I have already noticed the enthusiasm of one accomplished French critic for 'historic origins.' Another eminent French critic, M Vitet, comments upon that famous document of the early poetry of his nation, the *Chanson de Roland.* It is indeed a most interesting document. The *joculator* or *jongleur* Taillefer, who was with William the Conqueror's army at Hastings, marched before the Norman troops, so said the tradition, singing 'of Charlemagne and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux'; and it is suggested that in the *Chanson de Roland* by one Turoldus or Théroulde, a poem preserved in a manuscript of the twelfth century in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, we have certainly the matter, perhaps even some of the words, of the chant which Taillefer sang. The poem has vigour and freshness; it is not without pathos. But M Vitet is not satisfied with seeing in it a document of some poetic value, and of very

high historic and linguistic value; he sees in it a grand and beautiful work, a monument of epic genius. In its general design he finds the grandiose conception, in its details he finds the constant union of simplicity with greatness, which are the marks, he truly says, of the genuine epic, and distinguish it from the artificial epic of literary ages. One thinks of Homer; this is the sort of praise which is given to Homer, and justly given Higher praise cannot well be, and it is the praise due to epic poetry of the highest order only, and to no other. Let us try, then, the *Chanson de Roland* at its best. Roland, mortally wounded, lays himself down under a pine-tree, with his face turned towards Spain and the enemy:

'De plusurs choses a remembrer li prist,
De tantes teres cume li bers cunquist,
De dulce France, des humes de sun lign,
De Carlemagne sun seignor ki l'nurrit.'

That is primitive work, I repeat, with an undeniable poetic quality of its own. It deserves such praise, and such praise is sufficient for it. But now turn to Homer:

'So said she; they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedaemon.'

We are here in another world, another order of poetry altogether; here is rightly due such supreme praise as that which M Vitet gives to the *Chanson de Roland*. If our words are to have any meaning, if our judgments are to have any solidity, we must not heap that supreme praise upon poetry of an order immeasurably inferior.

Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them; it may be very dissimilar. But if we have any tact we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently. Take the two lines which I have just quoted from

Homer, the poet's comment on Helen's mention of her brothers; or take his 'Ah, unhappy pair, why gave we you to King Peleus, to a mortal but ye are without old age. and immortal. Was it that with men born in misery ye might have sorrow?'; the address of Zeus to the horses of Peleus;—or take finally... the words of Achilles to Priam, a suppliant before him, 'Nay, and thou too, old man, in former days wast, as we hear, happy.' Take that incomparable line and a half of Dante, Ugolino's tremendous words:

Io no piangeva; si dentro impietrai.
Piangevan elli...

take the lovely words of Beatrice to Virgil—

Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale...

take the simple, but perfect, single line—

In la sua volontade è nostra pace.

Take of Shakespeare a line or two of Henry the Fourth's expostulation with sleep—

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge...

and take, as well, Hamlet's dying request to Horatio—

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story...

Take of Milton that Miltonic passage—

Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek...

add two such lines as—

And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome...

and finish with the exquisite close to the loss of Proserpine, the loss

...which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world.

These few lines, if we have tact and can use them, are enough

even of themselves to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.

The specimens I have quoted differ widely from one another, but they have in common this: the possession of the very highest poetical quality. If we are thoroughly penetrated by their power, we shall find that we have acquired a sense enabling us, whatever poetry may be laid before us, to feel the degree in which a high poetical quality is present or wanting there. Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have recourse to concrete examples;—to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest, quality, and to say: The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed *there*. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic. Nevertheless if we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of them, we may safely, perhaps, venture on laying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its manner and style. Both of these, the substance and matter on the one hand, the style and manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power. But if we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should thereby be darkening the question, not clearing it. The mark and accent are as given by the substance and matter of that poetry, by the style and manner of that poetry, and of all other poetry which is akin to it in quality.

Only one thing we may add as to the substance and matter of poetry, guiding ourselves by Aristotle's profound observation that the superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness .... Let us add, therefore, to what we have said, this: that the substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing, in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. We may add yet further what is in itself evident, that to the style and manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more by their movement. And

though we distinguish between the two characters, the two accents, of superiority, yet they are nevertheless vitally connected one with the other. The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner. The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other. So far as high poetic truth and seriousness are wanting to a poet's matter and substance, so far also, we may be sure, will a high poetic stamp of diction and movement be wanting to his style and manner. In proportion as this high stamp of diction and movement, again, is absent from a poet's style and manner, we shall find, also, that high poetic truth and seriousness are absent from his substance and matter.

So stated, these are but dry generalities; their whole force lies in their application. And I could wish every student of poetry to make the application of them for himself. Made by himself, the application would impress itself upon his mind far more deeply than made by me. Neither will my limits allow me to make any full application of the generalities above propounded; but in the hope of bringing out, at any rate, some significance in them, and of establishing an important principle more firmly by their means, I will, in the space which remains to me, follow rapidly from the commencement the course of our English poetry with them in my view.

Once more I return to the early poetry of France, with which our own poetry, in its origins, is indissolubly connected. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that seedtime of all modern language and literature, the poetry of France had a clear predominance in Europe. Of the two divisions of that poetry, its productions in the *langue d'oil* and its productions in the *langue d'oc*, the poetry of the *langue d'oc*, of southern France, of the troubadours, is of importance because of its effect on Italian literature;—the first literature of modern Europe to strike the true and grand note, and to bring forth, as in Dante and Petrarch it brought forth, classics. But the predominance of French poetry in Europe, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is due to its poetry of the *langue d'oil*, the poetry of northern France and of the tongue which is now the French language. In the twelfth century

the bloom of this romance poetry was earlier and stronger in England, at the court of our Anglo-Norman kings, than in France itself. But it was a bloom of French poetry; and as our native poetry formed itself, it formed itself out of this. The romance-poems which took possession of the heart and imagination of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are French; 'they are,' as Southey justly says, 'the pride of French literature, nor have we anything which can be placed in competition with them.' Themes were supplied from all quarters; but the romance-setting which was common to them all, and which gained the ear of Europe, was French. This constituted for the French poetry, literature, and language, at the height of the Middle Age, an unchallenged predominance. The Italian Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, wrote his *Treasure* in French because he says, *'la parleure en est plus délitable et plus commune à toutes gens'*. In the same century, the thirteenth, the French romance writer, Christian of Troyes, formulates the claims, in chivalry and letters, of France, his native country, as follows:

Or vous ert par ce livre apris,
Que Greese ot de chevalerie
Le premier los et de clergie;
Puis vint chevalerie à Rome,
Et de la clergie la some,
Qui ore est en France venue.
Diex doinst qu'ele i soit retenue,
Et que li lius li abelisse
Tant que de France n'isse
L'onor qui s'i est arestée!

'Now by this book you will learn that first Greece had the renown for chivalry and letters: then chivalry and the primacy in letters passed to Rome, and now it is come to France. God grant it may be kept there; and that the place may please it so well, that the honour which has come to make stay in France may never depart thence!'

Yet it is now all gone, this French romance-poetry, of which the weight of substance and the power of style are not unfairly represented by this extract from Christian of Troyes. Only by means of the historic estimate can we persuade ourselves now to think that any of it is of poetical importance.

But in the fourteenth century there comes an Englishman nourished on this poetry, taught his trade by this poetry, getting words, rhyme, metre from this poetry; for even of that stanza which the Italians used, and which Chaucer derived immediately from the Italians, the basis and suggestion was probably given in France. Chaucer (I have already named him) fascinated his contemporaries, but so too did Christian of Troyes and Wolfram of Eschenbach. Chaucer's power of fascination, however, is enduring; his poetical importance does not need the assistance of the historic estimate; it is real. He is a genuine source of joy and strength, which is flowing still for us and will flow always. He will be read, as time goes on, far more generally than he is read now. His language is a cause of difficulty for us; but so also, and I think in quite as great a degree, is the language of Burns. In Chaucer's case, as in that of Burns, it is a difficulty to be unhesitatingly accepted and overcome.

If we ask ourselves wherein consists the immense superiority of Chaucer's poetry over the romance-poetry—why it is that in passing from this to Chaucer we suddenly feel ourselves to be in another world, we shall find that his superiority is both in the substance of his poetry and in the style of his poetry. His superiority in substance is given by his large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human life,—so unlike the total want, in the romance-poets, of all intelligent command of it. Chaucer has not their helplessness; he has gained the power to survey the world from a central, a truly human point of view. We have only to call to mind the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. The right comment upon it is Dryden's: 'It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*.' And again: 'He is a perpetual fountain of good sense.' It is by a large, free, sound representation of things, that poetry, this high criticism of life, has truth of substance; and Chaucer's poetry has truth of substance.

Of his style and manner, if we think first of the romance-poetry and then of Chaucer's divine liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement, it is difficult to speak temperately. They are irresistible, and justify all the rapture with which his successors speak of his 'gold dew-drops of speech.' Johnson misses the point entirely when he finds fault with Dryden for ascribing to Chaucer the first refinement of our numbers, and says that Gower

also can show smooth numbers and easy rhymes. The refinement of our numbers means something far more than this. A nation may have versifiers with smooth numbers and easy rhymes, and yet may have no real poetry at all. Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry; he is our 'well of English undefiled' because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement. he makes an epoch and founds a tradition. In Spenser. Shakespeare. Milton. Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement, of Chaucer; at one time it is his liquid diction of which in these poets we feel the virtue, and at another time it is his fluid movement. And the virtue is irresistible.

Bounded as is my space, I must yet find room for an example of Chaucer's virtue, as I have given examples to show the virtue of the great classics. I feel disposed to say that a single line is enough to show the charm of Chaucer's verse; that merely one line like this—

O martyr souded in virginitee!

has a virtue of manner and movement such as we shall not find in all the verse of romance-poetry;—but this is saying nothing. The virtue is such as we shall not find, perhaps, in all English poetry, outside the poets whom I have named as the special inheritors of Chaucer's tradition. A single line, however, is too little if we have not the strain of Chaucer's verse well in our memory; let us take a stanza. It is from *The Prioress's Tale*, the story of the Christian child murdered in a Jewry—

My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone
Saidè this child, and as by way of kinde
I should have deyd, yea, longè time agone;
But Jesu Christ, as ye in Bookès finde,
Will that his glory last and be in minde,
And for the worship of his mother dere
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clere.

Wordsworth has modernized this Tale, and to feel how delicate and evanescent is the charm of verse, we have only to read Wordsworth's first three lines of this stanza after Chaucer's—

My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.

The charm is departed. It is often said that the power of liquidness and fluidity in Chaucer's verse was dependent upon a free, a licentious dealing with language, such as is now impossible; upon a liberty, such as Burns too enjoyed, of making words like *neck, bird,* into a dissyllable by adding to them, and words like *cause, rhyme,* into a dissyllable by sounding the *e* mute. It is true that Chaucer's fluidity is conjoined with this liberty, and is admirably served by it; but we ought not to say that it was dependent upon it. It was dependent upon his talent. Other poets with a like liberty do not attain to the fluidity of Chaucer; Burns himself does not attain to it. Poets, again, who have a talent akin to Chaucer's, such as Shakespeare or Keats, have known how to attain to his fluidity without the like liberty.

And yet Chaucer is not one of the great classics. His poetry transcends and effaces, easily and without effort, all the romance poetry of Catholic Christendom; it transcends and effaces all the English poetry contemporary with it; it transcends and effaces all the English poetry subsequent to it down to the age of Elizabeth. Of such avail is poetic truth of substance, in its natural and necessary union with poetic truth of style. And yet, I say, Chaucer is not one of the great classics. He has not their accent.

What is wanting to him is suggested by the mere mention of the name of the first great classic of Christendom, the immortal poet who died eighty years before Chaucer,—Dante. The accent of such verse as

In la sua volontade è nostra pace...

is altogether beyond Chaucer's reach; we praise him, but we feel that this accent is out of the question for him. It may be said that it was necessarily out of the reach of any poet in the England of that stage of growth. Possibly; but we are to adopt a real, not a historic, estimate of poetry. However we may account for its absence, something is wanting, then, to the poetry of Chaucer, which poetry must have before it can be placed in the glorious class of the best. And there is no doubt what that something is. It is... the high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry. The substance of Chaucer's poetry, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity; but it has not this high seriousness. Homer's criticism of life has it, Dante's has it,

Shakespeare's has it. It is this chiefly which gives to our spirits what they can rest upon; and with the increasing demands of our modern ages upon poetry, this virtue of giving us what we can rest upon will be more and more highly esteemed. A voice from the slums of Paris, fifty or sixty years after Chaucer, the voice of poor Villon out of his life of riot and crime, has at its happy moments (as, for instance, in the last stanza of *La Belle Heaulmière*) more of this important poetic virtue of seriousness than all the productions of Chaucer. But its apparition in Villon, and in men like Villon, is fitful; the greatness of the great poets, the power of their criticism of life, is that their virtue is sustained.

To our praise, therefore, of Chaucer as a poet there must be this limitation; he lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue. Still, the main fact for us to bear in mind about Chaucer is his sterling value according to that real estimate which we firmly adopt for all poets. He has poetic truth of substance, though he has not high poetic seriousness, and corresponding to his truth of substance he has an exquisite virtue of style and manner. With him is born our real poetry.

For my present purpose I need not dwell on our Elizabethan poetry, or on the continuation and close of this poetry in Milton. We all of us profess to be agreed in the estimate of this poetry; we all of us recognize it as great poetry, our greatest, and Shakespeare and Milton as our poetical classics. The real estimate, here, has universal currency. With the next age of our poetry divergency and difficulty begin. An historic estimate of that poetry has established itself; and the question is, whether it will be found to coincide with the real estimate.

The age of Dryden, together with our whole eighteenth century which followed it, sincerely believed itself to have produced poetical classics of its own, and even to have made advance, in poetry, beyond all its predecessors. Dryden regards as not seriously disputable the opinion 'that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers.' Cowley could see nothing at all in Chaucer's poetry. Dryden heartily admired, and, as we have seen, praised its matter admirably; but of its exquisite manner and movement all he can find to say is that

'there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect.' Addison, wishing to praise Chaucer's numbers, compares them with Dryden's own. And all through the eighteenth century, and down even into our own times, the stereotyped phrase of approbation for good verse found in our early poetry has been, that it even approached the verse of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

Are Dryden and Pope poetical classics? Is the historic estimate, which represents them as such, and which has been so long established that it cannot easily give way, the real estimate? Wordsworth and Coleridge, as is well known, denied it; but the authority of Wordsworth and Coleridge does not weigh much with the young generation, and there are many signs to show that the eighteenth century and its judgments are coming into favour again. Are the favourite poets of the eighteenth century classics?

It is impossible within my present limits to discuss the question fully. And what man of letters would not shrink from seeming to dispose dictatorially of the claims of two men who are, at any rate, such masters in letters as Dryden and Pope; two men of such admirable talent, both of them, and one of them, Dryden, a man, on all sides, of such energetic and genial power? And yet, if we are to gain the full benefit from poetry, we must have the real estimate of it. I cast about for some mode of arriving, in the present case, at such an estimate without offence. And perhaps the best way is to begin, as it is easy to begin, with cordial praise.

When we find Chapman, the Elizabethan translator of Homer, expressing himself in his preface thus: 'Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora and Ganges few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm that, the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun,'—we pronounce that such a prose is intolerable. When we find Milton writing: 'And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,'—we pronounce that such a prose has its own grandeur, but that it is obsolete and inconvenient.

But when we find Dryden telling us: 'What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write',—then we exclaim that here at last we have the true English prose, a prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how. Yet Dryden was Milton's contemporary.

But after the Restoration the time had come when our nation felt the imperious need of a fit prose. So, too, the time had likewise come when our nation felt the imperious need of freeing itself from the absorbing preoccupation which religion in the Puritan age had exercised. It was impossible that this freedom should be brought about without some negative excess, without some neglect and impairment of the religious life of the soul; and the spiritual history of the eighteenth century shows us that the freedom was not achieved without them. Still, the freedom was achieved; the preoccupation, an undoubtedly baneful and retarding one if it had continued, was got rid of. And as with religion amongst us at that period, so it was also with letters. A fit prose was a necessity; but it was impossible that a fit prose should establish itself amongst us without some touch of frost to the imaginative life of the soul. The needful qualities for a fit prose are regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. The men of letters, whose destiny it may be to bring their nation to the attainment of a fit prose, must of necessity, whether they work in prose or in verse, give a predominating, and almost exclusive attention to the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. But an almost exclusive attention to these qualities involves some repression and silencing of poetry.

We are to regard Dryden as the puissant and glorious founder, Pope as the splendid high priest, of our age of prose and reason, of our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century. For the purposes of their mission and destiny their poetry, like their prose, is admirable. Do you ask me whether Dryden's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

> A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged.

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the inaugurator of an

age of prose and reason. Do you ask me whether Pope's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

To Hounslow Heath I point, and Banstead Down;
Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own.

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the high priest of an age of prose and reason. But do you ask me whether such verse proceeds from men with an adequate poetic criticism of life, from men whose criticism of life has a high seriousness, or even without that high seriousness, has poetic largeness, freedom, insight, benignity? Do you ask me whether the application of ideas to life in the verse of these men, often a powerful application no doubt, is a powerful *poetic* application? Do you ask me whether the poetry of these men has either the matter or the inseparable manner of such an adequate poetic criticism, whether it has the accent of

Absent thee from felicity awhile...

or of

And what is else not to be overcome...

or of

O martyr souded in virginitee!

I answer: It has not and cannot have them; it is the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason. Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose.

Gray is our poetical classic of that literature and age; the position of Gray is singular, and demands a word of notice here. He has not the volume or the power of poets who, coming in times more favourable, have attained to an independent criticism of life. But he lived with the great poets, he lived, above all, with the Greeks, through perpetually studying and enjoying them; and he caught their poetic point of view for regarding life, caught their poetic manner. The point of view and the manner are not self-sprung in him, he caught them of others; and he had not the free and abundant use of them. But whereas Addison and Pope never had the use of them, Gray had the use of them at times. He is the scantiest and frailest of classics in our poetry, but he is a classic.

And now, after Gray, we are met, as we draw towards the

end of the eighteenth century, we are met by the great name of Burns. We enter now on times where the personal estimate of poets begins to be rife, and where the real estimate of them is not reached without difficulty. But in spite of the disturbing pressures of personal partiality, of national partiality, let us try to reach a real estimate of the poetry of Burns.

By his English poetry Burns in general belongs to the eighteenth century, and has little importance for us.

> Mark ruffian Violence, distain'd with crimes,
> Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
> View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
> As guileful Fraud points out the erring way;
> While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
> The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong!

Evidently this is not the real Burns, or his name and fame would have disappeared long ago. Nor is Clarinda's love-poet, Sylvander, the real Burns either. But he tells us himself: 'These English songs gravel me to death. I have not the command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think that my ideas are more barren in English than in Scotch. I have been at *Duncan Gray* to dress it in English, but all I can do is desperately stupid.' We English turn naturally, in Burns, to the poems in our own language, because we can read them easily; but in those poems we have not the real Burns.

The real Burns is of course in his Scotch poems. Let us boldly say that of much of this poetry, a poetry dealing perpetually with Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, a Scotchman's estimate is apt to be personal. A Scotchman is used to this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners; he has a tenderness for it; he meets its poet half-way. In this tender mood he reads pieces like the *Holy Fair* or *Halloween*. But this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him when it is not a partial countryman who reads him; for in itself it is not a beautiful world, and no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world. Burns's world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, is often a harsh, a sordid, a repulsive world; even the world of his *Cottar's Saturday Night* is not a beautiful world. No doubt a poet's criticism of life may have

such truth and power that it triumphs over its world and delights us. Burns may triumph over this world, often he does triumph over his world, but let us observe how and where. Burns is the first case we have had where the bias of the personal estimate tends to mislead; let us look at him closely—he can bear it.

Many of his admirers will tell us that we have Burns, convivial, genuine, delightful, here—

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college;
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill or penny wheep
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in Burns, and it is unsatisfactory, not because it is bacchanalian poetry, but because it has not that accent of sincerity which bacchanalian poetry, to do it justice, very often has. There is something in it of bravado, something which makes us feel that we have not the man speaking to us with his real voice; something, therefore, poetically unsound.

With still more confidence, will his admirers tell us that we have the genuine Burns, the great poet, when his strain asserts the independence, equality, dignity, of men, as in the famous song *For a' that and a' that*—

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Here they find his grand, genuine touches; and still more, when this puissant genius, who so often set morality at defiance, falls moralizing—

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing,
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling.

Or in a higher strain—

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone;
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

Or in a better strain yet, a strain, his admirers will say, unsurpassable—

To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

There is criticism of life for you, the admirers of Burns will say to us; there is the application of ideas to life! There is, undoubtedly. The doctrine of the last-quoted lines coincides almost exactly with what was the aim and end, Xenophon tells us, of all the teaching of Socrates. And the application is a powerful one: made by a man of vigorous understanding, and (need I say) a master of language.

But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Those laws fix as an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness; the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity. The accent of high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity, is what gives to such verse as

In la sua volontade è nostra pace...

to such criticism of life as Dante's, its power. Is this accent felt in the passages which I have been quoting from Burns? Surely not; surely, if our sense is quick, we perceive that we have not in those passages a voice from the very inmost soul of the genuine Burns; he is not speaking to us from these depths, he is more or less preaching. And the compensation for admiring such passages less, from missing the perfect poetic accent in them, will be that we shall admire more the poetry where that accent is found.

No; Burns, like Chaucer, comes short of the high seriousness of the great classics, and the virtue of matter and manner which goes with that high seriousness is wanting to his work. At moments he touches it in a profound and passionate melancholy, as in those four immortal lines taken by Byron as a motto for *The Bride of Abydos*, but which have in them a depth of poetic quality such as resides in no verse of Byron's own—

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

But a whole poem of that quality Burns cannot make; the rest, in the *Farewell to Nancy*, is verbiage.

We arrive best at the real estimate of Burns, I think, by conceiving his work as having truth of matter and truth of manner, but not the accent or the poetic virtue of the highest masters. His genuine criticism of life, when the sheer poet in him speaks, is ironic; it is not—

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest, they must be best
Because they are Thy will!

It is far rather: *Whistle owre the lave o't*! Yet we may say of him as of Chaucer, that of life and the world, as they come before him, his view is large, free, shrewd, benignant,—truly poetic, therefore; and his manner of rendering what he sees is to match. But we must note, at the same time, his great difference from Chaucer. The freedom of Chaucer is heightened, in Burns, by a fiery, reckless energy; the benignity of Chaucer

deepens, in Burns, into an overwhelming sense of the pathos of things;—of the pathos of human nature, the pathos, also, of non-human nature. Instead of the fluidity of Chaucer's manner, the manner of Burns has spring, bounding swiftness. Burns is by far the greater force, though he has perhaps less charm. The world of Chaucer is fairer, richer, more significant that that of Burns; but when the largeness and freedom of Burns get full sweep, as in *Tam o' Shanter*, or still more in that puissant and splendid production, *The Jolly Beggars*, his world may be what it will, his poetic genius triumphs over it. In the world of *The Jolly Beggars* there is more than hideousness and squalor, there is bestiality; yet the piece is a superb poetic success. It has a breadth, truth and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's Cellar, of Goethe's *Faust*, seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes.

Here, where his largeness and freedom serve him so admirably, and also in those poems and songs where to shrewdness he adds infinite archness and wit, and to benignity infinite pathos, where his manner is flawless, and a perfect poetic whole is the result,—in things like the address to the mouse whose home he had ruined, in things like *Duncan Gray*, *Tam Glen*, *Whistle and I'll come to you my Lad*, *Auld Lang Syne* (this list might be made much longer)—here we have the genuine Burns, of whom the real estimate must be high indeed. Not a classic, nor with the excellent *spoudaiotes* of the great classics, nor with a verse rising to a criticism of life and a virtue like theirs; but a poet with thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of style, giving us a poetry sound to the core. We all of us have a leaning towards the pathetic, and may be inclined perhaps to prize Burns most for his touches of piercing, sometimes almost intolerable, pathos; for verse like—

> We two hae paidl't i' the burn
> From mornin' sun till dine;
> But seas between us braid hae roar'd
> Sin auld lang syne....

where he is as lovely as he is sound. But perhaps it is by the perfection of soundness of his lighter and archer masterpieces that he is poetically most wholesome for us. For the votary misled by a personal estimate of Shelley, as so many of us have

been, are and will be,—of that beautiful spirit building his many-coloured haze of words and images

Pinnacled dim in the intense inane—

no contact can be wholesomer than the contact with Burns at his archest and soundest. Side by side with the

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire,
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire...

of *Prometheus Unbound*, how salutary, how very salutary, to place this from *Tam Glen*—

My minnie does constantly deave me
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

But we enter on burning ground as we approach the poetry of times so near to us—poetry like that of Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth—of which the estimates are so often not only personal, but personal with passion. For my purpose, it is enough to have taken the single case of Burns, the first poet we come to of whose work the estimate formed is evidently apt to be personal, and to have suggested how we may proceed, using the poetry of the great classics as a sort of touchstone, to correct this estimate, as we had previously corrected by the same means the historic estimate where we met with it. A collection like the present, with its succession of celebrated names and celebrated poems, offers a good opportunity to us for resolutely endeavouring to make our estimates of poetry real. I have sought to point out a method which will help us in making them so, and to exhibit it in use so far as to put any one who likes in a way of applying it for himself.

At any rate the end to which the method and the estimate are designed to lead, and from leading to which, if they do lead to it, they get their whole value,—the benefit of being able clearly to feel and deeply to enjoy the best, the truly classic, in poetry, —is an end, let me say it once more at parting, of supreme importance. We are often told that an era is opening in which we are to see multitudes of a common sort of readers, and masses of a common sort of literature; that such readers do not want

and could not relish anything better than such literature, and that to provide it is becoming a vast and profitable industry. Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be abundantly worth while to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of momentary appearances; it never will lose supremacy. Currency and supremacy are insured to it, not indeed by the world's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far deeper,—by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

MATTHEW ARNOLD

MANY OBJECTIONS have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: 'Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is.' I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, 'almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires,—criticism;' and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I have assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by a Mr Shairp's excellent notice of Wordsworth, to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business, which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters:

'The writers in these publications' (the Reviews), 'while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favourable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry.'

And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect:

'Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said today that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would

be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may do much injury to the minds of others; a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.'

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the 'false or malicious criticism' of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment? is it true that all given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes* instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets*? nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his Ecclesiastical Sonnets than when he made his celebrated Preface, so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes,—not difficult, I think, to be traced,—which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service, at any given moment, the practice of criticism either is, or may be made, to his mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the true function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it

is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, which might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher. The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a masterwork of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its

own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, 'in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is.' Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society,—considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable,—every one can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it would be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematureness comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative

force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different. But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is,—his thought richer, and his influence of wider application,—was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch: Shelley had plenty of reading, Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles,—as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying,—had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but, besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustaining asmosphere of great value. Such an atmosphere the many-sided learning and the long and widely combined critical effort of Germany formed for Goethe, when he lived and worked. There was no national glow of life and thought there as in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth. That was the poet's weakness. But there was a sort of equivalent for it in the complete culture and unfettered thinking of a large body of Germans. That was his strength. In

the England of the first quarter of this century there was neither a national glow of life and thought, such as we had in the age of Elizabeth, nor yet a culture and a force of learning and criticism such as were to be found in Germany. Therefore the creative power of poetry wanted, for success in the highest sense, materials and a basis; a thorough interpretation of the world was necessarily denied to it.

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renascence, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements; movements in which the human spirit looked for its activity. The French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement, which went on in France under the old *regime*, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renascence; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution. Goethe reproached this last expressly with having 'thrown quiet culture back.' Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this!—that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however,—that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense; this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful; it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience? This is the English fashion, a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place is not

law in another; what is law here today is not law even here tomorrow; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding on another's. The old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surpliced minister in St Giles's Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force; at least I should say so if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in the *Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is,—it will probably long remain, the greatest, the most animating event in history. And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit—the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element: on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionize this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the

world of practice; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day: 'That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever.' I venture to think he was wrong; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas: it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert has said beautifully: *'C'est la force et le droit qui réglent toutes choses dans le monde; la force en attendant le droit.'* (Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready*; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right,—*right*, so far as we are concerned, is not ready,—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, should depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready*. This was the grand error of the French Revolution; and its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renascence, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration*. The great force of that epoch of concentration was England; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault. But on the whole, and for those who

can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth. They contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought. It is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr Price and the Liberals were enraged with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter;—the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he 'to party gave up what was meant for mankind,' that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere convictions of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,—the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791,—with these striking words:

'The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists. The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.*'

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me

one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas: when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth. I* know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

For the Englishman in general is like my friend the member of Parliament, and believes, point-blank, that for a thing to be an anomaly is absolutely no objection to it whatever. He is like Lord Auckland of Burke's day, who, in a memorandum on the French Revolution, talks of 'certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers, who have presumed themselves capable of establishing a new system of society.' The Englishman has been called a political animal, and he values what is political and practical so much that ideas easily become objects of dislike in his eyes, and thinkers 'miscreants,' because ideas and thinkers have rashly meddled with politics and practice. This would be all very well if the dislike and neglect confined themselves to ideas transported out of their own sphere, and meddling rashly with practice; but they are inevitably extended to ideas as such, and to the whole life of intelligence; practice is everything, a free play of the mind is nothing. The notion of the free play of the mind upon all subjects being a pleasure in itself, being an object of desire, being an essential provider of elements without which a nation's spirit, whatever compensations it may have for them, must, in the long run, die of inanition, hardly enters into an Englishman's thoughts. It is noticeable that the word *curiosity*, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake,—it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality. It obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and

195287

everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. This is an instinct for which there is, I think, little original sympathy in the practical English nature, and what there was of it has undergone a long benumbing period of blight and suppression in the epoch of concentration which followed the French Revolution.

But epochs of concentration cannot well endure for ever; epochs of expansion, in the due course of things, follow them. Such an epoch of expansion seems to be opening in this country. In the first place all danger of a hostile forcible pressure of foreign ideas upon our practice has long disappeared; like the traveller in the fable, therefore, we begin to wear our cloak a little more loosely. Then, with a long peace, the ideas of Europe steal gradually and amicably in, and mingle, though in infinitesimally small quantities at a time, with our own notions. Then, too, in spite of all that is said about the absorbing and brutalizing influence of our passionate material progress, it seems to me indisputable that this progress is likely, though not certain, to lead in the end to an apparition of intellectual life; and that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind, and that the mind may be made the source of great pleasure. I grant it is mainly the privilege of faith, at present, to discern this end to our railways, our business, and our fortune-making; but we shall see if, here as elsewhere, faith is not in the end the true prophet. Our ease, our travelling, and our unbounded liberty to hold just as hard and securely as we please to the practice to which our notions have given birth, all tend to beget an inclination to deal a little more freely with these notions themselves, to canvass them a little, to penetrate a little into their real nature. Flutterings of curiosity, in the foreign sense of the word, appear amongst us, and it is in these that criticism must look to find its account. Criticism first; a time of true creative activity, perhaps,—which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism,—hereafter, when criticism has done its work.

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rules for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it

ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word,—*disinterestedness.* And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called 'the practical view of things'; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches; by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it. For what is at present the bane of criticism in this country? It is that practical considerations cling to it and stifle it. It subserves interests not its own. Our organs of criticism are organs of men and parties having practical ends to serve, and with them those practical ends are the first thing and the play of mind the second; so much play of mind as is compatible with the prosecution of those practical ends is all that is wanted. An organ like the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, having for its main function to understand and utter the best that is known and thought in the world, existing, it may be said, as just an organ for a free play of the mind, we have not. But we have the *Edinburgh Review*, existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *British Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the political Dissenters, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Times*, existing as an organ of the common, satisfied, well-to-do Englishman, and for as much play of mind as may suit its being that. And so on

through all the various fractions, political and religious, of our society; every fraction has, as such, its organ of criticism, but the notion of combining all fractions in the common pleasure of a free disinterested play of mind meets with no favour. Directly this play of mind wants to have more scope, and to forget the pressure of practical considerations a little, it is checked, it is made to feel the chain. We saw this the other day in the extinction, so much to be regretted, of the *Home and Foreign Review*. Perhaps in no organ of criticism in this country was there so much knowledge, so much play of mind; but these could not save it. The *Dublin Review* subordinates play of mind to the practical business of English and Irish Catholicism, and lives. It must needs be that men should act in sects and parties, that each of these sects and parties should have its organ, and should make this organ subserve the interests of its action, but it would be well, too, that there should be a criticism, not the minister of these interests, not their enemy, but absolutely and entirely independent of them. No other criticism will ever attain any real authority or make any real way towards its end,—the creating a current of true and fresh ideas.

It is because criticism has so little kept in the pure intellectual sphere, has so little detached itself from practice, has been so directly polemical and controversial, that it has so ill accomplished, in this country, its best spiritual work; which is to keep man from a self-satisfaction which is retarding and vulgarizing, to lead him towards perfection, by making his mind dwell upon what is excellent in itself, and the absolute beauty and fitness of things. A polemical practical criticism makes men blind even to the ideal imperfection of their practice, makes them willingly assert its ideal perfection, in order the better to secure it against attack; and clearly this is narrowing and baneful for them. If they were reassured on the practical side, speculative considerations of ideal perfection they might be brought to entertain, and their spiritual horizon would thus gradually widen. Sir Charles Adderley says to the Warwickshire farmers:

'Talk of the improvement of breed! Why, the race we ourselves represent, the men and women, the old Anglo-Saxon race, are the best breed in the whole world.... The absence of a too enervating climate, too unclouded skies, and a too luxurious

nature, has produced so vigorous a race of people, and has rendered us so superior to all the world.'

Mr Roebuck says to the Sheffield cutlers:

'I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not property safe? Is not every man able to say what he likes? Can you not walk from one end of England to the other in perfect security? I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last.'

Now obviously there is a peril for poor human nature in words and thoughts of such exuberant self-satisfaction, until we find ourselves safe in the streets of the Celestial City.

Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blicke
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt—

says Goethe; 'the little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do.' Clearly this is a better line of reflection for weak humanity, so long as it remains on this earthly field of labour and trial.

But neither Sir Charles Adderley nor Mr Roebuck is by nature inaccessible to considerations of this sort. They only lose sight of them owing to the controversial life we all lead, and the practical form which all speculation takes with us. They have in view opponents whose aim is not ideal, but practical; and in their zeal to uphold their own practice against these innovators, they go so far as even to attribute to this practice an ideal perfection. Somebody has been wanting to introduce a six-pound franchise, or to abolish church-rates, or to collect agricultural statistics by force, or to diminish local self-government. How natural, in reply to such proposals, very likely improper or ill-timed, to go a little beyond the mark and to say stoutly, 'Such a race of people as we stand, so superior to all the world! The old Anglo-Saxon race, the best breed in the whole world! I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last! I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?' And so long as criticism answers this dithyramb by insisting that the old Anglo-Saxon race would be still more superior to all others if it had no church-rates, or that our unrivalled happiness would last yet longer with a six-pound franchise, so long will the strain, 'The best breed in the whole world' swell louder and louder, everything ideal and

refining will be lost out of sight, and both the assailed and their critics will remain in a sphere, to say the truth, perfectly unvital, a sphere in which spiritual progression is impossible. But let criticism leave church-rates and the franchise alone, and in the most candid spirit, without a single lurking thought of practical innovation, confront with our dithyramb this paragraph on which I stumbled in a newspaper immediately after reading Mr Roebuck:

'A shocking child murder has just been committed at Nottingham. A girl named Wragg left the workhouse there on Saturday morning with her young illegitimate child. The child was soon afterwards found dead on Mapperly Hills, having been strangled. Wragg is in custody.'

Nothing but that; but, in juxtaposition with the absolute eulogies of Sir Charles Adderley and Mr Roebuck, how eloquent, how suggestive are those few lines! 'Our old Anglo-Saxon breed, the best in the whole world'—how much that is harsh and ill-favoured there is in this best! Wragg! If we are to talk of ideal perfection, of 'the best in the whole world,' has any one reflected what a touch of grossness in our race, what an original shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions, is shown by the natural growth amongst us of such hideous names,—Higginbottom, Stiggins, Bugg! In India and Attica they were luckier in this respect than 'the best race in the world'; by the Ilissus there was no Wragg, poor thing! And 'our unrivalled happiness';—what an element of grimness, bareness, and hideousness mixes with it and blurs it; the workhouse, the dismal Mapperly Hills,—how dismal those who have seen them will remember;—the gloom, the smoke, the cold, the strangled illegitimate child! 'I ask you whether, the world over or in past history, there is anything like it?' Perhaps not, one is inclined to answer; but at any rate, in that case, the world is very much to be pitied. And the final touch,—short, bleak and inhuman: *Wragg is in custody.* The sex lost in the confusion of our unrivalled happiness; or (shall I say) the superfluous Christian name lopped off by the straightforward vigour of our old Anglo-Saxon breed! There is profit for the spirit in such contrasts as this; criticism serves the cause of perfection by establishing them. By eluding sterile conflict, by refusing to remain in the sphere where alone narrow and

relative conceptions have any worth and validity, criticism may diminish its momentary importance, but only in this way has it a chance of gaining admittance for those wider and more perfect conceptions to which all its duty is really owed. Mr Roebuck will have a poor opinion of an adversary who replies to his defiant songs of triumph only by murmuring under his breath, *Wragg is in custody*, but in no other way will these songs of triumph be induced gradually to moderate themselves, to get rid of what in them is excessive and offensive, and to fall into a softer and truer key.

It will be said that it is a very subtle and indirect action which I am thus prescribing for criticism, and that, by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work. Slow and obscure it may be, but it is the only proper work of criticism. The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all. The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex; most of all will this be the case where that life is so powerful as it is in England. But it is only by remaining collected, and refusing to lend himself to the point of view of the practical man, that the critic can do the practical man any service; and it is only by the greatest sincerity in pursuing his own course, and by at last convincing even the practical man of his sincerity, that he can escape misunderstandings which perpetually threaten him.

For the practical man is not apt for fine distinctions, and yet in these distinctions truth and the highest culture greatly find their account. But it is not easy to lead a practical man,—unless you reassure him as to your practical intentions, you have no chance of leading him,—to see that a thing which he has always been used to look at from one side only, which he greatly values, and which, looked at from that side, quite deserves, perhaps, all the

prizing and admiring which he bestows upon it,—that this thing, looked at from another side, may appear much less beneficent and beautiful, and yet retain all the claims to our practical allegiance. Where shall we find language innocent enough, how shall we make the spotless purity of our intentions evident enough, to enable us to say to the political Englishman that the British Constitution itself, which, seen from the practical side, looks such a magnificent organ of progress and virtue, seen from the speculative side,—with its compromises, its love of facts, its horror of theory, its studied avoidance of clear thoughts,—that, seen from this side, our august Constitution sometimes looks,—forgive me, shade of Lord Somers!—a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines? How is Cobbett to say this and not be misunderstood, blackened as he is with the smoke of a life-long conflict in the field of political practice? how is Mr Carlyle to say it and not be misunderstood, after his furious raid into this field with his Latter-day Pamphlets? how is Mr Ruskin, after his pugnacious political economy? I say, the critic must keep out of the region of immediate practice in the political, social, humanitarian sphere, if he wants to make a beginning for that more free speculative treatment of things, which may perhaps one day make its benefits felt even in this sphere, but in a natural and thence irresistible manner.

Do what he will, however, the critic will still remain exposed to frequent misunderstandings, and nowhere so much as in this country. For here people are particularly indisposed even to comprehend that without this free disinterested treatment of things, truth and the highest culture are out of the question. So immersed are they in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. 'We are all *terrae filii*,' cries their eloquent advocate; 'all Philistines together. Away with the notion of proceeding by any other course than the course dear to the Philistines; let us have a social movement, let us organize and combine a party to pursue truth and new thought, let us call it *the liberal party*, and let us all stick to each other, and back each other up. Let us have no nonsense about independent criti-

cism, and intellectual delicacy, and the few and the many. Don't let us trouble ourselves about foreign thought; we shall invent the whole thing for ourselves as we go along. If one of us speaks well, applaud him; if one of us speaks ill, applaud him too; we are all in the same movement, we are all liberals, we are all in pursuit of truth.' In this way the pursuit of truth becomes really a social, practical, pleasurable affair, almost requiring a chairman, a secretary, and advertisements; with the excitement of an occasional scandal, with a little resistance to give the happy sense of difficulty overcome; but in general, plenty of bustle and very little thought. To act is so easy, as Goethe says; to think is so hard! It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party movement, one of these *terrae filii*; it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terrae filius*, when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann: *Périssons en résistant.*

How serious a matter it is to try and resist, I had ample opportunity of experiencing when I ventured some time ago to criticize the celebrated first volume of Bishop Colenso. The echoes of the storm which was then raised I still, from time to time, hear grumbling round me. That storm arose out of a misunderstanding almost inevitable. It is a result of no little culture to attain to a clear perception that science and religion are two wholly different things; the multitude will for ever confuse them; but happily that is of no great real importance, for while the multitude imagines itself to live by its false science, it does really live by its true religion. Dr Colenso, however, in his first volume did all he could to strengthen the confusion, and to make it dangerous. He did this with the best intentions, I freely admit, and with the most candid ignorance that this was the natural effect of what he was doing; but, says Joubert, 'Ignorance, which in matters of morals extenuates the crime, is itself, in intellectual matters, a crime of the first order.' I criticized Bishop Colenso's speculative confusion. Immediately there was a cry raised: 'What is this? here is a liberal attacking a liberal. Do not you belong to the movement? are you not a friend of truth? Is not Bishop Colenso in pursuit of truth? then speak with proper respect of his book. Dr Stanley is another friend of truth, and you speak

with proper respect of his book; why make these invidious differences? both books are excellent, admirable, liberal; Bishop Colenso's perhaps the most so, because it is the boldest, and will have the best practical consequences for the liberal cause. Do you want to encourage to the attack of a brother liberal his, and your, and our implacable enemies, the *Church and State Review* or the *Record*,—the High Church rhinoceros and the Evangelican hyaena? Be silent, therefore; or rather speak, speak as loud as ever you can! and go into ecstasies over the eight hundred and odd pigeons.'

But criticism cannot follow this coarse and indiscriminate method. It is unfortunately possible for a man in pursuit of truth to write a book which reposes upon a false conception. Even the practical consequences of a book are to genuine criticism no recommendation of it, if the book is, in the highest sense, blundering. I see that a lady who herself, too, is in pursuit of truth, and who writes with great ability, but a little too much, perhaps, under the influence of the practical spirit of the English liberal movement, classes Bishop Colenso's book and M Renan's togther, in her survey of the religious state of Europe, as facts of the same order, works, both of them, of 'great importance'; 'great ability, power, and skill'; Bishop Colenso's perhaps, the most powerful; at least, Miss Cobbe gives special expression to her gratitude that to Bishop Colenso 'has been given the strength to grasp, and the courage to teach, truths of such deep import.' In the same way, more than one popular writer has compared him to Luther. Now it is just this kind of false estimate which the critical spirit is, it seems to me, bound to resist. It is really the strongest possible proof of the low ebb at which, in England, the critical spirit is, that while the critical hit in the religious literature of Germany is Dr Strauss's book, in that of France M Renan's book, the book of Bishop Colenso's is the critical hit in the religious literature of England. Bishop Colenso's book reposes on a total misconception of the essential elements of the religious problem, as that problem is now presented for solution. To criticism, therefore, which seeks to have the best that is known and thought on this problem, it is, however well meant, of no importance whatever. M Renan's book attempts a new synthesis of the elements furnished to us by the

Four Gospels. It attempts, in my opinion, a synthesis, perhaps premature, perhaps impossible, certainly not successful. Up to the present time, at any rate, we must acquiesce in Fleury's sentence on such recastings of the Gospel story: *Quiconque s'imagine la pouvoir mieux écrire, ne l'entend pas.* M Renan had himself passed by anticipation a like sentence on his own work, when he said: 'If a new presentation of the character of Jesus were offered to me, I would not have it; its very clearness would be, in my opinion, the best proof of its insufficiency.' His friends may with perfect justice rejoin that at the sight of the Holy Land, and of the Gospel story, all the current of M Renan's thoughts may have naturally changed, and a new casting of that story irresistibly suggested itself to him; and that this is just a case for applying Cicero's maxim: Change of mind is not inconsistency—*nemo doctus unquam mutationem consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.* Nevertheless, for criticism, M Renan's first thought must still be the truer one, as long as his new casting so fails more fully to commend itself, more fully (to use Coleridge's happy phrase about the Bible) to *find* us. Still M Renan's attempt is, for criticism, of the most real interest and importance, since, with all its difficulty, a fresh synthesis of the New Testament *data*—not a making war on them, in Voltaire's fashion, not a leaving them out of mind, in the world's fashion, but the putting a new construction upon them, the taking them from under the old, traditional, conventional point of view and placing them under a new one— is the very essence of the religious problem, as now presented; and only by efforts in this direction can it receive a solution.

Again, in the same spirit in which she judges Bishop Colenso, Miss Cobbe, like so many earnest liberals of our practical race, both here and in America, herself sets vigorously about a positive reconstruction of religion, about making a religion of the future out of hand, or at least setting about making it. We must not rest, she and they are always thinking and saying, in negative criticism, we must be creative and constructive; hence we have such works as her recent *Religious Duty*, and works still more considerable, perhaps, by others, which will be in every one's mind. These works often have much ability; they often spring out of sincere convictions, and a sincere wish to do good;

and they sometimes, perhaps, do good. Their fault is (if I may be permitted to say so) one which they have in common with the British College of Health, in the New Road. Every one knows the British College of Health; it is that building with the lion and the statue of the Goddess Hygeia before it; at least I am sure about the lion, though I am not absolutely certain about the Goddess Hygeia. This building does credit, perhaps, to the resources of Dr Morrison and his disciples; but it falls a good deal short of one's idea of what a British College of Health ought to be. In England, where we hate public interference and love individual enterprise, we have a whole crop of places like the British College of Health, the grand name without the grand thing. Unluckily, creditable to individual enterprise as they are, they tend to impair our taste by making us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to a public institution. The same may be said of the religions of the future of Miss Cobbe and others. Creditable, like the British College of Health, to the resources of their authors, they yet tend to make us forget what more grandiose, noble, or beautiful character properly belongs to religious constructions. The historic religions, with all their faults, have had this; it certainly belongs to the religious sentiment, when it truly flowers, to have this; and we impoverish our spirit if we allow a religion of the future without it. What then is the duty of criticism here? To take the practical point of view, to applaud the liberal movement and all its works,—its New Road religions of the future into the bargain,—for their general utility's sake? By no means; but to be perpetually dissatisfied with these works, while they perpetually fall short of a high and perfect ideal.

For criticism, these are elementary laws; but they never can be popular, and in this country they have been very little followed, and one meets with immense obstacles in following them. That is a reason for asserting them again and again. Criticism must maintain its independence of the practical spirit and its aims. Even with well-meant efforts of the practical spirit it must express dissatisfaction, if in the sphere of the ideal they seem impoverishing and limiting. It must not hurry on to the goal because of its practical importance. It must be patient and know how to wait, and flexible, and know how to attach itself to things

and how to withdraw from them. It must be apt to study and praise elements that for the fulness of spiritual perfection are wanted, even though they belong to a power which in the practical sphere may be maleficent. It must be apt to discern the spiritual shortcomings or illusions of powers that in the practical sphere may be beneficent. And this without any notion of favouring or injuring, in the practical sphere, one power or the other; without any notion of playing off, in this sphere, one power against the other. When one looks, for instance, at the English Divorce Court,—an institution which perhaps has its practical conveniences, but which in the ideal sphere is so hideous; an institution which neither makes divorce impossible nor makes it decent, which allows a man to get rid of his wife, or a wife of her husband, but makes them drag one another first, for the public edification, through a mire of unutterable infamy,—when one looks at this charming institution, I say, with its crowded trials, its newspaper reports, and its money compensations, this institution in which the gross unregenerate British Philistine has indeed stamped an image of himself,—one may be permitted to find the marriage theory of Catholicism refreshing and elevating. Or when Protestantism, in virtue of its supposed rational and intellectual origin, gives the law to criticism too magisterially, criticism may and must remind it that its pretensions, in this respect, are illusive and do it harm; that the Reformation was a moral rather than an intellectual event; that Luther's theory of grace no more exactly reflects the mind of the spirit than Bossuet's philosophy of history reflects it; and that there is no more antecedent probability of the Bishop of Durham's stock of ideas being agreeable to perfect reason than of Pope Pius the Ninth's. But criticism will not on that account forget the achievements of Protestantism in the practical and moral sphere; nor that, even in the intellectual sphere, Protestantism, though in a blind and stumbling manner, carried forward the Renascence, while Catholicism threw itself violently across its path.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the want of ardour and movement which he now found amongst young men in this country with what he remembered in his own youth, twenty years ago. 'What reformers we were then!' he exclaimed; 'What a zeal we had! how we canvassed every ins-

titution in Church and State, and were prepared to remodel them all on first principles!' He was inclined to regret as a spiritual flagging, the lull which he saw. I am disposed rather to regard it as a pause in which the turn to a new mode of spiritual progress is being accomplished. Everything was long seen, by the young and ardent amongst us, in inseparable connection with politics and practical life. We have pretty well exhausted the benefits of seeing things in this connection, we have got all that can be got by so seeing them. Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the serener life of the mind and spirit. This life, too, may have its excesses and dangers, but they are not for us at present. Let us think of quietly enlarging our stock of true and fresh ideas, and not, as soon as we get an idea or half an idea, be running out with it into the street, and trying to make it rule there. Our ideas will, in the end, shape the world all the better for maturing a little. Perhaps in fifty years' time it will in the English House of Commons be an objection to an institution that it is an anomaly, and my friend the Member of Parliament will shudder in his grave. But let us in the meanwhile rather endeavour that in twenty years' time it may, in English literature, be an objection to a proposition that it is absurd. That will be a change so vast, that the imagination almost fails to grasp it. *Ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.*

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. I have wished, above all, to insist on the attitude which criticism should adopt towards things in general; on its right tone and temper of mind. But then comes another question as to the subject-matter which literary criticisms should most seek. Here, in general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know,

while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence. The English critic of literature, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself. And it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver,—that the critic will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our *best in the world*?) criticism may have to deal with a subject matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics, it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics and criticism of the current English literature of the day; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism: a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world. How much of current

English literature comes into this 'best that is known and thought in the world'? Not very much I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass—so much better disregarded—of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavour, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with,—the criticism which alone can much help us for the future,—the criticism which throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit,—is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result, and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

There is so much inviting us!—what are we to take? what will nourish us in growth towards perfection? That is the question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others. In this idea of the critic's business the essays brought together in the following pages have had their origin; in this idea, widely different as are their subjects, they have, perhaps, their unity.

I conclude with what I said at the beginning: to have the

sense of creative activity is the great happiness and the great proof of being alive; and it is not denied to criticism to have it; but then criticism must be sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge. Then it may have in no contemptible measure, a joyful sense of creative activity; a sense which a man of insight and conscience will prefer to what he might derive from a poor, starved, fragmentary, inadequate creation. And at some epochs no other creation is possible.

Still, in full measure, the sense of creative activity belongs only to genuine creation; in literature we must never forget that. But what true man of letters ever can forget it? It is no such common matter for a gifted nature to come into possession of a current of true and living ideas, and to produce amidst the inspiration of them, that we are likely to underrate it. The epochs of Aeschylus and Shakespeare make us feel their pre-eminence. In an epoch like those is, no doubt, the true life of literature; there is the promised land, towards which criticism can only beckon. That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries; it will certainly be the best title to esteem with posterity.

FROM *THE RENAISSANCE*

WALTER PATER

PREFACE

MANY ATTEMPTS have been made by writers on art and poetry to define beauty in the abstract, to express it in the most general terms, to find a universal formula for it. The value of these attempts has most often been in the suggestive and penetrating things said by the way. Such discussions help us very little to enjoy what has been well done in art or poetry, to discriminate between what is more and what is less excellent in them, or to use words like beauty, excellence, art, poetry, with a more precise meaning than they would otherwise have. Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract, but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not a universal formula for it, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics.

'To see the object as in itself it really is,' has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly. The objects with which aesthetic criticism deals—music, poetry, artistic and accomplished forms of human life—are indeed receptacles of so many powers or forces: they possess, like the products of nature, so many virtues or qualities. What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to *me*? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do; and, as in the study of light, of morals, of number, one must realize such primary data for oneself, or not at all.

And he who experiences these impressions strongly, and drives directly at the analysis and discrimination of them, has no need to trouble himself with the abstract question what beauty is in itself, or what its exact relation is to truth or experience—metaphysical questions, as unprofitable as metaphysical questions elsewhere. He may pass them all by as being, answerable or not, of no interest to him.

The aesthetic critic, then, regards all the objects with which he has to do, all works of art, and the fairer forms of nature and human life, as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations, each of a more or less peculiar or unique kind. This influence he feels, and wishes to explain, by analysing and reducing it to its elements. To him, the picture, the landscape, the engaging personality in life or in a book, *La Gioconda*, the hills of Carrara, Pico of Mirandola, are valuable for their virtues, as we say in speaking of a herb, a wine, a gem; for the property each has of affecting one with a special, a unique, impression of pleasure. Our education becomes complete in proportion as our susceptibility to these impressions increases in depth and variety. And the function of the aesthetic critic is to distinguish, analyse, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced. His end is reached when he has disengaged that virtue, and noted it, as a chemist notes some natural element, for himself and others; and the rule for those who would reach this end is stated with great exactness in the words of a recent critic of Sainte-Beuve: *De se borner à connaitre de près les belles choses, et à s'en nourrir en exquis amateurs, en humanistes accomplis.*

What is important, then, is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects. He will remember always that beauty exists in many forms. To him all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal. In all ages there have been some excellent workmen, and some excellent work done. The question he asks is always:—In whom did the stir, the

genius, the sentiment of the period find itself? Where was the receptacle of its refinement, its elevation, its taste? 'The ages are all equal,' says William Blake, 'but genius is always above its age.'

Often it will require great nicety to disengage this virtue from the commoner elements with which it may be found in combination. Few artists, not Goethe or Byron even, work quite cleanly, casting off all *débris*, and leaving us only what the heat of their imagination has wholly fused and transformed. Take, for instance, the writings of Wordsworth. The heat of his genius, entering into the substance of his work, has crystallized a part, but only a part, of it; and in that great mass of verse there is much which might well be forgotten. But scattered up and down it, sometimes fusing and transforming entire compositions, like the stanzas on *Resolution and Independence*, or the *Ode on the Recollections of Childhood*, sometimes, as if at random, depositing a fine crystal here or there, in a matter it does not wholly search through and transform, we trace the action of his unique, incommunicable faculty, that strange, mystical sense of a life in natural things, and of man's life as a part of nature, drawing strength and colour and character from local influences, from the hills and streams, and from natural sights and sounds. Well! that is the virtue, the active principle in Wordsworth's poetry; and then the function of the critic of Wordsworth is to follow up that active principle, to disengage it, to mark the degree in which it penetrates his verse.

The subjects of the following studies are taken from the history of the *Renaissance*, and touch what I think the chief points in that complex, many-sided movement. I have explained in the first of them what I understand by the word, giving it a much wider scope than was intended by those who originally used it to denote only that revival of classical antiquity in the fifteenth century which was but one of many results of a general excitement and enlightening of the human mind, of which the great aim and achievements of what, as Christian art, is often falsely opposed to the Renaissance, were another result. This outbreak of the human spirit may be traced far into the Middle Age itself, with its motives already clearly pronounced, the care for physical beauty, the worship of the body, the breaking down

of those limits which the religious system of the Middle Age imposed on the heart and the imagination. I have taken as an example of this movement, this earlier Renaissance within the Middle Age itself, and as an expression of its qualities, two little compositions in early French; not because they constitute the best possible expression of them, but because they help the unity of my series, in as much as the Renaissance ends also in France, in French poetry, in a phase of which the writings of Joachim du Bellay are in many ways the most perfect illustration. The Renaissance, in truth, put forth in France an aftermath, a wonderful later growth, the products of which have to the full that subtle and delicate sweetness which belongs to a refined and comely decadence; just as its earliest phases have the freshness which belongs to all periods of growth in art, the charm of *ascêsis*, of the austere and serious girding of the loins in youth.

But it is in Italy, in the fifteenth century, that the interest of the Renaissance mainly lies,—in that solemn fifteenth century which can hardly be studied too much, not merely for its positive results in the things of the intellect and the imagination, its concrete works of art, its special and prominent personalities, with their profound aesthetic charm, but for its general spirit and character, for the ethical qualities of which it is a consummate type.

The various forms of intellectual activity which together make up the culture of an age, move for the most part from different starting points, and by unconnected roads. As products of the same generation they partake, indeed, of a common character, and unconsciously illustrate each other; but of the producers themselves, each group is solitary, gaining what advantage or disadvantage there may be in intellectual isolation. Art and poetry, philosophy and the religious life, and that other life of refined pleasure and action in the open places of the world, are each of them confined to its own circle of ideas, and those who prosecute either of them are generally little curious of the thoughts of others. There come, however, from time to time, eras of more favourable conditions, in which the thoughts of men draw nearer together than is their wont, and the many interests of the intellectual world combine in one complete type

of general culture. The fifteenth century in Italy is one of these happier eras; and what is sometimes said of the age of Pericles is true of that of Lorenzo:—it is an age productive in personalities, many-sided, centralized, complete. Here, artists and philosophers and those whom the action of the world has elevated and made keen, do not live in isolation, but breathe a common air, and catch light and heat from each other's thoughts. There is a spirit of general elevation and enlightenment in which all alike communicate. It is the unity of this spirit which gives unity to all the various products of the Renaissance; and it is to this intimate alliance with mind, this participation in the best thoughts which that age produced, that the art of Italy in the fifteenth century owes much of its grave dignity and influence.

I have added an essay on Winckelmann, as not incongruous with the studies which precede it, because Winckelmann, coming in the eighteenth century, really belongs in spirit to an earlier age. By his enthusiasm for the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, by his Hellenism, his life-long struggle to attain to the Greek spirit, he is in sympathy with the humanists of an earlier century. He is the last fruit of the Renaissance, and explains in a striking way its motive and tendencies.

CONCLUSION

To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without—our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorus and lime and delicate fibres, are present not in the human body alone: we detect them in places most remote from it. Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them—the passage of the blood, the wasting and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain by every ray of light and sound—processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the

elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us; it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them—a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it. This at least of flamelike our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye and fading of colour from the wall,—the movement of the shoreside, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest,—but the race of the mid-stream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflexion begins to play upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like a trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions—colour, odour, texture—in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further; the whole scope of observation is dwarfed to the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in

perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

Philosophiren, says Novalis, *ist dephlegmatisiren, vivificiren.* The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit is to rouse, to startle it into sharp and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us,—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and

of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. 'Philosophy is the microscope of thought.' The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

One of the most beautiful passages in the writings of Rousseau is that in the sixth book of the *Confessions*, where he describes the awakening in him of the literary sense. An undefinable taint of death had always clung about him, and now in early manhood he believed himself smitten by mortal disease. He asked himself how he might make as much as possible of the interval that remained; and he was not biassed by anything in his previous life when he decided that it must be by intellectual excitement, which he found just then in the clear, fresh writings of Voltaire. Well! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve—*les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis:* we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among 'the children of this world,' in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

T. S. ELIOT

I

WRITING SEVERAL YEARS ago on the subject of the relation of the new to the old in art, I formulated a view to which I still adhere, in sentences which I take the liberty of quoting, because the present paper is an application of the principle they express:

'The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past.'

I was dealing then with the artist, and the sense of tradition which, it seemed to me, the artist should have; but it was generally a problem of order; and the function of criticism seems to be essentially a problem of order too. I thought of literature then, as I think of it now, of the literature of the world, of the literature of Europe, of the literature of a single country, not as a collection of the writings of individuals, but as 'organic wholes', as systems in relation to which, and only in relation to which, individual works of literary art, and the works of individual artists, have their significance. There is accordingly something outside of the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself in order to earn and to obtain his unique position. A common inheritance and a common cause unite artists consciously or unconsciously: it must be admitted that the union is mostly unconscious. Between the true artists of any time there is, I believe,

an unconscious community. And, as our instincts of tidiness imperatively command us not to leave to the haphazard of unconsciousness what we can attempt to do consciously, we are forced to conclude that what happens unconsciously we could bring about, and form into a purpose, if we made a conscious attempt. The second-rate artist, of course, cannot afford to surrender himself to any common action; for his chief task is the assertion of all the trifling differences which are his distinction: only the man who has so much to give that he can forget himself in his work can afford to collaborate, to exchange, to contribute.

If such views are held about art, it follows that *a fortiori* whoever holds them must hold similar views about criticism. When I say criticism, I mean of course in this place the commentation and exposition of works of art by means of written words; for of the general use of the word 'criticism' to mean such writings, as Matthew Arnold uses it in his essay, I shall presently make several qualifications. No exponent of criticism (in this limited sense) has, I presume, ever made the preposterous assumption that criticism is an autotelic activity. I do not deny that art may be affirmed to serve ends beyond itself; but art is not required to be aware of these ends, and indeed performs its function, whatever that may be, according to various theories of value, much better by indifference to them. Criticism, on the other hand, must always profess an end in view, which, roughly speaking, appears to be the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste. The critic's task, therefore, appears to be quite clearly cut out for him; and it ought to be comparatively easy to decide whether he performs it satisfactorily, and in general, what kinds of criticism are useful and what are otiose. But on giving the matter a little attention, we perceive that criticism, far from being a simple and orderly field of beneficent activity, from which impostors can be readily ejected, is no better than a Sunday park of contending and contentious orators, who have not even arrived at the articulation of their differences. Here, one would suppose, was a place for quiet co-operative labour. The critic, one would suppose, if he is to justify his existence, should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks—tares to which we are all subject—and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible, in the common pursuit of true

judgment. When we find that quite the contrary prevails, we begin to suspect that the critic owes his livelihood to the violence and extremity of his opposition to other critics, or else to some trifling oddities of his own with which he contrives to season the opinions which men already hold, and which out of vanity or sloth they prefer to maintain. We are tempted to expel the lot.

Immediately after such an eviction, or as soon as relief has abated our rage, we are compelled to admit that there remain certain books, certain essays, certain sentences, certain men, who have been 'useful' to us. And our next step is to attempt to classify these, and find out whether we establish any principles for deciding what kinds of book should be preserved, and what aims and methods of criticism should be followed.

II

The view of the relation of the work of art to art, of the work of literature to literature, of 'criticism' to criticism, which I have outlined above, seemed to me natural and self-evident. I owe to Mr Middleton Murry my perception of the contentious character of the problem; or rather, my perception that there is a definite and final choice involved. To Mr Murry I feel an increasing debt of gratitude. Most of our critics are occupied in labour of obnubilation; in reconciling, in hushing up, in patting down, in squeezing in, in glozing over, in concocting pleasant sedatives, in pretending that they are nice men and the others of very doubtful repute. Mr Murry is not one of these. He is aware that there are definite positions to be taken, and that now and then one must actually reject something and select something else. He is not the anonymous writer who in a literary paper several years ago asserted that Romanticism and Classicism are much the same thing, and that the true Classical Age in France was the Age which produced the Gothic cathedrals and—Jeanne d' Arc. With Mr Murry's formulation of Classicism and Romanticism I cannot agree; the difference seems to me rather the difference between the complete and the fragmentary, the adult and the immature, the orderly and the chaotic. But what Mr Murry does show is that there are at least two attitudes toward literature and toward everything, and that you cannot

hold both. And the attitude which he professes appears to imply that the other has no standing in England whatever. For it is made a national, a racial issue.

Mr Murry makes his issue perfectly clear. 'Catholicism,' he says, 'stands for the principle of unquestioned spiritual authority outside the individual; that is also the principle of Classicism in literature.' Within the orbit within which Mr Murry's discussion moves, this seems to me an unimpeachable definition, though it is of course not all that there is to be said about either Catholicism or Classicism. Those of us who find ourselves supporting what Mr Murry calls Classicism believe that men cannot get on without giving allegiance to something outside themselves. I am aware that 'outside' and 'inside' are terms which provide unlimited opportunity for quibbling, and that no psychologist would tolerate a discussion which shuffled such base coinage; but I will presume that Mr Murry and myself can agree that for our purpose these counters are adequate, and concur in disregarding the admonitions of our psychological friends. If you find that you have to imagine it as outside, then it is outside. If, then, a man's interest is political, he must, I presume, profess an allegiance to principles, or to a form of government, or to a monarch; and if he is interested in religion, and has one, to a Church; and if he happens to be interested in literature, he must acknowledge, it seems to me, just that sort of allegiance which I endeavoured to put forth in the preceding section. There is, nevertheless, an alternative, which Mr Murry has expressed. 'The English writer, the English divine, the English statesman, inherit no rules from their forebears; they inherit only this: a sense that in the last resort they must depend upon the inner voice.' This statesment does, I admit, appear to cover certain cases; it throws a flood of light upon Mr Lloyd George. But why '*in the last resort*'? Do they, then, avoid the dictates of the inner voice up to the last extremity? My belief is that those who possess this inner voice are ready enough to hearken to it, and will hear no other. The inner voice, in fact, sounds remarkably like an old principle which has been formulated by an elder critic in of inner voice ride ten in a compartment to a football match at the now familiar phrase of 'doing as one likes'. The possessors Swansea, listening to the inner voice, which breathes the eternal

message of vanity, fear, and lust.

Mr Murry will say, with some show of justice, that this is a wilful misrepresentation. He says: 'If they (the English writer, divine, statsman) dig *deep enough* in their pursuit of self-knowledge—a piece of mining done with the intellect alone, but with the whole man—they will come upon a self that is universal'—an exercise far beyond the strength of our football enthusiasts. It is an exercise, however, which I believe was of enough interest to Catholicism for several handbooks to be written on its practice. But the Catholic practitioners were, I believe, with the possible exception of certain heretics, not palpitating Narcissi; the Catholic did not believe that God and himself were identical. 'The man who truly interrogates himself will ultimately hear the voice of God,' Mr Murry says. In theory, this leads to a form of pantheism which I maintain is not European—just as Mr Murry maintains that 'Classicism' is not English. For its practical results, one may refer to the verses of *Hudibras*.

I did not realize that Mr Murry was the spokesman for a considerable sect, until I read in the editorial columns of a dignified daily that 'magnificent as the representatives of the classical genius have been in England, they are not sole expressions of the English character, which remains at bottom obstinately "humorous" and nonconformist.' This writer is moderate in using the qualification *sole*, and brutally frank in attributing this 'humorousness' to 'the unreclaimed Teutonic element in us.' But it strikes me that Mr Murry, and this other voice, are either too obstinate or too tolerant. The question is, the first question, *not* what comes natural or what comes *easy* to us, but what is right? Either one attitude is better than the other, or else it is indifferent. But how can such a choice be indifferent? Surely the reference to racial origins, or the mere statement that the French are thus, and the English otherwise, is not expected to settle the question: which, of two antithetical views, is *right*? And I cannot understand why the opposition between Classicism and Romanticism should be profound enough in Latin countries (Mr Murry says it is) and yet of no significance among ourselves. For if the French are *naturally* classical, why should there be any 'opposition' in France, any more than there is here? And if Classicism is not natural to them, but something acquired, why

not acquire it here? Were the French in the year 1600 classical, and the English in the same year romantic? A more important difference, to my mind, is that the French in the year 1600 *had already a more mature prose.*

III

This discussion may seem to have led us a long way from the subject of this paper. But it was worth my while to follow Mr Murry's comparison of Outside Authority with the Inner Voice. For to those who obey the inner voice (perhaps 'obey' is not the word) nothing that I can say about criticism will have the slightest value. For they will not be interested in the attempt to find any common principles for the pursuit of criticism. Why have principles, when one has the inner voice? If I like a thing, that is all I want; and if enough of us, shouting all together, like it, that should be all that *you* (who don't like it) ought to want. The law of art, said Mr Clutton Brock, is all case law. And we can not only like whatever we like to like but we can like it for any reason we choose. We are not, in fact, concerned with literary *perfection* at all—the search for perfection is a sign of pettiness, for it shows that the writer has admitted the existence of an unquestioned spiritual authority outside himself, to which he has attempted to *conform*. We are not in fact interested in art. We will not worship Baal. 'The principle of classical leadership is that obeisance is made to the office or to the tradition, never to the man.' And we want, not principles, but men.

Thus speaks the Inner Voice. It is a voice to which, for convenience, we may give a name: and the name I suggest is Whiggery.

IV

Leaving, then, those whose calling and election are sure and returning to those who shamefully depend upon tradition and the accumulated wisdom of time, and restricting the discussion to those who sympathize with each other in this frailty, we may comment for a moment upon the use of the terms 'critical' and 'creative' by one whose place, on the whole, is with the weaker

brethren. Matthew Arnold distinguishes far too bluntly, it seems to me, between the two activities: he overlooks the capital importance of criticism in the work of creation itself. Probably, indeed, the larger part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour; the labour of shifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing: this frightful toil is as much critical as creative. I maintain even that the criticism employed by a trained and skilled writer on his own work is the most vital, the highest kind of criticism; and (as I think I have said before) that some creative writers are superior to others solely because their critical faculty is superior. There is a tendency, and I think it is a whiggery tendency, to decry this critical toil of the artist; to propound the thesis that the great artist is an unconscious artist, unconsciously inscribing on his banner the words Muddle Through. Those of us who are Inner Deaf Mutes are, however, sometimes compensated by a humble conscience, which, though without oracular expertness, counsels us to do the best we can, reminds us that our compositions ought to be as free from defects as possible (to atone for their lack of inspiration), and, in short, makes us waste a good deal of time. We are aware, too, that the critical discrimination which comes so hardly to us has in more fortunate men flashed in the very heat of creation; and we do not assume that because works have been composed without apparent critical labour, no critical labour has been done. We do not know what previous labours have prepared, or what goes on, in the way of criticism, all the time in the minds of the creators.

But this affirmation recoils upon us. If so large a part of creation is really criticism, is not a large part of what is called 'critical writing' really creative? If so, is there not creative criticism in the ordinary sense? The answer seems to be, that there is no equation. I have assumed as axiomatic that a creation, a work of art, is autotelic; and that criticism, by definition, is *about* something other than itself. Hence you cannot fuse creation with criticism as you can fuse criticism with creation. The critical activity finds its highest, its true fulfilment in a kind of union with creation in the labour of the artist.

But no writer is completely self-sufficient, and many creative writers have a critical activity which is not all discharged into

their work. Some seem to require to keep their critical powers in condition for the real work by exercising them miscellaneously; others, on completing a work, need to continue the critical activity by commenting on it. There is no general rule. And as men can learn from each other, so some of these treatises have been useful to other writers. And some of them have been useful to those who were not writers.

At one time I was inclined to take the extreme position that the *only* critics worth reading were the critics who practised, and practised well, the art of which they wrote. But I had to stretch this frame to make some important inclusions; and I have since been in search of a formula which should cover everything I wished to include, even if it included more than I wanted. And the most important qualification which I have been able to find, which accounts for the peculiar importance of the criticism of practitioners, is that a critic must have a very highly developed sense of fact. This is by no means a trifling or frequent gift. And it is not one which easily wins popular commendations. The sense of fact is something very slow to develop, and its complete development means perhaps the very pinnacle of civilization. For there are so many spheres of fact to be mastered, and our outermost sphere of fact, of knowledge, of control, will be ringed with narcotic fancies in the sphere beyond. To the member of the Browning Study Circle, the discussion of poets about poetry may seem arid, technical, and limited. It is merely that the practitioners have clarified and reduced to a state of fact all the feelings that the member can only enjoy in the most nebulous form; the dry technique implies, for those who have mastered it, all that the member thrills to; only that has been made into something precise, tractable, under control. That, at all events, is one reason for the value of the practitioner's criticism—he is dealing with his facts, and he can help us to do the same.

And at every level of criticism I find the same necessity regnant. There is a large part of critical writing which consists in 'interpreting' an author, a work. This is not on the level of the Study Circle either; it occasionally happens that one person obtains an understanding of another, or a creative writer, which he can partially communicate, and which we feel to be true and

illuminating. It is difficult to confirm the 'interpretation' by external evidence. To anyone who is skilled in fact on this level there will be evidence enough. But who is to prove his own skill? And for every success in this type of writing there are thousands of impostures. Instead of insight, you get a fiction. Your test is to apply it again and again to the original, with your view of the original to guide you. But there is no one to guarantee your competence, and once again we find ourselves in a dilemma.

We must ourselves decide what is useful to us and what is not; and it is quite likely that we are not competent to decide. But it is fairly certain that 'interpretation' (I am not touching upon the acrostic element in literature) is only legitimate when it is not interpretation at all, but merely putting the reader in possession of facts which he would otherwise have missed. I have had some experience of Extension lecturing, and I have found only two ways of leading any pupils to like anything with the right liking: to present them with a selection of the simpler kind of facts about a work—its conditions, its setting, its genesis —or else to spring the work on them in such a way that they were not prepared to be prejudiced against it. There were many facts to help them with Elizabethan drama: the poems of T. E. Hulme only needed to be read aloud to have immediate effect.

Comparison and analysis, I have said before, and Remy de Gourmont has said before me (a real master of fact—sometimes, I am afraid, when he moved outside of literature, a master illusionist of fact), are the chief tools of the critic. It is obvious indeed that they *are* tools, to be handled with care, and not employed in an inquiry into the number of times giraffes are mentioned in the English novel. They are not used with conspicuous success by many contemporary writers. You must know what to compare and what to analyse. The late Professor Ker had skill in the use of these tools. Comparison and analysis need only the cadavers on the table; but interpretation is always producing parts of the body from its pockets, and fixing them in place And any book, any essay, any note in *Notes and Queries*, which produces a fact even of the lowest order about a work of art is a better piece of work than nine-tenths of the most pretentious critical journalism, in journals or in books. We assume, of

course, that we are masters and not servants of facts, and that we know that the discovery of Shakespeare's laundry bills would not be of much use to us; but we must always reserve final judgment as to the futility of the research which has discovered them, in the possibility that some genius will appear who will know of a use to which to put them. Scholarship, even in its humblest forms, has its rights; we assume that we know how to use it, and how to neglect it. Of course the multiplication of critical books and essays may create, and I have seen it create, a vicious taste for reading about works of art instead of reading the works themselves, it may supply opinion instead of educating taste. But *fact* cannot corrupt taste; it can at worst gratify one taste—a taste for history, let us say, or antiquities, or biography—under the illusion that it is assisting another. The real corrupters are those who supply opinion or fancy; and Goethe and Coleridge are not guiltless—for what is Coleridge's *Hamlet*: is it an honest inquiry as far as the data permit, or is it an attempt to present Coleridge in an attractive costume?

We have not succeeded in finding such a test as anyone can apply; we have been forced to allow ingress to innumerable dull and tedious books; but we have, I think, found a test which, for those who are able to apply it, will dispose of the really vicious ones. And with this test we may return to the preliminary statement of the polity of literature and of criticism. For the kinds of critical work which we have admitted, there is the possibility of cooperative activity, with the further possibility of arriving at something outside of ourselves, which may provisionally be called truth. But if anyone complains that I have not defined truth, or fact, or reality, I can only say apologetically that it was no part of my purpose to do so, but only to find a scheme into which, whatever they are, they will fit, if they exist.

TO CRITICIZE THE CRITIC

T. S. ELIOT

OF WHAT USE, or uses, is literary criticism, is a question worth asking again and again, even if we find no answer satisfactory. Criticism may be, what F. H. Bradley said of metaphysics, 'the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct.' But as I propose to talk about my own criticism my choice of subject needs to be further defended. In casting an eye over my own literary criticism of the last forty-odd years, I hope that I may be able to draw some conclusions, some plausible generalizations of wider validity, or —what is still more worth while—stimulate other minds to do so; also I hope I may provoke other critics to make similar confessions. My justification must be that there is no other critic, living or dead, about whose work I am so well informed as I am about my own. I know more about the genesis of my essays and reviews than about those of any other critic; I know the chronology, the circumstances under which each essay was written and the motive for writing it, and about all those changes of attitude, taste, interest and belief which the years bring to pass. For the work of those masters of English criticism whom I regard with most reverence such full information is not available to me. I am thinking especially of Samuel Johnson and of Coleridge, and not ignoring Dryden or Arnold. But at this point I should distinguish between the several types of literary critic, in order to remind you that generalizations drawn from the study of the work of a critic of one type may not be applicable to that of others.

First of all among those types of critics other than mine, I should put down the Professional Critic—the writer whose literary criticism is his chief, perhaps his only title to fame. This critic might also be called the Super-Reviewer, for he has often been the official critic for some magazine or newspaper, and the occasion for each of his contributions the publication of some new book. The exemplar of this kind of criticism is of course the French critic Sainte-Beuve, who was the author of two im-

portant books, *Port-Royal* and *Chateaubriand et ses amis,* but the bulk of whose work consists of volume after volume of collected essays which had previously appeared week by week in the *feuilleton* of a newspaper. The Professional Critic may be as Sainte-Beuve certainly was, a failed creative writer; and in the case of Sainte-Beuve it is certainly worth while to look at his poems, if one can come by them, as an aid to understanding why he wrote better about authors of the past than about his contemporaries. The Professional Critic however is not *necessarily* a failed poet, dramatist or novelist: so far as I know, my old friend in America, Paul Elmer More, whose Shelburne Essays have something of the monumental appearance of the *Causeries du lundi,* attempted no creative writing. Another old friend of mine who was a Professional Critic, of both books and theatre, Desmond MacCarthy, confined his literary activity to his weekly article or review and employed his leisure in delightful conversation instead of devoting it to the books he never wrote. And Edmund Gosse—a different case again: for it is not his industry as a critic, but one book of autobiography which is already a classic—*Father and Son*——that will perpetuate his name.

Second, I name the Critic with Gusto. This critic is not called to the seat of judgment; he is rather the advocate of the authors whose work he expounds, authors who are sometimes the forgotten or unduly despised. He calls our attention to such writers, helps us to see merit which we had overlooked and to find charm where we had expected only boredom. Of such was George Saintsbury, an erudite and genial man with an insatiable appetite for the second-rate, and a flair for discovering the excellence which is often to be found in the second-rate. Who but Saintsbury, in writing a book on the French Novel, would give far more pages to Paul de Kock than to Flaubert? There was also my old friend Charles Whibley: for example, read him on Sir Thomas Urquhart or on Petronius. There was also Quiller-Couch, who must have taught many of those who attended his lectures at Cambridge, to find fresh sources of delight in English literature.

Third, the Academic and the Theoretical. I mention these two together, as they can overlap; but this category is perhaps too comprehensive, since it ranges from the purely scholarly, like W. P. Ker, who could illuminate an author of one age or lan-

guage by an unexpected parallel with some author of another age or another language, to the philosophical critic William Empson. Mr Richards and Mr Empson are also poets, but I do not regard their work as a by-product of their poetry. And where are we to place other contemporaries, such as L. C. Knights or Wilson Knight, except as men who have combined teaching with original critical work? And another critic of importance, Dr F. R. Leavis, who may be called the Critic as Moralist? The critic who is also tenant of an academic post is likely to have made a special study of one period or one author but to call him Specialist Critic would seem a kind of abridgment of his right to examine whatever literature he pleases.

And finally we come to the critic whose criticism may be said to be a by-product of his creative activity. Particularly, the critic who is also a poet. Shall we say, the poet who has written some literary criticism? The condition of entrance into this category is that the candidate should be known primarily for his poetry, but that his criticism should be distinguished for its own sake, and not merely for any light it may throw upon its author's verse. And here I put Samuel Johnson, and Coleridge; and Dryden and Racine in their prefaces; and Matthew Arnold with reservations; and it is into this company that I must shyly intrude. I hope you need by now no further assurance that it was not laziness that impelled me to turn to my own writings for my material. It most certainly was not vanity: for when I first applied myself to the required reading for this address, it was so long since I had read many of my essays that I approached them with apprehension rather than with hopeful expectations.

I am happy to say that I did not find quite so much to be ashamed of as I had feared. There are, to be sure, statements with which I no longer agree; there are views which I maintain with less firmness of conviction than when I first expressed them, or which I maintain only with important reservations; there are statements the meaning of which I no longer understand. There may be areas in which my knowledge has evaporated. On re-reading my essay on Pascal, for instance, I was astonished at the extent of the information I seem to have possessed when I wrote it. And there are some matters in which I have simply lost interest, so that, if asked whether I still hold the same

belief, I could only say 'I don't know' or 'I don't care'. There are errors of judgment, and what I regret more, there are errors of tone: the occasional note of arrogance, of vehemence, of cocksureness or rudeness, the braggadocio of the mild-mannered man safely entrenched behind his typewriter. Yet I must acknowledge my relationship to the man who made those statements, and in spite of all these exceptions, I continue to identify myself with the author.

Even in saying that, however, I think of a qualification. I find myself constantly irritated by having my words, perhaps written thirty or forty years ago, quoted as if I had uttered them yesterday. One very intelligent expositor of my work, who regarded it, furthermore, with a very favourable eye, discussed my critical writings some years ago as if I had, at the outset of my career as a literary critic, sketched out the design for a massive critical structure, and spent the rest of my life filling in the details. When I publish a collection of essays, or whenever I allow an essay to be re-published elsewhere, I make a point of indicating the original date of publication, as a reminder to the reader of the distance of time that separates the author when he wrote it from the author as he is today. But rare is the writer who, quoting me, says 'this is what Mr Eliot thought (or felt) in 1933' (or whatever the date was). Every writer is accustomed to seeing his words quoted out of context, in such a way as to put an unintended construction upon them, by not over-scrupulous controversialists. But the quotation of pronouncements of many years ago, as if they had been made yesterday, is still more frequent, because it is most often wholly without malice. I will give one instance of a statement which has continued to dog its author long after it has ceased, in his opinion, to be a satisfactory statement of his beliefs. It is a sentence from the preface to a small collection of essays entitled *For Lancelot Andrewes*, to the effect that I was a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion. I ought to have foreseen that so quotable a sentence would follow me through life as Shelley tells us his thoughts followed him:

> And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
> Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

The sentence in question was provoked by a personal experience.

My old teacher and master, Irving Babbit, to whom I owe so much, stopped in London on his way back to Harvard from Paris, where he had been lecturing, and he and Mrs Babbit dined with me. I had not seen Babbitt for some years, and I felt obliged to acquaint him with a fact as yet unknown to my small circle of readers (for this was I think in the year 1927) that I had recently been baptized and confirmed into the Church of England. I knew that it would come as a shock to him to learn that any disciple of his had so turned his coat, though he had already had what must have been a much greater shock when his close friend and ally Paul Elmer More defected from Humanism to Christianity. But all Babbit said was: 'I think you should come out into the open.' I may have been a little nettled by this remark; the quotable sentence turned up in the preface to the book of essays I had in preparation, swung into orbit, and has been circling my little world ever since. Well, my religious beliefs are unchanged, and I am strongly in favour of the maintenance of the monarchy in all countries which have a monarchy; as for Classicism and Romanticism, I find that the terms have no longer the importance to me that they once had. But even if my statement of belief needed no qualification at all after the passage of the years, I should not be inclined to express it in quite this way.

So far as I can judge from references, quotations and reprints in anthologies, it is my earlier essays which have made the deeper impression. I attribute this to two causes. The first is the dogmatism of youth. When we are young we see issues sharply defined: as we age we tend to make more reservations, to qualify our positive assertions, to introduce more parentheses. We see objections to our own reviews, we regard the enemy with greater tolerance and even sometimes with sympathy. When we are young, we are confident in our opinions, sure that we possess the whole truth; we are enthusiastic, or indignant. And readers, even mature readers, are attracted to a writer who is quite sure of himself. The second reason for the enduring popularity of some of my early criticism is less easily apprehended, especially by readers of a younger generation. It is that in my earlier criticism, both in my general affirmations about poetry and in writing about authors who had influenced me, I was im-

plicity defending the sort of poetry that I and my friends wrote. This gave my essays a kind of urgency, the warmth of appeal of the advocate, which my later, more detached and I hope more judicial essays cannot claim. I was in reaction, not only against Georgian poetry, but against Georgian criticism; I was writing in a context which the reader of today has either forgotten, or has never experienced.

In a lecture on Johnson's *Lives of the Poets,* published in one of my collections of essays and addresses, I made the point that in appraising the judgments of any critic of a past age, one needed to see him in the context of that age, to try to place oneself at his point of view. This is a difficult effort for the imagination; one, indeed, in which we cannot hope for more than partial success. We cannot discount the influence upon our formation of the creative writing and the critical writing of the intervening generations, or the inevitable modifications of taste, or our greater knowledge and understanding of the literature preceding that of the age which we are trying to understand. Yet merely to make that effort of imagination, and to have these difficulties in mind, is worth our while. In reviewing my own early criticism, I am struck by the degree to which it was written, as well as by the stage of maturity at which I had arrived, by the influence to which I had been exposed, and by the occasion of each essay. I cannot myself bring to mind all these circumstances, reconstruct all the conditions under which I wrote: how much less can any future critic of my work have knowledge of them, or, if he has knowledge and understanding, find my essays of the same interest that they had for those who read them sympathetically when they first appeared? No literary criticism can for a future generation excite more than curiosity, unless it continues to be of use in itself to future generations, to have intrinsic value out of its historical context. But if any part of it does have this timeless value, then we shall appreciate that value all the more precisely if we also attempt to put ourselves at the point of view of the writer and his first readers. To study the criticism of Johnson or of Coleridge in this way is undoubtedly rewarding.

I can divide my own critical writing roughly into three periods. There was first the period of *The Egoist,* that remarkable bi-

weekly edited and published by Miss Harriet Weaver. Richard Aldington had been sub-editor, and when he was called up for military service in the First World War Ezra Pound nominated me to Miss Weaver to fill his place. In *The Egoist* appeared an essay called *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, which still enjoys immense popularity among those editors who prepare anthological textbooks for American college students. There were then two influences which are not so incongruous as might at first sight appear: that of Irving Babbitt and that of Ezra Pound. The influence of Pound at that time may be detected in references to Remy de Gourmont, in my papers on Henry James, an author whom Pound much admired, but for whom my own enthusiasm has somewhat flagged, and sundry allusions to authors such as Gavin Douglas, whose work I hardly knew. The influence of Babbitt (with an infusion later of T. E. Hulme and of the more literary essays of Charles Maurras) is apparent in my recurrent theme of Classicism versus Romanticism. In my second period, after 1918, when *The Egoist* had come to an end, I was writing essays and reviews for two editors in whom I was fortunate, for they both gave me always the right books to review: Middleton Murry in the short-lived *Athenaeum*, and Bruce Richmond in *The Times Literary Supplement*. Most of my contributions remain buried in the files of these two papers, but the best, and they are among the best of my essays, are reprinted in my collections. My third period has been, for one reason or another, one of public lectures and addresses rather than of articles and reviews.

And here I wish to draw what seems to me an important line of demarcation between the essays of generalization (such as *Tradition and the Individual Talent*) and appreciations of individual authors. It is those in the latter category which seem to me to have the best chance of retaining some value for future readers: and I wonder whether this assertion does not itself imply a generalization applicable to other critics of my type. But I must draw a distinction here too. Several years ago my New York publishers brought out a paperback selection of my essays on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. I made the selection myself, and wrote a preface explaining my choice. I found that the essays with which I was still pleased were those on the contemporaries

of Shakespeare, not those on Shakespeare himself. It was from these minor dramatists that I in my own poetic formation, had learned my lessons; it was by them, and not by Shakespeare, that my imagination had been stimulated, my sense of rhythm trained, and my emotions fed. I had read them at the age at which they were best suited to my temperament and stage of development, and had read them with passionate delight long before I had any thought, or any opportunity of writing about them. At the period in which the stirrings of desire to write verse were becoming insistent, these were the men whom I took as my tutors. Just as the modern poet who influenced me was not Baudelaire but Jules Laforgue, so the dramatic poets were Marlowe and Webster and Tourneur and Middleton and Ford, not Shakespeare. A poet of the supreme greatness of Shakespeare can hardly influence, he can only be imitated: and the difference between influence and imitation is that influence can fecundate, whereas imitation—especially unconscious imitation—can only sterilize. (But when I came to attempt one brief imitation of Dante I was fifty-five years old and knew exactly what I was doing.) Besides, imitation of a writer in a foreign language can often be profitable—because we cannot succeed.

So much for those of my essays in literary criticism which I think have the best chance of survival, in the sense that they are those which have, I believe, the best chance of giving pleasure, and possibly enlarging the understanding, on the part of future readers, of the authors criticized. Now what of the generalizations, and the phrases which have flourished, such as 'dissociation of sensibility' and 'objective correlative'? I think also of an article on 'the function of criticism' written for *The Criterion*. I am not sure, at this distance of time, how valid are the two phrases I have just cited: I am always at a loss what to say, when earnest scholars, or schoolchildren, write to ask me for an explanation. The term 'objective correlative' occurs in an essay on *Hamlet and his Problems* in which I was perhaps not altogether guiltless of trailing my coat: I was at that time hand-in-glove with that gallant controversialist, J. M. Robertson, in his critical studies of Tudor and Stuart drama. But whatever the future of these phrases, and even if I am unable to defend them now with any forensic plausibility, I think they have been useful

in their time. They have been accepted, they have been rejected, they may soon go out of fashion completely: but they have served their turn as stimuli to the critical thinking of others. And literary criticism, as I hinted at the beginning, is an instinctive activity of the civilized mind. But I prophesy that if my phrases are given consideration, a century hence, it will be only in their historical context, by scholars interested in the mind of my generation.

What I wish to suggest, however, is that these phrases may be accounted for as being conceptual symbols for emotional preferences. Thus, the emphasis on tradition came about, I believe, as a result of my reaction against the poetry, in the English language, of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and my passion for the poetry, both dramatic and lyric, of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The 'objective correlative' in the essay on Hamlet may stand for my bias towards the more mature plays of Shakespeare—*Timon, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus* notably—and towards those late plays of Shakespeare about which Mr Wilson Knight has written illuminatingly. And the 'dissociation of sensibility' may represent my devotion to Donne and the metaphysical poets, and my reaction against Milton.

It seems to me, in fact, that these concepts, these generalizations, had their origin in my sensibility. They arise from my feeling of kinship with one poet or with one kind of poetry rather than another. I ought not to claim that what I am now saying holds good of other types of critic than mine, or even of other critics of the type to which I myself belong—that is, of poets who have also written critical essays. But about any writer in the field of aesthetics I always incline to ask: 'what literary works, paintings, sculpture, architecture and music does this theorist really enjoy?' We can, of course—and this is a danger to which the philosophical critic of art may be exposed—adopt a theory and then persuade ourselves that we like the works of art that fit into that theory. But I am sure that my own theorizing has been epiphenomenal of my tastes, and that in so far as it is valid, it springs from direct experience of those authors who have profoundly influenced my own writing. I am aware, of course, that my 'objective correlative' and my 'dissociation of sensibility'

must be attacked or defended on their own level of abstraction, and that I have done no more than indicate what I believe to have been their genesis. I am also aware that in accounting for them in this way I am now making a generalization about my generalizations. But I am certain of one thing: that I have written best about writers who have influenced my own poetry. And I say 'writers' and not only 'poets', because I include F. H. Bradley, whose works, I might say, whose personality as manifested in his works—affected me profoundly; and Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, from one of whose sermons on the Nativity I lifted several lines of my *Journey of the Magi* and of whose prose there may be a faint reflection in the sermon in *Murder in the Cathedral.* I include, in fact, any writers whether of verse or prose, whose style has strongly affected my own. I have hope that such essays of mine on individual writers who have influenced me, may retain some value even for a future generation which will reject or ridicule my theories. I spent three years, when young, in the study of philosophy. What remains to me of these studies? The style of three philosophers: Bradley's English, Spinoza's Latin and Plato's Greek.

It is in relation to essays on individual poets that I come to consider the question: how far can the critic alter public taste for one or another poet or one or another period of literature of the past? Have I myself, for example, been to any degree responsible for arousing interest and promoting appreciation of the early dramatists or of the metaphysical poets? I should say, hardly at all—as critic. We must distinguish of course between *taste* and *fashion.* Fashion, the love of change for its own sake, the desire for something new, is very transient; taste is something that springs from a deeper source. In a language in which great poetry has been written for many generations, as it has in ours, each generation will vary in its preferences among the classics of that language. Some writers of the past will respond to the taste of the living generations more nearly than others; some periods of the past may have closer affinity to our own age than others. To a young reader, or a critic of crude taste, the authors whom his generation favours may seem to be better than those fancied by the previous generation; the more conscious critic may recognize that they are simply more congenial, but not nece-

ssarily of greater merit. It is one function of the critic to assist the literate public of his day to recognize its affinity with one poet, or with one type of poetry, or one age of poetry, rather than with another.

The critic, however, cannot create a taste. I have sometimes been credited with starting the vogue for Donne and other metaphysical poets, as well as for the minor Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. But I did not discover any of these poets. Coleridge, and Browning in turn, admired Donne; and as for the early dramatists, there is Lamb, and the enthusiastic tributes of Swinburne are by no means without critical merit. In our own time, John Donne has lacked no publicity: Gosse's *Life and Letters*, in two volumes, appeared in 1899. I remember being introduced to Donne's poetry when I was a Freshman at Harvard by Professor Briggs, an ardent admirer; Grierson's edition of the Poems, in two volumes, was published in 1912; and it was Grierson's *Metaphysical Poetry*, sent me to review, that gave me my first occasion to write about Donne. I think that if I write well about the metaphysical poets, it was because they were poets who had inspired me. And if I can be said to have had any influence whatever in promoting a wider interest in them, it was simply because no previous poet who had praised these poets had been so deeply influenced by them as I had been. As the taste for my own poetry spread, so did the taste for the poets to whom I owed the greatest debt and about whom I had written. Their poetry, and mine, were congenial to that age. I sometimes wonder whether that age is not coming to an end.

It is true that I owed, and have always acknowledged, an equally great debt to certain French poets of the late nineteenth century, about whom I have never written. I have written about Baudelaire, but nothing about Jules Laforgue, to whom I owe more than to any one poet in any language, or about Tristan Corbière, to whom I owe something also. The reason, I believe, is that no one commissioned me to do so. For these early essays were all written for money, which I needed, and the occasion was always a new book about an author, a new edition of his works, or an anniversary.

The question of the extent to which a critic may influence the taste of his time I have answered, speaking for myself alone, by

saying that I do not believe that my own criticism has had, or could have had, any influence whatever apart from my own poems. Let me turn now to the question: how far, and in what ways do the critic's own tastes and views alter in the course of his lifetime? To what extent do such changes indicate greater maturity, when do they indicate decay, and when must we consider them merely as changes—neither for better nor for worse? For myself, again, I find that my opinion of poets whose work influenced me in my formative stage remains unchanged, and I abate nothing of the praise I have given them. True, they do not now give me that intense excitement and sense of enlargement and liberation which comes from a discovery which is also a discovery of oneself: but that is an experience which can only happen once. And indeed it is to other poets than these that I am likely to turn now for pure delight. I turn more often the pages of Mallarmé than those of Laforgue, those of George Herbert than those of Donne, of Shakespeare than of his contemporaries and epigoni. This does not necessarily involve a judgment of relative greatness: it is merely that what has best responded to my need in middle and later age is different from the nourishment I needed in my youth. So great is Shakespeare, however, that a lifetime is hardly enough for growing up to appreciate him. There is one poet, however, who impressed me profoundly when I was twenty-two and with only a rudimentary acquaintance with his language started to puzzle out his lines, one poet who remains the comfort and amazement of my age, although my knowledge of his language remains rudimentary. I was never more than an inferior classical scholar: the poet I speak of is Dante. In my youth, I think that Dante's astonishing economy and directness of language—his arrow that goes unerringly to the centre of the target provided for me a wholesome corrective to the extravagances of the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline authors in whom I also delighted.

Perhaps what I want to say now is true of all literary criticism. I am sure that it is true of mine, that it is at its best when I have been writing of authors whom I have wholeheartedly admired. And my next best are of authors whom I greatly admire, but only with qualifications with which other critics may disagree. I do not ask to be reassured about my essays on minor

Elizabethan dramatists, but, am always interested to hear what other critics of poetry think, for instance, about what I have written on Tennyson or Byron. As for criticism of negligible authors, it can hardly be of permanent interest, because people will cease to be influenced by other than literary considerations. The personality of Milton, as well as some of his politics and theology, was obviously antipathetic to Samuel Johnson, as it is to me. (But when I wrote my first essay on Milton, I was considering his poetry as poetry and in relation to what I conceived to be the needs of my own time; and when I wrote my second essay on Milton I did not intend it to be, what Desmond MacCarthy and others took it to be, a recantation of my earlier opinion, but a development in view of the fact that there was no longer any likelihood of his being imitated and that therefore he could profitably be studied. This reference to Milton is parenthetical.) I do not regret what I have written about Milton: but when an author's mind is so antipathetic to my own as was that of Thomas Hardy, I wonder whether it might not have been better never to have written about him at all.

Perhaps my judgment is less assured about writers who are contemporary or nearly so, than about writers of the past. Yet my valuation of the work of those poets contemporary with me, and of those poets younger than myself with whom I feel an affinity, remains unchanged. There is however one contemporary figure about whom my mind will, I fear, always waver between dislike, exasperation, boredom and admiration. That is D. H. Lawrence.

My opinions of D. H. Lawrence seem to form a tissue of praise and execration. The more vehement of my ejaculations of dislike are preserved, like flies in amber, or like wasps in honey, by the diligence of Dr Leavis; but between two passages which he quotes, one published in 1927 and the other in 1933, I find that in 1931 I was wagging my finger rather pompously at the bishops who had assembled at the Lambeth Conference, and reproaching them for 'missing an opportunity for dissociating themselves from the condemnation of two very serious and improving writers'—namely, Mr James Joyce and Mr D. H. Lawrence. I cannot account for such apparent contradictions. Last year, in the *Lady Chatterley* case, I expressed my readiness

to appear as a witness for the defence. Perhaps the counsel for the defence were well advised not to put me into the witness box, as it might have been rather difficult to make my views clear to a jury by that form of inquisition, and a really wily prosecutor might have tied me up in knots. I felt then, as I feel now, that the prosecution of such a book—a book of most serious and highly moral intention—was a deplorable blunder, the consequences of which would be most unfortunate whatever the verdict, and give the book a kind of vogue which would have been abhorrent to the author. But my antipathy to the author remains, on the ground of what seems to me egotism, a strain of cruelty, and a failing in common with Thomas Hardy —the lack of a sense of humour.

My particular reason for referring to my response to the work of Lawrence is that it is well to remind ourselves, in discussing the subject of literary criticism, that we cannot escape personal bias, and that there are other standards besides that of 'literary merit,' which cannot be excluded. It was noticeable, in the Chatterley case, that some witnesses for the defence defended the book for the moral intentions of the author rather than on the ground of its being important as a work of literature.

In most of what I have been saying today, however, I have endeavoured to confine myself to that part of my own critical prose which is most nearly definable as 'literary criticism.' May I sum up the conclusions to which I have come, after re-reading all of my writing which can be covered by that designation? I have found that my best work falls within rather narrow limits, my best essays being, in my opinion, those concerned with writers who had influenced me in my poetry; naturally the majority of these writers were poets. And it is that part of my criticism concerned with writers towards whom I felt gratitude and whom I could praise wholeheartedly, which is the part in which I continue to feel most confidence as the years pass. And as for the phrases of generalization which have been so often quoted, I am convinced that their force comes from the fact that they are attempts to summarize, in conceptual form, direct and intense experience of the poetry that I have found most congenial.

It is risky, and perhaps presumptuous, for me to generalize from my own experience, even about critics of my own type—

that is, writers who are primarily creative but reflect upon their own vocation and upon the work of other practitioners. I am, I admit, much more interested in what other poets have written about poetry than in what critics who are not poets have said about it. I have suggested also that it is impossible to fence off literary criticism from criticism on other grounds, and that moral, religious and social judgments cannot be wholly excluded. That they can, and that literary merit can be estimated in complete isolation, is the illusion of those who believe that literary merit alone can justify the publication of a book which could otherwise be condemned on moral grounds. But the nearest we get to pure literary criticism is the criticism of artists writing about their own art; and for this I turn to Johnson and Wordsworth and Coleridge. (Paul Valéry's is a special case). In other types of criticism, the historian, the philosopher, the moralist, the sociologist, the grammarian may play a large part; but in so far as literary criticism is purely literary, I believe that the criticism of artists writing about their own art is of greater intensity, and carries more authority, though the area of the artist's competence may be much narrower. I feel that I myself have spoken with authority (if the phrase itself does not suggest arrogance) only about those authors—poets and a very few prose writers—who have influenced me; that on poets who have not influenced me I still deserve serious consideration; and that on authors whose work I dislike my views may—to say the least—be highly disputable. And I should remind you again, in closing, that I have directed attention on my literary criticism *qua* literary, and that a study in respect of my religious, social, political or moral beliefs, and of that large part of my prose writing which is directly concerned with these beliefs would be quite another exercise in self-examination. But I hope that what I have said today may suggest reasons why, as the critic grows older, his critical writings may be less fired by enthusiasm, but informed by wider interest and, one hopes, by greater wisdom and humility.

POETRY: A NOTE ON ONTOLOGY

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

A POETRY may be distinguished from a poetry by virtue of subject-matter, and subject-matter may be differentiated with respect to its ontology, or the reality of its being. An excellent variety of critical doctrine arises recently out of this differentiation, and thus perhaps criticism leans again upon ontological analysis as it was meant to do by Kant. The recent critics remark in effect that some poetry deals with things, while some other poetry deals with ideas. The two poetries will differ from each other as radically as a thing differs from an idea.

The distinction in the hands of critics is a fruitful one. There is apt to go along with it a principle of valuation, which is the consequence of a temperament and therefore basic. The critic likes things and intends that his poet shall offer them: or likes ideas and intends that he shall offer them: and approves him as he does the one or the other. Criticism cannot well go much deeper than this. The critic has carried to the last terms his analysis of the stuff of which poetry is made, and valued it frankly as his temperament or his need requires him to value it.

So philosophical a critic seems to be highly modern. He is; but this critic as a matter of fact is peculiarly on one side of the question. (The implication is unfavourable to the other side of the question.) He is in revolt against the tyranny of ideas, and against the poetry which celebrates ideas, and which may be identified—so far as his usual generalization may be trusted—with the hateful poetry of the Victorians. His bias is in favour of the things. On the other hand the critic who likes Victorian verse, or the poetry of ideas, has probably not thought of anything of so grand a simplicity as electing between the things and the ideas, being apparently not quite capable of the ontological distinction. Therefore he does not know the real or constitutional ground of his liking and may somewhat ingenuously claim that his predilection is for those poets who give him inspiration, or comfort, or truth, or honest metres, or something else equally 'worth while.' But Plato, who was not a modern, was just as

clear as we are about the basic distinction between the ideas and the things, and yet stands far apart from the aforesaid conscious modern in passionately preferring the ideas over the things. The weight of Plato's testimony would certainly fall on the side of the Victorians, though they may scarcely have thought of calling him as their witness. But this consideration need not conclude the hearing.

I. PHYSICAL POETRY

The poetry which deals with things was much in favour a few years ago with the resolute body of critics. And the critics affected the poets. If necessary, they became the poets, and triumphantly illustrated the new mode. The Imagists were important figures in the history of our poetry, and they were both theorists and creators. It was their intention to present things in their thinginess, or *Dinge* in their *Dinglichkeit*; and to such an extent had the public lost its sense of *Dinglichkeit* that their redirection was wholesome. What the public was inclined to seek in poetry was ideas, whether large ones or small ones, grand ones or pretty ones, certainly ideas to live by and die by, but what the Imagists identified with the stuff of poetry was, simply, things.

Their application of their own principle was sufficiently heroic, though they scarcely consented to be as extreme in the practice as in the theory. They had artistic talent, every one of the original group, and it was impossible that they should make of poetry so simple an exercise as in doctrine they seemed to think it was. Yet Miss Lowell wrote a poem on *Thompson's Lunch Room, Grand Central Station*; it is admirable if its intention is to show the whole reach of her courage. Its detail goes like this:

> Jagged greenwhite bowls of pressed glass
> Rearing snow-peaks of chipped sugar
> Above the lighthouse-shaped castors
> Of gray pepper and gray-white salt.

For most of us as for the public idealist, with his 'values,' this is inconsequential. Unhappy it seems that the things as things do not necessarily interest us, and that in fact we are not quite constructed with the capacity for a disinterested interest. But it must be noted even here that the things are on their good behaviour, looking rather well, and arranged by lines into some-

thing approaching a military formation. More technically, there is cross-imagery in the snow-peaks of sugar, and in the light-house-shaped castors, and cross-imagery involves association, and will presently involve dissociation and thinking. The metre is but a vestige, but even so it means something, for metre is a powerful intellectual determinant marshalling the words and, inevitably, the things. The *Dinglichkeit* of this Imagist specimen, or the realism, was therefore not pure. But it was nearer pure than the world was used to in poetry, and the exhibit was astonishing.

For the purpose of this note I shall give to such poetry, dwelling as exclusively as it dares upon physical things, the name Physical Poetry. It is to stand opposite to that poetry which dwells as firmly as it dares upon ideas.

But perhaps thing *versus* idea does not seem to name an opposition precisely. Then we might phrase it a little differently: image *versus* idea. The idealistic philosophies are not sure that things exist, but they mean the equivalent when they refer to images. (Or they may consent to perceptions; or to impressions, following Hume, and following Croce, who remarks that they are pre-intellectual and independent of concepts. It is all the same unless we are extremely technical.) It is sufficient if they concede that image is the raw material of idea. Though it may be an unwieldy and useless affair for the idealist as it stands, much needing to be licked into shape, nevertheless its relation to idea is that of a material cause, and it cannot be dispossessed of its priority.

It cannot be dispossessed of a primordial freshness, which idea can never claim. An idea is derivative and tamed. The image is in the natural or wild state, and it has to be discovered there, not put there, obeying its own law and none of ours. We think we can lay hold of image and take it captive, but the docile captive is not the real image but only the idea, which is the image with its character beaten out of it.

But we must be very careful: idealists are nothing if not dialectical. They object that an image in an original state of innocence is a delusion and cannot exist, that no image ever comes to us which does not imply the world of ideas, there is 'no percept without a concept.' There is something in it. Every pro-

perty discovered in the image is a universal property, and nothing discovered in the image is marvellous in kind though it may be pinned down historically or statistically as a single instance. But there is this to be understood too: the image which is not remarkable in any particular property is marvellous in its assemblage of many properties; a manifold of properties, like a mine or a field, something to be explored for the properties; yet science can manage the image, which is infinite in properties, only by equating it to the one property with which the science is concerned: for science at work is always a science, and committed to a special interest. It is not by refutation but by abstraction that science destroys the image. It means to get its 'value' out of the image, and we may be sure that it has no use for the image in its original state of freedom. People who are engrossed with their pet 'values' become habitual killers. Their game is the images or the things, and they acquire the ability to shoot them as far off as they can be seen, and do. It is thus that we lose the power of imagination, or whatever faculty it is by which we are able to contemplate things as they are in their rich and contingent materiality. But our dreams reproach us, for in dreams they come alive again. Likewise our memory; which makes light of our science by recalling the images in their panoply of circumstance and with their morning freshness upon them.

It is the dream, the recollection, which compels us to poetry, and to deliberate aesthetic experience. It can hardly be argued, I think, that the arts are constituted automatically out of original images, and arise in some early age of innocence. (Though Croce seems to support this view, and to make art a pre-adult stage of experience.) Art is based on second love, not first love. In it we make a return to something which we had wilfully alienated. The child is occupied mostly with things, but it is because he is still unfurnished with systematic ideas, not because he is a ripe citizen by nature and comes along already trailing clouds of glory. Images are clouds of glory for the man who has discovered that ideas are a sort of darkness. Imagism, that is, the recent historical movement, may resemble a naïve poetry of mere things, but we can read the theoretical pronouncements of Imagists, and we can learn that Imagism is motivated by a distaste for the systematic abstractedness of thought. It presupposes acquaintance

with science; that famous activity which is 'constructive' with respect to the tools of our economic role in this world, and destructive with respect to nature. Imagists wish to escape from science by immersing themselves in images.

Not far off the simplicity of Imagism was, a little later, the subtler simplicity of Mr George Moore's project shared with several others, in behalf of 'pure poetry.' In Moore's house on Ebury Street they talked about poetry, with an after-dinner warmth if not an early-morning discretion, and their tastes agreed almost perfectly and reinforced one another. The fruit of these conversations was the volume *Pure Poetry*. It must have been the most exclusive anthology of English poetry that had yet appeared, since its room was closed to all the poems that dallied visibly with ideas, so that many poems that had been coveted by all other anthologists do not appear there. Nevertheless the book is delicious, and something more deserves to be said for it.

First, that 'pure poetry' is a kind of Physical Poetry. Its visible content is a thing-content. Technically, I suppose, it is effective in this character if it can exhibit its material in such a way that an image or set of images and not an idea must occupy the foreground of the reader's attention. Thus:

> Full fathom five thy father lies
> Of his bones are coral made.

Here it is difficult for anybody (except the perfect idealist who is always theoretically possible and who would expect to take a return from anything whatever) to receive any experience except that of a very distinct image, or set of images. It has the configuration of image, which consists in being sharp of edges, and the modality of image, which consists in being given and non-negotiable, and the density, which consists in being full, a plenum of qualities. What is to be done with it? It is pure exhibit; it is to be contemplated; perhaps it is to be enjoyed. The art of poetry depends more frequently on this faculty than on any other in its repertory; the faculty of presenting images so whole and clean that they resist the catalysis of thought.

And something else must be said, going in the opposite direction. 'Pure poetry,' all the same, is not as pure as it is claimed to be, though on the whole it is Physical Poetry. (All true poetry is a phase of Physical Poetry.) It is not as pure as Imagism is,

or at least it is not as pure as Imagism would be if it lived up to its principles; and in fact it is significant that the volume does not contain any Imagist poems, which argues a difference in taste somewhere. Imagism may take trifling things for its material; presumably it will take the first things the poet encounters, since 'importance' and 'interest' are not primary qualities which a thing possesses but secondary or tertiary ones which the idealist attributes to it by virtue of his own requirements. 'Pure poetry' as Moore conceives it, and as the lyrics of Poe and Shakespeare offer it, deals with the more dramatic materials, and here dramatic means human, or at least capable of being referred to the critical set of human interests. Employing this sort of material the poet cannot exactly intend to set the human economists in us actually into motion, but perhaps he does intend to comfort us with the fleeting sense that it is potentially our kind of material.

In the same way 'pure poetry' is nicely metred, where Imagism was free. Technique is written on it. And by the way the anthology contains no rugged anonymous Scottish ballad either, and probably for a like reason: because it would not be technically finished. Now both Moore and de la Mare are accomplished conservative artists, and what they do or what they approve may be of limited range but it is sure to be technically admirable, and it is certain that they understand what technique in poetry is though they do not define it. Technique takes the thing-content and metres and orders it. Metre is not an original property of things. It is artificial, and conveys the sense of human control, even if it does not wish to impair the thinginess of the things. Metric is a science, and so far as we attend to it we are within the scientific atmosphere. Order is the logical arrangement of things. It involves the dramatic 'form' which selects the things, and brings out their appropriate qualities, and carries them through a systematic course of prediction until the total impression is a unit of logic and not merely a solid lump of thing-content. The 'pure poems' which Moore admires are studied, though it would be fatal if they looked studious. A sustained effort of ideation effected these compositions. It is covered up, and communicates itself only on a subliminal plane of consciouness. But experienced readers are quite aware of it; they know at once what is the matter when they encounter a realism shamelessly passing for poetry, or a well-plan-

ned but blundering poetry.

As critics we should have every good will towards Physical Poetry: it is the basic constituent of any poetry. But the product is always something short of a pure or absolute existence, and it cannot quite be said that it consists of nothing but physical objects. The fact is that when we are more than usually satisfied with a Physical Poetry our analysis will probably disclose that it is more than usually impure.

II. Platonic Poetry

The poetry of ideas I shall denominate: Platonic Poetry. This also has grades of purity. A discourse which employed only abstract ideas with no images would be a scientific document and not a poem at all, not even a Platonic poem. Platonic poetry dips heavily into the physical. If Physical Poetry tends to employ some ideation surreptitiously while still looking innocent of idea, Platonic Poetry more than returns the compliment, for it tries as hard as it can to look like Physical Poetry, as if it proposed to conceal its medicine, which is the idea to be propagated, within the sugar candy of objectivity and *Dinglichkeit*. As an instance, it is almost inevitable that I quote a famous Victorian utterance:

> The year's at the spring
> And day's at the morn;
> Morning's at seven;
> The hill-side's dew-pearled;
> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn:
> God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world!

which is a piece of transparent homiletics; for in it six pretty, co-ordinate images are marched, like six little lambs to the slaughter, to a colon and a powerful text. Now the exhibits of this poetry in the physical kind are always large, and may take more of the attention of the reader than is desired, but they are meant mostly to be illustrative of the ideas. It is on this ground that idealists like Hegel detect something unworthy, like a pedagogical trick, in poetry after all, and consider that the race will abandon it when it has outgrown its childishness and is enlightened.

The ablest arraignment of Platonic Poetry that I have seen,

as an exercise which is really science but masquerades as poetry by affecting a concern for physical objects, is that of Mr Allen Tate in a series of studies recently in *The New Republic*. I will summarize. Platonic Poetry is allegory, a discourse in things, but on the understanding that they are translatable at every point into ideas. (The usual ideas are those which constitute the popular causes, patriotic, religious, moral, or social.) Or Platonic Poetry is the elaboration of ideas as such, but in proceeding introduces for ornament some physical properties after the style of Physical Poetry; which is rhetoric. It is negative when he despairs of their efficacy, because they have conspicuously failed to take care of him, and utters his personal wail:

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

This is 'Romantic Irony,' which comes at occasional periods to interrupt the march of scientific optimism. But it still falls under the category of Platonism; it generally proposes some other ideas to take place of those which are in vogue. But why Platonism? To define Platonism we must remember that it is not the property of the historical person who reports dialogues about it in an Academy, any more than 'pure poetry' is the property of the talkers who describe it from a house on Ebury Street. Platonism, in the sense I mean, is the name of an impulse that is native to us all, frequent, tending to take a too complete possession of our minds. Why should the spirit of mortal be proud? The chief explanation is that modern mortal is probably a Platonist. We are led to believe that nature is rational and that by the force of reasoning we shall possess it. I have read upon high authority: 'Two great forces are persistent in Plato: the love of truth and zeal for human improvement.' The forces are one force. We love to view the world under universal or scientific ideas to which we give the name truth; and this is because the ideas seem to make not for righteousness but for mastery. The Platonic view of the world is ultimately the predatory, for it reduces to the scientific, which we know. The Platonic Idea becomes the Logos which science worships, which is the Occidental God, whose minions we are, and whose children, claiming a large share in His powers for patrimony.

Now the fine Platonic world of ideas fails to coincide with the original world of perception, which the world populated by the

stubborn and contingent objects, and to which as artists we fly in shame. The sensibility manifested by artists makes fools of scientists, if the latter are inclined to take their special and quite useful form of truth as the whole and comprehensive article. A dandified pagan worldling like Moore can always defeat Platonism; he does it every hour; he can exhibit the savour of his fish and wines, the fragrance of his coffee and cigars, and the solidity of the images in his favourite verse. These are objects which have to be experienced, and cannot be reported, for what is their simple essence that the Platonist can abstract? Moore may sound mystical but he is within the literal truth when he defends 'pure poetry' on the ground that the things are constant, and it is the ideas which change—changing according to the latest mode under which the species indulges its grandiose expectation of subjugating nature. The things are constant in the sense that the ideas are never emancipated from the necessity of referring back to them as their original; and the sense that they are not altered nor diminished no matter which ideas may take off from them as a point of departure. The way to obtain the true *Dinglichkeit* of a formal dinner or a landscape or a beloved person is to approach the object as such, and in humility; then it unfolds a nature which we are unprepared for if we have put our trust in the simple idea which attempted to represent it.

The special antipathy of Moore is to the ideas as they put on their moral complexion, the ideas that relate everything to that insignificant centre of action, the human 'soul' in its most Platonic and Pharisaic aspect. Nothing can darken perception better than a repetitive moral earnestness, based on the reputed superiority and higher destiny of the human species. If morality is the code by which we expect the race to achieve the more perfect possession of nature, it is an incitement to a more heroic science, but not to aesthetic experience, nor religious; if it is the code of humility, by which we intend to know nature as nature is, that is another matter; but in an age of science morality is inevitably for the general public the former; and so transcendent a morality as the latter is now unheard of. And therefore:-

> O love, *they* die in yon rich sky,
> *They* faint on hill or field or river;

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.

The italics are mine. These lines conclude an otherwise innocent poem, a candidate for the anthology, upon which Moore remarks: 'The Victorian could never reconcile himself to finishing a poem without speaking about the soul, and the lines are particularly vindictive.' Vindictive is just. By what right did the Laureate exult in the death of the physical echoes and call upon his love to witness it, but out of the imperiousness of his savage Platonism? Plato himself would have admired this ending, and considered that it redeemed an otherwise vicious poem.

Why do persons who have ideas to promulgate risk the trial by poetry? If the poets are hired to do it, which is the polite conception of some Hegelians, why do their employers think it worth the money, which they hold in public trust for the cause? Does a science have to become a poetry too? A science is the less effective as a science when it muddies its clear waters with irrelevance, a sermon becomes less cogent when it begins to quote the poets. The moralist, the scientist, and the prophet of idealism think evidently that they must establish their conclusions in poetry, though they reach these conclusions upon quite other evidence. The poetry is likely to destroy the conclusions with a sort of death by drowning, if it is a free poetry.

When that happens the Platonists may be cured of Platonism. There are probably two cures, of which this is the better. One cure is by adversity, by the failure of the ideas to work, on account of treachery or violence, or the contingencies of weather, constitution, love, and economics; leaving the Platonist defeated and bewildered, possibly turned cynical and worthless. Very much preferable is the cure which comes by education in the fine arts, erasing his Platonism more gently, leading him to feel that that is not a becoming habit of mind which dulls the perceptions.

The definition which some writers have given to art is: the reference of the idea to the image. The implication is that the act is not for the purpose of honest comparison so much as for the purpose of proving the idea by image. But in the event the idea is not disproved so much as it is made to look ineffective and therefore foolish. The ideas will not cover the objects upon which they are imposed, they are too attenuated and threadlike;

for ideas have extension and objects have intension, but extension is thin while intension is thick.

There must be a great deal of genuine poetry which started in the poet's mind as a thesis to be developed, but in which the characters and the situations have developed faster than the thesis, and of their own accord. The thesis disappears; or it is recaptured here and there and at the end, and lodged sententiously with the reader, where every successive reading of the poem will dislodge it again. Like this must be some plays, even some play out of Shakespeare, whose thesis would probably be disentangled with difficulty out of the crowded pageant; or some narrative poem with a moral plot but much more pure detail; perhaps some 'occasional' piece by a Laureate or official person, whose purpose is compromised but whose personal integrity is saved by his wavering between the sentiment which is a public duty and the experience which he has in his own right; even some proclaimed allegory, like Spenser's, unlikely as that may seem, which does not remain transparent and everywhere translatable into idea but makes excursions into the territory of objectivity. These are hybrid performances. They cannot possess beauty of design, though there may be a beauty in detailed passages. But it is common enough, and we should be grateful. The mind is a versatile agent, and unexpectedly stubborn in its determination not really to be hardened in Platonism. Even in an age of science like the nineteenth century the poetic talents are not so loyal to its apostolic zeal as they and it suppose, and do not deserve the unqualified scorn which it is fashionable to offer them now that the tide has turned, for their performance is qualified.

But this may be not stern enough for concluding a note on Platonic Poetry. I refer again to that whose Platonism is steady and malignant. This poetry is an imitation of Physical Poetry, and not really a poetry. Platonists practise their bogus poetry in order to show that an image will prove an idea, but the literature which succeeds in this delicate mission does not contain real images but illustrations.

III. Metaphysical Poetry

'Most men,' Mr Moore observes, 'read and write poetry between fifteen and thirty and afterwards very seldom, for in youth we

are attracted by ideas, and modern theory being concerned almost exclusively with ideas we live on duty, liberty, and fraternity as chameleons are said to live on light and air, till at last we turn from ideas to things, thinking that we have lost our taste for poetry, unless, perchance, we are classical scholars.'

Much is conveyed in this characteristic sentence, even in proportion to its length. As for the indicated chronology, the cart is put after the horse, which is its proper sequence. And it is pleasant to be confirmed in the belief that many men do recant from their Platonism and turn back to things. But it cannot be exactly a *volte face*, for there are qualifications. If pure ideas were what these men turn from, they would have had no poetry at all in the first period, and if pure things were what they turn to, they would be having not a classical poetry but a pure imagism, if such a thing is possible, in the second.

The mind does not come unscathed and virginal out of Platonism. Ontological interest would have to develop curiously, or wastefully and discontinuously, if men through their youth must cultivate the ideas so passionately that upon its expiration they are done with ideas forever and ready to become as little (and pre-logical) children. Because of the foolishness of idealists are ideas to be taboo for the adult mind? And, as critics, what are we to do with those poems (like *The Canonization* and *Lycidas*) which could not obtain admission by Moore into the anthology but which very likely are the poems we cherish beyond others?

The reputed 'innocence' of the aesthetic moment, the 'knowledge without desire' which Schopenhauer praises, must submit to a little scrutiny, like anything else that looks too good to be true. We come into this world as aliens come into a land which they must conquer if they are to live. For native endowment we have an exacting 'biological' constitution which knows precisely what it needs and determines for us our inevitable desires. There can be no certainty that any other impulses are there, for why should they be? They scarcely belong in the biological picture. Perhaps we are simply an efficient animal species, running smoothly, working fast, finding the formula of life only too easy, and after a certain apprenticeship piling up power and wealth far beyond the capacity of our appetites to use. What will come next? Perhaps poetry, if the gigantic effort of science begins to seem

disproportionate to the reward, according to a sense of diminishing returns. But before this pretty event can come to pass, it is possible that every act of attention which is allowed us is conditioned by a gross and selfish interest.

Where is innocence then? The aesthetic moment appears as a curious moment of suspension; between the Platonism in us, which is militant, always sciencing and devouring, and a starved inhibited aspiration towards innocence which, if it could only be free, would like to respect and know the object as it might of its own accord reveal itself.

The poetic impulse is not free, yet it holds out stubbornly against science for the enjoyment of its images. It means to reconstitute the world of perceptions. Finally there is suggested some such formula as the following:

Science gratifies a rational or practical impulse and exhibits the minimum of perception. Art gratifies a perceptual impulse and exhibits the minimum of reason.

Now it would be strange if poets did not develop many technical devices for the sake of increasing the volume of the percipienda or sensibilia. I will name some of them.

First Device: metre. Metre is the most obvious device. A formal metre impresses us as a way of regulating very drastically the material, and we do not stop to remark (that is, as readers) that it has no particular aim except some nominal sort of regimentation. It symbolizes the predatory method, like a sawmill which intends to reduce all the trees to fixed unit timbers, and as business men we require some sign of our business. But to the Platonic censor in us it gives a false security, for so long as the poet appears to be working faithfully at his metrical engine he is left comparatively free to attend lovingly to the things that are being metered, and metering them need not really hurt them. Metre is the gentlest violence he can do them, if he is expected to do some violence.

Second Device: fiction. The device of the fiction is probably no less important and universal in poetry. Over every poem which looks like a poem is a sign which reads: This road does not go through to action: fictitious. Art always sets out to create an 'aesthetic distance' between the object and the subject, and art takes pains to announce that it is not history. The situation

treated is not quite an actual situation, for science is likely to have claimed that field, and exiled art; but a fictive or hypothetical one, so that science is less greedy and perception may take hold of it. Kant asserted that the aesthetic judgment is not concerned with the existence or non-existence of the object, and may be interpreted as asserting that it is so far from depending on the object's existence that it really depends on the object's non-existence. Sometimes we have a certain melancholy experience. We enjoy a scene which we receive by report only, or dream, or meet with in art; but subsequently find ourselves in the presence of an actual one that seems the very same scene; only to discover that we have not now the power to enjoy it, or to receive it aesthetically, because the economic tension is upon us and will not indulge us in the proper mood. And it is generally easier to obtain our aesthetic experience from art than from nature, because nature is actual, and communication is forbidden. But in being called fictive or hypothetical the art-object suffers no disparagement. It cannot be true in the sense of being actual, and therefore it may be despised by science. But it is true in the sense of being fair or representative, in permitting the 'illusion of reality'; just as Schopenhauer discovered that music may symbolize all the modes of existence in the world; and in keeping with the customary demand of the readers of fiction proper, that it shall be 'true to life.' The defenders of art must require for it from its practitioners this sort of truth, and must assert of it before the world this dignity. If jealous science succeeds in keeping the field of history for its own exclusive use, it does not therefore annihilate the arts, for they reappear in a field which may be called real though one degree removed from actuality. There the arts perform their function with much less interference, and at the same time with about as much fidelity to the phenomenal world as history has.

Third Device: tropes. I have named two important devices; I am not prepared to offer the exhaustive list. I mention but one other kind, the device which comprises the figures of speech. A proper scientific discourse has no intention of employing figures of speech. A proper scientific discourse has no intention of employing figurative language for its definitive sort of utterance. Figures of speech twist accidence away from the

straight course, as if to intimate astonishing lapses of rationality beneath the smooth surface of discourse, inviting perceptual attention, and weakening the tyranny of science over the senses. But I skip the several easier and earlier figures, which are timid, and stop on the climactic figure, which is the metaphor: with special reference to its consequence, a poetry which once in our history it produced in a beautiful and abundant exhibit, called Metaphysical Poetry.

And what is Metaphysical Poetry? The term was added to the official vocabulary of criticism by Johnson, who probably took it from Pope, who probably took it from Dryden, who used it to describe the poetry of a certain school of poets, thus: 'He [John Donne] affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign.... In this Mr Cowley has copied him to a fault.' But the meaning of metaphysical which was common in Dryden's time, having come down from the Middle Ages through Shakespeare, was simply: supernatural; *miraculous*. The context of the Dryden passage indicates it.

Dryden, then, noted a miraculism in poetry and repudiated it; except where it was employed for satire, where it was not seriously intended and had the effect of wit. Dryden himself employs miraculism wittily, but seems rather to avoid it if he will be really committed by it; he may employ it in his translations of Ovid, where the responsibility is Ovid's and not Dryden's and in an occasional classical piece where he is making polite use of myths well known to be pagan errors. In his 'amorous' pieces he finds the reign of nature sufficient, and it is often the worse for his amorous pieces. He is not many removes from a naturalist. (A naturalist is a person who studies nature not because he loves it but because he wants to use it, approaches it from the standpoint of commonsense, and sees it thin and not thick.) Dryden might have remarked that Donne himself had a change of heart and confined his miraculism at last to the privileged field of a more or less scriptural revelation. Perhaps Dryden found his way to accepting Milton because Milton's miraculism was mostly not a contemporary sort but classical and scriptural, pitched in a time when the age of miracles had not given way to the age of science. He knew too that Cowley had shamefully

recanted from his petty miraculism, which formed the conceits, and turned to the scriptural or large order of miraculism to write his heroic (but empty) verses about David; and had written a Pindaric ode in extravagant praise of 'Mr Hobs,' whose naturalistic account of nature seemed to render any other account fantastic if not contrary to the social welfare. Incidentally, we know how much Mr Hobbes affected Dryden too and the whole of Restoration literature. What Bacon with his disparagement of poetry had begun, in the cause of science and protestantism, Hobbes completed. The name of Hobbes is critical in any history that would account for the chill which settled upon the poets at the very moment that English poetry was attaining magnificently to the fullness of its powers. The name stood for common sense and naturalism, and the monopoly of the scientific spirit over the mind. Hobbes was the adversary, the Satan, when the latter first intimidated the English poets. After Hobbes his name is legion.

'Metaphysics,' or miraculism, informs a poetry which is the most original and exciting, and intellectually perhaps the most seasoned, that we know in our literature, and very probably it has few equivalents in other literatures. But it is evident that the metaphysical effects may be large-scale or they may be small-scale. (I believe that generically, or ontologically, no distinction is to be made between them.) If Donne and Cowley illustrate the small-scale effects, Milton will illustrate the large-scale ones, probably as a consequence of the fact that he wrote major poems. Milton, in the *Paradise Lost*, told a story which was heroic and miraculous in the first place. In telling it he dramatized it, and allowed the scenes and characters to develop of their own native energy. The virtue of a long poem on a 'metaphysical' subject will consist in the dramatization or substantiation of all the parts, the poet not being required to devise fresh miracles on every page so much as to establish the perfect 'naturalism' of the material upon which the grand miracle is imposed. The *Paradise Lost* possesses this virtue nearly everywhere:

> Thus *Adam* to himself lamented loud
> Through the still Night, not now, as ere man fell,
> Wholsom and cool, and mild, but with black Air
> Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,

Which to his evil Conscience represented
All things with double terror: On the ground
Outstrecht he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Curs'd his Creation, Death as oft accus'd
Of tardie execution, since denounc't
The day of his offence. Why comes not Death,
Said hee, with one thrice acceptable stroke
To end me?

This is exactly the sort of detail for a large-scale metaphysical work, but it would hardly serve the purpose with a slighter and more naturalistic subject: with 'amorous' verses. For the critical mind Metaphysical Poetry refers perhaps almost entirely to the so-called 'conceits' that constitute its staple.

To define the conceit is to define small-scale Metaphysical Poetry.

It is easily defined, upon a little citation. Donne exhibits two conceits, or two branches of one conceit in the familiar lines:

Our hands were firmly cemented
By a fast balm which thence did spring;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string.

The poem which follows sticks to the topic; it represents the lovers in precisely that mode of union and no other. Cowley is more conventional yet still bold in the lines:

Oh take my Heart, and by that means you'll prove
Within, too stor'd enough of love:
Give me but yours, I'll by that change so thrive
That Love in all my parts shall live.
So powerful is this my change, it render can,
My outside Woman, and your inside Man.

A conceit originates in a metaphor; and in fact the conceit is but a metaphor if the metaphor is meant; that is, if it is developed so literally that it must be meant, or predicated so baldly that nothing else can be meant. Perhaps this will do for a definition.

Clearly the seventeenth century had the courage of its metaphors, and imposed them imperially on the nearest things, and just as clearly the nineteenth century lacked this courage, and was half-heartedly metaphorical, or content with similes. The

difference between the literary qualities of the two periods is the difference between the metaphor and the simile. (It must be admitted that this like other generalizations will not hold without its exceptions.) One period was pithy and original in its poetic utterance, the other was prolix and predictable. It would not quite commit itself to the metaphor even if it came upon one. Shelly is about as vigorous as usual when he says in *Adonais*:

Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour...

But splendour is not the correlative of dew, it has the flat tone of a Platonic idea, while physically it scarcely means more than dew with sunshine upon it. The seventeenth century would have said: 'Turn thy dew, which is water, into fire, and accomplish the transmutation of the elements.' Tennyson in his boldest lyric sings:

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown.

and leaves us unpersuaded of the bat. The predication would be complete without the bat, 'The black night has flown,' and a flying night is not very remarkable. Tennyson is only affecting a metaphor. But ater in the same poem he writes:

The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near';
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late';
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear';
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

and this is a technical conceit. But it is too complicated for this author, having a plurality of images which do not sustain themselves individually. The flowers stand for the lover's thoughts, and have been prepared for carefully in an earlier stanza, but their distinctness is too arbitrary, and these are like a schoolgirl's made-up metaphors. The passage will not compare with one on a very similar situation in *Green Candles*, by Mr Humbert Wolfe:

'I know her little foot,' gray carpet said:
'Who but I should know her light tread?'
'She shall come in,' answered the open door,
'And not,' said the room, 'go out any more.'

Wolf's conceit works and Tennyson's does not, and though Wolfe's performance seems not very daring or important, and

only pleasant, he employs the technique of the conceit correctly: he knows that the miracle must have a basis of verisimilitude.

Such is Metaphysical Poetry; the extension of a rhetorical device; as one of the most brilliant successes in our poetry, entitled to long and thorough examination; and even here demanding somewhat by way of a more ontological criticism. I conclude with it.

We may consult the dictionary, and discover that there is a miraculism or supernaturalism in a metaphorical assertion if we are ready to mean what we say, or believe what we hear. Or we may read Mr Hobbes, the naturalist, who was very clear upon it: 'II. The second cause of absurd assertions I ascribed to the giving of names of 'bodies' to 'accidents,' or of 'accidents' to 'bodies,' as they do that say 'faith is infused' or 'inspired,' when nothing can be 'poured' or 'breathed' into anything but body... and that 'phantasms' are 'spirits,' etc.' Translated into our present terms, Hobbes is condemning the confusion of single qualities with whole things; or the substitution of concrete images for simple ideas.

Specifically, the miraculism arises when the poet discovers by analogy an identity between objects which is partial, though it should be considerable, and proceeds to an identification which is complete. It is to be contrasted with the simile, which says 'as if' or 'like,' and is scrupulous to keep the identification partial. In Cowley's passage above, the lover is saying, not for the first time in this literature: 'She and I have exchanged our hearts.' What has actually been exchanged is affections, and affections are only in a limited sense the same as hearts. Hearts are unlike affections in being engines that pump blood and form body; and it is a miracle if the poet represents the lady's affection as rendering her inside into man. But he succeeds, with this mixture, in depositing with us the image of a very powerful affection.

From the strict point of view of literary criticism it must be insisted that the miraculism which produces the humblest conceit is the same miraculism which supplies to religions their substantive content. (This is said to assert the dignity not of the conceits but of the religions.) It is the poet and nobody else who gives to the God a nature, a form, faculties, and a history: to

the God, most comprehensive of all terms, which, if there were no poetic impulse to actualize or 'find' Him, would remain the driest and deadest among Platonic ideas, with all intension sacrificed to infinite extension. The myths are conceits, born of metaphors. Religions are periodically produced by poets and destroyed by naturalists. Religion depends for its ontological validity upon a literary understanding, and that is why it is frequently misunderstood. The metaphysical poets, perhaps like their spiritual fathers, the mediaeval Schoolmen, were under no illusions about this. They recognized myth, as they recognized the conceits, as a device of expression; its sanctity as the consequence of its public or social importance.

But whether the topics be Gods or amorous experiences, why do poets resort to miraculism? Hardly for the purpose of controverting natural fact or scientific theory. Religion pronounces about God only where science and philosophy is negative; for a positive is wanted, that is, a God who has his being in the physical world as well as in the world of principles and abstractions. Likewise with the little secular enterprises of poetry. Not now are the poets so brave, not for a very long time have they been so brave, as to dispute the scientists on what they call their 'truth'; though it is a pity that the statement cannot be turned round. Poets will concede that every act of science is legitimate, and has its efficacy. The metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century particularly admired the methodology of science, and in fact they copied it, and their phrasing is often technical, spare, and polysyllabic, though they are not repeating actual science but making those metaphorical substitutions that are so arresting.

The intention of Metaphysical Poetry is to complement science, and improve discourse. Naturalistic discourse is incomplete, for either of two reasons. It has the minimum of physical content and starves the sensibility, or it has the maximum, as if to avoid the appearance of evil, but is laborious and pointless. Platonic Poetry is too idealistic, but Physical Poetry is too realistic and realism is tedious and does not maintain interest. The poets therefore introduce the psychological device of the miracle. The predication which it permits is clean and quick but it is not a scientific predication. For scientific predication concludes an act of attention but miraculism initiates one. It leaves us looking

marvelling, and revelling in the thick *dinglich* substance that has just received its strange representation.

Let me suggest as a last word, in deference to a common Puritan scruple, that the predication of Metaphysical Poetry is true enough. It is not true like history, but no poetry is true in that sense, and only a part of science. It is true in the pragmatic sense in which some of the generalizations of science are true: it accomplishes precisely the sort of representation that it means to. It suggests to us that the object is perceptually or physically remarkable, and we had better attend to it.

THE NATURE OF CRITICISM

HERBERT READ

I

ANY ATTEMPT to raise literary criticism above the vague level of emotional appreciation through the incorporation of scientific elements is sure to meet with opposition, not only from the great majority of critics, who depend on their emotions, but also from more serious people who imagine that the prescribed boundaries of decent critical activity are being broken down. To the former set we can only present our weapons; with the latter we must reason, and our task is all the more difficult for the lack, in England, of any scientific tradition. Our critics have, as a rule, resorted to nothing more distant from their subject than common sense. Perhaps the only successful attempt of a more ranging kind was that of Coleridge, who did consciously strive to give literary criticism the rank of a mental science by relating it to what he called 'the technical process of philosophy.' Unfortunately, what this technical process amounted to in Coleridge's day was a very innate kind of metaphysical speculation, speculation rather dim across an interval of more than a hundred years. We have become more empirical, and the general effect of the growth of science has been to discredit transcendental reasoning altogether.[1] Traditional criticism, therefore, in so far as it can claim to be fundamental, is a structure whose very foundations have perished, and if we are to save it from becoming the province of emotional dictators, we must hasten to relate it to those systems of knowledge which have to a great extent replaced transcendental philosophy. Physics, demanding as it does such impresssive modifications of aspect and attitude provides the most general background for all subsidiary efforts, but for the literary critic psychology gains an intimate importance because it is so directly concerned with the material origins of art.

The critic, in approaching psychology will not be altogether disinterested: he will merely raid it in the interests of what he conceives to be another science, literary criticism. The science—if it is permissible to call it a science—really covers a very wide

field indeed. It is the valuation, by some standard, of the worth of literature. You may say that the standard is always a very definitely aesthetic one, but I find it impossible to define aesthetics without bringing in questions of value which are, when you have seen all their implications, social or ethical in nature. There is no danger, therefore (or very little danger), in the direction of a too inclusive conception of the critic's function: danger, and death, is rather to be found in the narrow drift of technical research, the analysis of the *means* of expression and so on. But it is a proper complaint against literary criticism in general that it has reached no agreed definition of its boundaries, and until it does it has no serious claim to be considered as a science. It is only because I want to distinguish one kind of literary criticism from another, even as you distinguish astronomy from astrology, or chemistry from alchemy, that I resort to a pretence of science. That distinction established, there is no need to carry the pretence any further: it is not necessary, I mean, to stimulate the vocabularies of science.

Another consideration meets us at the outset of this inquiry, and the more one realizes it the more it appears to put the whole utility of our discussion in doubt. I mean the very obvious difference in the subject matter of our two sciences: psychology is concerned with the processes of mental activity, literary criticism with the product. The psychologist only analyses the product to arrive at the process: art is, from this point of view, as significant as any other expression of mentality. But of no more significance: its significance does not correspond to its value as literature. The psychologist is indifferent to literary values (too often, alas, even in his own work), and may even definitely deplore them, especially when they represent the trimming of subjective phantasies under the influence of some objective standard or tradition. But in any case the psychologist has found and will always find a large body of material in the imaginative literature of all epochs: that side of the question is so obvious that I shall pay no more attention to it. But whether in the nature of things it is possible for such psychology to add anything positive to the principles of literary criticism is more in doubt. Analysis involves the reduction of the symbol to its origins, and once the symbol is in this way dissolved, it is of no aesthetic

significance: art is art as symbol, not as sign. Alfred Adler, whom I have found, for my purpose, one of the most suggestive of the psycho-analytical school, has recognized this, pointing out that *'the attraction of a work of art arises from its synthesis,* and that the analysis of science profanes and destroys this synthesis."[2] This is perhaps *too* respectful an attitude; there is no need to make a mystery of art. But it is an easy and an unprofitable task to translate into crude terms of sexual phantasy a poem like William Blake's *I saw a Chapel all of Gold.* One might as well confess that the impossibility of avoiding such a translation is a serious defect in the psychological critic; for him the native acceptance of such a poem is impossible; here at least there is no beauty without mystery. Luckily for the critic, few poets are so artless as Blake, and meaning and intelligence tend to be remote in the degree that they are profound.[3]

I have perhaps laid sufficient emphasis on the general limitations of the psychological method in criticism. Before I begin with my main task, which is to explore the uses of psycho-analysis to literary criticism let me deal with one of its misuses. It perhaps concerns literature rather than criticism, but we must all realize by now that no good artist exists who is not, at every point of his career, firstly a good critic. The work of art emerges within a radiation of critical perceptions. But, criticism apart, the author who imagines that he can start from psycho-analysis and arrive at art is making a complete mistake. No literature, not even a novel, can arise out of a schematic understanding of the phenomena of life. Art has only one origin—experience. Art is itself a schematic construction; an order imposed on the chaos of life. As such it has its own delicate and individual laws. But to conceive art as the illustration of science, or even as the embodiment in tangible fiction of aprioristic views of the universe, is surely a final sort of degradation, a use of the imagination more finally discredited than any it is possible to think of.

That is not to say that the study of psycho-analysis is entirely without object for the would-be novelist or poet. It might at least help him to realize, more quickly and more reasonably than the normal man would realize from his own experience, such facts as the subjectivity of love,[4] and the general law of determinism in which all our emotions and ideals are bound. Again,

the novelist cannot in his plot ignore with impunity what we might now call the psycho-analytical probabilities. Then surely, it might be said, the examination of such probabilities is an opportunity for the critic well versed in psycho-analysis. But it does not follow. Here, admittedly, is the opportunity of the psycho-analyst, straying from his strict domain, eager to show what fools these artists be. But the literary critic will ignore this obvious use of psycho-analysis, if only for the sufficient reason that to a critic of any worth these psychological defects in a work of the imagination will appear as literary defects. You cannot write well—you cannot, as we say, 'create' your atmosphere—without a 'germ of the real.' Any psychological unreality will, in the end, be apparent in some insincerity of style or method.

In the endeavour to discover the critical utility of psycho-analysis I will, merely for dialectical reasons, formulate three questions.

I. What general function does psycho-analysis give to literature?

II. How does psycho-analysis explain the process of poetic creation or inspiration?

III. Does psycho-analysis cause us to extend in any way the functions of criticism?

I ask the first question, apart from its intrinsic interest, to make sure from both points of view—that of psycho-analysis and that of criticism—that we have the same subject matter in mind. I ask the second question—again apart from its intrinsic interest—to make sure that we have a common conception of what 'creative' literature is. We can then, without fear of misconstruction, deal with the third question—which is the question I have all the time been leading up to.

To most questions in psycho-analysis there are three answers—those respectively of Freud, Jung, and Adler—and as a mere expropriator in this territory I take the liberty to lift my material from whichever quarter suits me best. Perhaps in this matter of the general function of literature Jung is the only one of the three to work out a theory in any detail. Freud and Adler do not seem to press the question beyond its individual aspect, to which I shall come in my second question. Jung's theory springs

from that general principle of contrasted attitudes which is really the characteristic method of his psychology—the contrasted attitude which he calls introversion and extraversion, a fundamental division of the self which may be traced in every activity and which we may variously paraphrase as the opposition between subject and object, between thought and feeling, between idea and thing. Now Jung's theory is that living reality is never the exclusive product of one or the other of these contrasted attitudes, but only of a specific vital activity which unites them, bridges the gulf between them, giving intensity to sense-perception and effective force to the idea. This specific activity he calls *phantasy*, and he describes it as a perpetually creative act. It is the creative activity whence issue the solutions to all unanswerable questions; it is the mother of all possibilities, in which, too, the inner and the outer worlds, like all psychological antitheses, are joined in living union."[5] Jung further differentiates *active* and *passive* phantasy—the latter a morbid state which we need not stop to consider here. Active phantasy he describes as owing its existence 'to the propensity of the conscious attitude for taking up the indications or fragments of relatively lightly-toned unconscious associations, and developing them into complete plasticity by association with parallel elements.'[6]

Now although Jung remarks that this active phantasy is 'the principal attribute of the artistic mentality,' he nowhere seems to have pressed home the conclusions which are surely latent in his theory, namely, that the poetic function is nothing else but this active phantasy in its more-than-individual aspect. The poet, in fact, is one who is capable of creating phantasies of more than individual use—phantasies, as we should say, of universal appeal. Thus art has for psycho-analysis the general function of resolving into one uniform flow of life all that springs from the inner well of primordial images and instinctive feelings, and all that springs from the outer mechanism of actuality—doing this, not only for the artist himself, from whose own need the phantasy is born, but also, by suggestion and by symbol, for all who come to participate in his imaginative work.

And here at last the processes of psycho-analysis and literary criticism run together. 'Whether the actual social validity of the symbol,' says Jung, 'is more general or more restricted depends

upon the quality or vital capacity of the creative individuality. The more abnormal the individual, i.e. the less his general fitness for life, the more limited will be the common social value of the symbols he produces, although their value may be absolute for the individuality in question."[7] Now 'the social validity of the symbol' is a phrase which I confess I would willingly annex for literary criticism, for it is to some such concept that any thorough critical activity leads us, and though I think the 'symbol' in literature (we should never call it that) is something more precise, more deliberate, something more intelligent than the normal unconscious symbol of psychology, yet, if psychoanalysis can help us to test its social validity, then it can in this respect be of some use to literary criticism.

II

I come to the individual aspect: do we gain any further light from the psycho-analysis of the creative mind? How does the modern psychologist define inspiration, and does his definition bear any correspondence to our critical concepts? It is the general problem of the psychology of genius and far too big a field to explore in any detail here. But it will, I think, be worth while to examine one or two relevant aspects of the question. I think that in the mind of every artist (though I think particularly of the literary artist) there are two contrary tendencies. In one direction he is impelled to shuffle off conscious control and sink back into his primitive mind, where he knows he can find a fresh elemental imagery, a rich though incoherent phantasy. It is the disjoined fortuitous world of dreams—day-dreams. In the other direction he is impelled to establish strong affective tendencies—ideals of moral beauty, of plastic form of order and architecture. These resolve themselves into some kind of unity and form the goal towards which, consciously or unconsciously, the artist's life is turned. You get the harmony of perfect art when the two forces achieve a balance. I think this is all a matter of psychological observation, but it has a direct bearing on what we may call the central problem of literary criticism—I mean the question of romanticism and classicism. There is, therefore, a peculiar echo of reality in these words of André Gide, written from a purely literary standpoint, in reply to an inquiry on classicism:

> It is important to remember that the struggle between classicism and romanticism also exists inside each mind. And it is from this very struggle that the work is born; the classic work of art relates the triumph of order and measure over an inner romanticism. And the wilder the riot to be tamed the more beautiful your work will be. If the thing is orderly in its inception, the work will be cold and without interest.[8]

It is this riot within that we ordinarily call inspiration, and a good deal of attention has been devoted to its description by modern psychologists. By some it is assumed to be a function of the unconscious mind, which is credited with autonomous activity, with powers of incubation and elaboration. Most people will be familiar with Poincaré's account of his own experiences in mathematical discovery (*Science et méthode*, chap. iii) where he describes how some sudden illumination would come to him after a period during which conscious application to the problem had been abandoned. Poincaré attributed these sudden illuminations to the unconscious workings of the mind, but he did not really advance any proof of his hypothesis, and I do not think the idea is any longer entertained by psychologists. Modern psychologists explain sudden illumination or inspiration rather as due solely to a fortuitous entry into activity of ideas which are immediately associated and seized upon in their happy combination,[9] and this theory is, I think, entirely satisfactory as an explanation of poetic inspiration. It will not, perhaps, satisfy the poets themselves, who all, like Blake, imagine that they take down from the dictation of angels. But we are none of us very exact in the description of our own emotional states. What really happens may perhaps be described in the following way: you have in the first place the prevailing affectivity, the latent ideal of form or thought; what forms this idea, what brings it into being, I shall explain in a moment. You have, next, the bringing into activity fortuitously of some image or memory which until the moment of inspiration had lain latent in the unconscious mind; this fortuitous image is as it were criticized by the excited interest; it is selected or rejected; and if selected it is developed and transformed by the ever prevalent affectivity. If the affective tendency is suddenly and strongly roused, then you get a state of emotion, bringing with it an intensity of awareness

to all the images and ideas that follow in the wake of the first fortuitous image. This is the state of ecstasy. Images seem to leap from their hiding-places all fully equipped for the service of the ideal or affective tendency. But even in this state of animation or ecstasy I believe that a good deal of selection and rejection of images still goes on. However, normally a creative act occurs when the exact word or image is found. And the full creative process is but a summation of many of these primary creative moments.

The concept of inspiration must have arisen as soon as mankind began to distinguish between spirit and matter, that is to say, in prehistoric times. Life itself was then explained as matter, animated by spirit, and inevitably the spirit became associated with the breath, that warm and invisible emanation of the body which ceased at death. This dynamic relationship, which was actual enough for body and soul, was also used for all other spiritual visitations; so that when a man spoke with the voice of God, it seemed that the very breath of God had entered into his mortal frame. All the Hebrew prophets were regarded as being thus breathed into, or inspired. It was, therefore, natural enough at a later stage of development to transfer this concept to the poet, for the poet, like the prophet, seemed to speak with a more than human voice. Either the gods inspired him, or, if his utterance was too pagan, then a more sinister but still external agent was evoked—a daimon or genius. Even at its most rational extreme, the classical world could still play with the idea of a muse, whose more than human accents fell into the attentive ear of the poet.

The classical conception of inspiration or possession is beautifully illustrated by Plato, whose description of the poet in *Ion* is the final elaboration of the primitive metaphor:

'For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Corybantian revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains; but when falling under the power of music and metre they are inspired and possessed; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysus but not

when they are in their right mind. And the soul of the lyric poet does the same, as they themselves say; for they tell us that they bring songs from honeyed fountains, culling them out of the gardens and dells of the Muses; they, like the bees, winging their way from flower to flower. And this is true. For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles."[10]

It is not part of my intention to trace the history of this conception from the time of Plato—to a certain extent that has already been done by Erwin Panofsky.[11] All I would like to note here is that whilst the theory of inspiration persists in some form, at certain periods it tends to become exclusively religious. Saint Thomas Aquinas and the scholastics in general did not conceive art, whether in poetry, painting, or sculpture, as anything more than skill: and such inspiration as there was in the artist was in no way to be distinguished from spiritual grace. The only possible exception was demonic possession, and any kind of inspiration that did not conform to the prevailing notion of Christianity probably perished as mystery or witchcraft. The attitude of the rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was essentially the same; the concept of inspiration was contrary to common sense and was generally condemned (in religion no less than in art) as a pernicious form of *enthusiasm*. It was only with the romantic revival that the concept was once more reinstated, and began to be seriously investigated.

Since the eighteenth century, inspiration has lost its religious significance and become almost exclusively an aesthetic term. One might almost say that the historical distinction between classicism and romanticism is determined by this concept. The classicist, and the naturalist who has much in common with him, refuse to see in the highest works of art anything but the exercise of judgement, sensibility, and skill. The romanticist cannot be satisfied with such a normal standard; for him art is essentially irrational—an experience beyond normality, sometimes destructive of normality, and at the very least evocative of that state of wonder which is the state of mind induced by the immediately inexplicable.

Classicism and romanticism are in the end temperamental attitudes, a contradiction which no argument can resolve. But whilst hitherto romanticism has had to rely on subjective convictions, and has thus earned a certain disrepute in philosophy and the science of art, it can now claim a scientific basis in the findings of psycho-analysis. That psycho-analysis itself rests under the same shadow of subjectivism is an accusation which must be dismissed, for however tentative its theoretical structure may be, the groundwork is a mass of correlated facts from which the main features clearly emerge. That the theory, even in its basic form, has a direct bearing on the problems of artistic creation has already been observed by Freud, and Freud himself has in various places made the first approach to a solution.

Freud's study of neurosis in general soon brought the phenomena of art within the scope of his researches. He found, for example, a similarity between the phantasies which obsessed his patients and the phantasies which the artist put forth as works of the imagination. There was, however, this difference: in one case the phantasies remained mental and led eventually to a nervous breakdown; in the other case they were projected and objectified and the mind remained stable. Art, therefore, was conceived as a way back from phantasy to reality. Freud does not, of course, ignore the question of aesthetic values, and is far from suggesting that every sublimation of phantasy is a work of art. The artist has the additional ability (which Freud calls 'mysterious') of so moulding the objective form of his phantasies that the result gives a positive pleasure, which pleasure is independent of the phantasy and due to the physical proportions, the texture, the tone, the harmony, and all the other specific and objective qualities which we recognize in a work of art. The only explanation he has to offer of this objective power in the work of art is that the technique of the artist is in some way a means of breaking down the barriers between individual egos, uniting them all in some form of collective ego. He suggests that the purely formal or aesthetic elements in a work of art constitute a sort of pleasure-premium or preliminary seduction which, once it operates on our sensibilities, permits the liberation of a secondary and superior kind of enjoyment springing from much deeper levels. 'I believe,' he says, 'that the aesthetic pleasure produced

in us by the creative artist has a preliminary character, and that the real enjoyment of a work of art is due to the ease it gives to certain psychic tensions.'

More recently Freud has elaborated his anatomy of the mental personality, and though he does not, in this part of his work, make any direct references to the aesthetic problem, some of his observations are suggestive. As formulated in his *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), we have now to regard the individual as being divided into three levels or degrees of consciousness, called the ego, the super-ego, and the id. These divisions can only be schematically represented as definite; actually they shade off into one another. The super-ego in particular is not to be imagined as something separated from the id by the ego; some of its characteristics are derived directly from the id. The id is 'the obscure inaccessible part of our personality; the little we know about it we have learnt from the study of dream-work and the formation of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character, and can only be described as all that the ego is not. We can come nearer to the id with images, and call it a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement. We suppose that it is somewhere in direct contact with somatic (i.e. physical or bodily) processes, and takes over from them instinctual needs and gives them mental expression, but we cannot say in what substratum this contact is made. These instincts fill it with energy, but it has no organization and no unified will, only an impulse to obtain satisfaction for the instinctual needs, in accordance with the pleasure-principle. The laws of logic—above all, the law of contradiction—do not hold for processes in the id.... There is nothing in the id which can be compared to negation, and we are astonished that space and time are necessary forms of our mental acts. In the id there is nothing corresponding to the idea of time, no recognition of the passage of time, and (a thing which is very remarkable and awaits adequate attention in philosophic thought) no alteration of mental processes by the passage of time.... It is constantly being borne in on me that we have made far too little use for our theory of the indubitable fact that the repressed remains unaltered by the passage of time. This seems to offer us the possibility of an approach to some really profound truths.... Naturally the id knows no values, no good and evil, no morality.

'The economic, or, if you prefer, the quantitative factor, which is so closely bound up with the pleasure-principle, dominates all its processes.'

We must leave on one side the significance of the other two divisions of the mental personality—the ego and the super-ego—though their application to the sphere of criticism is not far to seek. The ego is the main agent of what Freud calls the reality-principle and its tendency is to synthetize the lawless products of the id—to bring together and unify the basic mental processes. It is in the ego that the work of art receives its formal organization, just as it is in the super-ego that it receives its moral or social aim. The super-ego is 'the representative of all moral restrictions, the advocate of the impulse towards perfection—in short, it is as much as we have been able to apprehend psychologically of what people call the 'higher' things in human life.

The work of art, therefore, has its correspondences with each region of the mind. It derives its energy, its irrationality and its mysterious power from the id, which is to be regarded as the source of what we have called 'inspiration'. It is given formal synthesis and unity by the ego; and finally it may be assimilated to those ideologies or spiritual aspirations which are the peculiar creation of the super-ego. The old metaphor underlying the word 'inspiration' is to this extent confirmed: that out of the darkness of that region of the mind we call the id, come these sudden promptings of words, sounds, or images from which the artist constructs his work of art. It is not for me to discuss at present how that construction is effected—to what extent, for example, it comes into consciousness readymade. It is sufficient to note that Freud has provided a psychological explanation of the fact of inspiration. In another connection (he is discussing the phenomenon of mysticism) Freud suggests that under certain conditions 'the perceptual system becomes able to grasp relations in the deeper layers of the ego and in the id which would otherwise be inaccessible to it.' We might elaborate the metaphor and picture the regions of the mind as three superimposed strata in which a phenomenon comparable to a 'fault' in geology has taken place. As a result, in one part of the mind the layers become discontinuous and exposed to each other at unusual levels; the sensational awareness of the ego being brought into direct contact with

the id, and from that 'seething cauldron' snatching some archetypal form, some instinctive association of words, images or sounds which constitute the basis of the work of art. Ideas, and all the rational superstructure of the mind, can be conveyed by the instruments of thought or science; but those deeper intuitions of the mind, which are neither rational nor economic, but which nevertheless exercise a changeless and eternal influence on successive generations of men—these are accessible only to the mystic and the artist, and only the artist can give them material representation, though naturally the mystic may be, and often is, one kind of artist—a poet.

If this be a correct description of the process of poetic creation—and it is based both on my reading of psychology and on the analysis of my own putative experiences—then the part that may be played by suggestion or self-hypnosis in the encouragement of such states is obviously considerable, and I think that in time a complete technique of inspiration may be evolved. That this will result in a vast increase in the number of poets need not be feared, for nothing ever comes out of the unconscious mind that has not previously been consciously elaborated or sensibly felt: the product of the unconscious mind will always strictly correspond with the quality of the conscious mind, and dull intellects will find as ever that there is no short cut to genius.

It will be observed that there is nothing essential or peculiar in this description of the creative process: it is just what occurs in any man's mind when he is suddenly endowed with a 'bright idea.' Where then must we seek for an explanation of the abnormality of the artist? Obviously, I think, in the nature of the ideal or affective tendency to which his whole creative life is subservient.

Freud and his disciples would trace back the formation of the abnormal mentality of the artist to the period of infancy. 'Analysis of this aspiration' (for ideal beauty), says Dr Ernest Jones, 'reveals that the chief source of its stimuli is not so much a primary impulse as a reaction, a rebellion against the coarser and more repellent aspects of material existence, one which psychogenetically arises from the reaction of the young child against its original excremental interests.'[12] The repression of such tabooed interests may indeed contribute to the details of aesthetic

activity, but this particular hypothesis seems far too limited in conception, and far too poorly supported by facts to account for the variety and profundity of aesthetic expression in general. The less specialized theory of Adler seems to offer a clearer explanation. According to the principles of 'individual psychology,' 'every neurosis can be understood as an attempt to free oneself from a feeling of inferiority in order to gain a feeling of superiority.'[13] The feeling of inferiority usually arises in the family circle, and the compensatory feeling of superiority is usually a phantasy so absurd in its high-set goal of godlikeness that it remains in the unconscious; it is repressed by the communal standards of logic, sympathy, and co-operation. This buried sense of superiority is present in most of us, but the artist takes the goal of godlikeness seriously and is compelled to flee from real life and compromise to seek a life within life;[14] and he is an artist in virtue of the form and ideal perfection which he can give to this inner life. The neurotic fails to create a formal phantasy, and lapses into some degree of chaos. Now it is worth observing, as a confirmation of the general truth of this theory, that the most general period for the formation of the superiority-complex coincides with the most general period for the outburst of the poetic impulse. I mean the time of the awakening of the adolescent sexual instincts, the time of the withdrawal of parental protection, the period of intense conflict between instinctive desires and social control. I think there can be no doubt that the artist is born of this conflict. Freud himself lends support to this view. He says: The artist 'is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of woman; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality, and transfers all his interest, and all his libido too, on the creation of his wishes in the life of phantasy.' And Freud goes on to explain how the artist can, by the expression and elaboration of his phantasies, give them the impersonality and universality of art and make them communicable and desirable to others—'and then he has won—through his phantasy—what before he could only win in phantasy: honour, power, and the love of woman.'[15]

The essential point to notice is that psycho-analysis seems to

show that the artist is initially by tendency a neurotic, but that in becoming an artist he as it were escapes the ultimate fate of his tendency and through art finds his way back to reality. I think it will be seen now where psycho-analysis can be of some assistance to the critic—namely, in the verification of the reality of the sublimation of any given neurotic tendency. The psycho-analyst should be able to divide sharply for us, in any given artistic or pseudo-artistic expression, the real and the neurotic. There is much in literature that is on the border-line of reality: it would be useful for the critic to be able to determine by some scientific process the exact course of this borderline. But again I would suggest that in all probability the critic could determine this border-line by general critical principles; but psycho-analysis might be a shorter path to the test; and in any case it would supply collateral evidence of a very satisfactory kind. Psycho-analysis finds in art a system of symbols, representing a hidden reality, and by analysis it can testify to the purposive genuineness of the symbols; it can also testify to the faithfulness, the richness, and the range of the mind behind the symbol.

III

There still remains the third question that I propounded: Does psycho-analysis modify in any way our conception of the critic's function? The clear difference in subject-matter, already defined, makes it unlikely that we shall find any fundamental influence. It is merely a question of what kind of attitude, among the many possible to the critic within the strict limits of his function, psycho-analysis will stress. It does not, so far as I can see, amount to anything very definite—anything more precise than a general admonition to tolerance. Human activities are shown to be so interrelated, so productive of unrealized compensations, that any narrowly confined application of energy and intelligence results in a distortion of reality. Hence the futility of a purely categorical criticism—which may be illustrated by reference to 'the Hamlet problem.' During the past two hundred years an extensive body of criticism has accumulated around Shakespeare's cryptic masterpiece. The difficulty, for the critics, is to account within the canons of art for Hamlet's hesitancy in seeking to revenge his father's murder. Dr Ernest Jones has given a fairly

complete summary,[16] which I will summarize still further, of all the various theories advanced at different times. There are two main points of view: one, that of Goethe and Coleridge, finds a sufficient explanation of the inconsistencies of the play in the temperament of Hamlet, whom they regard as a noble nature, but one incapable of decisive action of any kind—'without that energy of the soul which constitutes the hero,' as Goethe expresses it. The second point of view sees a sufficient explanation in the difficulty of the task that Hamlet is called upon to perform. Both these theories have been decisively refuted, time and time again, from the very facts of the play, and finally criticism has manoeuvred itself into a paradoxical position, boldly asserting that the tragedy is in its essence 'inexplicable, incoherent, and incongruous.' This is the position taken up with so much force by the late J. M. Robertson. 'Robertson's thesis' (I quote from Dr Jones's summary) 'is that Shakespeare, finding in the old play "an action that to his time discounting sense was one of unexplained delay, elaborated that aspect of the hero as he did every other," "finally missing artistic consistency simply because consistency was absolutely excluded by the material;" he concludes that *Hamlet* is "not finally an intelligible drama as it stands," that "that play cannot be explained from within" and that "no jugglery can do away with the fact that the construction is incoherent, and the hero perforce an enigma, the snare of idolatrous criticism." 'All this can be said, and said intelligently, and with a convincing absence of emotional prejudice. But it leaves us curiously dissatisfied. We cannot dismiss so easily the personal intensity of expression throughout the play, and such intensity, such consistent intensity, gives the play a unity which the old academic criticism has failed to perceive. It seems that here is a case of an instrument not large enough, or not exact enough, to measure the material in hand.

Where literary criticism fails to account for its problem, what can psycho-analysis do? Dr Jones has shown that it will claim to do a great deal, and he has elaborated in his study of Hamlet a psychological explanation of the peculiar problems of the play. He sees in Hamlet's vacillation the workings of a typical 'complex'—the Oedipus complex, as it is called by the psycho-analysts. That is to say, the mental peculiarities of Hamlet, expressed

throughout the play with such vividness and actuality, can be explained as the consequences of 'repressed' infantile incestuous wishes, stirred into activity by the death of the father and the appearance of a rival, Claudius. With the use of this hypothesis Dr Jones can explain, and explain very plausibly, all the difficulties and incoherences of the action; and he finds in the play such an exact delineation and such a rich wealth of detail that he cannot but conclude that in writing *Hamlet* Shakespeare was giving expression to a conflict passing through his own mind. There is a certain amount of biographical confirmation of this further hypothesis in the circumstances of the composition of the play, but not facts enough, alas, to be of much use to any solution of the problem.

It would be interesting to follow this application of psycho-analysis to literary criticism into further detail, but perhaps I have indicated enough of Dr Jones's theory and method to show the possibilities of this new approach to the problems of literature. Whether Dr Jones's explanation is tenable or not, it does provide what is at present the only way out of a critical impasse, and for that reason alone it merits serious consideration. At the very least it points to a defect in our critical methods, for the failure of literary criticism to deal with *Hamlet* is largely due to its approach to the problem along too narrow a front: we must always be prepared for literature refusing to fit into our critical categories. Criticism is a process of crystallization, of the discovery and elaboration of general concepts; but we must be prepared for the voyage of discovery leading us into strange and unfamiliar tracts of the human mind.

That is one way in which psycho-analysis supplies a corrective to the narrowness of criticism. I find still another, tending to the same end. I have referred before to the eternal opposition of the classic and the romantic: to this blind difference under the influence of which even the best of critics race into untenable dogmatisms. Can psycho-analysis resolve this difficult conflict and supply us with a common standpoint?

I think it can—particularly the psycho-analysis associated with the name of Jung. Jung has devoted his best work to the analysis of psychological types. As I have mentioned before, he distinguishes between two fundamental types, the extraverted and the

introverted, determined according to whether the general mental energy of the individual is directed outwards to the visible, actual world, or inward to the world of thought and imagery. These two fundamental types are further subdivided into types determined by the functions of thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition, but the psychological types so determined do not form hard-and-fast categories into which the whole of humanity can be classified: they are merely indications of extensive divisions which merge one into another. But in our particular sphere they do supply a scientific basis for the description of literary types. You will find, for example, that the romantic artist always expresses some function of the extraverted attitude, whilst the classic artist always expresses some function of the introverted attitude. Now this suggests that the critic, like the psychologist, should take up a position above the conflict, and although his own psychological state may lead him to sympathize with one school or the other, yet as a scientific critic he must no longer be content with a dog-in-the-manger attitude. Again, he must broaden the basis of his criticism: he must see the romantic and classic artist always expresses some function of the introverted logical opposition in human nature. It is not sufficient to treat the matter one way or the other as a question of intellectual fallacy; it is a question, for the individual, of natural necessity; and criticism must find its general basis in a science of mankind.

I would like to indicate, in conclusion, what I think might be a fruitful direction for further work in the application of psycho-analysis to literature. Recent theories explain memory, and indeed most of the characteristics of mind on a basis of physiological 'traces' left by experience. Experience may be individual or collective, and those instincts and experiences incidental to the struggle for adaptation and existence leave their traces on the mind when, and in so far as, it functions collectively. The accretion of innumerable traces ensures a set response to environment. A given physical structure of the brain results in certain inevitable forms of thought, and these Jung, following Burckhardt, calls primordial images. Such images eventually crystallize as myths and religions, and psychology has already devoted a good deal of attention to the relation of such myths and religions to the unconscious processes of which they are the expression. Some-

times these collective ideas or primordial images find expression in literature, which, from an evolutionary point of view, has been regarded as a rational mythology.[18] Jung quotes from a letter of Burckhardt's these very suggestive sentences:

> What you are destined to find in *Faust*, that you will find by intuition. *Faust* is nothing else than pure and legitimate myth, a great primitive conception, so to speak, in which everyone can divine in his own way his own nature and destiny. Allow me to make a comparison: What would the ancient Greeks have said had a commentator interposed himself between them and the Oedipus legend? There was a chord of the Oedipus legend in every Greek which longed to be touched directly and respond in its own way. And thus it is with the German nation and *Faust*.[19]

This train of thought, allied to what we know of the possibilities of psycho-analysis in dealing with myths, seems to suggest the further possibility of relating the types actualized by the poetic imagination to their origin in the root-images of the community. In this way criticism would possess still another basic reality on which it could ground the imaginative hypotheses of art. Whether criticism, under the guidance of psycho-analysis, could go still further and indicate the needs of the collective mind, is perhaps too venturesome a suggestion to make. But with the advance of reason we have lost the main historic content of the collective mind: the symbols of religion are no longer effective because they are no longer unconscious. We still, however, retain structural features of the mind that cry for definite satisfaction. The modern world is uneasy because it is the expression of an unappeased hunger. We need some unanimity to focus the vague desires that exist in the collective mind. Will the psychologist unite with the critic to define and to solve this problem?

NOTES

1 I imply 'in the general mind'. That empirical science can ever dispense with all aprioristic processes is a vulgar error to which the general tenor of this book is opposed.

2 *Individual Psychology* (English edition, 1924), p. 268.

3 When this remoteness occurs, as in the case of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, then I think it inevitably follows that any explanation that psychology can offer for the complicated strands of poetic creation tends

to quicken our general sensibility. Reasoning and mechanism do not lose their value because we follow step by step the process of their operation; and a poetic process is exactly analogous. It is where you have, not a dynamic process, but a static symbol, that analysis is without any critical significance, and may be positively destructive of the aesthetic effect. I shall return to this point in dealing with Dr Ernest Jones's study of *Hamlet*.

4 Cf. Jacques Rivière, 'Notes on a Possible Generalization of the Theories of Freud' (*The Criterion*, vol. i, no. iv, pp. 344-5).

5 *Psychological Types* (English edition, London, 1923), p. 69.

6 Ibid. p. 574.

7 *Psychological Types*, p. 380.

8 'Réponse à une enquête de la Renaissance sur le classicisme,' 8 Janvier 1921 (*Morceaux Choisis*, p. 453).

9 Cf. E. Rignano, *The Psychology of Reasoning* (London, 1923), p. 129.

10 Jowett's translation.

11 *Idea*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, v. 1924.

12 *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis*, 1923, p. 262.

13 Alfred Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* (English edition, London, 1924), p. 23.

14 Ibid. p. 8.

15 Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (English edition, London, 1922), pp. 314-15.

16 *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* (London, 1923), pp. 1—98, 'The Problem of Hamlet'.

17 This process, however, should not be held to exclude the possibility of the specific origin of myths. The opposition between psycho-analysis and ethnologists on this score is largely fictitious. The origin of the myth may be a plain event devoid of psychological significance: the elaboration of this event into a mythical structure, often over a period of many years, even centuries, may all the same be a process for which we should seek an explanation in psychology.

18 Cf. Th. Ribot, *Essai sur l'Imagination. Créatrice* (Paris, 1900), p. 114: 'La littérature est une mythologie déchue et rationalisée.'

19 C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (English edition, 1918), p. 490.

THE IMAGINATION

I. A. RICHARDS

AT LEAST six distinct senses of the word 'imagination' are still current in critical discussion. It is convenient to separate them before passing on to consider the one which is most important.

(i) The production of vivid images, usually visual images, already sufficiently discussed, is the commonest and the least interesting thing which is referred to by imagination.

(ii) The use of figurative language is frequently all that is meant. People who naturally employ metaphor and simile, especially when it is of an unusual kind, are said to have imagination. This may or may not be accompanied by imagination in the other senses. It should not be overlooked that metaphor and simile—the two may be considered together—have a great variety of functions in speech. A metaphor may be illustrative or diagrammatical, providing a concrete instance of a relation which would otherwise have to be stated in abstract terms. This is the most common scientific or prose use of metaphor. It is rare in emotive language and in poetry; Shelley's 'Dome of many-coloured glass' is almost the only example which springs to mind. More usually the elucidation is a mere pretence; some attitude of the speaker to his subject or to his audience is using the metaphor as a means of expression. 'The freedom of my writings has indeed provoked an implacable tribe,' said Gibbon, 'but as I was safe from the stings, I was soon accustomed to the buzzing of the hornets.' But metaphor has yet further uses. It is the supreme agent by which disparate and hitherto unconnected things are brought together in poetry for the sake of the effects upon attitude and impulse which spring from their collocation and from the combinations which the mind then establishes between them. There are few metaphors whose effect, if carefully examined, can be traced to the logical relations involved. Metaphor is a semi-surreptitious method by which a greater variety of elements can be wrought into the fabric of the experience. Not that there is any virtue in variety by itself, though the list of critics who seem to have thought so

would be lengthy; a page of the dictionary can show more variety than any page of poetry. But what is needed for the wholeness of an experience is not always naturally present and metaphor supplies an excuse by which what is needed may be smuggled in. This is an instance of a very strange phenomenon constantly appearing in the arts. What is most essential often seems to be done as it were inadvertently, to be a by-product, an accidental concomitant. Those who look only to the ostensible purposes for the explanation of the effects, who make prose analyses of poems, must inevitably find them a mystery. But why overt and evident intention should so often destroy the effect is certainly a difficult problem.

(iii) A narrower sense is that in which sympathetic reproducing of other people's states of mind, particularly their emotional states, is what is meant. 'You haven't enough imagination,' the dramatist says to the critic who thinks that his persons behave unnaturally. This kind of imagination is plainly a necessity for communication, and is covered by what has already been said in Chapter XXIV. It has no necessary connection with senses of imagination which imply value. Bad plays to be successful require it as much as good.

(iv) Inventiveness, the bringing together of elements which are not ordinarily connected, is another sense. According to this Edison is said to have possessed imagination, and any fantastic romance will show it *in excelsis*. Although this comes nearer to a sense in which value is implied, it is still too general. The lunatic will beat any of us at combining odd ideas: Dr Cook outstrips Peary, and Bottomley outshines Sir John Bradbury.

(v) Next we have that kind of relevant connection of things ordinarily thought of as disparate which is exemplified in scientific imagination. This is an ordering of experience in definite ways and for a definite end or purpose, not necessarily deliberate and conscious, but limited to a given field of phenomena. The *technical* truimphs of the arts are instances of this kind of imagination. As with all ordering, value considerations are very likely to be implied, but the value may be limited or conditional.

(vi) Finally we come to the sense of imagination with which we are here most concerned. The original formulation[1] was

Coleridge's greatest contribution to critical theory, and except in the way of interpretation, it is hard to add anything to what he has said, though, as we have already noted in Chapter XXIV, some things might be taken away from it with advantage.

'That synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination...-reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities... the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement.' 'The sense of musical delight... with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling'[2]—these are gifts of the imagination. It was natural, we shall shortly see why, for Coleridge to carry his further speculations upon Imagination into the realms of Transcendentalism, but setting this aside, there is enough in this description and in the many applications and elucidations scattered through the *Biographia* and the *Lectures* to justify Coleridge's claim to have put his finger more nearly than anyone else upon the essential characteristic of poetic as of all valuable experience.

In describing the poet we laid stress upon the availability of his experience, upon the width of the field of stimulation which he can accept, and the completeness of the response which he can make. Compared with him the ordinary man suppresses nine-tenths of his impulses, because he is incapable of managing them without confusion. He goes about in blinkers because what he would otherwise see would upset him. But the poet through his superior power of ordering experience is freed from this necessity. Impulses which commonly interfere with one another and are conflicting, independent, and mutually distractive, in him combine into a stable poise. He selects, of course, but the range of suppression which is necessary for him is diminished, and for this very reason such suppressions as he makes are more rigorously carried out. Hence the curious local callousness of the artist which so often strikes the observer.

But these impulses active in the artist become mutually modified and thereby ordered to an extent which only occurs in the

ordinary man at rare moments, under the shock of, for example, a great bereavement or an undreamt-of happiness; at instants when the 'film of familiarity and selfish solicitude,' which commonly hides nine-tenths of life from him, seems to be lifted and he feels strangely alive and aware of the actuality of existence. In these moments his myriad inhibitions are weakened; his responses, canalized—to use an inappropriate metaphor—by routine and by practical but restricted convenience, break loose and make up a new order with one another; he feels as though everything were beginning anew. But for most men after their early years such experiences are infrequent; a time comes when they are incapable of them unaided, and they receive them only through the arts. For great art has this effect, and owes thereto its supreme place in human life.

The poet makes unconsciously a selection which outwits the force of habit; the impulses he awakens are freed, through the very means by which they are aroused, from the inhibitions that ordinary circumstances encourage; the irrelevant and the extraneous is excluded; and upon the resulting simplified but widened field of impulses he imposes an order which their greater plasticity allows them to accept. Almost always too the chief part of his work is done through those impulses which we have seen to be most uniform and regular, those which are aroused by what are called the 'formal elements.' They are also the most primitive, and for that reason commonly among those which are most inhibited, most curtailed and subordinated to superimposed purposes. We rarely let a colour affect us purely as a colour, we use it as a sign by which we recognize some coloured object. Thus our responses to colours in themselves become so abbreviated that many people come to think that the pigments painters use are in some way more colourful than Nature. What happens is that inhibitions are released, and at the same time mutual interactions between impulses take place which only sunsets seem to evoke in everyday experience. We have seen in discussing communication one reason for the pre-eminence of 'formal elements' in art, the uniformity of the responses which they can be depended upon to produce. In their primitiveness we find another. The sense that the accidental and adventitious aspect of life has receded, that we are beginning again, that our contact with actuality

is largely due to this restoration of their full natural power to sensations.

But this restoration is not enough; merely looking at a landscape in a mirror, or standing on one's head will do it. What is much more essential is the increased organization, the heightened power of combining all the several effects of formal elements into a single response, which the poet bestows. To point out that 'the sense of musical delight is a gift of the imagination' was one of Coleridge's most brilliant feats. It is in such resolution of a welter of disconnected impulses into a single ordered response that in all the arts imagination is most shown but for the reason that here its operation is most intricate and most inaccessible to observation, we shall study it more profitably in its other manifestations.

We have suggested, but only by accident, that imagination characteristically produces effects similar to those which accompany great and sudden crises in experience. This would be misleading. What is true is that those imaginative syntheses which most nearly approach to these climaxes, Tragedy for example, are the most easy to analyse. What clearer instance of the 'balance or reconciliation of opposite and discordant qualities' can be found than Tragedy? Pity, the impulse to approach, and Terror, the impulse to retreat, are brought in Tragedy to a reconciliation which they find nowhere else, and with them who knows what other allied groups of equally discordant impulses. Their union in an ordered single response is the *catharsis* by which Tragedy is recognized, whether Aristotle meant anything of this kind or not. This is the explanation of that sense of release, of repose in the midst of stress, of balance and composure, given by Tragedy, for there is no other way in which such impulses, once awakened, can be set at rest without suppression.

It is essential to recognize that in the full tragic experience there is no suppression. The mind does not shy away from anything, it does not protect itself with any illusion, it stands uncomforted, unintimidated, alone and self-reliant. The test of its success is whether it can face what is before it and respond to it without any of the innumerable subterfuges by which it ordinarily dodges the full development of experience. Suppressions and sublimations alike are devices by which we endeavour to

avoid issues which might bewilder us. The essence of Tragedy is that it forces us to live for a moment without them. When we succeed we find, as usual, that there is no difficulty; the difficulty came from the suppressions and sublimations. The joy which is so strangely the heart of the experience is not an indication that 'all's right with the world' or that 'somewhere, somehow, there is justice;' it is an indication that all is right here and now in the nervous system. Because Tragedy is the experience which most invites these subterfuges, it is the greatest and the rarest thing in literature, for the vast majority of works which pass by that name are of a different order. Tragedy is only possible to a mind which is for the moment agnostic or Manichean. The least touch of any theology which has a compensating Heaven to offer the tragic hero is fatal. That is why *Romeo and Juliet* is not a Tragedy in the sense in which *King Lear* is.

But there is more in Tragedy than unmitigated experience. Besides Terror there is Pity, and if there is substituted for either something a little different—Horror or Dread. say, for Terror; Regret or Shame for Pity; or that kind of Pity which yields the adjective 'Pitiable' in place of that which yields 'Piteous'—the whole effect is altered. It is the relation between the two sets of impulses, Pity and Terror, which gives its specific character to Tragedy, and from that relation the peculiar poise of the Tragic experience springs.

The metaphor of a balance or poise will bear consideration. For Pity and Terror are opposites in a sense in which Pity and Dread are not. Dread or Horror are nearer than Terror to Pity, for they contain attraction as well as repulsion. As in colour, tones just not in harmonic relation are peculiarly unmanageable and jarring, so it is with these more easily describable responses. The extraordinarily stable experience of Tragedy, which is capable of admitting almost any other impulses so long as the relation of the main components is exactly right, changes at once if these are altered. Even if it keeps its coherence it becomes at once a far narrower, more limited, and exclusive thing, a much more partial, restricted and specialized response. Tragedy is perhaps the most general, all-accepting, all-ordering experience known. It can take anything into its organization, modifying it so that it finds a place. It is invulnerable; there is nothing which does

not present to the tragic attitude *when fully developed* a fitting aspect and only a fitting aspect. Its sole rivals in this respect are the attitude of Falstaff and of the Voltaire of *Candide*. But pseudo-tragedy—the greater part of Greek Tragedy as well as almost all Elizabethan Tragedy outside Shakespeare's six masterpieces comes under this head—is one of the most fragile and precarious of attitudes. Parody easily overthrows it, the ironic addition paralyses it; even a mediocre joke may make it look lopsided and extravagant.

This balanced poise, stable through its power of inclusion, not through the force of its exclusions, is not peculiar to Tragedy. It is a general characteristic of all the most valuable experiences of the arts. It can be given by a carpet or a pot or by a gesture as unmistakably as by the Parthenon, it may come about through an epigram as clearly as through a Sonata. We must resist the temptation to analyse its cause into sets of opposed characters in the object. As a rule no such analysis can be made. The balance is not in the structure of the stimulating object, it is in the response. By remembering this we escape the danger of supposing that we have found a formula for Beauty.

Although for most people these experiences are infrequent apart from the arts, almost any occasion may give rise to them. The most important general condition is mental health, a high state of 'vigilance;' the next is the frequent occurrence of such experiences in the recent past. None of the effects of art is more transferable than this balance or equilibrium.

Despite all differences in the impulses concerned, a certain general similarity can be observed in all these cases of supremely fine and complete organization. It is this similarity which has led to the legends of the 'aesthetic state', the 'aesthetic emotion' and the single quality Beauty, the same in all its manifestations. We had occasion in Chapter II to suggest that the characteristics by which aesthetic experience is usually defined—that impersonality, disinterestedness and detachment so much stressed and so little discussed by aestheticians—are really two sets of quite different characters. One set we have seen (Chapters X and XXIV) to be merely conditions of communication having nothing essentially to do with value, conditions involved in valueless and valuable communications alike. We have suggested above, however,

that this kind of detachment and severance from ordinary circumstances and accidental personal interests may be of special service in these supremely valuable[3] communications, since it makes the breaking down of inhibitions more easy. This same facilitation of response is also, it should be added, the explanation of the peculiarly pernicious effect of bad competent art.

We may now turn to consider that other set of characters which have been confused with these communicative conditions, and which may justifiably be taken as defining a special field for those interested in the values of experience. There are two ways in which impulses may be organized; by exclusion and by inclusion, by synthesis and by elimination. Although every coherent state of mind depends upon both, it is permissible to contrast experiences which win stability and order through a narrowing of the response with those which widen it. A very great deal of poetry and art is content with the full, ordered development of comparatively special and limited experiences, with a definite emotion, for example, Sorrow, Joy, Pride or a definite attitude, Love, Indignation, Admiration, Hope, or with a specific mood, Melancholy, Optimism or Longing. And such art has its own value and its place in human affairs. No one will quarrel with 'Break, break, break', or with the *Coronach* or with *Rose Aylmer* or with *Love's Philosophy*,[4] although clearly they are limited and exclusive. But they are not the greatest kind of poetry; we do not expect from them what we find in the *Ode to the Nightingale*, in *Proud Maisie*, in *Sir Patrick Spens*, in *The Definition of Love* or in the *Nocturnall upon S. Lucie's Day*.

The structures of these two kinds of experiences are different, and the difference is not one of subject but of the relations *inter se* of the several impulses active in the experience. A poem of the first group is built out of sets of impulses which run parallel, which have the same direction. In a poem of the second group the most obvious feature is the extraordinary heterogeneity of the distinguishable impulses. But they are more than heterogeneous, they are opposed. They are such that in ordinary, non-poetic, non-imaginative experience, one or other set would be suppressed to give as it might appear freer development to the others.

The difference comes out clearly if we consider how compara-

tively unstable poems of the first kind are. They will not bear an ironical contemplation. We have only to read *The War Song of Dinas Vawr* in close conjunction with the *Coronach*, or to remember that unfortunate phrase 'Those lips, O slippery blisses!' from *Endymion*, while reading *Love's Philosophy*, to notice this. Irony in this sense consists in the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses; that is why poetry which is exposed to it is not of the highest order, and why irony itself is so constantly a characteristic of poetry which is.

These opposed impulses from the resolution of which such experiences spring cannot usually by analysed. When, as is most often the case, they are aroused through formal means, it is evidently impossible to do so. But sometimes, as in the above cited cases, they can, and through this accident literary criticism is able to go a step further than the criticism of the other arts.

We can only conjecture dimly what difference holds between a balance and reconciliation of impulses and a mere rivalry or conflict. One difference is that a balance sustains one state of mind, but a conflict two alternating states. This, however, does not take us very far. The chief misconception which prevents progress here is the switchboard view of the mind. What conception should be put in its place is still doubtful, but we have already (chapters XIV and XX) discussed the reasons which make a more adequate conception imperative. The rest of the difficulty is due merely to ignorance; we do not yet know enough about the central nervous system.

With this preliminary disavowal of undue certainty we may proceed. The equilibrium[5] of opposed impulses, which we suspect to be the ground-plan of the most valuable aesthetic responses, brings into play far more of our personality than is possible in experiences of a more defined emotion. We cease to be oriented in one definite direction; more facets of the mind are exposed and, what is the same thing, more aspects of things are able to affect us. To respond, not through one narrow channel of interest, but simultaneously and coherently through many, is to be *disinterested* in the only sense of the word which concerns us here. A state of mind which is not distinterested is one which sees things only from one standpoint or under one aspect. At the same time since more of our personality is engaged the in-

dependence and individuality of other things becomes greater. We seem to see 'all round' them, to see them as they really are; we see them apart from any one particular interest which they may have for us. Of course without some interest we should not see them at all, but the less any one particular interest is indispensable, the more *detached* our attitude becomes. And to say that we are *impersonal* is merely a curious way of saying that our personality is more *completely* involved.

These characters of aesthetic experiences can thus be shown to be very natural consequences of the diversity of their components. But that so many different impulses should enter in is only what may be expected in an experience whose ground-plan is a balance of opposites. For every impulse which does not complete itself in isolation tends to bring in allied systems. The state of irresolution shows this clearly: The difference between any such welter of vacillating impulses and the states of composure we are considering may well be a matter of mediating relations between the supporting systems brought in from either side. One thing only perhaps is certain; what happens is the exact opposite to a deadlock, for compared to the experience of great poetry every other state of mind is one of bafflement.

The consciousness which arises in these moments of completed being lends itself inevitably to transcendental descriptions. 'This Extasie doth unperplex,' we seem to see things as they really are, and because we are freed from the bewilderment which our own maladjustment brings with it,

> The heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened.

Wordsworth's Pantheistic interpretation of the imaginative experience in *Tintern Abbey*[2] is one which in varying forms has been given by many poets and critics. The reconciliation of it with the account here presented raises a point of extreme importance, the demarcation of the two main uses of language.

NOTES

1 Coleridge's debt here to Schelling has been over-estimated. Such borrowings as he made were more hampering to him than helpful.
2 *Biographia Literaria*, II, pp. 12, 14.

3 It may perhaps be desirable to point out that this description of the effects of art follows from the theory of value outlined in Chapter VII. They are the most valuable experiences because they are the least wasteful. Thus the place assigned to them is not a mere personal expression of preference.

4 May I assume that references here will not distress the reader? Tennyson, Scott, Landor, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Anon; Marvell, Donne, Peacock. I am anxious to facilitate the actual detailed comparison of these poems.

5 This topic is discussed from a slightly different angle in *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (Allen and Unwin, 1922).

6 I will quote the familiar passage for the reader's convenience:

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought
> And rolls through all things.

Not itself an instance of imaginative utterance, although some instances *can* be found in the poem.

METAPHOR

I. A. RICHARDS

IT WAS Aristotle, no lesser man, who said, in *The Poetics*, 'The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor.' But he went on to say, 'This alone cannot be imparted to another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances.' I do not know how much influence this remark has had: or whether it is at all responsible for our feeling that what it says is commonsense. But question it for a moment and we can discover in it, if we will to be malicious, here at the very beginning of the subject, the evil presence of three of the assumptions which have ever since prevented the study of this greatest thing by far from taking the place it deserves among our studies and from advancing, as theory and practice, in the ways open to it.

One assumption is that 'an eye for resemblances' is a gift that some men have but others have not. But we all live, and speak, only through our eye for resemblances. Without it we should perish early. Though some may have better eyes than others, the differences between them are in degree only and may be remedied, certainly in some measure, as other differences are, by the right kinds of teaching and study. The second assumption denies this and holds that, though everything else may be taught, 'This alone cannot be imparted to another.' I cannot guess how seriously Aristotle meant this or what other subjects of teaching he had in mind as he spoke. But, if we consider how we all of us attain what limited measure of a command of metaphor we possess, we shall see that no such contrast is valid. As individuals we gain our command of metaphor just as we learn whatever else makes us distinctively human. It is all imparted to us from others, with and through the language we learn, language which is utterly unable to aid us except through the command of metaphor which it gives. And that brings up the third and worst assumpion—that metaphor is something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode

of working, instead of the omnipresent principle of all its free action.

Throughout the history of Rhetoric, metaphor has been treated as a sort of happy extra trick with words, an opportunity to exploit the accidents of their versatility, something in place occasionally but requiring unusual skill and caution. In brief, a grace or ornament or *added* power of language, not its constitutive form. Sometimes, it is true, a writer will venture on speculations that go deeper. I have just been echoing Shelley's observation that 'Language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until words, which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thought instead of pictures of integral thoughts: and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse.' But that is an exceptional utterance and its implications have not yet been taken account of by rhetoricians. Nor have philosophers, as a body, done much better, though historians of language have long taught that we can find no word or description for any of the intellectual operations which, if its history is known, is not seen to have been taken, by metaphor, from a description of some physical happening. Only Jeremy Bentham, as successor to Bacon and Hobbes, insisted—with his technique of archetypation and phraseoplerosis—upon one inference that might be drawn; namely, that the mind and all its doings are fictions. He left it to Coleridge, F. H. Bradley and Vaihinger to point to the further inference; namely, that matter and its adventures, and all the derivative objects of contemplation, are fictions too, of varied rank because of varied service.

I have glanced for a moment at these deep waters into which a serious study of metaphor may plunge us, because possibly fear of them may be one cause why the study has so often not been enterprising and why Rhetoric traditionally has limited its inquiry to relatively superficial problems. But we shall not advance in even these surface problems unless we are ready to explore, as best we can, the depths of verbal interaction which give rise to them.

That metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language can

be shown by mere observation. We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it, as you will be noticing throughout this lecture. Even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty. In the semi-technicalized subjects, in aesthetics, politics, sociology, ethics, psychology, theory of language and so on, our constant chief difficulty is to discover how we are using it and how our supposedly fixed words are shifting their senses. In philosophy, above all, we can take no step safely without an unrelaxing awareness of the metaphors we, and our audience, may be employing, and though we may pretend to eschew them, we can attempt to do so only by detecting them. And this is the more true, the more severe and abstract the philosophy is. As it grows more abstract we think increasingly by means of metaphors that we profess not to be relying on. The metaphors we are avoiding steer our thought as much as those we accept. So it must be with any utterance for which it is less easy to know what we are saying than what we are not saying. And in philosophy, of which this is almost a definition, I would hold with Bradley that our pretence to do without metaphor is never more than a bluff waiting to be called. But if that is a truth it is easier to utter than to accept with its consequences or to remember.

The view that metaphor is omnipresent in speech can be recommended theoretically. If you recall what I tried to say in my Second Lecture about the context theorem of meaning; about meaning as the delegated efficacy of signs by which they bring together into new unities the abstracts, or aspects, which are the missing parts of their various contexts, you will recollect some insistence that a word is normally a substitute for (or means) not one discrete past impression but a combination of general aspects. Now that is itself a summary account of the principle of metaphor. In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction.

'As to metaphorical expression,' said Dr Johnson, 'that is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for one.' He is keeping, you see, to the limited traditional view of metaphor. As to the excellence of a style

that gives you two ideas for one, that depends on what the two ideas do to one another, or conjointly do for us. We find, of course, when we look closer that there is an immense variety in these modes of interaction between co-present thoughts, as I will call them, or, in terms of the context theorem, between different missing parts or aspects of the different contexts of a word's meaning. In practice, we distinguish with marvellous skill between these modes of interaction, though our skill varies. The Elizabethans, for example, were far more widely skilled in the use of metaphor—both in utterance and in interpretation—than we are. A fact which made Shakespeare possible. The eighteenth century narrowed its skill down, defensively, to certain modes only. The early nineteenth century and my generation have been recovering from these two specializations. That, I suggest, is a way of reformulating the Classic-Romantic antithesis which it would be interesting to try out.

But it could not be tried out without a better developed theory of metaphor than is yet available. The traditional theory noticed only a few of the modes of metaphor; and limited its application of the term *metaphor* to a few of them only. And thereby it made metaphor seem to be a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words, whereas fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts. *Thought* is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom. To improve the theory of metaphor we must remember this. And the method is to take more note of the skill in thought which we possess and are intermittently aware of already. We must translate more of our skill into discussable science. Reflect better upon what we do already so cleverly. Raise our implicit recognitions into explicit distinctions.

As we do so we find that all the questions that matter in literary history and criticism take on a new interest and a wider relevance to human needs. In asking how language works we ask about how thought and feeling and all the other modes of the mind's activity proceed, about how we are to learn to live and how that 'greatest thing of all,' a command of metaphor—which is great only because it is a command of life—may best, in spite of Aristotle, 'be imparted to another.' But to profit we must

remember, with Hobbes, that 'the scope of all speculation is the performance of some action or thing to be done,' and, with Kant, that—'We can by no means require of the pure practical reason to be subordinated to the speculative, and thus to reverse the order, since every interest is at last practical, and even that of the speculative reason is but conditional, and is complete only in its practical use.' Our theory, as it has its roots in practice, must also have its fruit in improved skill. 'I am the child,' says the Sufi mystic, 'whose father is his son, and the wine whose vine is its jar,' summing up so the whole process of that meditation which does not forget what it is really about.

This much has been an introduction or preparation to put the theory of metaphor in a more important place than it has enjoyed in traditional Rhetoric. It is time to come down from these high speculations to consider some simple steps in analysis which may take the translation of our skill with metaphor into explicit science easier. A first step is to introduce two technical terms to assist us in distinguishing from one another what Dr Johnson called the two ideas that any metaphor, at its simplest, gives us. Let me call them the tenor and the vehicle. One of the oddest of the many odd things about the whole topic is that we have no agreed distinguishing terms for these two halves of a metaphor—in spite of the immense convenience, almost the necessity, of such terms if we are to make any analyses without confusion. For the whole task is to compare the different relations which, in different cases, these two members of a metaphor hold to one another, and we are confused at the start if we do not know which of the two we are talking about. At present we have only some clumsy descriptive phrases with which to separate them. 'The original idea' and 'the borrowed one'; 'what is really being said or thought of' and 'what it is compared to'; 'the underlying idea' and 'the imagined nature'; 'the principal subject' and 'what it resembles' or, still more confusing, simply 'the meaning' and 'the metaphor' or 'the idea' and 'its image.'

How confusing these must be is easily seen, and experience with the analysis of metaphors fully confirms the worst expectations. We need the word 'metaphor' for the whole double unit, and to use it sometimes for one of the two components in sepa-

ration from the other is as injudicious as that other trick by which we use 'the meaning' here sometimes for the work that the whole double unit does and sometimes for the other component—the tenor, as I am calling it—the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means. It is not surprising that the detailed analysis of metaphors, if we attempt it with such slippery terms as these, sometimes feels like extracting cube-roots in the head. Or, to make a more exact comparison, what would the most elementary arithmetic feel like, if we used the word *twelve* (12) sometimes for the number one (1), sometimes for the number two (2) and sometimes for the number twenty-one (21) as well, and had somehow to remember, or see, unassisted by our notation, which uses we were making of it at different places in our calculations? All these words, *meaning*, *expression*, *metaphor*, *comparison*, *subject*, *figure*, *image*, behave so, and when we recognize this we need look no further for a part, at least, of the explanation of the backward state of the study. Why rhetoricians have not long ago remedied this defect of language for their purpose, would perhaps be a profitable matter for reflection. I do not know a satisfactory answer. As the best teacher I ever knew, G. E. Moore, once remarked, 'Why we should use the same form of verbal expression to convey such different meanings is more than I can say. It seems to me very curious that language should have grown up as if it were expressly designed to mislead philosophers; and I do not know why it should have.'

The words 'figure' and 'image' are especially and additionally misleading here. They both sometimes stand for the whole double unit and sometimes for one member of it, the vehicle as opposed to the other. But in addition they bring in a confusion with the sense-perception of some sort, and so have made rhetoricians think that a figure of speech, an image, or imaginative comparison, must have something to do with the presence of images, in this other sense, in the mind's eye or the mind's ear. But, of course, it need not. No images of this sort need come in at any point. We had one instance of the vicious influence of this red-herring in my first lecture—Lord Kames' antic with the mental picture he supposed we must form of Shakespeare's peacock-feather. Whole schools of rhetoric and criticism have gone astray after it. Lessing's discussion of the relations of the arts, for ex-

ample, is grievously spoilt by it. We cannot too firmly recognize that how a figure of speech works has nothing necessarily to do with how any images, as copies or duplicates of sense-perceptions, may, for reader or writer, be backing up his words. In special cases for certain readers they may come in—then is a long chapter of individual psychology which is relevant here. But the words can do almost anything without them, and we must put no assumption about their necessary presence into our general theory.

I can illustrate both the convenience of such technical terms as *tenor* and *vehicle* and the evil influence of the imagery assumption, with another citation from Lord Kames, from Chapter 20, paragraph 6, of his *Elements of Criticism*. You will see from the very difficulty of making out just what he is saying, how much we need rigid technicalities here. His point is, I think, evidently mistaken; but before we can be satisfied that it is mistaken, we have to be certain what it is; and what I want I first to direct your attention upon is the clumsy and distracting language in which he has to state it. He is preparing to set up a rule to be observed by writers in 'constructing a metaphor.' He says, 'In the fourth place, the comparison... being in a metaphor sunk by imagining the principal subject to be that very thing which it only resembles; an opportunity is furnished to describe it (i.e. the principal subject) in terms taken strictly or literally with respect to its imagined nature.'

To use my proposed terms—we can describe or qualify the tenor by describing the vehicle. He goes on, 'This suggests another rule: That in constructing a metaphor, the writer ought to make use of such words only as are applicable literally to the imagined nature of his subject.' That is, he must not use any further metaphor in describing the vehicle. 'Figurative word,' he says, 'ought carefully to be avoided; for such complicated figures, instead of setting the principal subject in a strong light, involve it in a cloud; and it is well if the reader, without rejecting by the lump, endeavour patiently to gather the plain meaning, regardless of the figures.'

Let me invite you to consider what is being done here very carefully, for it illustrates, I believe, most of the things which have made the traditional studies of metaphor not very profit-

able. And notice first how it shows the eighteenth century assumptions that figures are a mere embellishment or added beauty and that the plain meaning, the tenor, is what alone really matters and is something that, 'regardless of the figures,' might be gathered by the patient reader.

A modern theory would object, first, that in many of the most important uses of metaphor, the co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction. That the vehicle is not normally a mere embellishment of a tenor which is otherwise unchanged by it but that vehicle and tenor in co-operation give a meaning of more varied powers than can be ascribed to either. And a modern theory would go on to point out that with different metaphors the relative importance of the contributions of vehicle and tenor to this resultant meaning varies immensely. At one extreme the vehicle may become almost a mere decoration or colouring of the tenor, at the other extreme, the tenor may become almost a mere excuse for the introduction of the vehicle, and so no longer be 'the principal subject.' And the degree to which the tenor is imagined 'to be that very thing which it only resembles' also varies immensely.

These are differences I return to next week. Let us study Lord Kames a little longer first: How about this suggested rule that we should carefully avoid mounting metaphor upon metaphor? What would be the effect of taking it seriously? It would, if we accepted and observed it, make havoc of most writing and speech. It is disregarding—under cover of the convenient excuse that they are dead—the most regular sustaining metaphors of all speech. It would make, I think, Shakespeare the faultiest writer who ever held a pen; and it turns an obstinately blind eye upon one of the most obvious features of current practice in every minute of our speech. Look, for example, at Lord Kames' own sentence. 'Such complicated figures, instead of setting the principal subject in a strong light, involve it in a cloud.' What about that 'strong' light? The light is a vehicle and is described—without anyone experiencing the least difficulty—by a secondary metaphor, a figurative word. But you may say, 'No! *Strong* is no longer a figurative word as applied to light. It is as literally descriptive of light as it is of a man or a horse. It carries not two

ideas but one only. It has become "adequated," or is dead, and is no longer a metaphor.' But however stone dead such metaphors seem, we can easily wake them up, and if Kames were right, to wake them up would be to risk involving the tenor in a cloud, and nothing of the sort happens. This favourite old distinction between dead and living metaphors (itself a two-fold metaphor) is, indeed, a device which is very often a hindrance to the play of sagacity and discernment throughout the subject. For serious purposes it needs a drastic re-examination.

We are in fact immeasurably more adroit in handling complicated metaphors than Kames will allow us to be. He gives an example of a breach of his rule which is worth examining if only to show how easily a theory can paralyse normal aptitude in such things. He takes these two lines

A stubborn and unconquerable flame
Creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life.

'Let us analyse this expression,' he says. 'That a fever may be imagined a flame, I admit; though more than one step is necessary to come at the resemblance.' I, for my part, would have supposed, on the contrary, that we could hardly find a simpler transference, since both a fever and a flame are instances of a rise in temperature! But he goes on to detail these steps. 'A fever by heating the body, resembles fire; and it is no stretch to imagine a fever to be a fire. Again, by a figure of speech, flame may be put for fire, because they are commonly conjoined; and therefore a fever may be termed a flame. But now, admitting a fever to be a flame, its effects ought to be explained in words that agree literally to a flame. This rule is not observed here for a flame drinks figuratively only, not properly.'

Well and good! But who, for all that, has any difficulty in understanding the lines? The interactions of tenor and vehicle are not in the least hampered by the secondary vehicle.

I have taken this instance of vain pedantry chiefly to accustom you to my use of these technical terms, but partly too to support the contention that the best part of the traditional discussion of metaphor is hardly more than a set of cautionary hints to overenthusiastic schoolboys, hints masquerading as fundamental theory of language. Lord Kames is not exceptionally limited in his treatment or abnormally obtuse. You will find

similar things in Johnson when he discusses Cowley and Donne for example, in Monboddoe, and Harris and Withers, and Campbell, in all the chief eighteenth century Rhetoricians.

Not until Coleridge do we get any adequate setting of these chief problems of language. But Coleridge's thought has not even yet come into its own. And, after Coleridge, in spite of the possibilities which he opened, there was a regrettable slackening of interest in the questions. The eighteenth century was mistaken in the way it put them and in the technique it attempted to use, but it at least knew that they were important questions and that there is work to be done upon them. And so Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism*, though I may seem to have been making fun of it in places, and though it is so full of similar things as to be most absorbing reading, is still a very valuable and instructive book offering a model not only of misconceptions to be avoided but of problems to be taken up, reframed and carried forward. Turning his pages you will again and again find points raised, which, if his treatment of them is unsatisfactory, are none the less points that no serious study of language should neglect. One such will serve me as a peg for a pair of warnings or morals of which any ambitious attempt to analyse metaphors is constantly in need.

Kames quotes from *Othello* the single line,

Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips

and comments, 'The resemblance is too faint to be agreeable—Poverty must here be conceived to be a fluid which it resembles not in any manner.' Let us look at Othello's whole speech. We shall find that it is not an easy matter to explain or justify that 'steep'd'. It comes, you will recall, when Othello first openly charges Desdemona with unfaithfulness,

> Had it pleas'd heaven
> To try me with affliction, had he rain'd
> All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head,
> Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
> Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
> I should have found in some part of my soul
> A drop of patience; but alas! to make me
> The fixed figure for the time of scorn
> To point his slow and moving finger at;

> Yet could I bear that too; well, very well.
> But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
> Where either I must live or bear no life,
> The fountain from the which my current runs,
> Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
> To know and gender in!

What are we to say of that word *steep*, how answer Kames? He is indeed too mild, in saying 'the resemblance is too faint to be agreeable.' It's not a case of a lack of resemblance but of too much diversity, too much sheer oppositeness. For Poverty, the tenor, is a state of deprivation, of desiccation; but the vehicle —the sea or vat in which Othello is to be steeped—gives an instance of superfluity. In poverty all is outgoing, without income; were we 'steeped to the very lips' it would be the incomings that we would have to fight against. You will have noticed that the whole speech returns again and again to these liquid images: 'had they rained', 'a drop of patience,' 'The fountain from the which my current runs, Or else dries up.' None of these helps *steep* out, and one of them 'a drop of patience' makes the confused, disordered effect of *steep* seem much worse. I do not myself find any defence of the word except this, which seems indeed quite sufficient—as dramatic necessities commonly are—that Othello is himself horribly disordered, that the utterance is part of 'the storm of horrour and outrage' with which he is assailing Desdemona and that a momentarily deranged mind speaks so and is obsessed with images regardless of their fittingness. Othello, we might say, is drowning in this storm (Cf. Act II. i. 212–21), and knows it.

The morals I would point with this instance are: First, that not to see how a word can work is never by itself sufficient proof that it will not work. Second, conversely, that to see how it ought to work will not prove that it does. Any detailed examination of metaphor brings us into such risk of pedantry and self-persuasion, that these morals seem worth stress. Yet a critical examination of metaphor, with these morals in mind, is just now what literary criticism chiefly needs.

To come back to Kames, his objection that 'the resemblance is too faint to be agreeable' (notice the amusing assumption that a writer must of course always aim to be agreeable!)—assumed

that tenor and vehicle must be linked by their resemblance and that their interaction comes about through their resemblance one to another. And yet Kames himself elsewhere takes some pride, and vehicle. He says that it has been overlooked by former wri- depend upon resemblance but upon other relations between tenor and vehicle. He says that it has been overlooked by former writers, and that it must be distinguished from other figures as depending on a different principle.

'Giddy brink, jovial wine, daring wound are examples of this figure. Here are adjectives that cannot be made to signify any quality of the substantives to which they are joined: a *brink*, for example, cannot be termed *giddy* in a sense, either proper or figurative, that can signify any of its qualities or attributes. When we examine attentively the expression, we discover that a *brink* is termed giddy from producing that effect in those who stand on it.... How,' he asks, 'are we to account for this figure, which we see lies in the thought (I am not sure what *lies* means here. I think he means 'has its ground or explanation in the thought' not 'utters falsehood.') and to what principle shall we refer it? Have the poets a privilege to alter the nature of things, and at pleasure to bestow attributes upon a subject to which they do not belong?' Most moderns would say, 'Of course, they have!' But Kames does not take that way out. He appeals instead to a principle of contiguous association. 'We have had often occasion to inculcate, that the mind passeth easily and sweetly along a train of connected objects, and, when the objects are intimately connected, that it is disposed to carry along the good or bad properties of one to another, especially when it is in any degree inflamed with these properties.' He then lists eight varieties of these contiguous inflammations—without, I think, at all clearly realizing what an immense extension of the theory of possibilities of metaphoric interaction he has made with this new principle. Once we begin 'to examine attentively' interactions which do not work through *resemblances* between tenor and vehicle, but depend upon other relations between them including *disparities*, some of our most prevalent, over-simple, ruling assumptions about metaphors as comparisons are soon exposed.

But let us take one more glance at this *giddy brink* first. Is Kames right in saying that a *brink* cannot be termed *giddy* in a

sense that can signify any of its qualities or attributes? Is he right in turning *giddy* into *giddy-making*—'a brink is termed giddy from producing that effect in those who stand on it'? Is it not the case that at the moment of giddiness the brink itself is perceived as swimming? As the man totters in vertigo, the world spins too and the brink becomes not merely giddy-making but actually vertiginous, seems itself to stagger with a dizziness and to whirl with a bewildering rapidity. The eyes nystagmically rolling give away their motion to the world, including the brink. Thus the brink as perceived, which is the brink that the poet is speaking of, actually itself acquires a giddiness. If so, we may doubt for a moment whether there is a metaphor here at all—until we notice how this whirling that infects the world as we grow giddy comes to it by a process which is itself radically metaphoric. Our eyes twitch, but it is the world which seems to spin. So it is with a large part, perhaps, in the final account, with *all* our perceptions. Our world is a projected world, shot through with characters lent to it from our own life. 'We receive but what we give.' The processes of metaphor in language, the exchanges between the meanings of words which we study in explicit verbal metaphors, are super-imposed upon a perceived world which is itself a product of earlier or unwitting metaphor. and we shall not deal with them justly if we forget that this is so. That is why, if we are to take the theory of metaphor further than the eighteenth century took it, we must have some general theorem of meaning. And since it was Coleridge who saw most deeply and clearly into this necessity, and, with his theory of the imagination, has done most to supply it, I may fittingly close this Lecture with a passage from Appendix C of *The Statesman's Manual*, in which Coleridge is stating that theory symbolically.

A symbol, for him, is a translucent instance, which 'while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part of that unity of which it is the representative.' So here he takes the vegetable kingdom, or any plant, as an object of meditation through and in which to see the universal mode of imagination—of those metaphoric exchanges by which the individual life and its world grow together. If we can follow the meditation we are led, I believe, to Coleridge's conception of imaginative growth more easily and safely than by any other road. For, as the plant here is

a symbol, in his sense, of all growth, so the passage too is itself a symbol, a translucent instance, of imagination.

He has been speaking of the book of Nature that 'has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages, it is the poetry of all human nature, to read it likewise in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondences and symbols of the spiritual world.

'I have at this moment before me, in the flowery meadow, on which my eye is now reposing, one of its most soothing chapters, in which there is no lamenting word, no one character of guilt or anguish. For never can I look and meditate on the vegetable creation, without a feeling similar to that with which we gaze at a beautiful infant that has fed itself asleep at its mother's bosom, and smiles in its strange dream of obscure yet happy sensations. The same tender and genial pleasure takes possession of me, and this pleasure is checked and drawn inward by the like aching melancholy, by the same whispered remonstrance, and made restless by a similar impulse of aspiration. It seems as if the soul said to herself: From this state hast *thou* fallen! Such shouldst thou still become, thy Self all permeable to a holier power! thy self at once hidden and glorified by its own transparency, as the accidental and dividuous in this quiet and harmonious object is subjected to the life and light of nature which shines in it, even as the transmitted power, love and wisdom of God over all, fills and shines through nature! But what the plant is, by an act not its own and unconsciously—that must thou make thyself to become! must by prayer and by a watchful and unresisting spirit, join at least with the preventive and assisting grace to make thyself, in that light of conscience which inflameth not, and with that knowledge which puffeth not up!

'But further... I seem to myself to behold in the quiet objects on which I am gazing, more than an arbitrary illustration, more than a mere simile, the work of my own fancy. I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same power as that of the reason—the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of nature. Lo!—with the rising sun it commences its outward life

and enters into open communion with all the elements at once assimilating them to itself and to each other. At the same moment it strikes its roots and unfolds its leaves, absorbs and respires, steams forth its cooling vapour and finer fragrance, and breathes a repairing spirit, at once the food and tone of the atmosphere, into the atmosphere that feeds it. Lo!—at the touch of light how it returns an air akin to light, and yet with the same pulse effectuates its own secret growth, still contracting to fix what expanding it had refined. Lo!—how upholding the ceaseless plastic motion of the parts in the profoundest rest of the whole, it becomes the visible *organismus* of the whole silent or elementary life of nature and therefore, in incorporating the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason.'

What Coleridge has here said of this 'open communion' is true also of the word—in the free metaphoric discursive sentence. 'Are not words,' he had asked nineteen years before, 'Are not words parts and germinations of the plant?'

THE TRAGIC FALLACY

J. W. KRUTCH

I

THROUGH THE LEGACY of their art the great ages have transmitted to us a dim image of their glorious vitality. When we turn the pages of a Sophoclean or a Shakespearean tragedy we participate faintly in the experience which created it and we sometimes presumptuously say that we 'understand' the spirit of these works. But the truth is that we see them, even at best and in the moments when our souls expand most nearly to their dimensions, through a glass darkly.

It is so much easier to appreciate than to create that an age too feeble to reach the heights achieved by the members of a preceding one can still see those heights towering above its importance, and so it is that, when we perceive a Sophocles or a Shakespeare soaring in an air which we can never hope to breathe, we say that we can 'appreciate' them. But what we mean is that we are just able to wonder, and we can never hope to participate in the glorious vision of human life out of which they were created—not even to the extent of those humbler persons for whom they were written; for while to us the triumphant voices come from far away and tell of a heroic world which no longer exists, to them that spoke of immediate realities and revealed the inner meaning of events amidst which they still lived.

When the life has entirely gone out of a work of art come down to us from the past, when we read it without any emotional comprehension whatsoever and can no longer even imagine why the people for whom it was intended found it absorbing and satisfying, then, of course, it has ceased to be a work of art at all and has dwindled into one of those deceptive 'documents' from which we get a false sense of comprehending through the intellect things which cannot be comprehended at all except by means of a kinship of feeling. And though all works from a past age have begun in this way to fade there are some, like the great Greek or Elizabethan tragedies, which are still halfway between the work of art and the document. They no longer can have for

us the immediacy which they had for those to whom they originally belonged, but they have not yet eluded us entirely. We no longer live in the world which they represent, but we can half imagine it and we can measure the distance which we have moved away. We write no tragedies today, but we can still talk about the tragic spirit of which we would, perhaps, have no conception were it not for the works in question.

An age which could really 'appreciate' Shakespeare or Sophocles would have something comparable to put beside them—something like them, not necessarily in form, or spirit, but at least in magnitude—some vision of life which would be, however different, equally ample and passionate. But when we move to put a modern masterpiece beside them, when we seek to compare them with, let us say, a *Ghosts* or a *Weavers*, we shrink as from the impulse to commit some folly and we feel as though we were about to superimpose Bowling Green upon the Great Prairies in order to ascertain which is the larger. The question, we see, is not primarily one of art but of the two worlds which two minds inhabited. No increased powers of expression, no greater gift for words, could have transformed Ibsen into Shakespeare. The materials out of which the latter created his works—his conception of human passions, his vision of the amplitude of human life—simply did not and could not exist for Ibsen, as they did not and could not exist for his contemporaries. God and Man and Nature had all somehow dwindled in the course of the intervening centuries, not because the realistic creed of modern art led us to seek out mean people, but because this meanness of human life was somehow thrust upon us by the operation of that same process which led to the development of realistic theories of art by which our vision could be justified.

Hence, though we still apply, sometimes, the adjective 'tragic' to one or another of those modern works of literature which describe human misery and which end more sadly even than they begin, the term is a misnomer since it is obvious that the works in question have nothing in common with the classical examples of the genre and produce in the reader a sense of depression which is the exact opposite of that elation generated when the spirit of a Shakespeare rises joyously superior to the outward calamities which he recounts and celebrates the greatness of the

human spirit whose travail he describes. Tragedies, in that only sense of the word which has any distinctive meaning, are no longer written in either the dramatic or any merely literary terms. It is not the result of any fashion in literature or of any deliberation to write about human nature or character under different aspects, any more than it is of either any greater sensitiveness of feeling which would make us shrink from the contemplation of the suffering of Medea or Otheilo or of any greater optimism which would make us more likely to see life in more cheerful terms. It is, on the contrary, the result of one of those enfeeblements of the human spirit not unlike that described in the previous chapter of this essay, and a further illustration of that gradual weakening of man's confidence in his ability to impose upon the phenomenon of life an interpretation acceptable to his desires which is the subject of the whole of the present discussion.

To explain that fact and to make clear how the creation of classical tragedy did consist in the successful effort to impose such a satisfactory interpretation will require, perhaps, the special section which follows, although the truth of the fact that it does impose such an interpretation must be evident to any one who has ever risen from the reading of *Oedipus* or *Lear* with that feeling of exultation which comes when we have been able, by rare good fortune, to enter into its spirit as completely as it is possible for us of a remoter and emotionally enfeebled age to enter it. Meanwhile one anticipatory remark may be ventured. If the plays and the novels of today deal with littler people and less mighty emotions it is not because we have become interested in commonplace souls and their unglamorous adventures but because we have come, willy-nilly, to see the soul of man as commonplace and its emotions as mean.

II

Tragedy, said Aristotle, is the 'imitation of noble actions,' and though it is some twenty-five hundred years since the dictum was uttered there is only one respect in which we are inclined to modify it. To us 'imitation' seems a rather naïve word to apply to that process by which observation is turned into art, and we seek one which would define or at least imply the nature of that interposition of the personality of the artist between the

object and the beholder which constitutes his function and by means of which he transmits a modified version, rather than a mere imitation, of the thing which he has contemplated.

In the search for this word the aestheticians of romanticism invented the term 'expression' to describe the artistic purpose to which apparent imitation was subservient. Psychologists, on the other hand, feeling that the artistic process was primarily one by which reality is modified in such a way as to render it more acceptable to the desires of the artist, employed various terms in the effort to describe that distortion which they wish may produce in vision. And though many of the newer critics reject both romanticism and psychology, even they insist upon the fundamental fact that in art we are concerned, not with mere imitation, but with the imposition of some form upon the material which it would not have if it were merely copied as a camera copies.

Tragedy is not, then, as Aristotle said, the *imitation* of noble actions, for, indeed, no one knows what a *noble* action is or whether or not such a thing as nobility exists in nature apart from the mind of man. Certainly the action of Achilles in dragging the dead body of Hector around the walls of Troy and under the eyes of Andromache, who had begged to be allowed to give it decent burial, is not to us a noble action, though it was such to Homer, who made it the subject of a farce, depending upon the way in which it was treated; so that to say that tragedy is the *imitation* of a *noble* action is to be guilty of assuming, first, that art and photography are the same, and, second, that there may be something inherently noble in an act as distinguished from the motives which prompted it or from the point of view from which it is regarded.

And yet, nevertheless, the idea of nobility is inseparable from the idea of tragedy, which cannot exist without it. If tragedy is not the imitation or even the modified representation of noble actions it is certainly a representation of actions *considered* as noble, and herein lies its essential nature, since no man can conceive it unless he is capable of believing in the greatness and importance of man. Its action is usually, if not always, calamitous, because it is only in calamity that the human spirit has the opportunity to reveal itself triumphant over the outward universe which fails to conquer it; but this calamity in tragedy is

only a means to an end and the essential thing which distinguishes real tragedy from those distressing modern works sometimes called by its name is the fact that it is in the former alone that the artist has found himself capable of considering and of making us consider that his people and his actions have that amplitude and importance which make them noble. Tragedy arises then when, as in Periclean Greece or Elizabethan England, a people fully aware of the calamities of life is nevertheless serenely confident of the greatness of man, whose mighty passions and supreme fortitude are revealed when one of these calamities overtakes him.

To those who mistakenly think of it as something gloomy or depressing, who are incapable of recognizing the elation which its celebration of human greatness inspires, and who, therefore, confuse it with things merely miserable or pathetic, it must be a paradox that the happiest, most vigorous, and most confident ages which the world has ever known—the Periclean and the Elizabethan—should be exactly those which created and which most relished the mightiest tragedies; but the paradox is, of course, resolved by the fact that tragedy is essentially an expression, not of despair, but of the triumph over despair and of confidence in the value of human life. If Shakespeare himself ever had that 'dark period' which his critics and biographers have imagined for him, it was at least no darkness like that bleak and arid despair which sometimes settles over modern spirits. In the midst of it he created both the elemental grandeur of Othello and the pensive majesty of Hamlet and, holding them up to his contemporaries, he said in the words of his own Miranda, 'Oh, rare new world that hath *such* creatures in it.'

All works of art which deserve their name have a happy end. This is indeed the thing which constitutes them as art and through which they perform their function. Whatever the character of the events, fortunate or unfortunate, which they recount, they so mould or arrange or interpret them that we accept gladly the conclusion which they reach and would not have it otherwise. They may conduct us into the realm of pure fancy where wish and fact are identical and the world is remade exactly after the fashion of the heart's desire or they may yield some greater or less allegiance to fact; but they must always reconcile us in one way or another to the representation which they make and the distinc-

tions between the genres are simply the distinctions between the means by which this reconciliation is effected.

Comedy laughs the minor mishaps of its characters away; drama solves all the difficulties which it allows to arise; and melodrama, separating good from evil by simple lines, distributes its rewards and punishments in accordance with the principles of a naïve justice which satisfies the simple souls of its audience, which are neither philosophical enough to question its primitive ethics nor critical enough to object to the way in which its neat events violate the laws of probability. Tragedy, the greatest and the most difficult of the arts, can adopt none of these methods; and yet it must reach its own happy end in its own way. Though its conclusion must be, by its premise, outwardly calamitous, though it must speak to those who know that the good man is cut off and that the fairest things are the first to perish, yet it must leave them, as *Othello* does, content that this is so. We must be and we are glad Juliet dies and glad that Lear is turned out into the storm.

Milton set out, he said, to justify the ways of God to man, and his phrase, if it be interpreted broadly enough, may be taken as describing the function of all art, which must, in some way or other, make the life which it seems to represent satisfactory to those who see its reflection in the magic mirror, and it must gratify or at least reconcile the desires of the beholder, not necessarily, as the naïve exponents of Freudian psychology maintain, by gratifying individual and often eccentric wishes, but at least by satisfying the universally human desire to find in the world some justice, some meaning, or, at the very least, some recognizable order. Hence it is that every real tragedy, however tremendous it may be, is an affirmation of faith in life, a declaration that even if God is not in his Heaven, then at least Man is in his world.

We accept gladly the outward defeats which it describes for the sake of the inward victories which it reveals. Juliet died, but not before she had shown how great and resplendent a thing love could be; Othello plunged the dagger into his own breast, but not before he had revealed that greatness of soul which makes his death seem unimportant. Had he died in the instant when he struck the blow, had he perished still believing that the

world was as completely black as he saw it before the innocence of Desdemona was revealed to him, then, for him at least, the world would have been merely damnable, but Shakespeare kept him alive long enough to allow him to learn his error and hence to die, not in despair, but in the full acceptance of the tragic reconciliation to life. Perhaps it would be pleasanter if men could believe what the child is taught—that the good are happy and that things turn out as they should—but it is far more important to be able to believe, as Shakespeare did, that however much things in the outward world may go awry, man has, nevertheless, splendours of his own and that, in a word, Love and Honour and Glory are not words but realities.

Thus for the great ages tragedy is not an expression of despair but the means by which they saved themselves from it. It is a profession of faith, and a sort of religion; a way of looking at life by virtue of which it is robbed of its pain. The sturdy soul of the tragic author seizes upon suffering and uses it only as a means by which joy may be wrung out of existence, but it is not to be forgotten that he is enabled to do so only because of his belief in the greatness of human nature and because, though he has lost the child's faith in life, he has not lost his far more important faith in human nature. A tragic writer does not have to believe in God, but he must believe in man.

And if, then, the Tragic Spirit is in reality the product of a religious faith in which, sometimes at least, faith in the greatness of God is replaced by faith in the greatness of man, it serves, of course, to perform the function of religion, to make life tolerable for those who participate in its beneficent illusion. It purges the souls of those who might otherwise despair and it makes endurable the realization that the events of the outward world do not correspond with the desires of the heart, and thus, in its own particular way, it does what all religions do, for it gives a rationality, a meaning, and a justification to the universe. But if it has the strength it has also the weakness of all faiths, since it may—nay, it must—be ultimately lost as reality, encroaching further and further into the realm of imagination, leaves less and less room in which that imagination can build its refuge.

III

It is, indeed, only at a certain stage in the development of the

realistic intelligence of a people that the tragic faith can exist. A naïver people may have, as the ancient men of the north had, a body of legends which are essentially tragic, or it may have only (and need only) its happy and childlike mythology which arrives inevitably at its happy end, and where the only ones who suffer 'deserve' to do so and in which, therefore, life is represented as directly and easily acceptable. A too sophisticated society on the other hand—one which, like ours, has outgrown not merely the simple optimism of the child but also that vigorous, one might almost say adolescent, faith in the nobility of man which marks a Sophocles or a Shakespeare, has neither fairy tales to assure it that all is always right in the end nor tragedies to make it believe that it rises superior in soul to the outward calamities which befall it.

Distrusting its thought, despising its passions, realizing its importance in the universe, it can tell itself no stories except those which make it still more acutely aware of its trivial miseries. When its heroes (sad misnomer for the pitiful creatures who people contemporary fiction) are struck down it is not, like Oedipus, by the gods that they are struck but only, like Oswald Alving, by syphilis, for they know that the gods, even if they existed, would not trouble with them, and they cannot attribute to themselves in art an importance in which they do not believe. Their so-called tragedies do not and cannot end with one of those splendid calamities which in Shakespeare seem to reverberate through the universe, because they cannot believe that the universe trembles when their love is, like Romeo's, cut off or when the place where they (small as they are) have gathered up their trivial treasure is, like Othello's sanctuary, defiled. Instead, mean misery piles on mean misery, petty misfortune follows petty misfortune, and despair becomes intolerable because it is no longer even significant or important.

Ibsen once made one of his characters say that he did not read much because he found reading 'irrelevant,' and the adjective was brilliantly chosen because it held implications even beyond those of which Ibsen was consciously aware. What is it that made the classics irrelevant to him and to us? It is not just exactly those to him impossible premises which make tragedy what it is, those assumptions that the soul of man is great, that

the universe (together with whatever gods may be) concerns itself with him and that he is, in a word, noble. Ibsen turned to village politics for exactly the same reason that his contemporaries and his successors have, each in his own way, sought out some aspect of the common man and his common life—because, that is to say, here was at least something small enough for him to be able to believe.

Bearing this fact in mind, let us compare a modern 'tragedy' with one of the great works of a happy age, not in order to judge of their relative technical merits but in order to determine to what extent the former deserves its name by achieving a tragic solution capable of purging the soul or of reconciling the emotions to the life which it pictures. And in order to make the comparison as fruitful as possible let us choose *Hamlet* on the one hand and on the other a play like *Ghosts*, which was not only written by perhaps the most powerful as well as the most typical of modern writers but which is, in addition, the one of his works which seems most nearly to escape that triviality which cannot be entirely escaped by any one who feels, as all contemporary minds do, that man is relatively trivial.

In *Hamlet* a prince ('in understanding, how like a god!') has thrust upon him from the unseen world a duty to redress a wrong which concerns not merely him, his mother, and his uncle, but the moral order of the universe. Erasing all trivial fond records from his mind, abandoning at once both his studies and his romance because it has been his good fortune to be called upon to take part in an action of cosmic importance, he plunges (at first) not into action but into thought, weighing the claims which are made upon him and contemplating the grandiose complexities of the universe. And when the time comes at last for him to die he dies, not as a failure, but as a success. Not only has the universe regained the balance which had been upset by what *seemed* the monstrous crime of the guilty pair ('there is nothing either good nor ill but thinking makes it so'), but in the process by which that readjustment is made a mighty mind has been given the opportunity, first to contemplate the magnificent scheme of which it is a part, and then to demonstrate the greatness of its spirit by playing a role in the grand style which it called for. We do not need to despair in *such* a world if it has

such creatures in it.

Turn now to *Ghosts*—look upon this picture and upon that. A young man has inherited syphilis from his father. Struck by a to him mysterious malady he returns to his northern village, learns the hopeless truth about himself, and persuades his mother to poison him. The incidents prove, perhaps, that pastors should not endeavour to keep a husband and wife together unless they know what they are doing. But what a world is this in which a great writer can deduce nothing more than that from his greatest work and how are we to be purged or reconciled when we see it acted? Not only is the failure utter, but it is trivial and meaningless as well.

Yet the journey from Elsinore to Skien is precisely the journey which the human spirit has made, exchanging in the process princes for invalids and gods for disease. We say, as Ibsen would say, that the problems of Oswald Alving are more 'relevant' to our life than the problems of Hamlet, that the play in which he appears is more 'real' than the other more glamorous one, but it is exactly because we find it so that we are condemned. We can believe in Oswald but we cannot believe in Hamlet, and a light has gone out in the universe. Shakespeare justifies the ways of God to man, but in Ibsen there is no such happy end and with him tragedy, so called, has become merely an expression of our despair at finding that such justification is no longer possible.

Modern critics have sometimes been puzzled to account for the fact that the concern of ancient tragedy is almost exclusively with kings and courts. They have been tempted to accuse even Aristotle of a certain naïveté in assuming (as he seems to assume) that the 'nobility' of which he speaks as necessary to a tragedy implies a nobility of rank as well as of soul, and they have sometimes regretted that Shakespeare did not devote himself more than he did to the serious consideration of those common woes of the common man which subsequent writers have exploited with increasing pertinacity. Yet the tendency to lay the scene of a tragedy at the court of a king is not the result of any arbitrary convention but of the fact that the tragic writers believed easily in greatness just as we believe easily in meanness. To Shakespeare, robes and crowns and jewels are the garments most appropriate to man because they are the fitting outward manifes-

tation of his inward majesty, but to us they seem absurd because the man who bears them has in our estimation, so pitifully shrunk. We do not write about kings because we do not believe that any man is worthy to be one and we do not write about courts because hovels seem to us to be dwellings more appropriate to the creatures who inhabit them. Any modern attempt to dress characters in robes ends only by making us aware of a comic incongruity and any modern attempt to furnish them with a language resplendent like Shakespeare's ends only in bombast.

True tragedy capable of performing its function and of purging the soul by reconciling man to his woes can exist only by virtue of a certain pathetic fallacy far more inclusive than that to which the name is commonly given. The romantics, feeble descendants of the tragic writers to whom they are linked by their effort to see life and nature in grandiose terms, loved to imagine that the sea or the sky had a way of according itself with their modes, of storming when they stormed and smiling when they smiled. But the tragic spirit sustains itself by an assumption much more far-reaching and no more justified. Man as it sees him lives in a world which he may not dominate but which is always aware of him. Occupying the exact centre of a universe which would have no meaning except for him and being so little below the angles that, if he believes in God, he has no hesitation in imagining Him formed as he is formed and crowned with a crown like that which he or one of his fellows wears, he assumes that each of his acts reverberates through the universe. His passions are important to him because he believes them important throughout all time and all space; the very fact that he can sin (no modern can) means that this universe is watching his acts; and though he may perish, a God leans out from infinity to strike him down. And it is exactly because an Ibsen cannot think of man in any such terms as these that his persons have so shrunk and that his 'tragedy' has lost that power which real tragedy always has of making that infinitely ambitious creature called man content to accept his misery if only he can be made to feel great enough and important enough. An Oswald is not a Hamlet chiefly because he has lost that tie with the natural and supernatural world which the latter had. No ghost will leave the other world to warn or encourage him,

there is no virtue and no vice which he can possibly have which can be really important, and when he dies neither his death nor the manner of it will be, outside the circle of two or three people as unnecessary as himself, any more important than that of a rat behind the arras.

Perhaps we may dub the illusion upon which the tragic spirit is nourished the Tragic, as opposed to the Pathetic, Fallacy, but fallacy though it is, upon its existence depends not merely the writing of tragedy but the existence of that religious feeling of which tragedy is an expression and by means of which a people aware of the dissonances of life manages nevertheless to hear them as harmony. Without it neither man nor his passions can seem great enough or important enough to justify the sufferings which they entail, and literature, expressing the mood of a people, begins to despair where once it had exulted. Like the belief in love and like most of the other mighty illusions by means of which human life has been given a value, the Tragic Fallacy depends ultimately upon the assumption which man so readily makes that something outside his own being, some 'spirit not himself'—be it God, Nature, or that still vaguer thing called a Moral Order—joins him in the emphasis which he places upon this or that and confirms him in his feeling that his passions and his opinions are important. When his instinctive faith in that correspondence between the outer and the inner world fades, his grasp upon the faith that sustained him fades also, and Love or Tragedy or what not ceases to be the reality which it was because he is never strong enough in his own insignificant self to stand alone in a universe which snubs him with its indifference.

In both the modern and the ancient worlds tragedy was dead long before writers were aware of the fact. Seneca wrote his frigid melodramas under the impression that he was following in the footsteps of Sophocles, and Dryden probably thought that his *All for Love* was an improvement upon Shakespeare, but in time we awoke to the fact that no amount of rhetorical bombast could conceal the fact that grandeur was not to be counterfeited when the belief in its possibility was dead, and turning from the hero to the common man, we inaugurated the era of realism. For us no choice remains except that between mere rhetoric and the frank consideration of our fellow men, who may be the highest

of the anthropoids but who are certainly too far below the angels to imagine either that these angels can concern themselves with them or that they can catch any glimpse of even the soles of angelic feet. We can no longer tell tales of the fall of noble men because we do not believe that noble men exist. The best that we can achieve is pathos and the most that we can do is to feel sorry for ourselves. Man has put off his royal robes and it is only in sceptred pomp that tragedy can come sweeping by.

IV

Nietzsche was the last of the great philosophers to attempt a tragic justification of life. His central and famous dogma—'Life is good because it is painful'—sums up in a few words the desperate and almost meaningless paradox to which he was driven in his effort to reduce to rational terms the far more imaginative conception which is everywhere present but everywhere unanalysed in a Sophocles or a Shakespeare and by means of which they rise triumphant over the manifold miseries of life. But the very fact that Nietzsche could not even attempt to state in any except intellectual terms an attitude which is primarily unintellectual and, to which, indeed, intellectual analysis is inevitably fatal, is proof of the distance which he had been carried (by the rationalizing tendencies of the human mind) from the possibility of the tragic solution which he sought; and the confused, half-insane violence of his work will reveal, by the contrast which it affords with the serenity of the tragic writers whom he admired, how great was his failure.

Fundamentally this failure was, moreover, conditioned by exactly the same thing which has conditioned the failure of all modern attempts to achieve what he attempted—by the fact, that is to say, that tragedy must have a hero if it is not to be merely an accusation against, instead of a justification of, the world in which it occurs. Tragedy is, as Aristotle said, an imitation of noble actions, and Nietzsche, for all his enthusiasm for the Greek tragic writers, was palsied by the universally modern incapacity to conceive man as noble. Out of this dilemma, out of his need to find a hero who could give to life as he saw it the only possible justification, was born the idea of the Superman, but the Superman is, after all, only a hypothetical being, destined to become

what man actually was in the eyes of the great tragic writers—a creature (as Hamlet said) 'how infinite in capacities, in understanding how like a god.' Thus Nietzsche lived half in the past through his literary enthusiasms and half in the future through his grandiose dreams, but for all his professed determination to justify existence he was no more able than the rest of us to find the present acceptable. Life, he said in effect, is not a Tragedy now but perhaps it will be when the Ape-man has been transformed into a hero (the Übermensch), and trying to find that sufficient, he went mad.

He failed, as all moderns must fail when they attempt, like him, to embrace the tragic spirit as a religious faith, because the resurgence of that faith is not an intellectual but a vital phenomenon, something not achieved by taking thought but born, on the contrary, out of an instinctive confidence in life which is nearer to the animal's unquestioning allegiance to the scheme of nature than it is to that critical intelligence characteristic of a fully developed humanism. And like other faiths it is not to be recaptured merely by reaching an intellectual conviction that it would be desirable to do so.

Modern psychology has discovered (or at least strongly emphasized) the fact that under certain conditions desire produces belief, and having discovered also that the more primitive a given mentality the more completely are its opinions determined by its wishes, modern psychology has concluded that the best mind is that which most resists the tendency to believe a thing simply because it would be pleasant or advantageous to do so. But justified as this conclusion may be from the intellectual point of view, it fails to take into account the fact that in a universe as badly adapted as this one to human as distinguished from animal needs this ability to will a belief may bestow an enormous vital advantage as it did, for instance, in the case at present under discussion where it made possible for Shakespeare the compensations of a tragic faith completely inaccessible to Nietzsche. Pure intelligence, incapable of being influenced by desire and therefore also incapable of choosing one opinion rather than another simply because the one chosen is the more fruitful or beneficent, is doubtless a relatively perfect instrument for the pursuit of truth, but the question (likely, it would seem, to be

answered in the negative) is simply whether or not the spirit of man can endure the literal and inhuman truth.

Certain ages and simple people have conceived of the action which passes upon the stage of the universe as of something in the nature of a Divine Comedy, as something, that is to say, which will reach its end with the words 'and they lived happily ever after.' Others, less naïve and therefore more aware of those maladjustments whose reality, at least so far as outward events are concerned, they could not escape, have imposed upon it another artistic form and called it a Divine Tragedy, accepting its catastrophe as we accept the catastrophe of an *Othello*, because of its grandeur. But a Tragedy, Divine or otherwise, must, it may again be repeated, have a hero, and from the universe as we see it both the Glory of God and the Glory of Man have departed. Our cosmos may be farcical or it may be pathetic but it has not the dignity of tragedy and we cannot accept it as such.

Yet our need for the consolations of tragedy has not passed with the passing of our ability to conceive it. Indeed, the dissonances which it was tragedy's function to resolve grow more insistent instead of diminishing. Our passions, our disappointments, and our sufferings remain important to us though important to nothing else and they thrust themselves upon us with an urgency which makes it impossible for us to dismiss them as the mere trivialities which, so our intellects tell us, they are. And yet, in the absence of tragic faith or the possibility of achieving it, we have no way in which we may succeed in giving them the dignity which would not only render them tolerable but transform them as they were transformed by the great ages into joys. The death of tragedy is, like the death of love, one of those emotional fatalities as the result of which the human as distinguished from the natural world grows more and more a desert.

Poetry, said Santayana in his famous phrase, is 'religion which is no longer believed,' but it depends, nevertheless, upon its power to revive in us a sort of temporary or provisional credence and the nearer it can come to producing an illusion of belief the greater is its power as poetry. Once the Tragic Spirit was a living faith and out of it tragedies were written. Today these great expressions of a great faith have declined, not merely into poetry, but into a kind of poetry whose premises are so far from

any we can really accept that we can only partially dimly grasp its meaning.

We read but we do not write tragedies. The tragic solution of the problem of existence, the reconciliation to life by means of the tragic spirit is, that is to say, now only a fiction surviving in art. When that art itself has become, as it probably will, completely meaningless, when we have ceased not only to write but to *read* tragic works, then it will be lost and in real senses forgotten, since the devolution from Religion to Art to Document will be complete.

LITERARY CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHY

F. R. LEAVIS

I MUST THANK Dr Wellek for bringing fundamental criticism to my work, and above all for raising in so complete a way an issue that a reviewer or two had more or less vaguely touched on—an issue of which no one can have been more conscious than myself who had seen the recognition of it as an essential constituent of what I naturally (whatever the quality of my performance) hoped for: an appreciation of my undertaking. Dr Wellek points out, justly, that in my dealings with English poetry I have made a number of assumptions that I neither defend nor even state: 'I could wish,' he says, 'that you had made your assumptions more explicitly and defended them systematically.' After offering me a summary of these assumptions, he asks me to 'defend this position abstractly and to become conscious that large ethical, philosophical and, of course, ultimately, also aesthetic *choices* are involved.'

I in my turn would ask Dr Wellek to believe that if I omitted to undertake the defence he desiderates it was not from any lack of consciousness: I knew I was making assumptions (even if I didn't—and shouldn't now—state them to myself quite as he states them) and I was not less aware than I am now of what they involve. I am interested that he should be able to say that, for the most part, he shares them with me. But, he adds, he would 'have misgivings in pronouncing them without elaborating a specific defence or a theory in their defence.' That, I suggest, is because Dr Wellek is a philosopher; and my reply to him in the first place is that I myself am not a philosopher, and that I doubt whether in any case I could elaborate a theory that he would find satisfactory. I am not, however, relying upon modesty for my defence. If I profess myself so freely to be no philosopher it is because I feel that I can afford my modesty; it is because I have pretensions—pretensions to being a literary critic. And I would add that even if I had felt qualified to satisfy Dr Wellek on his own ground I should have declined to attempt it in that book.

Literary criticism and philosophy seem to me to be quite distinct and different kinds of discipline—at least, I think they ought to be (for while in my innocence I hope that philosophic writing commonly represents a serious discipline, I am quite sure that literary-critical writing commonly doesn't). This is not to suggest that a literary critic might not, as such, be the better for a philosophic training, but if he were, the advantage, I believe, would manifest itself partly in a surer realization that literary criticism is not philosophy. I pulled up just short of saying 'the two disciplines . . . ,' a phrase that might suggest too great a simplification: it is no doubt possible to point to valuable writing of various kinds representing varying kinds of alliances between the literary critic and the philosopher. But I am not the less sure that it is necessary to have a strict literary criticism somewhere and to vindicate literary criticism as a distinct and separate discipline.

The difficulty that one who approaches with the habit of one kind of discipline has in duly recognizing the claims of a very different kind—the difficulty of reconciling the two in a working alliance—seems to be to be illustrated in Dr Wellek's way of referring to the business of literary criticism: 'Allow me,' he says, 'to sketch your ideal of poetry, your "norm" with which you measure every poet. . .' That he should slip into this way of putting things seems to me significant, for he would on being challenged agree, I imagine, that it suggests a false idea of the procedure of the critic. At any rate, he gives me an excuse for making, by way of reminder, some elementary observations about that procedure.

By the critic of poetry I understand the complete reader: the ideal critic is the ideal reader. The reading demanded by poetry is of a different kind from that demanded by philosophy. I should not find it easy to define the difference satisfactorily, but Dr Wellek knows what it is and could give at least as good an account of it as I could. Philosophy, we say, is 'abstract' (thus Dr Wellek asks me to defend my position 'more abstractly'), and poetry 'concrete'. Words in poetry invite us, not to 'think about' and judge but to 'feel into' or 'become'—to realize a complex experience that is given in the words. They demand, not merely a fuller-bodied response, but a completer responsiveness—a kind of responsiveness that is incompatible with the judicial, one-eye-

on-the-standard approach suggested by Dr Wellek's phrase: 'your "norm" with which you measure every poet'. The critic—the reader of poetry— is indeed concerned with evaluation, but to figure him as measuring with a norm which he brings up to the object and applies from the outside is to misrepresent the process. The critic's aim is, first, to realize as sensitively and completely as possible this or that which claims his attention; and a certain valuing is implicit in the realizing. As he matures in experience of the new thing he asks, explicitly and implicitly: 'Where does this come? How does it stand in relation to...? How relatively important does it seem?' And the organization into which it settles as a constituent in becoming 'placed' is an organization of similarly 'placed' things, things that have found their bearings with regard to one another, and not a theoretical system or a system determined by abstract considerations.

No doubt (as I have admitted) a philosophic training might possibly—ideally would—make a critic surer and more penetrating in the perception of significance and relation and in the judgment of value. But it is to be noted that the improvement we ask for is of the critic, the critic as critic, and to count on it would be to count on the attainment of an arduous ideal. It would be reasonable to fear—to fear blunting of edge, blurring of focus and muddled misdirection of attention: consequences of queering one discipline with the habits of another. The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalizing—of it or from it. His first concern is to enter into possession of the given poem (let us say) in its concrete fulness, and his constant concern is never to lose his completeness of possession, but rather to increase it. In making value-judgments (and judgments as to significance), implicitly or explicitly, he does so out of that completeness of possession and with that fulness of response. He doesn't ask, 'How does this accord with these specifications of goodness in poetry?' He aims to make fully conscious and articulate the immediate sense of value that 'places' the poem.

Of course, the process of 'making fully conscious and articu-

late' is a process of relating and organizing, and the 'immediate sense of value' should, as the critic matures with experience, represent a growing stability of organization (the problem is to combine stability with growth). What, on testing and retesting and wider experience, turn out to be my more constant preferences, what the relative permanencies in my response, and what structure begins to assert itself in the field of poetry with which I am familiar? What map or chart of English poetry as a whole represents my utmost consistency and most inclusive coherence of response?

From this consistency and this coherence (in so far as I have achieved them) it should, of course, be possible to elicit principles and abstractly formulable norms. Dr Wellek's first criticism of me is (to give it its least exceptionable force) that I haven't proceeded to elicit them: that, having written the book I undertook to write, I haven't gone on to write another book in which I develop the theoretical implications of the first (for it would be essentially a matter of two books, even if there were only one binding). To this I make again my modest reply that I doubt, in any case, my capacity to satisfy Dr Wellek in this respect. And I add again that I do not think my modesty has any adverse bearing on my qualifications for writing the book I did undertake to write. The cogency I hoped to achieve was to be for other readers of poetry—readers of poetry as such. I hoped. by putting in front of them, in a criticism that should keep as close to the concrete as possible, my own developed 'coherence of response,' to get them, to agree (with, no doubt, critical qualifications) that the map, the essential order, of English poetry seen as a whole did, when they interrogated their experience, look like that to them also. Ideally I ought perhaps (though, I repeat, I should not put my position in quite the terms Dr Wellek ascribes to me) to be able to complete the work with a theoretical statement. But I am sure that the kind of work that I have attempted comes first, for such a theoretical statement to be worth anything, have to be done first.

If Dr Wellek should still insist that I ought, even if I declined to elaborate the philosophy implicit in my assumptions, at any rate to have been more explicit about them, I can only reply that I think I have gone as far in explicitness as I could profit-

ably attempt to go, and that I do not see what would be gained by the kind of explicitness he demands (though I see what is lost by it). Has any reader of my book been less aware of the essential criteria that emerge than he would have been if I had laid down such general propositions as: 'poetry must be in serious relation to actuality, it must have a firm grasp of the actual, of the object, it must be in relation to life, it must not be cut off from direct vulgar living, it should be normally human...'? If, as I did, I avoided such generalities, it was not out of timidity; it was because they seemed too clumsy to be of any use. I thought I had provided something better. My whole effort was to work in terms of concrete judgments and particular analyses: 'This—doesn't it?—bears such a relation to that; this kind of thing—don't you find it so?—wears better than that', etc. If I had to generalize, my generalization regarding the relation between poetry and 'direct vulgar living' or the 'actual' would run rather in the following way than in that suggested by Dr Wellek: traditions, or prevailing conventions or habits, that tend to cut poetry in general off from direct vulgar living and the actual, or that make it difficult for the poet to bring into poetry his most serious interests as an adult living in his own time, have a devitalizing effect. But I cannot see that I should have added to the clarity, cogency or usefulness of my book by enunciating such a proposition (or by arguing it theoretically). Again, I did not say that the language of poetry 'should not flatter the singing voice, should not be merely mellifluous', etc. I illustrated concretely in comparison and analysis the qualities indicated by those phrases, pointed to certain attendant limitations, and tried to show in terms of actual poetic history that there were serious disadvantages to be recognized in a tradition that insisted on such qualities as essential to poetry. In fact, though I am very much aware of the shortcomings of my work, I feel that by my own methods I have attained relative precision that makes this summarizing seem intolerably clumsy and inadequate. I do not, again, argue in general terms that there should be 'no emotion for its own sake, no afflatus, no mere generous emotionality, no luxury in pain and joy'; but by choice, arrangement and analysis of concrete examples I give those phrases (in so far, that is, as I have achieved my purpose) a precision of meaning they couldn't have

in any other way. There is, I hope, a chance that I may in this way have advanced theory, even if I haven't done the theorizing. I know that the cogency and precision I have aimed at are limited; but I believe that any approach involves limitations, and that it is by recognizing them and working within them that one may hope to get something done.

Dr Wellek has a further main criticism to bring against me: it is that my lack of interest in philosophy makes me unfair to the poets of the Romantic period. I hope he will forgive me if I say that his demonstration has, for me, mainly the effect of demonstrating how difficult it is to be a philosopher and a literary critic at the same time. The positive aim of his remarks he sums up as being 'to show that the romantic view of the world... underlines and pervades the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, elucidates many apparent difficulties, and is, at least, a debatable view of the world.'—'The romantic view of the world,' a view common to Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley and others—yes, I have heard of it; but what interest can it have for the literary critic? For the critic, for the reader whose primary interest is in poetry, those three poets are so radically different, immediately and finally, from one another that the offer to assimilate them in a common philosophy can only suggest the irrelevance of the philosophic approach.

My attitude towards Blake, Dr Wellek, I think, misunderstands. He certainly misrepresents my verdict on the particular poem, the *Introduction* to *Songs of Experience*. The comparison with *Ash-Wednesday* has context in the chapter to which the note challenged by Dr Wellek is appended, and, so far from arguing that Blake's poem is 'so ambiguous as to have no "right sense",' I have in that note the explicit aim of showing how Blake, with his astonishingly original technique, achieves something like the extraordinary precision of *Ash-Wednesday*. And in general, where Blake is concerned, my intention is the reverse of a slighting one. My view of the poem in fact, seems to me more favourable than that implied by Dr Wellek, who says: 'Actually I think the poem has only one possible meaning, which can be ascertained by a study of the whole of Blake's symbolical philosophy.' I myself, a literary critic, am interested in Blake because it is possible to say with reference to some of his work that his symbolical philo-

sophy is one thing, his poetry another. I know that even in his best poetry symbolism appears, and I was aware of symbolism in the poem I picked on; but I judged that I might fairly avoid a large discussion that seemed inessential to the point I was proposing to make.

I will say now, though, that when in Blake's poetry his symbols function poetically they have, I believe, a life that is independent of his 'symbolical philosophy': for instance, 'Earth', 'starry pole', 'dewy grass' and 'wat'ry shore', in the *Introduction* to *Songs of Experience*, seem to me to have a direct evocative power. Knowledge of Blake's arbitrary assignment of value to a symbol may often help to explain why he should have written as he has done here, there and elsewhere; I do not believe that it will ever turn what was before an unsuccessful poem into a good one. And I think *Hear the Voice of the Bard!* decidedly a good one. Dr Wellek's account of it seems to me to justify my assumption that I could fairly discuss the poem without talking about symbols: for I cannot see that his account tends to invalidate mine. I cannot, in fact, see why he should suppose it does. Or rather, I see it is because he assumes that what we are elucidating is a text of symbolical philosophy—written as such and to be read as such.

The confidence of his paraphrase made me open my eyes. It is a philosopher's confidence—the confidence of one who in the double strength of a philosophic training and a knowledge of Blake's system ignores the working of poetry. The main difference, one gathers, between the philosopher and the poet is that to the poet there may be allowed, in the interests of rhythm and mere formal matters like that, a certain looseness, a laxity of expression; 'Delete "and" (in line 7) which was inserted only because of the rhythm and the sense is quite clear'—Yes, immediately clear, if one derives from a study of 'the whole of Blake's symbolical philosophy' the confidence to perform these little operations. But I myself believe that in this poem Blake is using words with very unusual precision—the precision of a poet working as a poet.

And it is this precision that Dr Wellek ignores in his paraphrase and objects to my noticing:

> In spite of his fall Man might yet control the universe ('the starry pole'). . . . The next 'that' cannot possibly refer to God, but to the soul or to Man, who after his rebirth might control the 'starry pole'. There is no need to evoke Lucifer.

'Man' capable of controlling the universe may surely be said to have taken on something of God and may be, I suggest, in Blake's syntax—in his peculiar organization of meaning—not so sharply, distinguishable from God as Dr Wellek's notion of 'clear sense' and 'one possible meaning' demands. And if 'fallen, fallen light' does not for Dr Wellek bring into the complex of associations Lucifer—

> from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day, and with the setting sun,
> Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
> On Lemnos, the Aegean isle

—then I think we have an instance of the philosopher disabling the critic; an instance of the philosophical approach inducing in the reader of poetry a serious impercipience or insensitiveness. Blake is not referring to abstract ideas of Man and rebirth; he works in the concrete, evoking by a quite unproselike (that was my point) use of associations a sense of a state of desolation that is the more grievous by contrast with an imagined state of bliss in which Man, in harmonious mastery of his full potentialities, might be godlike—an unfallen and unsinful Lucifer (Milton, we remember, was of the Devil's party without knowing it).

> The twinkling stars in Blake mean always the light of Reason and the watery shore the limit of matter or of Time and Space. The identification of Earth and Man in this poem is explicitly recognized by Blake in the illustration to this very poem which represents a masculine figure lying upon the 'watery shore' and with the 'starry floor' as a background, painfully lifting his head.

I would call Dr Wellek's attention to the poem *Earth's Answer* immediately following that which is under discussion. It opens:

Earth raised up *her* head
From the darkness dread and drear.
Her light fled,
Stony dread!
And her locks cover'd with grey despair.
Prison'd on wat'ry shore.
Starry Jealousy does keep my den:
Cold and hoar,
Weeping o'er,
I hear the father of the ancient men.

I quote these stanzas as a way of suggesting to him that his neat and confident translation of symbols will not do (I am not saying that 'Reason' and 'Jealousy' could not be reconciled), and that even an argument from one of Blake's illustrations may not be as coercive as Dr Wellek supposes.

Again, where Wordsworth is concerned, Dr Wellek seems to misunderstand my intention. 'So contrary to your own conclusion' (p. 164), he says, 'I would maintain the coherence, unity, and subtlety of Wordsworth's thought'.—Well, I had heard of and read about Wordsworth's thought, which, indeed, has received a great deal of notice, but my business was with Wordsworth's poetry; I never proposed, and do not propose now, to consider him as a philosophic thinker. When I look up p. 164 in my book I find this as the only passage Dr Wellek can be referring to: 'His philosophizing (in the sense of the Hartleian studies and applications) had not the value he meant it to have; but it is an expression of his intense moral seriousness and a mode of that essential discipline of contemplation which gave consistency and stability to his experience.' In saying that Wordsworth's philosophizing hadn't the value he meant it to have I was pointing out that it hadn't the relation he supposed to his business as a poet, and my analysis still seems to me conclusive. Dr Wellek merely says in general terms that it isn't conclusive for him: 'I cannot see why the argument of Canto II of the *Prelude* could not be paraphrased.'—It can, I freely grant, be very easily paraphrased if one brings to it a general knowledge of the kind of thought involved and an assumption that poets put loosely what philosophers formulate with precision. For would Dr Wellek in

prose philosophy be satisfied with, or even take seriously, such looseness of statement and argument as Wordsworth's in his philosophic verse? If so, he has a very much less strict criterion for philosophy as philosophy than I have for poetry as poetry. Even if Wordsworth had a philosophy, it is as a poet that he matters, and if we remember that even where he offers 'thought' the strength of what he gives is the poet's, we shall, as critics, find something better to do than supply precision and completeness to his abstract argument.

I do not see what service Dr Wellek does either himself or philosophy by adducing chapter v of *Science and the Modern World*. That an eminent mathematician, logician and speculative philosopher should be so interested in poetry as Professor Whitehead there shows himself to be is pleasing; but I have always thought the quality of his dealings with poetry to be exactly what one would expect of an authority so qualified. I will add, perhaps wantonly and irrelevantly, that the utterances of Professor Whitehead's quoted by Dr Wellek look to me like bad poetry; in their context no doubt they become something different, but I cannot see why even then they should affect a literary critic's view of Wordsworth and Shelley.

When Dr Wellek comes to Shelley he hardly makes any serious show of sustaining his case against me and the weakness of his own approach is most clearly exposed. He is so interested in philosophy that he pays no real attention to my analyses of poetry. Take, for instance, his suggested interpretations of points in the *Ode to the West Wind*: it is not merely that they are, it seems to me, quite unacceptable; even if they were otherwise, they would make no substantial difference to my carefully elaborated analysis of the way in which Shelley's poetry works. And why should Dr Wellek suppose that he is defending Shelley in arguing that 'the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean may allude to "the old mystical conception of the two trees of Heaven and Earth intertwining"?' Not that I attack the *Ode to the West Wind*; I merely illustrate from it the characteristic working of Shelley's poetry.

Nor do I attack *Mont Blanc*: When Dr Wellek says, 'I cannot see the slightest confusion in the opening paragraph of *Mont*

Blanc,' he seems to me to be betraying an inappreciation of Shelley—an inappreciation explained by the approach intimated in his next sentence: 'It states an epistemological proposition quite clearly.' Now to me the opening paragraph of *Mont Blanc* evokes with great vividness a state of excited bewilderment and wonder. The obvious Wordsworthian element in the poem suggests a comparison with Wordsworth, and, regarding as I do the two poets, not as stating epistemological propositions or asserting general conceptions, but as reacting characteristically to similar concrete occasions, the comparison I actually make seems to me justified. When Dr Wellek tells me that the passage I quote from the *Prelude* 'has philosophically nothing to do with the introduction of Shelley's *Mont Blanc*,' he merely confirms my conviction that philosophy and literary criticism are very different things.

Having described certain Shelleyan habits I go on to point out that these carry with them a tendency to certain vices; vices such that, in diagnosing them, the literary critic finds himself becoming explicitly a moralist. I conduct the argument very carefully and in terms of particular analysis, and I cannot see that Dr Wellek makes any serious attempt to deal with it. I cannot see why he should think that his alternative interpretation of the third stanza of *When the lamp is shattered* makes that poem less bad in any of the ways in which I have judged it adversely. But I do see that, *not* reading as a literary critic, he fails to respond with his sensibility to the peculiarly Shelleyan virtue, the personal voice of the last stanza, and so fails to realize the force of my radical judgment on the poem (I cannot recapitulate the whole argument here).

Actually, of course, Dr Wellek's attention is elsewhere than on Shelley's poetry and my analysis. 'These notes,' he slips into saying, 'are made only to support my main point that Shelley's philosophy, I think, is astonishingly unified, and perfectly coherent.'—I do not consider it my business to discuss that proposition, and Dr Wellek has given me no grounds for judging Shelley's poetry to be anything other than I have judged it to be. If, in reply to my charge that Shelley's poetry is repetitive, vaporous, monotonously self-regarding and often emotionally cheap, and

so, in no very long run, boring, Dr Wellek tells me that Shelley was an idealist. I can only wonder whether some unfavourable presumption has not been set up about idealism. Again, it is no consolation for disliking the characteristic Shelleyan vapour to be told:

> This fusing of the spheres of the different senses in Shelley is exactly paralleled in his rapid transitions and fusions of the emotions, from pleasure to pain, from sorrow to joy. Shelley would like us similarly to ignore or rather to transcend the boundaries of individuality between persons just as Indian philosophy or Schopenhauer wants us to overcome the curse and burden of the *principium individuationis*.

Of course, according to that philosophy, poetry may be a mistake or illusion, something to be left behind. But Dr Wellek will hardly bring it against me that I have been unfair to Shelley's poetry out of lack of sympathy with such a view.

Unfairness to poets out of lack of interest in their philosophy he does, of course, in general charge me with. His note concludes:

> Your book... raises anew the question of the poet's belief and how far sympathy with this belief and comprehension of it is necessary for an appreciation of the poetry. A question which has been debated a good deal, as you know, and which I would not like to solve too hastily on the basis of your book.

I will only comment, without wishing to question the justice of this conclusion, that Dr Wellek seems to me to assume too easily that the poet's essential 'belief' is what can be most readily extracted as such from his works by a philosopher.

REALITY AND SINCERITY

F. R. LEAVIS

THE FOLLOWING comes from an exercise in critical comparison involving three poems: Alexander Smith's *Barbara*, which is [was] to be found in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*; Emily Brontë's *Cold in the earth*; and Hardy's *After a Journey*. The challenge was to establish an order of preference among these poems. But only two of them are seriously examined below.

About which of the three poems should come lowest in order of preference there will be ready agreement. Alexander Smith's *Barbara* has all the vices that are to be feared when his theme is proposed, the theme of irreparable loss. It doesn't merely surrender to temptation; it goes straight for a sentimental debauch, an emotional wallowing, the alleged situation being only the show of an excuse for the indulgence, which is, with a kind of innocent shamelessness, sought for its own sake. If one wants a justification for invoking the term 'insincerity', one can point to the fact that the poem clearly enjoys its pang: to put it more strictly, the poem offers a luxurious enjoyment that, to be enjoyed, must be taken for the suffering of an unbearable sorrow. The cheapness of the sentimentality appears so immediately in the movement, the clichés of phrase and attitude, and the vaguenesses and unrealities of situation, that (except for the purposes of elementary demonstration) there would be no point in proceeding to detailed analysis: the use of the poem for present purposes is to serve as a foil to Emily Brontë's —which it does by the mere juxtaposition.

Its quality as foil to Emily Brontë's is plain at once. The emotional sweep of the movement, the declamatory plangency, of *Cold in the earth* might seem to represent dangerous temptations; but in responding to the effect of passionate intensity we register what impresses us as a controlling strength. It remains to be seen just what that is:

> Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
> Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!

Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Sever'd at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers
From these brown hills have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lighten'd up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perish'd,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherish'd,
Strengthen'd and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Wean'd my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

The poem does unmistakably demand to be read in a plangent declamation; in, that is, a rendering that constitutes an overt assertion of emotional intensity. If we ask why, nevertheless, the dangers such an account might suggest don't seem at any point disturbingly present, we can observe for answer that what is said in stanza seven—

Then did I check the tears of useless passion

—is more than *said*; it represents an active principle that informs the poem and is there along with the plangency. We have it in the movement, in the tough prose rationality, the stating matter-of-factness of good sense, that seems to play against the dangerous running swell. It makes us take the suggestion that some strength corresponding to 'these brown hills,' which do not themselves melt, underlies the poem. And we see an obvious hint at the nature of the strength in

Then did I learn how existence could be cherish'd,
Strengthen'd and fed without the aid of joy:

the suggestion that something quite opposed to the luxury of 'memory's rapturous pain' is being 'cherished' in the poem; that a resolute strength of will, espousing the bare prose 'existence', counters the run of emotion.

Cold in the earth, then, in its strong plangency, might reasonably be judged to be a notable achievement. I say this however, in order to go on to judge that Hardy's *After a Journey* is a much rarer and finer thing, to be placed, as a poetic achievement, decidedly higher. I approach in this way because I have not, in fact, found that those who confidently place *Cold in the earth* above *Barbara* do, as a rule, judge *After a Journey* to be obviously superior to *Cold in the earth* and yet, for such readers, the superiority can, I think, be demonstrated; that is, established to their satisfaction.

The difficulties, or conditions, that explain the failure of response on the part of intelligent readers lie largely, it would seem, in the nature of the superiority itself, though no doubt some stylistic oddities—what there is some excuse for seeing as such—play their part. Here is the poem:

Hereto I come to view a voiceless ghost;
Whither, O whither will its whim now draw me?
Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,
And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.
Where you will next be there's no knowing,
Facing round about me everywhere,
With your nut-coloured hair,
And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going.

Yes; I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;
Through the years, through the dead scenes, I have tracked you;
What have you now found to say of our past—
Scanned across the dark space wherein I lacked you?
Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division?
Things were not lastly as firstly well
With us twain, you tell?
But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

I see what you are doing: you are leading me on
To the spots we knew when we haunted here together,
The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone
At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,
And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow
That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,
When you were all aglow,
And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow!

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily,
Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
For the stars close their shutters, and the dawn whitens hazily.

Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
I am just the same as when
Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

A difference in manner and tone between Hardy's poem and the other two will have been observed at once: unlike them it is not declamatory. The point should in justice lead on to a positive formulation, and this may not come as readily; certain stylistic characteristics that may at first strike the reader as oddities and clumsinesses tend to delay the recognition of the convincing intimate naturalness. It turns out, however, that the essential ethos of the manner is given in

Where you will next be there's no knowing.

This intimacy we are at first inclined to describe as 'conversational,' only to replace that adjective by 'self-communing' when we have recognized that, even when Hardy (and it is significant that we say 'Hardy') addresses the 'ghost' he is still addressing himself. And it shouldn't take long to recognize that the marked idiosyncrasy of idiom and diction going with the intimacy of tone achieves some striking precisions and felicities. Consider, for instance, the verb in

Facing round about me everywhere...

There is nothing that strikes us as odd in that 'facing', but it is a use created for the occasion, and when we look into its unobtrusive naturalness it turns out to have a positive and 'inevitable' rightness the analysis of which involves a precise account of the 'ghost's' status—which in its turn involves a precise account of the highly specific situation defined by the poem.

Then again, there is that noun in the fourth line which (I can testify) has offended readers not incapable of recognizing its felicity:

And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.

'Ejaculations' gives with vivid precision that sound that 'awes' Hardy: the slap of the waves on the rocky walls; the slap with its prolonging reverberant syllables—the hollow voice, in fact, that, in stanza three, 'seems to call out to me from forty years ago' (and

the hollowness rings significantly through the poem).

In fact, the difference first presenting itself as an absence of declamatory manner and tone, examined, leads to the perception of positive characteristics—precisions of concrete realization, specificities, complexities—that justify the judgment I now advance: Hardy's poem, put side by side with Emily Brontë's is seen to have a great advantage in *reality*. This term, of course, has to be given its due force by the analysis yet to be done—the analysis it sums up; but it provides the right pointer. And to invoke another term, more inescapably one to which a critic must try and give some useful force by appropriate and careful use, if he can contrive that: to say that Hardy's poem has an advantage in reality is to say (it will turn out) that it represents a profounder and completer sincerity.

Emily Brontë's poem is a striking one, but when we go back to it from Hardy's the contrast precipitates the judgment that, in it, she is dramatizing herself in a situation such as she has clearly not known in actual experience: what she offers is betrayingly less real. We find that we have declamatory generality—talking *about*—in contrast to Hardy's quiet presentment of specific fact and concrete circumstance; in contrast, that is, to detailed complexity evoking a total situation that, as merely evoked, carries its power and meaning in itself. Glancing back at Alexander Smith we can say that whereas in postulating the situation of Barbara (he can hardly be said to imagine it) he is seeking a licence for an emotional debauch, Emily Brontë conceives a situation in order to have the satisfaction of a disciplined imaginative exercise: the satisfaction of dramatizing herself in a tragic role—an attitude, nobly impressive, of sternly controlled passionate desolation.

The marks of the imaginative self-projection that is insufficiently informed by experience are there in the poem, and (especially with the aid of the contrast with Hardy) a duly perceptive reader could discern and describe them, without knowing the biographical fact. They are there in the noble (and given the intimate offer of the theme, paradoxical) declamation, and in the accompanying generality, the absence of any convincing concreteness of a presented situation that speaks for itself. Locally we can put a finger on the

significance of the declamatory mode in, for example, the last line of the first stanza:

Sever'd at last by Time's all-severing wave.

The imagery there, or the suggestion of it, is essentially rhetorical; the noble declamation, the impressive *saying*, provides the impressiveness, and when we consider the impressiveness critically we recognize that to respond to the declamatory mode is to be unexacting in respect of offered imagery: the unrealized rhetorical-verbal will receive a deference that cannot be critically justified. Time's 'wave' is of the order of cliché; prompted, it would seem, by 'grave', it makes as rime—and the closing rime of the stanza—a claim to strength that it certainly cannot sustain.

Turning back to *After a Journey* we may now look at the words in the first line that have made it (strange as that must seem when one has taken the poem) characteristic of Hardy's clumsiness. Actually it is characteristic of the supreme Hardy achievement, the poem in which what at first may look clumsiness turns out, once the approach to the poem has been found, to be something very different—something supremely right. The vindication of the questioned details in the first line must be, then, in terms of what follows, and of the whole effect in which they have their part. Of 'hereto', the archaism that (in such a use) looks like a Hardy coinage, we need say little more than that it comes to look like one of those Hardy coinages which, in the great poems, cease to be anything but natural and inevitable. Its balanced slowness is precisely what was needed—as appears when we consider 'view', which, again, has been challenged as a perversity, one characteristically settled on by Hardy, it would seem, for the sake of a perverse alliteration with 'voiceless'.

But we cannot judge 'view' until we have realized just what is the nature of the 'ghost'. This should have been sufficiently established by the time we have come to the opening of the second stanza:

Yes; I have re-entered your olden haunts at last;

Through the years, through the dead scenes, I have tracked you.

Prompted by these lines we are at first inclined to say that the journey has also been a journey through time. But an essential effect of the poem is to constate, with a sharp and full realization, that we *cannot* go back in time. The dimension of time dominates the poem; we feel it in the hollowness of the 'waters' ejaculations' —the voice of the 'cave just under', a voice that has more than a hollowness of here and now; 'it seems to call out to me from forty years ago.' It calls out here and now; but here and now it calls out from forty years ago. The dimension of time, the 'dark space,' is in the voice itself, so startling in its immediacy, and, with the paradoxical duality of the experience, so annunciatory that the forty years ago from which it seems to call out is not, all the same, here and now, but forty years away. And memory, having 'tracked' the woman 'through the years, through the dead scenes,' attains only a presence that is at the same time the absence felt more acutely. The reference to the time 'when we haunted here together' contains an implicit recognition of the different kind of 'haunting' represented by such presence as she has for him now, when their togetherness is so illusory. And by this point in the poem we know that the 'ghost', if an evanescent and impalpable thing, is in no ordinary sense a ghost.

We can now go back to the opening lines of the poem and judge fairly what it offers, and, having done that, tell how it demands to be read. 'View', we recognize, is no insensitive perversity; it is the word compelled by the intensely realized situation, and we feel it imposing itself on Hardy (and so on us) as right and irreplaceable: such seeing as memory will do (given success in its 'tracking') will be an intent dwelling of contemplation upon the object. And the object will be—again the word is, with a poised recognizing endorsement, accepted when it comes—a 'voiceless' (it will be a one-sided meeting, and the voice will be the cave's) 'ghost'; on this word, again after a kind of judicially recognizing pause, the reader's voice descends and rests, as on a kind of summing-up close to the sentence.

It will be seen, then, that to recognize the rightness of 'view and 'voiceless' and give them their due value is to recognize the kind of rendering demanded by the line: a slow and deliberate 'Hereto I come', followed by judicial discovering and accepting rests on 'view' and 'voiceless', and the concluding tone for 'ghost' that makes it plain that no literal ghost is in question, so that the 'nut-coloured hair and gray eyes and rose-flush' should bring no disconcerting surprise. Once the deliberate stock-taking poise of the opening line has been appreciated, the rest of the poem is safe against the kind of misreading that would give the movement a jaunty sing-song.

The self-communing tone is established in the first four lines, and there is no change when Hardy passes from the 'its' of the second line to the 'you' of the fifth. He remains 'lonely, lost' throughout the poem; that is not a state which is altered by his communion (if that is the word) with the 'ghost'. The loneliness and the desolation are far from being mitigated by the 'viewing' in memory; for the condition of the 'viewing' is Hardy's full realizing contemplation of the woman's irremediable absence—of the fact that she is dead.

There are two places in the poem where a difficulty of interpretation has been found. One of them is the last line of the second stanza:

> But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

The last line doesn't mean: 'All's closed now, in spite of Time, or Time's derision, standing in the way of its being closed.' It isn't a simple, direct statement of fact. It conveys a quite complex attitude that entails a weighing of considerations against one another and leaves them in a kind of poise. The effect is: 'Well, any way, all that's over now, the suffering of division, things not being firstly as lastly well—I recognize that, though what, of course, I find myself contemplating now is the mockery of time; it's Time's derision I'm left with.' There is certainly no simple, and no preponderant, consolation. In the 'all's closed now' there is an irony, to be registered in a kind of sigh. '*All's* closed,' not only the suffering, though that, Hardy recognizes, is of course included.

But the last word is with Time's derision; and the rendering of the closing phrase, 'despite Time's derision', makes a testing demand on the reader: the phrase must be spoken with a certain flatness of inflection—an absence of clinching effect, or of any suggestion of a sum worked out.

The other place is at the fourth line from the end of the poem:

> Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
> The bringing me here...

Not to take the significance of that 'Trust me, I mind not' is to have failed to respond to the complexity of the total attitude, and to have failed to realize the rare kind of integrity the poem achieves. It is to miss the suggestion of paradoxical insistence, the intensity of directed feeling and will, in 'Nay, bring me here again'. For what, in the bringing him here, he may be supposed to mind is not the arduousness, for an old man, of the long journey and the ramble by night. 'To bring me here,' says Hardy, 'is to make me experience to the full the desolation and the pang—to give a sharp edge to the fact of Time's derision. But I don't mind—I more than don't mind: bring me here again! I hold to life, even though life as a total fact lours. The *real* for me, the focus of my affirmation, is the remembered realest thing, though to remember vividly is at the same time, inescapably, to embrace the utterness of loss.'

The rare integrity appears in the way in which the two aspects, the affirmation and the void, affect us as equal presences in the poem. Vacancy is evoked as an intensity of *absence* with a power that sends us for comparison to that other poem of the same years (1911–13), *The Voice* ('Woman much missed'); but vacancy, we find, in the other poem prevails, setting off by contrast the astonishing way in which in this poem it does not. *After a Journey* closes on the affirmation. But if 'affirmation' is the word (and it seems to be a necessary one), it mustn't suggest anything rhetorical; the affirmation is dramatic in a quite other sense. The opposite of the rhetorical has its very observable manifestation in the opening of the stanza:

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,
The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily;
Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
For the stars close their shutters, and the dawn whitens hazily.

No one who has responded perceptively to the mode established at the beginning of the poem would read this as a trivial sing-song, but it clearly doesn't lend itself to noble plangency. 'Flitting' and 'flop' are key words—and 'flop', while being so decidedly the reverse of noble, has at the same time a felicity of poetic strength: rendering the sound, as it does, with matter-of-fact precision and immediacy (there is no plangency about the resonance), it conveys both the emptiness and quotidian ordinariness that are essential notes of the ethos with which the poem leaves us at the end. And 'the stars close their shutters' gives the right defining touch to Hardy's attitude towards the woman—to the spirit of his cult of memory. This spirit is manifested in the stars suggesting to him, and to us, as they disappear, not sublimities and the vault of heaven, but lamplit cottage windows—associations in key with his recollections of 'forty years ago.' The note is intimate—with the touch of humorous fancy, it is tenderly familiar and matter-of-fact. No alchemy of idealization, no suggestion of the transcendental, no nobly imaginative self-deceiving, attends on this devotion to the memory of a woman. It is the remembered as it was that Hardy is intent on. '*I* am just the same': that is the final stress. *She* is a 'thin ghost'—mattering only because she matters to *him*. It is astonishing how the peculiar reality of the remembered but non-existent is conveyed: vivid—

nut-coloured hair,
And gray eyes, and rose-flush

—and real enough to be addressed; yet at the same time 'flitting', a 'thin ghost'; never, that is, more than something recalled in memory, so that the address is never anything other than self-communing. It is the purest fidelity, the sincerest tribute to the actual woman. Hardy, with the subtlest and completest integrity, is intent

on recapturing what can be recaptured of that which, with all his being, he judges to have been the supreme experience of life, the realest thing, the centre of value and meaning.

The sense in which, though he now frailly follows, he is

> just the same as when
> Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers

has been, when the poem reaches this close, precisely defined, and his right to affirm it established beyond questioning. It is a poem that we recognize to have come directly out of life; it could, that is, have been written only by a man who had the experience of a life to remember back through. And recognizing that, we recognize the rare quality of the man who can say with that truth 'I am just the same,' and the rare integrity that can so put the truth beyond question. It is a case in which we know from the art what the man was like; we can be sure, that is, what personal qualities we should have found to admire in Hardy if we could have known him.

THE SENSE OF THE PAST

LIONEL TRILLING

IN RECENT YEARS the study of literature in our universities has again and again been called into question, chiefly on the ground that what is being studied is not so much literature itself as the history of literature. John Jay Chapman was perhaps the first to state the case against the literary scholars when in 1927 he denounced the 'archaeological, quasi-scientific, and documentary study of the fine arts' because, as he said, it endeavoured 'to express the fluid universe of many emotions in terms drawn from the study of the physical sciences.' And since Chapman wrote, the issue in the universities has been clearly drawn in the form of an opposition of 'criticism' to 'scholarship.' Criticism has been the aggressor, and its assault upon scholarship has been successful almost in proportion to the spiritedness with which it has been made; at the present time, although the archaeological and quasi-scientific and documentary study of literature is still the dominant one in our universities, it is clear to everyone that scholarship is on the defensive and is ready to share the rule with its antagonist.

This revision of the academic polity can be regarded only with satisfaction. The world seems to become less and less responsive to literature; we can even observe that literature is becoming something like an object of suspicion, and it is possible to say of the historical study of literature that its very existence is an evidence of this mistrust. De Quincey's categories of *knowledge* and *power* are most pertinent here; the traditional scholarship, in so far as it takes literature to be chiefly an object of knowledge, denies or obscures that active power by which literature is truly defined. All sorts of studies are properly ancillary to the study of literature. For example, the study of the intellectual conditions in which a work of literature was made is not only legitimate but sometimes even necessary to our perception of its power. Yet when Professor Lovejoy in his influential book, *The Great Chain of Being*, tells us that for the study of the history of ideas a really dead writer is

better than one whose works are still enjoyed, we naturally pull up short and wonder if we are not in danger of becoming like the Edinburgh body-snatchers who saw to it that there were enough cadavers for study in the medical school.

Criticism made its attack on the historians of literature in the name of literature as power. The attack was the fiercer because literary history had all too faithfully followed the lead of social and political history, which, having given up its traditional connection with literature, had allied itself with the physical sciences of the nineteenth century and had adopted the assumption of these sciences that the world was reflected with perfect literalness in the will-less mind of the observer. The new history had many successes and it taught literary study what it had itself learned, that in an age of science prestige is to be gained by approximating the methods of science. Of these methods the most notable and most adaptable was the investigation of genesis, of how the work of art came into being. I am not concerned to show that the study of genesis is harmful to the right experience of the work of art: I do not believe it is. Indeed, I am inclined to suppose that whenever the genetic method is attacked we ought to suspect that special interests are being defended. So far is it from being true that the genetic method is in itself inimical to the work of art, that the very opposite is so; a work of art, or any human thing, studied in its genesis can take on an added value. Still, the genetic method can easily be vulgarized, and when it is used in its vulgar form, it can indeed reduce the value of a thing; in much genetic study the implication is clear that to the scholar the work of art is nothing but its conditions.

One of the attractions of the genetic study of art is that it seems to offer a high degree of certainty. Aristotle tells us that every study has its own degree of certainty and that the well-trained man accepts that degree and does not look for a greater one. We may add that there are different kinds as well as different degrees of certainty, and we can say that the great mistake of the scientific-historical scholarship is that it looks for a degree and kind of certainty that literature does not and cannot allow.

The error that is made by literary scholars when they seek for a certainty analogous with the certainty of science has been so often

remarked that at this date little more need be said of it. Up to a point the scientific study of art is legitimate and fruitful; the great thing is that we should recognize the terminal point and not try to push beyond it, that we should not expect that the scientific study of, say, literature will necessarily assure us of the experience of literature; and if we wish as teachers to help others to the experience of literature, we cannot do so by imparting the fruits of our scientific study. What the partisans of the so-called New Criticism revolted against was the scientific notion of the fact as transferred in a literal way to the study of literature. They wished to restore autonomy to the work of art, to see it as the agent of power rather than as the object of knowledge.

The faults of these critics we know. Perhaps their chief fault they share with scientific-historical scholars themselves—they try too hard. No less than the scholars, the critics fall into an error that Chapman denounced, the great modern illusion 'that anything whatever... can be discovered through hard intellectual work and concentration.' We often feel of them that they make the elucidation of poetic ambiguity or irony a kind of intellectual calisthenic ritual. Still, we can forgive them their strenuousness, remembering that something has happened to our relation with language which seems to require that we make methodical and explicit what was once immediate and unformulated.

But there is another fault of the New Critics of which we must take notice. It is that in their reaction from the historical method they forget that the literary work is ineluctably a historical fact, and, what is more important, that its historicity is a fact in our aesthetic experience. Literature, we may say, must in some sense always be an historical study, for literature is an historical art. It is historical in three separate senses.

In the old days the poet was supposed to be himself an historian, a reliable chronicler of events. Thucydides said that he was likely to be an inaccurate historian, but Aristotle said that he was more accurate, because more general, than any mere annalist; and we, following Aristotle, suppose that a large part of literature is properly historical, the recording and interpreting of personal, national, and cosmological events.

Then literature is historical in the sense that it is necessarily

aware of its own past. It is not always consciously aware of this past, but it is always practically aware of it. The work of any poet exists by reason of its connection with past work, both in continuation and in divergence, and what we call his originality is simply his special relation to tradition. The point has been fully developed by T. S. Eliot in his well-known essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. And Mr Eliot reminds us how each poet's relation to tradition changes tradition itself, so that the history of literature is never quiet for long and is never merely an additive kind of growth. Each new age makes the pattern over again, forgetting what was once dominant, finding new affinities; we read any work within a kaleidoscope of historical elements.

And in one more sense literature is historical, and it is with this sense that I am here chiefly concerned. In the existence of every work of literature of the past, its historicity, its *pastness*, is a factor of great importance. In certain cultures the pastness of a work of art gives it an extra-aesthetic authority which is incorporated into its aesthetic power. But even in our own culture with its ambivalent feeling about tradition, there inheres in a work of art of the past a certain quality, an element of its aesthetic existence, which we can identify as its pastness. Side by side with the formal elements of the work, and modifying these elements, there is the element of history, which, in any complete aesthetic analysis, must be taken into account.

The New Critics exercised their early characteristic method almost exclusively upon lyric poetry, a genre in which the historical element, although of course present, is less obtrusive than in the long poem, the novel, and the drama. But even in the lyric poem the factor of historicity is part of the aesthetic experience; it is not merely a negative condition of the other elements, such as prosody or diction, which, if they are old enough, are likely to be insufficiently understood—it is itself a positive aesthetic factor with positive and pleasurable relations to the other aesthetic factors. It is a part of the *given* of the work, which we cannot help but respond to. The New Critics imply that this situation *should* not exist, but it cannot help existing, and we have to take it into account.

We are creatures of time, we are creatures of the historical sense,

not only as men have always been put in a new way since the time of Walter Scott. Possibly this may be for the worse; we would perhaps be stronger if we believed that Now contained all things, and that we in our barbarian moment were all that had ever been. Without the sense of the past we might be more certain, less weighted down and apprehensive. We might also be less generous, and certainly we would be less aware. In any case, we have the sense of the past and must live with it, and by it.

And we must read our literature by it. Try as we will, we cannot be like Partridge at the play, wholly without the historical sense. The leap of the imagination which an audience makes when it responds to Hamlet is enormous, and it requires a comprehensive, although not necessarily a highly instructed sense of the past. This sense does not, for most artistic purposes, need to be highly instructed; it can consist largely of the firm belief that there really is such a thing as the past.

In the New Critics' refusal to take critical account of the historicity of a work there is, one understands, the impulse to make the work of the past more immediate and more real, to deny that between Now and Then there is any essential difference, the spirit of man being one and continuous. But it is only if we are aware of the reality of the past as past that we can feel it as alive and present. If, for example, we try to make Shakespeare literally contemporaneous, we make him monstrous. He is contemporaneous only if we know how much a man of his own age he was; he is relevant to us only if we see his distance from us. Or to take a poet closer to us in actual time, Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode* is acceptable to us only when it is understood to have been written at a certain past moment; if it had appeared much later than it did, if it were offered to us now as a contemporary work, we would not admire it; and the same is true of *The Prelude*, which of all works of the Romantic Movement is closest to our present interest. In the pastness of these works lies the assurance of their validity and relevance.

The question is always arising: What is the real poem? Is it the poem we now perceive? Is it the poem the author consciously intended? Is it the poem the author intended and his

first readers read? Well, it is all these things, depending on the state of our knowledge. But in addition the poem is the poem as it has existed in history, as it has lived its life from Then to Now, as it is a thing which submits itself to one kind of perception in one age and another kind of perception in another age, as it exerts in each age a different kind of power. This makes it a thing we can never wholly understand—other things too, of course, help to make it that—and the mystery, the unreachable part of the poem, is one of its aesthetic elements.

To suppose that we can think like men of another time is as much of an illusion as to suppose that we can think in a wholly different way. But it is the first illusion that is exemplified in the attitude of the anti-historical critics. In the admirable poetry textbook of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, the authors disclaim all historical intention. Their purpose being what it is, they are right to do so, but I wonder if they are right in never asking in their aesthetic analysis the question: What effect is created by our knowledge that the language of a particular poem is not such as would be uttered by a poet writing now? To read a poem of even a hundred years ago requires as much translation of its historical circumstance as of its metaphors. This the trained and gifted critic is likely to forget; his own historical sense is often so deeply ingrained that he is not wholly conscious of it, and sometimes, for reasons of his own, he prefers to keep it merely implicit. Yet whether or not it is made conscious and explicit, the historical sense is one of the aesthetic and critical faculties.

What more apposite reminder of this can we have than the early impulse of the New Critics themselves to discover all poetic virtue in the poetry of the seventeenth century, the impulse, only lately modified, to find the essence of poetic error in the poetry of Romanticism? Their having given rein to this impulse is certainly not illegitimate. They were doing what we all must and even should do: they were involving their aesthetics with certain cultural preferences, they were implying choices in religion, metaphysics, politics, manners. And in so far as they were doing this by showing a preference for a particular period of the past, which they brought into comparison with the present, they were exercising their histo-

rical sense. We cannot question their preference itself; we can only question the mere implicitness of their historical sense, their attitude of making the historical sense irrelevant to their aesthetic.

But if the historical sense is always with us, it must, for just that reason, be refined and made more exact. We have, that is, to open our minds to the whole question of what we mean when we speak of causation in culture. Hume, who so shook our notions of causation in the physical sciences, raises some interesting questions of causation in culture. 'There is no subject,' he says, 'in which we must proceed with more caution than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences; lest we assign causes which never existed and reduce what is merely contingent to staple and universal principles.' The cultivators of the arts, he goes on to say, are always few in number and their minds are delicate and 'easily perverted.' 'Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes must have great influence on the rise and progress of all refined arts.' But there is one fact, he continues, which gives us the licence to speculate—this is the fact that the choice spirits arise from and are related to the mass of the people of their time. 'The question, therefore, is not altogether concerning the taste, genius, and spirit of a few, but concerning those of a whole people; and may, therefore, be accounted for, in some measure, by general causes and principles.' This gives us our charter to engage in cultural history and cultural criticism, but we must see that it is a charter to deal with a mystery.

The refinement of our historical sense chiefly means that we keep it properly complicated. History, like science and art, involves abstraction: we abstract certain events from others and we make this particular abstraction with an end in view, we make it to serve some purpose of our will. Try as we may, we cannot, as we write history, escape our purposiveness. Nor, indeed, should we try to escape, for purpose and meaning are the same thing. But in pursuing our purpose, in making our abstractions, we must be aware of what we are doing; we ought to have it fully in mind that our abstraction is not perfectly equivalent to the infinite complication of events from which we have abstracted. I should like to suggest a few ways in which those of us who are literary scholars can give to our notion of history an appropriate complication.

It ought to be for us a real question whether, and in what way, human nature is always the same. I do not mean that we ought to settle this question before we get to work, but only that we insist to ourselves that the question is a real one. What we certainly know has changed is the *expression* of human nature, and we must keep before our minds the problem of the relation which expression bears to feeling. E. E. Stoll, the well-known Shakespearean critic, has settled the matter out of hand by announcing the essential difference between what he calls 'convention' and what he calls 'life,' and he insists that the two may have no truck with each other, that we cannot say of Shakespeare that he is psychologically or philosophically acute because these are terms we use of 'life,' whereas Shakespeare was dealing only with 'convention.' This has the virtue of suggesting how important is the relation of 'convention' to 'life,' but it misses the point that 'life' is always expressed through 'convention' and in a sense always is 'convention,' and that convention has meaning only because of the intentions of life. Professor Stoll seems to go on the assumption that Shakespeare's audiences were conscious of convention; they were aware of it, but certainly not conscious of it; what they were conscious of was life, into which they made an instantaneous translation of all that took place on the stage. The problem of the interplay between the emotion and the convention which is available for it, and the reciprocal influence they exert on each other, is a very difficult one, and I scarcely even state its complexities, let alone pretend to solve them. But the problem with its difficulties should be admitted, and simplicity of solution should always be regarded as a sign of failure.

A very important step forward in the complication of our sense of the past was made when Whitehead and after him Lovejoy taught us to look not for the expressed but for the assumed ideas of an age, what Whitehead describes as the 'assumptions which appear so obvious that people do not know that they are assuming them because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them.'

But a regression was made when Professor Lovejoy, in that influential book of his, assured us that 'the ideas in serious reflective literature are, of course, in great part philosophical ideas in dilution.' To go fully into the error of this common belief would need

more time than we have now at our disposal. It is part of our suspiciousness of literature that we undertake thus to make it a dependent art. Certainly we must question the assumption which gives the priority in ideas to the philosopher and sees the movement of thought as always from the systematic thinker, who thinks up the ideas in, presumably, a cultural vacuum, to the poet who 'uses' the ideas 'in dilution.' We must question this even if it means a reconstruction of what we mean by 'ideas.'

And this leads to another matter about which we may not be simple, the relation of the poet to his environment. The poet, it is true, is an effect of environment, but we must remember that he is no less a cause. He may be used as the barometer, but let us not forget that he *is* also part of the weather. We have been too easily satisfied by a merely elementary meaning of environment; we have been content with a simple quantitative implication of the word, taking a large and literally environing thing to be always the environment of a smaller thing. In a concert room the audience and its attitude are of course the environment of the performer, but also the performer and his music make the environment of the audience. In a family the parents are no doubt the chief factors in the environment of the child; but also the child is a factor in the environment of the parents and himself conditions the actions of his parents towards him.

Corollary to this question of environment is the question of influence, the influence which one writer is said to have had on another. In its historical meaning, from which we take our present use, *influence* was a word intended to express a mystery. It means a flowing-in, but not as a tributary river flows into the main stream at a certain observable point; historically the image is an astrological one and the meanings which the Oxford Dictionary gives all suggest 'producing effects by *insensible* or *invisible* means'—'the infusion of any kind of divine, spiritual, moral, immaterial, or secret power or principle.' Before the idea of influence we ought to be far more puzzled than we are; if we find it hard to be puzzled enough, we may contrive to induce the proper state of uncertainty by turning the word upon ourselves, asking, 'What have been the influences that made me the person I am, and to whom would I

entrust the task of truly discovering what they were?'

Yet another thing that we have not understood with sufficient complication is the nature of ideas in their relation to the conditions of their development and in relation to their transmission. Too often we conceive of an idea as being like the baton that is handed from runner to runner in a relay race. But an idea as a transmissible thing is rather like the sentence that in the parlour game is whispered about in a circle; the point of the game is the amusement that comes when the last version is compared with the original. As for the origin of ideas, we ought to remember that an idea is the formulation of a response to a situation; so, too, is the modification of an existing idea. Since the situations in which people or cultures find themselves are limited in number, and since the possible responses are also limited, ideas certainly do have a tendency to recur, and because people think habitually ideas also have a tendency to persist when the situation which called them forth is no longer present; so that ideas do have a certain limited autonomy, and sometimes the appearance of a complete autonomy. From this there has grown up the belief in the actual perfect autonomy of ideas. It is supposed that ideas think themselves, create themselves and their descendants, have a life independent of the thinker and the situation. And from this we are often led to conclude that ideas, systematic ideas, are directly responsible for events.

A similar feeling is prevalent among our intellectual classes in relation to words. Semantics is not now the lively concern that it was a few years ago, but the mythology of what we may call political semantics has become established in our intellectual life, the belief that we are betrayed by words, that words push us around against our will. 'The tyranny of words' became a popular phrase and is still in use, and the semanticists offer us an easier world and freedom from war if only we assert our independence from words. But nearly a century ago Dickens said that he was tired of hearing about 'the tyranny of words' (he used that phrase); he was, he said, less concerned with the way words abuse us than with the way we abuse words. It is not words that make our troubles, but our own wills. Words cannot control us unless we desire to be

controlled by them. And the same is true of the control of systematic ideas. We have come to believe that some ideas can betray us, others save us. The educated classes are learning to blame ideas for our troubles, rather than blaming what is a very different thing —our own bad thinking. This is the great vice of academicism, that it is concerned with ideas rather than with thinking, and nowadays the errors of academicism do not stay in the academy; they make their way into the world, and what begins as a failure of perception among intellectual specialists finds its fulfilment in policy and action.

In time of war, when two different cultures, or two extreme modifications of the same culture, confront each other with force, this belief in the autonomy of ideas becomes especially strong and therefore especially clear. In any modern war there is likely to be involved a conflict of ideas which is in part fictitious but which is largely genuine. But this conflict of ideas, genuine as it may be, suggests to both sides the necessity of believing in the fixed, immutable nature of the ideas to which each side owes allegiance. What gods were to the ancients at war, ideas are to us. Thus, in the last war, an eminent American professor of philosophy won wide praise for demonstrating that Nazism was to be understood as the inevitable outcome of the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, while the virtues of American democracy were to be explained by tracing a direct line of descent from Plato and the Athenian polity. Or consider a few sentences from a biography of Byron, written when, not so long ago, the culture of Nazism was at its height. The author, a truly admirable English biographer, is making an estimate of the effort of the Romantic Movement upon our time. He concludes that the Romantic Movement failed. Well, we have all heard that before, and perhaps it is true, although I for one know less and less what it means. Indeed, I know less and less what is meant by the ascription of failure to any movement in literature. All movements fail, and perhaps the Romantic Movement failed more than most because it attempted more than most; possibly it attempted too much. To say that a literary movement failed seems to suggest a peculiar view of both literature and history; it implies that literature ought to settle something for good

and all, that life ought to be progressively completed. And according to our author, not only did the Romantic Movement fail—it left a terrible legacy.

> Nationalism was essentially a Romantic movement, and from nationalism springs the half-baked racial theorist with his romantic belief in the superiority of 'Aryan' blood and his romantic distrust of the use of reason. So far-reaching were the effects of the Romantic Revival that they still persist in shapes under which they are no longer recognized.... For Romantic literature appeals to that strain of anarchism which inhabits a dark corner of every human mind and is continually advancing the charms of extinction against the claims of life—the beauty of all that is fragmentary and youthful and half-formed as opposed to the compact achievement of adult genius.

It is of course easy enough to reduce the argument to absurdity —we have only to ask why Germany and not ourselves responded so fiercely to the romantic ideas which, if they be indeed the romantic ideas, were certainly available to everybody. The failure of logic is not however what concerns us, but rather what the logic is intended to serve: the belief that ideas generate events, that they have an autonomous existence, and that they can seize upon the minds of some men and control their actions independently of circumstance and will.

Needless to say, these violations of historical principle require a violation of historical fact. The Schopenhauer and the Nietzsche of the first explanation have no real reference to two nineteenth-century philosophers of the same names; the Plato is imaginary, the Athens out of a storybook, and no attempt is made to reconcile this fanciful Athens with the opinion of the real Athens held by the real Plato. As for the second explanation, how are we to connect anarchism, and hostility to the claims of life, and the fragmentary, and the immature, and the half-formed, with Kant, or Goethe, or Wordsworth, or Beethoven, or Berlioz, or Delacroix? And how from these men, who *are* Romanticism, dare we derive

the iron rigidity and the desperate centralization which the New Order of the Nazis involved, or the systematic cruelty or the elaborate scientism with which the racial doctrine was implicated?

The two books to which I refer are of course themselves harmless and I don't wish to put upon them a weight which they should not properly be made to bear. But they do suggest something of the low estate into which history has fallen among our educated classes, and they are of a piece with the depreciation of the claims of history which a good many literary people nowadays make, a depreciation which has had the effect of leading young students of literature, particularly the more gifted ones, to incline more and more to resist historical consideration justifying themselves, as it is natural they should, by pointing to the dullness and deadness and falsifications which have resulted from the historical study of literature. Our resistance to history is no doubt ultimately to be accounted for by nothing less than the whole nature of our life today. It was said by Nietzsche—the real one, not the lay figure of cultural propaganda—that the historical sense was an actual faculty of the mind, 'a sixth sense,' and that the credit for the recognition of its status must go to the nineteenth century. What was uniquely esteemed by the nineteenth century is not likely to stand in high favour with us: our coldness to historical thought may in part be explained by our feeling that it is precisely the past that caused all our troubles, the nineteenth century being the most blameworthy of all the culpable centuries. Karl Marx, for whom history was indeed a sixth sense, expressed what has come to be the secret hope of our time, that man's life in politics, which is to say, man's life in history, shall come to an end. History, as we now understand it, envisions its own extinction—that is really what we nowadays mean by 'progress'—and with all the passion of a desire kept secret even from ourselves, we yearn to elect a way of life which shall be satisfactory once and for all, time without end, and we do not want to be reminded by the past of the considerable possibility that our present is but perpetuating mistakes and failures and instituting new troubles.

And yet, when we come to think about it, the chances are all in favour of our having to go on making our choices and so of

making our mistakes. History, in its meaning of a continuum of events, is not really likely to come to an end. There may therefore be some value in bringing explicitly to mind what part in culture is played by history in its other meaning of an ordering and understanding of the continuum of events. There is no one who is better able to inform us on this point than Nietzsche. We can perhaps listen to him with the more patience because he himself would have had considerable sympathy for our impatience with history, for although he thought that the historical sense brought certain virtues, making men 'unpretentious, unselfish, modest, brave, habituated to self-control and self-renunciation,' he also thought that it prevented them from having the ability to respond to the very highest and noblest developments of culture, making them suspicious of what is wholly completed and fully matured. This ambivalent view of the historical sense gives him a certain authority when he defines what the historical sense is and does. It is, he said, 'the capacity for divining quickly the order of the rank of the valuation according to which a people, a community, or an individual has lived.' In the case of a people or of a community, the valuations are those which are expressed not only by the gross institutional facts of their life, what Nietzsche called 'the operating forces,' but also and more significantly by their morals and manners, by their philosophy and art. And the historical sense, he goes on to say, is 'the "divining instinct" for the relationships of these valuations, for the relation of the valuations to the operating forces.' The historical sense, that is, is to be understood as the critical sense, as the sense which life uses to test itself. And since there never was a time when the instinct for divining—and 'quickly'!—the order of rank of cultural expressions was so much needed, our growing estrangement from history must be understood as the sign of our desperation.

Nietzsche's own capacity for quickly divining the order of rank of cultural things was, when he was at his best, more acute than that of any other man of his time or since. If we look for the explanation of his acuity, we find it in the fact that it never occurred to him to separate his historical sense from his sense of art. They were not two senses but one. And the merit of his definition of the

historical sense, especially when it is taken in conjunction with the example of himself, is that it speaks to the historian and to the student of art as if they were one person. To that person Nietzsche's definition prescribes that culture be studied and judged as life's continuous evaluation of itself, the evaluation being understood as never finding full expression in the 'operating forces' of a culture, but as never finding expression at all without reference to those gross, institutional facts.

FROM *HOW MANY CHILDREN HAD LADY MACBETH?*

L. C. KNIGHTS

I

SINCE EVERYONE who has written about Shakespeare probably imagines that he has 'treated him primarily as a poet,' some explanation is called for. How should we read Shakespeare?

We start with so many lines of verse on a printed page which we read as we should read any other poem. We have to elucidate the meaning (using Dr Richards's fourfold definition[1]) and to unravel ambiguities; we have to estimate the kind and quality of the imagery and determine the precise degree of evocation of particular figures; we have to allow full weight to each word, exploring its 'tentacular roots,' and to determine how it controls and is controlled by the rhythmic movement of the passage in which it occurs. In short, we have to decide exactly why the lines 'are so and not otherwise.'

As we read other factors come into play. The lines have a cumulative effect. 'Plot', aspects of 'character' and recurrent 'themes'—all 'precipitates from the memory'—help to determine our reaction at a given point. There is a constant reference backwards and forwards. But the work of detailed analysis continues to the last line of the last act. If the razor-edge of sensibility is blunted at any point we cannot claim to have read what Shakespeare wrote, however often our eyes may have travelled over the page. A play of Shakespeare's is a precise particular experience, a poem—and precision and particularity are exactly what is lacking in the greater part of Shakespeare criticism, criticism that deals with *Hamlet* or *Othello* in terms of abstractions that have nothing to do with the unique arrangement of words that constitutes these plays.

Obviously what is wanted to reinforce the case against the traditional methods is a detailed examination of a particular play. Unfortunately anything approaching a complete analysis is precluded

ed by the scope of the present essay. The following remarks on one play, *Macbeth,* are therefore, not offered as a final criticism of the play; they merely point to factors that criticism must take into account if it is to have any degree of relevance, and emphasize the kind of effect that is necessarily overlooked when we discuss a Shakespeare play in terms of characters 'copied from life,' or of 'Shakespeare's knowledge of the human heart.'

Even here there is a further reservation to be made. In all elucidation there is an element of crudity and distortion. 'The true generalization,' Mr Eliot reminds us, 'is not something superposed upon an accumulation of perceptions; the perceptions do not, in a really appreciative mind, accumulate as a mass, but form themselves as a structure; and criticism is the statement in language of this structure; it is a development of sensibility.'[2] Of course, the only full statement in language of this structure is in the exact words of the poem concerned; but what the critic can do is to aid 'the return to the work of art with improved perception and intensified, because more conscious, enjoyment.' He can help others to 'force the subject to expose itself,' he cannot fully expose it in his own criticism. And in so far as he paraphrases or 'explains the meaning' he must distort. The main difference between good and bad critics is that the good critic points to something that is actually contained in the work of art, whereas the bad critic points away from the work in question; he introduces extraneous elements into his appreciation—smudges the canvas with his own point. With this reservation I should like to call the following pages an essay in elucidation.

II

Macbeth is a statement of evil. I use the word 'statement' (unsatisfactory as it is) in order to stress those qualities that are 'non-dramatic,' if drama is defined according to the canons of William Archer or Dr Bradley. It also happens to be poetry, which means that the apprehension of the whole can only be obtained from a lively attention to the parts whether they have an immediate bearing on the main action or 'illustrative character,' or not. Two main themes, which can only be separated for the purpose of analysis, are blended in the play—the themes of the reversal of values and

of unnatural disorder. And closely related to each is a third theme, that of the deceitful appearance, and consequent doubt, uncertainty and confusion. All this is obscured by false assumptions about the category 'drama'; *Macbeth* has greater affinity with *The Waste Land* than with *The Doll's House*.[3]

Each theme is stated in the first act. The first scene, every word of which will bear the closest scrutiny, strikes one dominant chord :

> Faire is foule, and foule is faire,
> Hover through the fogge and filthie ayre.

It is worth remarking that 'Hurley-burley' implies more than 'the tumult of sedition or insurrection.' Both it and 'when the Battaile's lost, and wonne' suggest the kind of metaphysical pitch-and-toss that is about to be played with good and evil. At the same time we hear the undertone of uncertainty: the scene opens with a question, and the second line suggests a region where the elements are disintegrated as they never are in nature; thunder and lightning are disjoined, and offered as alternatives. We should notice also that the scene expresses the same movement as the play as a whole: the general crystallizes into the immediate particular ('Where the place'—'Upon the Heath.'—'There to meet with Macbeth') and then dissolves again into the general presentment of hideous gloom. All is done with the greatest speed, economy and precision.

The second scene is full of images of confusion. It is a general principle in the work of Shakespeare and many of his contemporaries that when A is made to describe X, a minor character or event, the description is not merely immediately applicable to X, it helps to determine the way in which our whole response shall develop. This is rather crudely recognized when we say that certain lines 'create the atmosphere' of the play. Shakespeare's power is seen in the way in which details of this kind develop, check, or provide a commentary upon the main interests that he has aroused.[4] In the present scene the description

> —Doubtful it stood,
> As two spent Swimmers, that doe cling together,
> And choake their Art—

applies not only to the battle but to the ambiguity of Macbeth's future fortunes. The impression conveyed is not only one of violence but of unnatural violence ('to bathe in reeking wounds') and of a kind of nightmare gigantism:

> Where the Norweyan Banners flowt the skie,
> And fanne our people cold.

(These lines alone should be sufficient answer to those who doubt the authenticity of the scene.) When Duncan says, 'What he hath lost, Noble Macbeth hath wonne,' we hear the echo,

> So from that Spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
> Discomfort swells,

—and this is not the only time the Captain's words can be applied in the course of the play. Nor is it fantastic to suppose that in the account of Macdonwald Shakespeare consciously provided a parallel with the Macbeth of the later acts when 'The multiplying Villanies of Nature swarme upon him.' After all, everybody has noticed the later parallel between Macbeth and Cawdor ('He was a Gentleman, on whom I built an absolute Trust').

A poem works by calling into play, directing, and integrating certain interests. If we really accept the suggestion, which then becomes revolutionary, that Macbeth is a poem, it is clear that the impulses aroused in Act I, scenes i and ii, are part of the whole response, even if they are not all immediately relevant to the fortunes of the protagonist. If these scenes are 'the botching work of an interpolator,' he botched to pretty good effect.

In Act I, scene iii, confusion is succeeded by uncertainty. The Witches

> looke not like th'Inhabitants o'th'Earth,
> And yet are on't.

Banquo asks Macbeth,

> Why doe you start, and seeme to feare
> Things that doe sound so faire?

He addresses the Witches,

> You should be women,
> And yet your Beards forbid me to interprete
> That you are so....
> ...i'th' name of truth

Are yet fantasticall, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye shew?

When they vanish, 'what seem'd corporall' melts 'as breath into the Winde.' The whole force of the uncertainty of the scene is gathered into Macbeth's soliloquy,

This supernaturall solliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good...

which with its sickening see-saw rhythm completes the impression of 'a phantasma, or a hideous dream.'[5] Macbeth's echoing of the Witches' 'Faire is foule' has often been commented upon.

In contrast to the preceding scenes, Act I, scene iv suggests that natural order which is shortly to be violated. It stresses: natural relationships—'children', 'servants', 'sons', and 'kinsmen'; honourable bonds and the political order—'liege', 'thanes' service', 'duty', 'loyalty', 'throne', 'state and 'honour'; and the human 'love' is linked to the natural order of organic growth by images of husbandry. Duncan says to Macbeth,

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing.

When he holds Banquo to his heart Banquo replies,

There if I grow,
The Harvest is your owne.

Duncan's last speech is worth particular notice,

...in his commendations, I am fed:
It is a Banquet to me.

At this point something should be said of what is meant by 'the natural order.' In *Macbeth* this comprehends both 'wild nature'—birds, beasts and reptiles—and humankind since 'humane statute purg'd the gentle Weale.' The specifically human aspect is related to the concept of propriety and degree:

Degrees in Schooles and Brother-hoods in Cities,
Peacefull Commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive, and due of byrth,
Prerogative of Age, Crownes, Scepters, Lawrels.

In short, it represents society in harmony with nature, bound by love and friendship, and ordered by law and duty. It is one of the main axes of reference by which we take our emotional bearings in

the play.

In the light of this the scene of Duncan's entry into the castle gains in significance. The critics have often remarked on the irony. What is not so frequently observed is that the key words of the scene are 'loved', 'wooingly', 'bed', 'procreant Cradle', 'breed, and haunt', all images of love and procreation, supernaturally sanctioned, for the associations of 'temple-haunting' colour the whole of the speeches of Banquo and Duncan.[6] We do violence to the play when we ignore Shakespeare's insistence on what may be called the 'holy supernatural' as opposed to the 'supernaturall solliciting' of the Witches. I shall return to this point. Meanwhile it is pertinent to remember that Duncan himself is 'The Lords anoynted Temple' (Act II, scene iii, 70).[7]

The murder is explicitly presented as unnatural. After the greeting of Ross and Angus, Macbeth's heart knocks at his ribs 'against the use of Nature.' Lady Macbeth fears his 'humane kindnesse;' she wishes herself 'unsexed,' that she may be troubled by 'no compunctious visitings of Nature,' and invokes the 'murth'ring Ministers' who 'wait on Natures Mischiefe.' The murder is committed when

> Nature seems dead, and wicked Dreams abuse
> The Curtain'd sleepe,

and it is accompanied by portents 'unnaturall, even like the deed that's done.' The sun remains obscured, and Duncan's horses 'Turn'd wilde in nature.' Besides these explicit references to the unnatural we notice the violence of the imagery:

> I have given Sucke, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the Babe that milkes me,
> I would, while it was smyling in my Face,
> Have pluckt my Nipple from his Bonelesse Gummes,
> And dasht the Braines out . . .

Not only are the feelings presented unnatural in this sense, they are also strange—peculiar compounds which cannot be classified by any of the usual labels—'fear', 'disgust', etc. Macbeth's words towards the end of Act II, scene i serve to illustrate this:

> Thou sowre [sure] and firme-set Earth
> Heare not my steps, which way they walke, for feare

Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now sutes with it.

The first three lines imply a recognition of the enormity of the crime; Macbeth asks that the earth ('sure and firme-set' contrasted with the disembodied 'Murder' which 'moves like a Ghost') shall not hear his steps, for if it does so the very stones will speak and betray him—thereby breaking the silence and so lessening the horror. 'Take' combines two constructions. On the one hand, 'for fear they take the present horror from the time' expresses attraction, identification with the appropriate setting of his crime. But 'take' is also an imperative, expressing anguish and repulsion. 'Which now sutes with it' implies an acceptance of the horror, willing or reluctant according to the two meanings of the previous line. The unusual sliding construction (unusual in ordinary verse, there are other examples in Shakespeare, and in Donne) expresses the unusual emotion which is only crudely analysed if we call it a mixture of repulsion and attraction fusing into 'horror'.

'Confusion now hath made his Master-peece,' and in the lull that follows the discovery of the murder, Ross and an Old Man, as chorus, echo the theme of unnatural disorder. The scene (and the Act) ends with a 'sentence' by the Old Man:

Gods benyson go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad, and Friends of Foes.

This, deliberately pronounced, has an odd ambiguous effect. The immediate reference is to Ross, who intends to make the best of a dubious business by accepting Macbeth as king. But Macduff also is destined to 'make good of bad' by destroying the evil. And an overtone of meaning takes our thoughts to Macbeth, whose attempt to make good of bad by restoring the natural order is the theme of the next movement; the tragedy lies in his inevitable failure.

A key is found in Macbeth's words spoken to the men hired to murder Banquo. When Dr Bradley is discussing the possibility that *Macbeth* has been abridged he remarks ('very aptly' according to the Arden editor), 'surely, anyone who wanted to cut the play down would have operated, say, on Macbeth's talk with Banquo's mur-

derers, or on Act III, scene vi, or on the very long dialogue of Malcolm and Macduff, instead of reducing the most exciting part of the drama.'[8] No, the speech to the murderers is not very 'exciting' —but its function should be obvious to anyone who is not blinded by Dr Bradley's preconceptions about 'drama'. By accepted canons it is an irrelevance; actually it stands as a symbol of the order that Macbeth wishes to restqre. In the catalogue,

> Hounds, and Greyhounds, Mungrels, Spaniels, Curres.
> Showghes, Water-Rugs, and Demy-Wolves

are merely 'dogs', but Macbeth names each one individually; and

> the valued file
> Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
> The House-keeper, the Hunter, every one
> According to the gift, which bounteous Nature
> Hath in him clos'd.

It is an image of order, each one in his degree. At the beginning of the scene, we remember, Macbeth had arranged 'a feast', a solemn supper', at which 'society' should be 'welcome'. And when alone he suggests the ancient harmonies by rejecting in idea the symbols of their contraries—'a fruitlesse Crowne', 'a barren Scepter', and an 'unlineall' succession. But this ney 'health' is 'sickly' whilst Banquo lives, and can only be made 'perfect' by his death. In an attempt to re-create an order based on murder, disorder makes fresh inroads. This is made explicit in the next scene. Here the snake, usually represented as the most venomous of creatures, stands for the natural order which Macbeth has 'scotched' but which will 'close and be her selfe.'

At this point in the play there is a characteristic confusion. At the end of Act III, scene ii, Macbeth says, 'Things bad begun, make strong themselves by ill,' that is, all that he can do is to ensure his physical security by a second crime, although earlier (Act III, scene i, 106-107) he had aimed at complete 'health' by the death of Banquo and Fleance, and later he says that the murder of Fleance would have made him

> perfect,
> Whole as the Marble, founded as the Rocke.
> (Act III, scene iv, 21-22)

The truth is only gradually disentangled from this illusion.

The situation is magnificently presented in the banquet scene. Here speech, action and symbolism combine. The stage direction '*Banquet prepar'd*' is the first pointer. In Shakespeare, as Mr Wilson Knight has remarked, banquets are almost invariably symbols of rejoicing, friendship and concord. Significantly, the nobles sit in due order.

MACBETH. You know your owne degrees, sit downe :
At first and last, the hearty welcome.
LORDS. Thankes to your Majesty.
MACBETH. Our selfe will mingle with Society,
And play the humble Host:
Our Hostesse keepes her State, but in best time
We will require her welcome.
LADY MACBETH. Pronounce it for me Sir, to all our Friends,
For my heart speakes, they are welcome.
Enter first Murderer.

There is no need for comment. In a sense the scene marks the climax of the play. One avenue has been explored; 'Society', 'Host', 'Hostess', 'Friends' and 'Welcome' repeat a theme which henceforward is heard only faintly until it is taken up in the final orchestration, when it appears as 'Honor, Love, Obedience, Troopes of Friends.' With the disappearance of the ghost, Macbeth may be 'a man againe', but he has, irretrievably,

displac'd the mirth,
Broke the good meeting, with most admir'd disorder.

The end of the scene is in direct contrast to its beginning.

Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once

echoes ironically, 'You know your owne degrees, sit downe.'

Before we attempt to disentangle the varied threads of the last Act, two more scenes call for particular comment. The first is the scene in Macduff's castle. Almost without exception the critics have stressed the pathos of young Macduff, his 'innocent prattle,' his likeness to Arthur, and so on—reactions appropriate to the work of Sir James Barrie which obscure the complex dramatic function of the scene.[10] In the first place, it echoes in different keys the theme

of the false appearance, of doubt and confusion. At its opening we are perplexed with questions: Is Macduff a traitor? If so, to whom, to Macbeth or to his wife? Was his flight due to wisdom or to fear? Ross says,

> But cruell are the times, when we are Traitors
> And do not know our selves: when we hold Rumor
> From what we feare, yet know not what we feare.

Lady Macduff says of her son,

> Father'd he is,
> And yet hee's Father-lesse.[11]

She teases him with riddles, and he replies with questions.

Secondly, the scene shows the spreading evil. As Fletcher has pointed out, Macduff and his wife are 'representatives of the interests of loyalty and domestic affection.' There is much more in the death of young Macduff than 'pathos'; the violation of the natural order is completed by the murder. But there is even more than this. That the tide is about to turn against Macbeth is suggested both by the rhythm and imagery of Ross's speech:

> But cruell are the times, when we are Traitors
> And do not know our selves: when we hold Rumor
> From what we feare, yet know not what we feare,
> But floate upon a wilde and violent Sea
> Each way, and move—[13]

The comma after 'way', the complete break after 'move', give the rhythm of a tide, pausing at the turn. And when Lady Macduff answers the Murderer's question, 'Where is your husband?'

> I hope in no place so unsanctified,
> Where such as thou may'st find him

we recall the association set up in Act III, scene vi, a scene of choric commentary upon Macduff's flight to England, to the 'Pious Edward,' 'the Holy King.'

Although the play moves swiftly, it does not move with a simple directness. Its complex subtleties include cross-currents, the ebb and flow of opposed thoughts and emotions. The scene in Macduff's castle, made up of doubts, riddles, paradoxes and uncertainties, ends with an affirmation, 'Thou ly'st thou shagge-ear'd Villaine.' But this is immediately followed, not by the downfall of Macbeth,

but by a long scene which takes up once more the theme of mistrust, disorder and evil.

The conversation between Macduff and Malcolm has never been adequately explained. We have already seen Dr Bradley's opinion of it. The Clarendon editors say, 'The poet no doubt felt this scene was needed to supplement the meagre parts assigned to Malcolm and Macduff.' If this were all, it might be omitted. Actually the Malcolm-Macduff dialogue has at least three functions. Obviously Macduff's audience with Malcolm and the final determination to invade Scotland help on the story, but this is of subordinate importance. It is clear also that Malcolm's suspicion and the long testing of Macduff emphasize the mistrust that has spread from the central evil of the play.[14] But the main purpose of the scene is obscured unless we realize its function as choric commentary. In alternating speeches the evil that Macbeth has caused is explicitly stated, without extenuation. And it is stated impersonally.

> Each new Morne,
> New Widdowes howle, new Orphans cry, new sorowes
> Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
> As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
> Like Syllable of Dolour.
>
> Our Country sinkes beneath the yoake,
> It weepes, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
> Is added to her wounds.
>
> Not in the Legions
> Of horrid Hell, can come a Divell more damn'd
> In evils, to top *Macbeth*
>
> I grant him Bloody,
> Luxurious, Avaricious, False, Deceitfull,
> Sodaine, Malicious, smacking of every sinne
> That has a name.

With this approach we see the relevance of Malcolm's self-accusation. He has ceased to be a person. His lines repeat and magnify the evils that have already been attributed to Macbeth, acting as

a mirror wherein the ills of Scotland are reflected. And the statement of evil is strengthened by contrast, with the opposite virtues. 'As Justice, Verity, Temp'rance, Stablenesse.'

There is no other way in which the scene can be read. And if dramatic fitness is not sufficient warrant for this approach, we can refer to the pointers that Shakespeare has provided. Macbeth is 'luxurious' and 'avaricious,' and the first sins mentioned by Malcolm in an expanded statement are lust and avarice. When he declares,

> Nay, had I power, I should
> Poure the sweet Milke of Concord, into Hell.
> Uprore the universall peace, confound
> All unity on earth,

we remember that this is what Macbeth has done.[15] Indeed Macduff is made to answer,

> These Evils thou repeat'st upon thy selfe,
> Hath banish'd me from Scotland.[16]

Up to this point at least the impersonal function of the speaker is predominant. And even when Malcolm, once more a person in a play, announces his innocence, it is impossible not to hear the impersonal overtone:

> For even now
> I put my selfe to thy Direction, and
> Unspeake mine owne detraction. Heere abjure
> The taints, and blames I laide upon my selfe,
> For strangers to to my Nature.

He speaks for Scotland, and for the forces of order. The 'scotch'd Snake' will 'close, and be herselfe.'

There are only two alternatives; either Shakespeare was a bad dramatist, or his critics have been badly misled by mistaking the *dramatis personae* for real persons in this scene. Unless of course the ubiquitous Interpolator has been at work upon it.

I have called Macbeth a statement of evil; but it is a statement not of a philosophy but of ordered emotion. This ordering is of course a continuous process (hence the importance of the scrupulous analysis of each line), it is not merely something that happens

in the last Act corresponding to the dénouement or unravelling of the plot. All the same, the interests aroused are heightened in the last Act before they are finally 'placed,' and we are given a vantage point from which the whole course of the drama may be surveyed in retrospect. There is no formula that will describe this final effect. It is no use saying that we are 'quietened,' 'purged' or 'exalted' at the end of *Macbeth* or of any other tragedy. It is no use taking one step nearer the play and saying we are purged, etc., because we see the downfall of a wicked man or because we realize the justice of Macbeth's doom whilst retaining enough sympathy for him or admiration of his potential qualities to be filled with a sense of 'waste.' It is no use discussing the effect in abstract terms at all; we can only discuss it in terms of the poet's concrete realization of certain emotions and attitudes.

At this point it is necessary to return to what I have already said about the importance of images of grace and of the holy supernatural in the play. For the last hundred years or so the critics have not only sentimentalized Macbeth—ignoring the completeness with which Shakespeare shows his final identification with evil—but they have slurred the passages in which the positive good is presented by means of religious symbols. In Act III the banquet scene is immediately[17] followed by a scene in which Lennox and another Lord (both completely impersonal) discuss the situation; the last half of their dialogue is of particular importance. The verse has none of the power of, say, Macbeth's soliloquies; but it would be a mistake to call it undistinguished; it is serenely harmonious, and its tranquillity contrasts with the turbulence of the scenes that immediately precede it and follow it, as its images of grace contrast with their 'toile and trouble.' Macduff has fled to 'the Pious Edward'. 'the Holy King', who has received Malcolm 'with such grace.' Lennox prays for the aid of 'some holy Angell,'

> that a swift blessing
> May soone returne to this our suffering Country,
> Under a hand accurs'd.

and the 'other Lord' answers, 'Ile send my Prayers with him.' Many of the phrases are general and abstract—'grace', 'the malevolence of Fortune', 'his high respect'—but one passage has an in-

dividual particularity that gives it prominence:

> That by the helpe of these (with him above
> To ratifie the Worke) we may againe
> Give to our Tables meate, sleepe to our Nights:
> Free from our Feasts, and Banquets bloody knives;
> Do faithful Homage, and receive free Honors,
> All which we pine for now.

Food and sleep, society and the political order are here, as before, represented as supernaturally sanctioned. I have suggested that this passage is recalled for a moment in Lady Macduff's answer to the Murderer (Act IV, scene ii, 80), and it is certainly this theme which is taken up when the Doctor enters the Malcolm-Macduff dialogue in Act IV, scene iii; the reference to the King's Evil may be a compliment to King James, but it is not merely that. We have only to remember that the unseen Edward stands for the powers that are to prove 'the Med'cine of the sickly Weale' of Scotland to see the double meaning in

> there are a crew of wretched Soules
> That stay his cure....

Their disease 'is called the Evill.' The 'myraculous worke', the 'holy Prayers', 'the healing Benediction', Edward's 'vertue', the 'sundry Blessings... that speake him full of Grace' are reminders not only of the evil against which Malcolm its seeking support; but of the positive qualities against which the evil and disorder must be measured. Scattered notes ('Gracious England', 'Christendome', 'heaven', 'gentle Heavens') remind us of the theme until the end of the scene, when we know that Macbeth (the 'Hell-Kite', 'this Fiend of Scotland')

> Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
> Put on their Instruments.

The words quoted are not mere formalities; they have a positive function, and help to determine the way in which we shall respond to the final scenes.

The description of the King's Evil (Act IV, scene iii, 141–159) has a particular relevance; it is directly connected with the disease metaphors of the Act;[18] and these are strengthened by combining within themselves the ideas of disorder and of the unnatural

which run throughout the play. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking is a 'slumbry agitation,' and 'a great perturbation in Nature.' Some say Macbeth is 'mad.' We hear of his 'distemper'd cause,' and of his pester'd senses' which

> recoyle and start,
> When all that is within him, do's condemne
> It selfe, for being there.

In the play general impressions are pointed by reference to the individual and particular (cf. Act IV, scene iii, where 'the general cause' is given precision by the 'Fee-griefe due to some single breast'); whilst at the same time particular impressions are reflected and magnified. Not only Macbeth and his wife but the whole land is sick. Caithness says,

> Meet we the Med'cine of the sickly Weale,
> And with him poure we in our Countries purge,
> Each drop of us.

And Lennox replies,

> Or so much as it needs,
> To dew the Soveraigne Flower, and drowne the Weeds.
> (Act v, scene ii, 27–30)

—an admirable example, by the way, of the kind of fusion already referred to, since we have not only the weed–flower opposition, but a continuation of the medical metaphor in 'Soveraigne,' which means both 'royal' and 'powerfully remedial.' And the images of health and disease are clearly related to moral good and evil. The Doctor says of Lady Macbeth,

> More needs she the Divine, than the Physitian:
> God, God forgive us all.

Macbeth asks him,

> Can'st thou not Minister to a minde diseas'd,
> Plucke from the Memory a rooted Sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the Braine,
> And with some sweet Oblivious Antidote
> Cleanse the stufft bosome, of that perillous stuffe
> Which weighes upon the heart?

There is terrible irony in his reply to the Doctor's 'Therein the patient must minister to himselfe:' 'Throw Physicke to the Dogs,

lle none of it.'

We have already noticed the association of the ideas of disease and of the unnatural in these final scenes:

> unnatural deeds
> Do breed unnatural troubles,

and there is propriety in Macbeth's highly charged metaphor,

> My way of life
> Is falne into the Seare, the yellow Leafe.

But the unnatural has now another part to play, in the peculiar 'reversal' that takes place at the end of *Macbeth*. Hitherto the agent of the unnatural has been Macbeth. Now it is Malcolm who commands Birnam Wood to move, it is 'the good Macduff' who reveals his unnatural birth, and the opponents of Macbeth whose 'deere causes' would 'excite the mortified man.' Hitherto Macbeth has been the deceiver, 'mocking the time with fairest show;' now Malcolm orders,

> Let every Souldier hew him downe a Bough,
> And bear't before him, thereby shall we shadow
> The numbers of our Hoast, and make discovery
> Erre in report of us.

Our first reaction is to make such remarks as 'Nature becomes unnatural in order to rid itself of Macbeth.' But this is clearly inadequate; we have to translate it and define our impressions in terms of our response to the play at this point. By associating with the opponents of evil the ideas of deceit and of the unnatural, previously associated solely with Macbeth and the embodiments of evil, Shakespeare emphasizes the disorder and at the same time frees our minds from the burden of the horror. After all, the movement of Birnam Wood and Macduff's unnatural birth have a simple enough explanation.

There is a parallel here with the disorder of the last Act. It begins with Lady Macbeth sleep-walking—a 'slumbry agitation'—and the remaining scenes are concerned with marches, stratagems, fighting, suicide, and death in battle. If we merely read the play we are liable to overlook the importance of the sights and sounds which are obvious on the stage. The frequent stage directions should be observed—*Drum and Colours, Enter Malcolm... and*

Soldiers Marching, A Cry within of Women—and there are continuous directions *for Alarums, Flourishes,* and fighting. Macduff orders.

> Make all our Trumpets speak, give them all breath,
> Those clamorous Harbingers of Blood, and Death,

and he traces Macbeth by the noise of fighting:

> That way the noise is: Tyrant shew thy face.
> ...There thou shoud'st be,
> By this great clatter, one of greatest note
> Seemes bruited.

There are other suggestions of disorder throughout the Act. Macbeth

> Cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
> Within the belt of Rule.

He orders, 'Come, put mine Armour on,' and almost in the same breath, 'Pull't off I say.' His 'Royal Preparation' is a noisy confusion. He wishes 'th' estate o' th' world were now undon,' though the tone is changed now since he bade the Witches answer him,

> Though bladed Corne be lodg'd and Trees blown downe,
> Though Castles topple on their Warders heads:
> Though Pallaces, and Pyramids do slope
> Their heads to their Foundations.

But all this disorder has now a positive tendency, towards the good which Macbeth had attempted to destroy, and which he names as 'Honor, Love, Obedience, Troopes of Friends.' At the beginning of the battle Malcolm says,

> Cosins, I hope the dayes are neere at hand
> That Chambers will be safe,

and Menteith answers, 'We doubt it nothing.' Siward takes up the theme of certainty as opposed to doubt:

> Thoughts speculative, their unsure hopes relate,
> But certaine issue, stroakes must arbitrate,
> Towards which, advance the warre.

And doubt and illusion are finally dispelled:

> Now neere enough:
> Your leavy Skreenes throw downe,

And shew like those you are.

By now there should be no danger of our misinterpreting the greatest of Macbeth's final speeches.

> To-morrow and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creepes in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of Recorded time.
> And all our yesterdays, have lighted Fooles
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, breefe Candle.
> Life's but a walking Shadow, a poore Player,
> That struts and frets his houre upon the Stage,
> And then is heard no more. It is a Tale
> Told by an Ideot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing.

The theme of the false appearance is revived—with a difference. It is not only that Macbeth sees life as deceitful, but the poetry is so fine that we are almost bullied into accepting an essential ambiguity in the final statement of the play, as though Shakespeare were expressing his own 'philosophy' in the lines. But the lines are 'placed' by the tendency of the last Act (order emerging from disorder, truth emerging from behind deceit), culminating in the recognition of the Witches' equivocation ('And be these Jugling Fiends no more believ'd . . .'), the death of Macbeth, and the last words of Siward, Macduff and Malcolm (Act v, scene vii, 65–105).

This tendency has behind it the whole weight of the positive values which Shakespeare has already established, and which are evoked in Macbeth's speech—

> My way of life
> Is falne into the seare, the yellow Leafe,
> And that which should accompany Old-Age,
> As Honor, Love, Obedience, Troopes of Friends,
> I must not looke to have: but in their stead,
> Curses, not lowd but deepe, Mouth-honor, breath,
> Which the poore heart would faine deny, and dare not.

Dr Bradley claims, on the strength of this and the 'To-morrow, and to-morrow' speech, that Macbeth's 'ruin is never complete. To the end he never totally loses our sympathy. . . . In the very depths a gleam of his native love of goodness, and with it a tinge of tragic grandeur, rests upon him.' But to concentrate attention thus on the *personal* implications of these lines is to obscure the fact that they have an even more important function as the keystone of the system of values that gives emotional coherence to the play. Certainly those values are likely to remain obscured if we concentrate our attention upon 'the two great terrible figures, who dwarf all the remaining characters of the drama,' if we ignore the 'unexciting' or 'undramatic' scenes, or if conventional 'sympathy for the hero' is allowed to distort the pattern of the whole.

I must repeat that I have no illusions about the adequacy of these remarks as criticism; they are merely pointers. But if we follow them our criticism at least will not be deflected by too great a stress upon 'personality,' into inquiries into 'latent motives and policies not avowed,' or into pseudo-critical investigations that are only slightly parodied by the title of this essay.

NOTES

1 *Practical Criticism*, pp. 181-3.

2 *The Sacred Wood* (second edition, 1928), p. 15; see also p. 11, op cit., and *Selected Essays*, p. 205.

3 See the Arden Edition, p. xxii: 'The scenes [Act IV, scenes ii and iii] seem to have been composed with evident effort, as if Shakespeare felt the necessity of stretching out his material to the ordinary length of a five-act tragedy, and found lack of *dramatic* material, which was certainly wanting in his authority, Holinshed. Hence his introduction in Act V of the famous "sleep-walking scene" . . . and the magnificently *irrelevant* soliloquies of the great protagonist himself.' The italics are mine. There is something wrong with a conception of 'the dramatic' that leads a critic to speak of Macbeth's final soliloquies as 'irrelevant' even though 'magnificent'. I deal with the dramatic function of Act IV, scene ii and Act IV, scene iii below.

4 Cf. Coleridge, *Lectures on Shakespeare, etc.* (Bohn edition), p. 406: 'Massinger is like a Flemish painter, in whose delineations objects appear as they do in nature, have the same force and truth, and

produce the same effect upon the spectator. But Shakespeare is beyond this;—he always by metaphors and figures involves in the thing considered a universe of past and possible experience.'

5 The parallel with *Julius Caesar*, Act II, scene i, 63–9 is worth notice.

> Between the acting of a dreadfull thing,
> And the first motion, all the Interim is
> Like a Phantasma, or a hideous Dreame ...

Macbeth speaks of 'the Interim', and his 'single state of Man' echoes Brutus'

> The state of man,
> Like to a little Kingdome, suffers then
> The nature of an Insurrection.

The rhythm of Macbeth's speech is repeated in Lady Macbeth's

> What thou would'st highly,
> That would'st thou holily, etc.

6 See F. R. Leavis, *How to Teach Reading* (now reprinted as an appendix to *Education and the University*), for a more detailed analysis of these lines.

7 Later, Macduff says to Malcolm:

> Thy Royall Father
> Was a most Sainted King
>
> (Act IV, scene iii, 108)

8 *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 469. *Macbeth, Arden Edition*, pp. xxi-ii. I discuss the importance of Act III, scene vi, and of the Malcolm-Macduff dialogue later, pp. 38-42.

9 The murder of Banquo, like the murder of Duncan, is presented as a violation of natural continuity and natural order. Macbeth will 'cancell and teare to pieces that great Bond' which keeps him pale. 'Bond' has a more than general significance. The line is clearly associated with Lady Macbeth's 'But in them, Natures Coppie's not eterne,' and the full force of the words is only brought out if we remember that when Shakespeare wrote them, copyholders formed numerically the largest landholding class in England whose appeal was always to 'immemorial antiquity' and 'times beyond the memory of man.' The Macbeth-Banquo opposition is emphasized when we learn that Banquo's line will 'stretch out to the cracke of Doome' (Act IV, scene i, 117). Macbeth is cut off from the natural sequence, 'He has no children' (Act IV, scene iii, 217), he is a 'Monster' (Act V, scene vii, 54). Macbeth's isolation is fully brought out in the last act.

10 Dr Bradley says of this and the following scene: 'They have a technical value in helping to give the last stage of the action the form of a conflict between Macbeth and Macduff. But their chief function is of another kind. It is to touch the heart with a sense

of beauty and pathos, to open the springs of love and of tears.'—*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 391, see also p. 394.

11 Compare the equivocation about Macduff's birth.

12 Quoted by Furness, p. 218. The whole passage from Fletcher is worth attention.

13 The substitution of a dash for the full stop after 'move' is the only alteration that seems necessary in the Folio text. The other emendations of various editors ruin both the rhythm and the idiom. Ross is in a hurry and breaks off; he begins the next line, 'Shall not be long', omitting 'I' or 'it'—which some editors needlessly restore. In the Folio a colon is used to indicate the breaking offs of a sentence in Act, v, scene iii, 20.

14 As an example of the slight strands that are gathered into the pattern of the play, consider the function of the Third Murderer in Act III scene iii. It seems that Macbeth has sent him 'to make security doubly sure.' Only after some doubt do the first two decide that the third 'needs not our mistrust.'

15 For a more specific reference see Act IV, scene i, 50–61:

> Though the treasure
> Of Nature Germaine tumble altogether,
> Even till destruction sicken . . .

16 'Hath' is third person plural. See Abbott, *Shakespearian Grammar*, p. 334. I admit the lines are ambiguous but they certainly bear the interpretation I have given them. Indeed most editors print, 'upon thyself Have banished . . .'

17 If we omit Act III, scene v, where for once the editors' 'spurious' may be allowed to stand. I thought at first that Shakespeare intended to portray the Witches at this point as rather shoddy creatures, thereby intensifying the general irony. Certainly the rhythm of Hecate's speech is banal—but so is the obvious rhythm of *Sweeney Agonistes*, and it does provide a contrast with the harmony of the verse in the next scene. Certainly also Shakespeare did not intend to portray the Witches as in any way 'dignified' ('Dignified, impressive, sexless beings, ministers of fate and the supernatural powers . . . existing in the elemental poetry of wind and storm'—*Macbeth*, Arden edition, p. xlii). But the verse is too crude to serve even this purpose.

18 The original audience would be helped to make the connection if, as is likely, the Doctor of Act IV, scene iii and the Doctor of Act V were played by the same actor, probably without any change of dress. We are not meant to think of two Doctors in the play (Dr A of Harley Street and Dr B of Edinburgh) but simply, in each case, of 'a doctor'.

19 Macbeth himself says:

> If thou could'st Doctor, cast
> The Water of my Land, finde her Disease,

> And purge it to a sound and pristine Health,
> I would applaud thee to the very Eccho.

And he continues:

> What Rubarb, Senna, or what Purgative drugge
> would scowre these English hence?
>
> (Act v, scene iii, 50–6)

The characteristic reversal (the English forces being represented as an impurity which has to be 'scoured') need not surprise us since Macbeth is the speaker.

MARVELL'S GARDEN

WILLIAM EMPSON

THE CHIEF POINT of the poem is to contrast and reconcile conscious and unconscious states, intuitive and intellectual modes of apprehension; and yet that distinction is never made, perhaps could not have been made; his thought is implied by his metaphors. There is something very Far-Eastern about this; I was set to work on the poem by Dr Richards's recent discussion of a philosophical argument in Mencius. The Oxford edition notes bring out a crucial double meaning (so that this at least is not my own fancy) in the most analytical statement of the poem, about the mind—

> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade.

'Either "reducing the whole material world to nothing material, i.e. to a green thought," or "considering the material world as of no value compared to a green thought", ' either contemplating everything or shutting everything out. This combines the idea of the conscious mind, including everything because understanding it, and that of the unconscious animal nature, including everything because in harmony with it. Evidently the object of such a fundamental contradiction (seen in the etymology: turning all *ad nihil, to* nothing, and *to* a thought) is to deny its reality; the point is not that these two are essentially different but that they must cease to be different so far as either is to be known. So far as he has achieved his state of ecstasy he combines them, he is 'neither conscious nor not conscious,' like the seventh Buddhist state of enlightenment. This gives its point, I think, to the other ambiguity, clear from the context, as to whether the *all* considered was *made* in the mind of the author or the Creator; to so peculiarly 'creative' a knower there is little difference between the two. Here as usual with 'profound' remarks the strength of the thing is to combine unusually intellectual with unusually primitive ideas; thought about the conditions of knowledge with a magical idea that the adept controls the ex-

ternal world by thought.

The vehemence of the couplet, and this hint of physical power in thought itself (in the same way as the next line gives it colour), may hint at an idea that one would like to feel was present, as otherwise it is the only main idea about Nature that the poem leaves out; that of the *Hymn to David* and *The Ancient Mariner*, the Orpheus idea, that by delight in Nature when terrible man gains strength to control it. This grand theme too has a root in magic; it is an important version of the idea of the man powerful because he has included everything in himself, is still strong, one would think, among the mountain climbers and often the scientists, and deserves a few examples here. I call it the idea of the *Hymn to David*, though being hidden behind the religious one it is nowhere overtly stated, except perhaps in the line

> Praise above all, for praise prevails.

David is a case of Orpheus-like behaviour because his music restrained the madness of Saul.

> His furious foes no more maligned
> When he such melody divined,
> And sense and soul detained;

By *divining*—intuiting—the harmony behind the universe he 'makes it divine,' rather as to discover a law of nature is to 'give nature laws,' and this restrains the madman who embodies the unruled forces of nature from killing him. The main argument of the verses describing nature (or nature as described by David) is that the violence of Nature is an expression of her adoration of God. and therefore that the man of prayer who also adores God delights in it and can control it.

> Strong the gier eagle on his sail;
> Strong against tide, th' enormous whale
> Emerges, as he goes.
>
> But stronger still, in earth or air

Or in the sea, the man of prayer,
And far beneath the tide.

The feeling is chiefly carried by the sound; long Latin words are packed into the short lines against a short one-syllable rhyming word full of consonants; it is like dancing in heavy skirts; he juggles with the whole cumbrous complexity of the world. The *Mariner* makes a more conscious and direct use of the theme, but in some degree runs away from it at the end. The reason it was a magical crime for a sailor to kill the albatross is that it both occurs among terrible scenes of Nature and symbolizes man's power to extract life from them, so ought doubly to be delighted in. So long as the Mariner is horrified by the creatures of the calm he is their slave; he is set free to act, in the supreme verses of the poem as soon as he delights in them. The final moral is

He prayeth best, that loveth best
All things both great and small

But that copybook maxim is fine only if you can hold it firmly together with such verses as this, which Coleridge later omitted:

The very deeps did rot; oh Christ
That such a thing could be;
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

And it was these creatures, as he insisted in the margin by giving the same name to both, that the Mariner blessed unaware when he discovered their beauty. This is what Coleridge meant by alternately saying that the poem has too much of the moral and too little; knowing what the conventional phrases of modern Christianity ought to mean he thought he could shift to a conventional moral that needs to be based upon the real one. Byron's nature-poetry gives more obvious examples of the theme; he likes to compare a storm on the Jura or what not to a woman whom, we are to feel, only Byron could dominate. Poe was startled and liberated by

it into a symbol of his own achievement; the sailor in *The Maelstrom* is so horrified as to be frozen, through a trick of neurosis, into idle curiosity, and this becomes a scientific interest in the portent which shows him the way to escape from it.

Nature when terrible is no theme of Marvell's, and he gets this note of triumph rather from using nature when peaceful to control the world of man.

> How safe, methinks, and strong, behind
> These Trees have I encamp'd my Mind;
> Where Beauty, aiming at the Heart,
> Bends in some Tree its useless Dart;
> And where the World no certain Shot
> Can make, or me it toucheth not.
> But I on it securely play,
> And gaul its Horsemen all the Day.
>
> (*Upon Appleton House*, 601–8)

The masculine energy of the last couplet is balanced immediately by an acceptance of Nature more masochist than passive, in which he becomes Christ with both the nails and the thorns.

> Bind me ye *Woodbines* in your 'twines,
> Curle me about ye gadding *Vines*,
> And Oh so close your Circles lace,
> That I may never leave this Place;
> But lest your Fetters prove too weak,
> Ere I your Silken Bondage break,
> Do you, O Brambles, chain me too,
> And courteous *Briars* nail me through.
>
> (*Upon Appleton House*, 609–16)

He does not deify himself more actively, and in any case the theme of the *Garden* is a *repose*.

> How vainly men themselves amaze
> To win the Palm, or Oke, or Bayes;

And their uncessant Labours see
Crown'd from some single Herb or Tree.
Whose short and narrow verged Shade
Does prudently their Toyles upbraid;
While all Flow'rs and all Trees do close
To weave the Garlands of repose.

This first verse comes nearest to stating what seems the essential distinction, with that between powers inherent and power worked out in practice, being a general and feeling one could be; in this ideal case, so the wit of the thing claims, the power to have been a general is already satisfied in the garden. 'Unemployment' is too painful and normal even in the fullest life for such a theme to be trivial. But self-knowledge is possible in such a state so far as the unruly impulses are digested, ordered, made transparent, not by their being known at the time, as unruly. Consciousness no longer makes an important distinction; the impulses, since they must be balanced already, neither need it to put them right nor are put wrong by the way it forces across their boundaries. They let themselves be known because they are not altered by being known, because their principle of indeterminacy no longer acts. This idea is important for all the versions of pastoral, for the pastoral figure is always ready to be the critic; he not only includes everything but may in some unexpected way know it.

Another range of his knowledge might be mentioned here. I am not sure what arrangement of flowerbeds is described in the last verse, but it seems clear that the sun goes through the 'zodiac' of flowers in one day, and that the bees too, in going from one bed to another, reminding us of the labours of the first verse, pass all summer in a day. They compute their time as well as we in that though their lives are shorter they too contract all experience into it. and this makes the poet watch over large periods of time as well as space. So far he becomes Nature, he becomes permanent. It is a graceful finale to the all-in-one theme, but not, I think, very important; the crisis of the poem is in the middle.

Once you accept the Oxford ediition's note you may as well apply it to the whole verse.

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other Seas,
Annihilating...

From pleasure less. Either 'from the lessening of pleasure'—'we are quiet in the country, but our dullness gives a sober and self-knowing happiness, more intellectual than that of the overstimulated pleasures of the town' or 'made less by this pleasure'—'The pleasures of the country give a repose and intellectual release which make my mind less worrying and introspective.' This is the same puzzle as to the consciousness of the thought; the ambiguity gives two meanings to pleasure, corresponding to his Puritan ambivalence about it, and to the opposition between pleasure and happiness. *Happiness*, again names a conscious state and yet involves the idea of things falling right, happening so, not being ordered by an anxiety of the conscious reason. (So that as a rule it is a weak word; it is by seeming to look at it hard and bring out its implications that the verse here makes it act as a strong one.)

The same doubt gives all their grandeur to the next lines. The sea if calm reflects everything near it; the mind as knower is a conscious mirror. Somewhere in the sea are sea-lions and horses and everything else, though they are different from land ones; the unconsciousness is unplumbed and pathless, and there is no instinct so strange among the beasts that it lacks its fantastic echo in the mind. In the first version thoughts are shadows, in the second (like the *green thought*) they are as solid as what they image; and yet they still correspond to something in the outer world, so that the poet's intuition is comparable to pure knowledge. This metaphor may reflect back so that *withdraws* means the tide going down; the *mind* is *less* now, but will return, and it is now that one can see the rock-pools. On the Freudian view of an Ocean, *withdraws* would make this repose in Nature a return to the womb; anyway it may mean either 'withdraws into self-contemplation' or 'withdraws al-

together, into its mysterious processes of digestion.' *Streight* may mean 'packed together,' in the microcosm, or 'at once'; the beasts see their reflection (perhaps the rootidea of the metaphor) as soon as they look for it; the calm of Nature gives the poet an immediate self-knowledge. But we have already had two entrancingly witty verses about the sublimation of sexual desires into a taste for Nature (I should not say that this theme was the main emotional drive behind the poem, but it takes up a large part of its overt thought), and the *kinds* look for their *resemblance*, in practice, out of a desire for creation; in the mind, at this fertile time for the poet, they can *find* it 'at once,' being 'packed together'. The transition from the beast and its reflection to the two pairing beasts implies a transition from the correspondences of thought with fact to those of thought with thought, to find which is to be creative; there is necessarily here a suggestion of rising from one 'level' or thought to another; and in the next couplet not only does the mind transcend the world it mirrors, but a sea to which it is parallel, transcends both land and sea too, which implies self-consciousness and all the antinomies of philosophy. Whether or not you give *transcendent* the technical sense 'predicable of all categories' makes no great difference; in including everything in itself the mind includes as a detail itself and all its inclusions. And it is true that the sea reflects the *other worlds* of the stars; Donne's metaphor of the globe is in the background. Yet even here the double meaning is not lost; all land-beasts have their sea-beasts, but the sea also has the kraken; in the depths as well as the transcendence of the mind are things stranger than all the kinds of the world.

Miss M. C. Bradbrook has pointed out to me that the next verse, while less triumphant, gives the process a more firmly religious interpretation.

> Here at the Fuontains sliding foot,
> Or by some Fruit-trees mossy root,
> Casting the Bodies Vest aside,
> My soul into the boughs does glide;
> There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
> Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;

> And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
> Waves in its Plumes the various Light.

The bird is the dove of the Holy Spirit and carries a suggestion of the rainbow of the covenant. By becoming inherent in everything he becomes a soul not pantheist but clearly above and apart from the world even while still living in it. Yet the paradoxes are still firmly maintained here, and the soul is as solid as the green thought. The next verse returns naturally to the jokes in favour of solitude against women.

Green takes on great weight here, as Miss Sackville-West pointed out, because it has been a pet word of Marvell's before. To list the uses before the satires may seem an affectation of pedantry, but shows how often the word was used; and they are pleasant things to look up. In the Oxford text: pages 12, l.23; 17, l.18; 25, l.11; 27, l.4; 38, l.3; 45, l.3; 46, l.25; 48, l.18; 49, l.48; 70, l.376; 71, l.390; 74, l.510; 122, l.2. Less rich uses: 15, l.18; 21, l.44; 30, l.55; 42, l.14; 69, l.339; 74, ll.484, 496; 78, l.628; 85, l.82; 89, l.94; 108, l.196. It is connected here with grass, buds, children, an as yet virginal prospect of sexuality, and the peasant stock from which the great families emerge. The 'unfathomable' grass makes the soil fertile and shows it to be so; it is the humble, permanent, undeveloped nature which sustains everything, and to which everything must return. No doubt D. H. Lawrence was right when he spoke up for *Leaves of Grass* against Whitman and said they felt themselves to be very aristocratic, but that too is eminently a pastoral fancy. Children are connected with this both as buds, and because of their contact with Nature (as in Wordsworth), and unique fitness for Heaven (as in the Gospels).

> The tawny mowers enter next,
> Who seem like Israelites to be,
> Walking on foot through a green sea. . . .
>
> (*Upon Appleton House*, 388–90)

connects greenness with oceans and gives it a magical security:

> And in the greenness of the grass

Did see my hopes as in a glass...
(*The Mower's Song*)

connects greenness with mirrors and the partial knowledge of the mind. The complex of ideas he concentrates into this passage in fact, had been worked out already, and in a context that shows how firmly these ideas about Nature were connected with direct pastoral. The poem indeed comes immediately after a pastoral series about the mower of grass.

I am the Mower Damon, known
Through all the Meadows I have mown;
On me the Morn her dew distills
Before her darling Daffodils.
(*Damon the Mower*, 41–4)

In these meadows he feels he has left his mark on a great territory, if not on everything, and as a typical figure he has mown all the meadows of the world; in either case Nature gives him regal and magical honours, and I suppose he is not only the ruler but the executioner of the daffodils—the Clown as Death.

Only for him no Cure is found,
Whom Juliana's Eyes do wound.
'Tis death alone that this must do:
For Death thou art a Mower too.
(*Damon the Mower*, 85–8)

He provides indeed more conscious and comic mixtures of heroic and pastoral:

every Mower's wholesome heat
Smelled like an Alexander's sweat.
(*Upon Appleton House*, 427–8)

It is his grand attack on gardens which introduces both the con-

nection through wit between the love of woman and of nature, which is handled so firmly in the *Garden*:

> No white nor red was ever seen
> So am'rous as this lovely green:

—and the belief that the fruitful attitude to Nature is the passive one:

> His [the gardener's] green *Seraglio* has its
> Eunuchs too;
> Lest any Tyrant him outdoe.
> And in the Cherry he does Nature vex,
> To procreate without a Sex.
> 'Tis all enforced; the Fountain and the Grot;
> While the sweet Fields do lye forgot;
> Where willing Nature does to all dispence
> A wild and fragrant Innocence:
> And *Fauns* and *Faryes* do the Meadows till,
> More by their presence than their skill.
> (*The Mower against Gardens*)

It is Marvell himself who tills the Garden by these magical and contemplative powers.

Grass indeed comes to be taken for granted as the symbol of pastoral humility:

> Unhappy Birds! what does it boot
> To build below the Grasses' Root;
> When Lowness is unsafe as Hight,
> And Chance o'ertakes what scapeth Spight?

It is a humility of Nature from which she is still higher than man, so that the grasshoppers preach to him from their pinnacles:

> And now to the Abyss I pass
> Of that unfathomable Grass,
> Where men like Grashoppers appear,
> But Grashoppers are Gyants there;

They, in their squeking Laugh, contemn
Us as we walk more low than them:
And, from the Precipices tall
Of the green spire's, to us do call.
(*Upon Appleton House*, 369–76)

it seems also to be an obscure merit of grass that it produces 'hay,' which was the name of a country dance, so that the humility is gaiety.

With this the golden fleece I shear
Of all these Closes ev'ry Year,
And though in Wool more poor than they,
Yet I am richer far in Hay.
(*Damon the Mower*, 53–6)

To nineteenth-century taste the only really poetical verse of the poem is the central fifth of the nine; I have been discussing the sixth whose dramatic position is an illustration of its very penetrating theory. The first four are a crescendo of wit, on the themes 'success or failure is not important, only the repose that follows the exercise of one's powers' and 'women, I am pleased to say, are no longer interesting to me, because nature is more beautiful.' One effect of the wit is to admit, and so make charming, the impertinence of the second of these, which indeed the first puts in its place; it is only for a time, and after effort among human beings, that he can enjoy solitude. The value of these moments made it fitting to pretend they were eternal; and yet the lightness of his expression of their sense of power is more intelligent, and so more convincing, than Wordsworth's solemnity on the same theme, because it does not forget the opposing forces.

When we have run our Passions heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The *Gods*, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a Tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted *Daphne* so,
Only that she might Laurel grow,

And *Pan* did after *Syrinx* speed,
Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed.
(*The Garden*)

The energy and delight of the conceit has been sharpened or keyed up here till it seems to burst and transform itself; it dissolves in the next verse into the style of Keats. So his observation of the garden might mount to an ecstasy which disregarded it; he seems in this next verse to imitate the process he has described, to enjoy in a receptive state the exhilaration which an exercise of wit has achieved. But striking as the change of style is, it is unfair to empty the verse of thought and treat it as random description; what happens is that he steps back from overt classical conceits to a rich and intuitive use of Christian imagery. When people treat it as the one good 'bit' of the poem one does not know whether they have recognized that the Alpha and Omega of the verse are the Apple and the Fall.

What wond'rous Life in this I lead!
Ripe Apples drop about my head;
The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
The Nectaren, and curious Peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass.

Melon, again, is the Greek for Apple; 'all flesh is *grass*,' and its own *flowers* here are the snakes in it that stopped Eurydice. Mere grapes are at once the primitive and the innocent wine; the *nectar* of Eden, and yet the blood of sacrifice. *Curious* could mean 'rich and strange' (nature), 'improved by care' (art) or 'inquisitive' (feeling towards me, since nature is a mirror, as I do towards her). All these eatable beauties give themselves so as to lose themselves, like a lover, with a forceful generosity; like a lover they *ensnare* him. It is the triumph of the attempt to impose a sexual interest upon nature; there need be no more Puritanism in this use of

sacrificial ideas than is already inherent in the praise of solitude; and it is because his repose in the orchard hints at such a variety of emotions that he is contemplating *all that's made.* Sensibility here repeats what wit said in the verse before; he tosses into the fantastic treasure-chest of the poem's thought all the pathos and dignity that Milton was to feel in his more celebrated Garden; and it is while this is going on, we are told in the next verse, that the mind performs its ambiguous and memorable *withdrawal.* For each of the three central verses he gives a twist to the screw of the microscope and is living in another world.

I must go back to the *annihilating* lines, whose method is less uncommon. Similar ideas and tricks of language are used in Donne's *Exstasie,* where various puns impose on us the idea that an adequate success in love is a kind of knowledge which transcends the barriers of the ordinary kind. There is again some doubt how far the author knew what he was doing.

> As our blood labours to beget
> Spirits, as like souls as it can, . . .
> So must pure louers' soules descend, . . .

To the modern reader this is a pun on the senses 'subtle material essence' (e.g. 'spirits of salt') and 'non-material unit of life'; it seems used with as much 'wit' as the other puns, to trick us into feeling that soul and body may be interfused. The Oxford edition notes make clear that to Donne this was neither a pun nor a sophistry; 'The spirits. . . are the thin and active part of the blood, and are of a kind of a middle nature, between soul and body' (*Sermons*); one view of them was that there was a hierarchy of more and more spiritual ones. It is curious how the change in the word leaves the poetry unaffected; by Swift's time the two senses were an absurd accident from which one could get ironies against materialism. No doubt in some important senses Donne was right, but however supported by Cambridge Platonism it is a genuine primitive use of the word. Whereas he would certainly have known there was a pun on 'sense' even if he took it for granted.

Our bodies why do we forbeare? . . .
We owe them thankes, because they thus,
Did us, to us, at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are dross to us, but allay.

The antithesis for *allay* makes it mean 'alloy', a less valuable substance put into their gold to strengthen it for practical use; *allay* could mean 'keeping the spiritual pleasure from being too great, more than our strength could bear,' which goes with 'alloy,' then, behind that, 'relief to the pain of desire,' which makes the flesh less unimportant. This is reinforced by the special meaning of sense ('the wanton stings and motions of the s'). That rich word confuses the pleasure and the knowledge given the senses (Donne wants to imply they are mutually dependent) and suggests that soul and body are in a healthy intuitive relation—'plenty of sense.' The use of *sense* for sensibleness became stronger later in the century, but it is already clearly an element in the word—for example in saying 'there is no sense' in a statement when it has meaning but is not sensible. 'We could not know each other at all without sensations, therefore cannot know each other fully without sensuality, nor would it be sensible to try to do so.'

The poem uses the word again later, and there the sexual meaning is clear.

So must pure louers soules descend
To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies.
To our bodies turn we then . . .

Affections are 'loves,' 'weaknesses,' and in the philosophical sense 'physical effects.' *Apprehend* means 'know' and by derivation 'clutch' and *reach* would go with either, which gives sense a sort of bridge between its meanings.

It is possible that Donne means to throw in a pun on 'know,' as in 'Adam knew his wife.'

Wee then, who are this new soule, know,
Of what we are compos'd, and made,
For, the Atomies of which we grow,
Are soules, which no change can invade.

Know is isolated by the comma ('know each other'), and *of* may then take a step towards 'by means of.' Then, with Donne's usual leap in pretending to give a reason, he makes each soul entirely immaterial; 'the intellectual knowledge has, for us, all the advantages of the physical one, even granted that they are distinguishable.' If he did this it would have to be done consciously and wilfully.

One should not of course take such poetry as only a clever game. This truth-seeking idea seems fundamental to the European convention of love-poetry; love is always idealized as a source of knowledge not only of the other party but of oneself and of the world:

This Exstasie doth unperplex

because it makes the disparate impulses of the human creature not merely open to the prying of the mind but prepared for its intrusion. It is along these lines, I think, that D. H. Lawrence's hatred of the whole conception might be answered, or rather that he answered it himself. On the other hand, I think Donne felt quite casual about these particular tricks; the juggle with *sense* has the same graceful impudence as his frankly absurd arguments. M. Legouis may be right in saying that he set out merely to dramatize the process of seduction; it is only clear that he found the argument fascinating and believed that it had some truth in some cases. He did not think it so false as to depend on his puns, even where he recognized them; he may well have understood what the puns themselves depend upon. They insist on relics of primitive thought in civilized language, and thereby force the language to break down its later distinctions and return to ideas natural to the human mind. Dr Richards's account of romantic nature poetry in *Coleridge on Imagination* is a very good example; the personalized Nature is treated both as external to man and as created by an instinct of

the mind, and by tricks of language these are made to seem the same. But if they were simply called the same we would not so easily be satisfied by the tricks. What we feel is that though they are essentially unlike they are practically unlike in different degrees at different times; a supreme condition can therefore be imagined, though not attained, in which they are essentially like. (To put it like this is no doubt to evade a philosophic issue.) A hint of the supreme condition is thus found in the actual one (this makes the actual one include everything in itself), but this apparently exalted claim is essentially joined to humility; it is effective only through the admission that it is only a hint. Something of the tone of pastoral is therefore inherent in the claim; the fault of the Wordsworthian method seems to be that it does not show this.

I shall add here a pun from *As You Like It*, which shows how the same issue may be raised by a casual joke. The pun in its context makes a contradiction, and this is felt to show an intuitive grasp of some of the puzzles of the context. Fortunately there is no doubt that a pun is meant because the text insists upon it; the *N.E.D.* shows that the modern spellings, though used loosely, already made the distinction. Apart from fascimiles no edition that I have seen has yet printed the text. The point of the two spellings is to show that the two senses are at work; it is none the less fair to take the senses the other way round. (This is from the Folio; there is no Quarto.)

CLOWN .... truly, I would the Gods hadde made thee poetical.

AUDREY. I do not know what Poetical is : is it honest in word and deed : is it a true thing?

CLOWN. No trulie : for the truest poetrie is the most fayning, and Louers are given to Poetrie: and what they sweare in Poetrie, may be said as Louers, they do feigne.

AUDREY. Do you wish then that the Gods had made me Poetical?

CLOWN. I do truly: for thou swear'st to me thou art honest: Now if thou were a Poet, I might haue some hope thou didst feigne.

'A material fool' is the pleased judgment of the listening Jaques; he feels that there is a complete copy of the human world among fools, as of beasts among sea-beasts. This indeed is one of the assumptions of pastoral, that you can say everything about complex people by a complete consideration of simple people. The jokes are mainly carried on by puns on 'honest'—chastity in women, truth in speech, simplicity in clowns, and the hearty sense 'generous because free from hypocrisy'; my point is the pun on 'fain' (*desiring*) and 'feign' (*pretend*; in lovers *pretend honest desire*). The doubt of the poet's honesty is referred to the broader doubt of his self-knowledge just as *honest* itself shifts from 'truth-telling' to 'sincere in his own mind.' The pun itself is common, though I think it is only here, where it enriches the thought so much, that Shakespeare spelt it out for the reader.

> EGEUS. Thou hast by moonelight at her window sang
> With faining voice, verses of faining love,
> And stolne the impression of her fantasie.

He feigns true love because he would fain possess her; the word *love* itself may be used of a desire not permanent or generous; Egeus would call that a feigning love even if Nature deceives both of them, and the man thinks himself sincere. The easy but capacious mind of Spenser takes this for granted (*F.Q.*, V. xii. 36; *Hymn to Love*, 216); nobody pretends without purpose, so it is a useful trick of language. Touchstone's use of it about poetry is more searching.

The root of the joke is that a physical desire drives the human creature to a spiritual one. The best poetry is the most genuinely passionate (fain) but there may be pretences (feign), that the desire felt for this woman is spiritual and that any woman is the object of so spiritual a desire. 'To write poetry is not the quickest way to satisfy desire; there must be some other impulse behind the convention of love-poetry; something feigned in the choice of topic; some other thing of which they are fain.' As for the distinction between their roles as poets and lovers, both senses may apply to them in both, also to *swearing*, since 'go to hell' is spontaneous,

not meant, not meant to deceive, and a sort of feigning in which you are fain of what you feign. For that matter they are wooing the reader even if they are not trying to seduce a mistress; the process at its simplest involves desire and detachment, nature and sophistication; levels mysteriously inter-related which a sane man separates only for a joke. Touchstone's pretence of acidity allows of a real plea for his own case because it implies that the most refined desires are inherent in the plainest, and would be false if they weren't; he shows a staircase by giving the two lowest steps, lust and cheating. In the Marvell and Donne examples it is the top of a staircase that is in question, but the same method is used to define it. Two ideas are united which in normal use are contradictory, and our machinery of interpretation so acts that we feel there is a series of senses in which they could be more and more truly combined. This is clearest in what Mr James Smith defined as metaphysical conceits, those that genuinely sum up a metaphysical problem. The top and next steps in the Aristotelian staircase about form and matter, for example, would be pure form and the material, already form, which it informs. Donne is using this when he calls each lover's soul the body of the other's; the fact that we do not believe that the lovers are in this condition does not keep us from a feeling of belief in the conceit, because we believe in the staircase which it defines; the lovers appear as conscious of the staircase and higher up on it than most. Nor for that matter do we believe that the clown is at the bottom of his staircase; his understanding of it acts as a proof that he isn't. A good case of a poem with some doubt about the staircase it requires is provided by Shakespeare's *Phoenix and Turtle*; it depends on the same ideas as Donne's *First Anniversary*, but gets very different feelings out of them. The entire flatness of the use of the convention makes it seem first an engagingly simpleminded piece of 'idealism' and then, since the union of the birds is likely after all to be of a simple kind, an expression of cultivated and good-humoured sensuality; this does not by any means destroy the pathetic dignity of the close. There is a suggestion that the author finds the convention fascinating but absurd, which he shows mainly by his sound-effects. This seems to me intentional, very delightful, and not a thing that Chapman (who has been sug-

gested as the author) could possibly have done. It is clear here that once you cease to impose a staircase the thing shifts from heroic to mock-pastoral. Some such idea needs to be added to Mr James Smith's account (perhaps he would call it obvious) because otherwise there seems no way of putting in a judgment of value; on his account a metaphysical conceit is essentially a vivid statement of a puzzle, and in practice it is more.

I should say that this process is at work in much poetry that does not seem ambiguous at all, and shall pursue the question into Homer as the fountainhead of simplicity. This may also throw some light on the obscure connection between heroic and pastoral; the fact seems to be that both rely on a 'complex in simple' formula.

One idea essential to a primitive epic style is that the good is not separable (anyway at first level judgments) from a life of straightforward worldly success in which you keep certain rules; the plain satisfactions are good in themselves and make great the men who enjoy them. From this comes the 'sense of glory' and of controlling nature by delight in it. It is absurd to call this a 'pre-moralistic' view, since the rules may demand great sacrifices and it is shameful not to keep them; there is merely a naïve view of the nature of good. (Both a limitation of the things that are good and a partial failure to separate the idea of good from the idea of those things.) The naïve view is so often more true than the sophisticated ones that this comes in later ages to take on an air of massive grandeur; it gives a feeling of freedom from humbug which is undoubtedly noble and the Homeric heroes support this by the far from savage trait of questioning the beliefs they still die for. Stock epithets about 'the good wine' or 'the well-built gates' imply 'so one always rightly feels'; such a thing essentially has virtue in it. is a piece of virtue; a later reader feels this to be symbolic, a process of packing all the sorts of good into a simple one. Material things are taken as part of a moral admiration, and to a later reader (with less pride, for example, in the fact that his culture uses iron) this seems an inspiriting moral paradox like those of pastoral—'to one who knows how to live the ideal is easily reached.' It is assumed that Ajax is still enormously grand when he cooks his dinner, the

later reader feels he must really be very grand not to lose his dignity, whereas at the time it was a thing of some splendour to have so much dinner to cook or such implements to do it with. This comes to have the same effect as a pretence of pastoral humility in the author. Also the heroic individual has an enormous effect on everything in sight, gods and men, and yet finds everything of manageable dimensions; the later reader feels that this belongs to a village society rather than a large-town one. Certainly the heroes are not grand merely because they are brave; they can run away like other people, and say so more frankly. Indeed a great part of their dignity comes from the naïve freshness with which they can jump from one level of argument to another, and this leaves room for the effects I am considering.

Thus the puzzles become more obvious later, but this is not to say they were not used at the start. The heroes are given a directly moral grandeur by the perpetual clashes between free-will and necessity, symbolized by their relations with the gods, out of which they construct their speeches; they fight on when certain of failure and kill each other with the apology that they too are fated, and such fore-knowledge as they have makes them half divine. It is very curious that what is supposed to be another branch of the same race, when it arrived in India, had none of this interest in the problems of free-will; the dignity of the heroes in the Mahabharata is based on puzzles about the One and the Many. Nor did it develop later; the Buddha was once actually faced with the problem of free-will raised so starkly by his system, and brushed it aside on grounds of morality; I understand that all Buddhist theologians have ignored the issue. Whereas all new ideas in Europe, Christianity and the sciences in turn, have been taken as new problems about necessity and free-will. Thus the reason why the Homeric *but* where one expects 'and' has so much poetic force is that it implies some argument, such as all the characters are happy with, and the argument would lead you to other levels of thought. (This acts as a feeling that the two things put together are vividly different in themselves.) 'He spoke, and held still his hand upon the silvery hilt, and thrust back the great sword into the scabbard, nor did he disobey the order of Minerva; but she had gone to Olympus, to

the mansions of aegis-bearing Jove, amongst the other deities.' *But* makes her already indifferent; the puzzle about how far men are free and how far the gods are only forces in their minds is thrust upon your attention. Also there is a strong feeling in the epic that the heroes are too great to kill each other for detested Helen and the unneccessary recovery of corpses ('Nor do I fear so much about the dead body of Patroclus, which will quickly satiate the dogs and birds of the Trojans, as much as I fear for my own head, lest it suffer anything, and for thine') and yet that only this would display their greatness; a rich contradiction on which to build a hierarchy of value. I began by saying that such writing was based on a naïve idea of the nature of good, but in fact other ideas of good are implicit in it; Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* is often taken as a sort of parody of the *Iliad*, but there is little in it that Homer did not imply. What becomes strange to a more sophisticated society is the order in which the ideas can be built up; in such a society everybody has been told some refined ideas about good (or what not) and wants them put in at once; to take a simple thing and imply a hierarchy in it can then only be done in a strange world like that of Milton's Adam or a convention like that of pastoral. To say this is to echo what many of Homer's critics, including Milton himself, have said about the peculiar advantage he got from his date, and I am only trying to show that it fits in with my theory.

I have not been able to say what machinery erects a staircase on a contradiction, but then the only essential for the poet is to give the reader a chance to build an interesting one; there are continual opportunities in the most normal uses of language. Any statement of identity between terms already defined ('God is love') is a contradition because you already know they are not identical; you have to ignore senses that would be unimportant ('the first cause was a creative impulse') and there are likely to be degrees in which the two may be called identical which lead to different important senses. That the process is not simple is obvious when you turn them round; 'love is God' would be quite different. 'Might is Right' and 'Right is Might' were felt to be clear and opposite statements of ethical theory, and it is not clear how this was possible. It is no good to read them as 'if a man has might, then he has right,' etc.;

a supporter of this opinion would say that if a man has no might he has no right, and the two sentences are still identical. The same applies to the similar interpretations 'Might is a member of the class Right,' etc.; it would be the only member of its class. I think these are at work; the analogy of the second word to an adjective in this version shows how the first is felt to be the more solid and unchangeable. But the second word is in fact belittled rather than made inclusive. Yet you cannot read them simply as substitutions; 'always say might instead of right; there is no reason for not making a full use of power' and 'never calculate chances; to be in the right is the only thing to be considered.' These are present and seem to control the senses from the back, but the subdued word is still there and is not negated. *Right* in the first is some sort of justification and *might* in the Second some sort of hope or claim. 'A great and crowded nation has the right to expand'; 'because we have right on our side we are certain to win'. A vague sense that 'is' has other uses than the expression of identity makes us ready to find meanings in such sentences; this may well have been the historical reason why it was too convenient to be simplified. But the principle of language that makes the two different is simply a traffic rule; the two words are felt to cover some of the same ground and in some cases of conflict the first has the right of way.

It might I think also be argued that any contradiction implies a regress, though not one definite one. To say that it is always an example of the supreme process of seeing the Many as One is to ignore the differences in the feelings aroused by different examples; but there may always be a less ambitious process at work that uses similar machinery. The pretence that two words are identical acts as a hint that they have been fitted into some system, in which each key word is dependent on the others, like the parts of an organism; admittedly, the words are not the same but they have been 'unified' One characteristic of an organism is that you can only change it (as a whole and without killing it) by a process like edging up a chimney in rock-climbing; one element must be changed to the small extent that the elasticity of the system allows and then the others must be changed to fit it. So to find your way into the interpretation seems essentially a process of shifting the words again

and again. This at least describes the sense of richness (readiness for argument not pursued) in such language and the fact that one ambiguity, even though obtained in several parallel words, is not enough for it.

That this talk about a hierarchy of 'levels' is vague I can cheerfully admit; the idea is generally vague in the authors who use it, and none the less powerful for being left in a suggestive form. But the three central verses of the Marvell poem are at least a definite example; in the course of suggesting various interlocking hierarchies (knowing that you know that you know, reconciling the remaining unconscious with the increasing consciousness, uniting in various degrees perception and creation, the one and the many), it does in fact rise through a hierarchy of three sharply contrasted styles and with them give a more and more inclusive account of the mind's relation to Nature. Only a metaphysical poet with so perfect a sense of form and so complete a control over the tricks of the style, at the end of its development, could actually dramatize these hints as he gave them.

THE LANGUAGE OF PARADOX

CLEANTH BROOKS

FEW OF US are prepared to accept the statement that the language of poetry is the language of paradox. Paradox is the language of sophistry, hard, bright, witty; it is hardly the language of the soul. We are willing to allow that paradox is a permissible weapon which a Chesterton may on occasion exploit. We may permit it in epigram, a special subvariety of poetry; and in satire, which though useful, we are hardly willing to allow to be poetry at all. Our prejudices force us to regard paradox as intellectual rather than emotional, clever rather than profound, rational rather than divinely irrational.

Yet there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry. It is the scientist whose truth requires a language purged of every trace of paradox; apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox. I overstate the case, to be sure; it is possible that the title of this chapter is itself to be treated as merely a paradox. But there are reasons for thinking that the overstatement which I propose may light up some elements in the nature of poetry which tend to be overlooked.

The case of William Wordsworth, for instance, is instructive on this point. His poetry would not appear to promise many examples of the language of paradox. He usually prefers the direct attack. He insists on simplicity; he distrusts whatever seems sophistical. And yet the typical Wordsworth poem is based upon a paradoxical situation. Consider his celebrated

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
> The holy time is quiet as a Nun
> Breathless with adoration....

The poet is filled with worship, but the girl who walks beside him is not worshipping. The implication is that she should respond to the holy time, and become like the evening itself, nunlike; but she seems less worshipful than inanimate nature itself. Yet

If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

The underlying paradox (of which the enthusiastic reader may well be unconscious) is nevertheless thoroughly necessary, even for that reader. Why does the innocent girl worship more deeply than the self-conscious poet who walks beside her? Because she is filled with an unconscious sympathy for *all* of nature, not merely the grandiose and solemn. One remembers the lines from Wordsworth's friend, Coleridge

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.

Her unconscious sympathy is the unconscious worship. She is in communion with nature 'all the years', and her devotion is continual whereas that of the poet is sporadic and momentary. But we have not done with the paradox yet. It not only underlies the poem, but something of the paradox informs the poem, though, since this is Wordsworth, rather timidly. The comparison of the evening to the nun actually has more than one dimension. The calm of the evening obviously means 'worship,' even to the dull-witted and insensitive. It corresponds to the trappings of the nun, visible to everyone. Thus, it suggests not merely holiness, but, in the total poem, even a hint of Pharisaical holiness, with which the girl's careless innocence, itself a symbol of her continual secret worship, stands in contrast.

Or consider Wordsworth's sonnet, 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge.' I believe that most readers will agree that it is one of Wordsworth's most successful poems; yet most students have the greatest difficulty in accounting for its goodness. The attempt to account for it on the grounds of nobility of sentiment soon breaks down. On this level, the poem merely says: that the city in the morning light presents a picture which is majestic and touching to all but the most dull of soul; but the poem says very

little more about the sight: the city is beautiful in the morning light and it is awfully still. The attempt to make a case for the poem in terms of the brilliance of its images also quickly breaks down: the student searches for graphic details in vain; there are next to no realistic touches. In fact, the poet simply huddles the details together:

> silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields...

We get a blurred impression—points of roofs and pinnacles along the skyline, all twinkling in the morning light. More than that, the sonnet as a whole contains some very flat writing and some well-worn comparisons.

The reader may ask: Where, then, does the poem get its power? It gets it, it seems to me, from the paradoxical situation out of which the poem arises. The speaker is honestly surprised, and he manages to get some sense of awed surprise into the poem. It is odd to the poet that the city should be able to 'wear the beauty of the morning' at all. Mount Snowden, Skiddaw, Mont Blanc—these wear it by natural right, but surely not grimy, feverish London. This is the point of the almost shocked exclamation:

> Never did sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill...

The 'smokeless air' reveals a city which the poet did not know existed: man-made London is a part of nature too, is lighted by the sun of nature, and lighted to as beautiful effect.

> The river glideth at his own sweet will...

A river is the most 'natural' thing that one can imagine; it has the elasticity, the curved line of nature itself. The poet had never been able to regard this one as a real river—now, uncluttered by barges, the river reveals itself as a natural thing, not at all disciplined into a rigid and mechanical pattern: it is like the daffodils, or the mountain brooks, and whimsical, and 'natural' as

they. The poem closes, you will remember, as follows:

> Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
> And all that mighty heart is lying still!

The city, in the poet's insight of the morning, has earned its right to be considered organic, not merely mechanical. That is why the stale metaphor of the sleeping houses is strangely renewed. The most exciting thing that the poet can say about the houses is that they are *asleep*. He has been in the habit of counting them dead—as just mechanical and inanimate; to say they are 'asleep' is to say that they are alive, that they participate in the life of nature. In the same way, the tired old metaphor which sees a great city as a pulsating heart of empire becomes revivified. It is only when the poet sees the city under the semblance of death that he can see it as actually alive—quick with the only life which he can accept, the organic life of 'nature.'

It is not my intention to exaggerate Wordsworth's own consciousness of the paradox involved. In this poem, he prefers, as is usual with him, the frontal attack. But the situation is paradoxical here as in so many of his poems. In his preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth stated that his general purpose was 'to choose incidents and situations from common life' but so to treat them that 'ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect'. Coleridge was to state the purpose for him later, in terms which make even more evident Wordsworth's exploitation of the paradoxical: 'Mr Wordsworth... was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to exile a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us....' Wordsworth, in short, was consciously attempting to show his audience that the common was really uncommon, the prosaic was really poetic.

Coleridge's terms, 'the charm of novelty to things of every day,' 'awakening the mind,' suggest the Romantic preoccupation with wonder—the surprise, the revelation which puts the tarnished familiar world in a new light. This may well be the *raison*

d'être of most Romantic paradoxes; and yet the neoclassic poets use paradox for much the same reason. Consider Pope's lines from *The Essay on Man*:

> In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer;
> Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
> Alike in ignorance, his Reason such,
> Whether he thinks too little, or too much...
>
> Created half to rise, and half to fall;
> Great Lord of all things, yet a Prey to all;
> Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurl'd;
> The Glory, Jest, and Riddle of the world!

Here, it is true, the paradoxes insist on the irony, rather than the wonder. But Pope too might have claimed that he was treating the things of everyday, man himself, and awakening his mind so that he would view himself in a new and blinding light. Thus, there is a certain awed wonder in Pope just as there is a certain trace of irony implicit in the Wordsworth sonnets. There is, of course, no reason why they should not occur together, and they do. Wonder and irony merge in many of the lyrics of Blake; they merge in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. The variations in emphasis are numerous. Gray's *Elegy* uses a typical Wordsworth 'situation' with the rural scene and with peasants contemplated in the light of their 'betters.' But in the *Elegy* the balance is heavily tilted in the direction of irony, the revelation an ironic rather than a startling one:

> Can storied urn or animated bust
> Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
> Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust?
> Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

But I am not here interested in enumerating the possible variations; I am interested rather in our seeing that the paradoxes spring from the very nature of the poet's language: it is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations. And I do not mean that the connotations are important as supplying some sort of frill or trimming, something external to the real matter in hand, I mean that the poet does

not use a notation at all—as the scientist may properly be said to do so. The poet, within limits, has to make up his language as he goes.

T. S. Eliot has commented upon 'that perpetual slight alteration of language, words perpetually juxtaposed in new and sudden combinations,' which occurs in poetry. It *is* perpetual; it cannot be kept out of the poem; it can only be directed and controlled. The tendency of science is necessarily to stabilize terms, to freeze them into strict denotations; the poet's tendency is by contrast disruptive. The terms are continually modifying each other, and thus violating their dictionary meanings. To take a very simple example, consider the adjectives in the first lines of Wordsworth's evening sonnet: *beauteous, calm, free, holy, quiet, breathless.* The juxtapositions are hardly startling; and yet notice this: the evening is like a nun breathless with adoration. The adjective 'breathless' suggests tremendous excitement; and yet the evening is not only quiet but *calm.* There is no final contradiction, to be sure: it is *that* kind of calm and *that* kind of excitement, and the two states may well occur together. But the poet has no one term. Even if he had a polysyllabic technical term, the term would not provide the solution for his problem. He must work by contradiction and qualification.

We may approach the problem in this way: the poet has to work by analogies. All of the subtler states of emotion, as I.A. Richards has pointed out, necessarily demand metaphor for their expression. The poet must work by analogies, but the metaphors do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge. There is a continual tilting of the planes; necessary overlappings, discrepancies, contradictions. Even the most direct and simple poet is forced into paradoxes far more often than we think, if we are sufficiently alive to what he is doing.

But in dilating on the difficulties of the poet's task, I do not want to leave the impression that it is a task which necessarily defeats him, or even that with his method he may not win to a fine precision. To use Shakespeare's figure, he can

> with assays of bias
> By indirections find directions out.

Shakespeare had in mind the game of lawnbowls in which the bowl is distorted, a distortion which allows the skillful player to bowl a curve. To elaborate the figure, science makes use of the perfect sphere and its attack can be direct. The method of art can, I believe, never be direct—is always indirect. But that does not mean that the master of the game cannot place the bowl where he wants it. The serious difficulties will only occur when he confuses his game with that of science and mistakes the nature of his appropriate instrument. Mr Stuart Chase a few years ago, with a touching naïvete, urged us to take the distortion out of the bowl—to treat language like notation.

I have said that even the apparently simple and straightforward poet is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument. Seeing this, we should not be surprised to find poets who consciously employ it to gain a compression and precision otherwise unobtainable. Such a method, like any other, carries with it its own perils. But the dangers are not overpowering; the poem is not predetermined to a shallow and glittering sophistry. The method is an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it.

I should like to refer the reader to a concrete case. Donne's *Canonization* ought to provide a sufficiently extreme instance. The basic metaphor which underlies the poem (and which is reflected in the title) involves a sort of paradox. For the poet daringly treats profane love as if it were divine love. The canonization is not that of a pair of holy anchorites who have renounced the world and the flesh. The hermitage of each is the other's body; but they do renounce the world, and so their title to sainthood is cunningly argued. The poem then is a parody of Christian sainthood; but it is an intensely serious parody of a sort that modern man, habituated as he is to an easy yes or no, can hardly understand. He refuses to accept the paradox as a serious rhetorical device; and since he is able to accept it only as a cheap trick, he is forced into this dilemma. Either: Donne does not take love seriously; here he is merely sharpening his wit as a sort of mechanical exercise. Or: Donne does not take sainthood seriously; here he is merely indulging in a cynical and bawdy parody.

Neither account is true; a reading of the poem will show that Donne takes both love and religion seriously; it will show, further, that the paradox is here his inevitable instrument. But to see this plainly will require a closer reading than most of us give to poetry.

The poem opens dramatically on a note of exasperation. The 'you' whom the speaker addresses is not identified. We can imagine that it is a person, perhaps a friend, who is objecting to the speaker's love affair. At any rate, the person represents the practical world which regards love as a silly affectation. To use the metaphor on which the poem is built, the friend represents the secular world which the lovers have renounced.

Donne begins to suggest this metaphor in the first stanza by the contemptuous alternatives which he suggests to the friend:

> ... chide my palsie, or my gout,
> My five gray haires, or ruin'd fortune flout...

The implications are: (1) All right, consider my love as an infirmity, as a disease, if you will, but confine yourself to my other infirmities, my palsy, my approaching old age, my ruined fortune. You stand a better chance of curing those; in chiding me for this one, you are simply wasting your time as well as mine. (2) Why don't you pay attention to your own welfare—go on and get wealth and honor for yourself? What should you care if I do give these up in pursuing my love

The two main categories of secular success are neatly, and contemptuously epitomized in the line

> Or the Kings reall, or his stamped face...

Cultivate the court and gaze at the king's face there, or, if you prefer, get into business and look at his face stamped on coins. But let me alone.

This conflict between the 'real' world and the lover absorbed in the world of love runs through the poem; it dominates the second stanza in which the torments of love, so vivid to the lover, affect the real world not at all—

What merchants ships have my sighs drown'd ?

It is touched on in the fourth stanza in the contrast between the word 'Chronicle' which suggests secular history with its pomp and magnificence, the history of kings and princes, and the word 'sonnets' with its suggestions of trivial and precious intricacy. The conflict appears again in the last stanza, only to be resolved when the unworldly lovers, love's saints who have given up the world, paradoxically achieve a more intense world. But here the paradox is still contained in, and supported by, the dominant metaphor; so does the holy anchorite win a better world by giving up this one.

But before going on to discuss this development of the theme, it is important to see what else the second stanza does. For it is in this second stanza and the third, that the poet shifts the tone of the poem, modulating from the note of irritation with which the poem opens into the quite different tone with which it closes.

Donne accomplishes the modulation of tone by what may be called an analysis of love-metaphor. Here, as in many of his poems, he shows that he is thoroughly self-conscious about what he is doing. This second stanza, he fills with the conventionalized figures of the Petrarchan tradition: the wind of lovers' sighs, the floods of lovers' tears, etc.—extravagant figures with which the contemptuous secular friend might be expected to tease the lover. The implication is that the poet himself recognizes the absurdity of the Petrarchan love metaphors. But what of it? The very absurdity of the jargon which lovers are expected to talk makes for his argument: their love, however absurd it may appear to the world, does no harm to the world. The practical friend need have no fears: there will still be wars to fight and lawsuits to argue.

The opening of the third stanza suggests that this vein of irony is to be maintained. The poet points out to his friend the infinite fund of such absurdities which can be applied to lovers:

Call her on, mee another flye,
We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die...

For that matter, the lovers can conjure up for themselves plenty of such fantastic comparisons: they know what the world thinks of them. But these figures of the third stanza are no longer the threadbare Petrarchan conventionalities; they have sharpness and bite. The last one, the likening of the lovers to the phoenix, is fully serious, and with it the tone has shifted from ironic banter into a defiant but controlled tenderness.

The effect of the poet's implied awareness of the lovers' apparent madness is to cleanse and revivify metaphor; to indicate the sense in which the poet accepts it and thus to prepare us for accepting seriously the fine and seriously intended metaphors which dominate the last two stanzas of the poem.

The opening line of the fourth stanza,

> Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,

achieves an effect of tenderness and deliberate resolution. The lovers are ready to die to the world; they are committed; they are not callow but confident. (The basic metaphor of the saint, one notices, is being carried on; the lovers in their renunciation of the world, have something of the confident resolution of the saint. By the bye, the word 'legend'—

> . . . if unfit for tombes and hearse
> Our legend bee—

in Donne's time meant 'the life of a saint.') The lovers are willing to forego the ponderous and stately chronicle and to accept the trifling and insubstantial 'sonnet' instead; but then if the urn be well wrought, it provides a finer memorial for one's ashes than does the pompous and grotesque monument. With the finely contemptuous, yet quiet phrase, 'halfe-acre tombes,' the world which the lovers reject expands into something gross and vulgar. But the figure works further; the pretty sonnets will not merely hold their ashes as a decent earthly memorial. Their legend, their story, will gain them canonization; and approved as love's saints, other lovers will invoke them.

In this last stanza, the theme receives a final complication. The

lovers in rejecting life actually win to the most intense life. This paradox has been hinted at earlier in the phoenix metaphor. Here it receives a powerful dramatization. The lovers in becoming hermits, find that they have not lost the world, but have gained the world in each other, now a more intense, more meaningful world. Donne is not content to treat the lovers' discovery as something which comes to them passively, but rather as something which they actively achieve. They are like the saint, God's athlete :

> Who did the whole worlds soule *contract*, and *drove*
> Into the glasses of your eyes...

The image is that of a violent squeezing as of a powerful hand. And what do the lovers 'drive' into each other's eyes? The 'Countries, Townes,' and 'Courtes,' which they renounced in the first stanza of the poem. The unworldly lovers thus become the most 'worldly' of all.

The tone with which the poem closes is one of triumphant achievement, but the tone is a development contributed to by various earlier elements. One of the more important elements which works towards our acceptance of the final paradox is the figure of the phoenix, which will bear a little further analysis.

The comparison of the lovers to the phoenix is very skillfully related to the two earlier comparisons, that in which the lovers are like burning tapers, and that in which they are like the eagle and the dove. The phoenix comparison gathers up both: the phoenix is a bird, and like the tapers, it burns. We have a selected series of items the phoenix figure seems to come in a natural stream of association. 'Call us what you will,' the lover says, and rattles off in his desperation the first comparisons that occur to him. The comparison to the phoenix seems thus merely another outlandish one, the most outrageous of all. But it is this most fantastic one, stumbled over apparently in his haste, that the poet goes on to develop. It really describes the lovers best and justifies their renunciation. For the phoenix is not two but one, 'we two being one, are it;' and it burns, not like the taper at its own cost, but to live again. Its death is life: 'Wee dye and rise the same....' The poet literally justifies the fantastic asser-

tion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to 'die' means to experience the consummation of the act of love. The lovers after the act are the same. Their love is not exhausted in mere lust. This is their title to canonization. Their love is like the phoenix.

I hope that I do not seem to juggle the meaning of 'die.' The meaning that I have cited can be abundantly justified in the literature of the period; Shakespeare uses 'die' in this sense; so does Dryden. Moreover, I do not think that I give it undue emphasis. The word is in a crucial position. On it is pivoted the transition to the next stanza,

> Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,
> And if unfit for tombes...

Most important of all, the sexual submeaning of 'die' does not contradict the other meanings: the poet is saying: 'Our death is really a more intense life;' 'We can afford to trade life (the world) for death (love) for that death is the consummation of life;' 'After all, one does not expect to live by love, one expects, and wants, to die by it.' But in the total passage he is also saying: 'Because our love is not mundane, we can give up the world;' 'Because our love is not merely lust, we can give up the other lusts, the lust for wealth and power;' 'because,' and this is said with an inflection of irony as by one who knows the world too well, 'because our love can outlast its consummation, we are a minor miracle, we are love's saints.' This passage with its ironical tenderness and its realism feeds and supports the brilliant paradox with which the poem closes.

There is one more factor in developing and sustaining the final effect. The poem is an instance of the doctrine which it asserts; it is both the assertion and the realization of the assertion. The poet has actually before our eyes built within the song the 'pretty room' with which he says the lovers can be content. The poem itself is the well-wrought urn which can hold the lovers' ashes and which will not suffer in comparison with the prince's 'halfe-acre tomb.'

And how necessary are the paradoxes? Donne might have said directly, 'Love in a cottage is enough.' *The Canonization* contains

this admirable thesis, but it contains a great deal more. He might have been as forthright as a later lyricist who wrote, 'We'll build a sweet little nest,/Somewhere out in the West,/And let the rest of the world go by.' He might even have imitated that more metaphysical lyric, which maintains, 'You're the cream in my coffee.' *The Canonization* touches on all these observations, but it goes beyond them, not merely in dignity, but in precision.

I submit that the only way by which the poet could say what *The Canonization* says is by paradox. More direct methods may be tempting, but all of them enfeeble and distort what is to be said. This statement may seem the less surprising when we reflect on how many of the important things which the poet has to say have to be said by means of paradox: most of the language of lovers is such—*The Canonization is* a good example; so is most of the language of religion—'He who would save his life, must lose it.' 'The last shall be first.' Indeed. almost any insight important enough to warrant a great poem apparently has to be stated in such terms. Deprived of the character of paradox with its twin concomitants of irony and wonder, the matter of Donne's poem unravels into 'facts,' biological, sociological, and economic. What happens to Donne's lovers if we consider them 'scientifically,' without benefit of the supernaturalism which the poet confers upon them? Well, what happens to Shakespeare's lovers, for Shakespeare uses the basic metaphor of *The Canonization* in his *Romeo and Juliet*? In their first conversation, the lovers play with the analogy between the lover and the pilgrim to the Holy Land. Juliet says:

> For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch
> And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Considered scientifically, the lovers become Mr Aldous Huxley's animals, 'quietly sweating, palm to palm.'

For us today, Donne's imagination seems obsessed with the problem of unity; the sense in which the lovers become one—the sense in which the soul is united with God. Frequently, as we have seen, one type of union becomes a metaphor for the other. It may not be too far-fetched to see both as instances of, and

metaphors for, the union which the creative imagination itself effects. For that fusion is not logical; it apparently violates science and common sense; it welds together the discordant and the contradictory. Coleridge has of course given us the classic description of its nature and power. It 'reveals itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order...' It is a great and illuminating statement, but is a series of paradoxes. Apparently Coleridge could describe the effect of the imagination in no other way.

Shakespeare, in one of his poems, has given a description that oddly parallels that of Coleridge.

> Reason in it selfe confounded,
> Saw Division grow together,
> To themselves yet either neither,
> Simple were so well compounded.

I do not know what his *The Phoenix and the Turtle* celebrates. Perhaps it was written to honour the marriage of Sir John Salisbury and Ursula Stanley; or perhaps the Phoenix is Lucy, Countess of Bedford; or perhaps the poem is merely an essay on Platonic love. But the scholars themselves are so uncertain, that I think we will do little violence to established habits of thinking, if we boldly pre-empt the poem for our own purposes. Certainly the poem is an instance of that magic power which Coleridge sought to describe. I propose that we take it for a moment as a poem about that power;

> So they loved as love in twaine,
> Had the essence but in one,
> Two distincts, Division none,
> Number there in love was slaine.
> Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
> Distance and no space seene,
> Twixt this *Turtle* and his Queene;

But in them it were a wonder....
Propertie was thus appalled,
That the selfe was not the same;
Single Natures double name,
Neither two nor one was called.

Precisely! The nature is single, one, unified. But the name is double, and today with our multiplication of sciences, it is multiple. If the poet is to be true to his poetry, he must call it neither two nor one: the paradox is his only solution. The difficulty has intensified since Shakespeare's day: the timid poet, when confronted with the problem of 'Single Natures double name,' has too often funked it. A history of poetry from Dryden's time to our own might bear as its subtitle. 'The Half-Hearted Phoenix.'

In Shakespeare's poem, Reason is 'in it selfe confounded' at the union of the Phoenix and the Turtle; but it recovers to admit its own bankruptcy:

Love hath Reason, Reason none,
If what parts, can so remaine....

and it is Reason which goes on to utter the beautiful threnos with which the poem concludes:

Beautie, Truth, and Raritie,
Grace in all simplicitie,
Here enclosed, in cinders lie.

Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
And the *Turtles* loyall breast,
To eternitie doth rest .....

Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
Beautie, bragge, but tis not she,
Truth and Beautie buried be.

To this urne let those repaire,
That are either true or faire,
For these dead Birds, sigh a prayer.

Having pre-empted the poem for our own purposes, it may not be too outrageous to go on to make one further observation. The urn to which we are summoned, the urn which holds the ashes of the phoenix, is like the well-wrought urn of Donne's 'Canonization' which holds the phoenix-lovers' ashes: it is the poem itself. One is reminded of still another urn, Keat's Grecian urn, which contained for Keats, Truth and Beauty, as Shakespeare's urn encloses 'Beautie, Truth, and Raritie.' But there is a sense in which all such well-wrought urns contain the ashes of a Phoenix. The urns are not meant for memorial purposes only, though that often seems to be their chief significance to the professors of literature. The phoenix rises from its ashes; or ought to rise; but it will not arise for all our mere sifting and measuring the ashes, or testing them for their chemical content. We must be prepared to accept the paradox of the imagination itself; else 'Beautie, Truth, and Raritie' remain enclosed in their cinders and we shall end with essential cinders, for all our pains.

THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY

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THE CLAIM of the author's 'intention' upon the critic's judgement has been challenged in a number of recent discussions, notably in the debate entitled *The Personal Heresy*, between Professors Lewis and Tillyard. But it seems doubtful if this claim and most of its romantic corollaries are as yet subject to any widespread questioning. The present writers, in a short article entitled 'Intention' for a *Dictionary*[1] of literary criticism, raised the issue but were unable to pursue its implications at any length. We argued that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art and it seems to us that this is a principle which goes deep into some differences in the history of critical attitudes. It is a principle which accepted or rejected points to the polar opposites of classical 'imitation' and romantic expression. It entails many specific truths about inspiration, authenticity, biography, literary history and scholarship, and about some trends of contemporary poetry, especially its allusiveness. There is hardly a problem of literary criticism in which the critic's approach will not be qualified by his view of 'intention.'

'Intention,' as we shall use the term, corresponds to *what he intended* in a formula which more or less explicitly has had wide acceptance. 'In order to judge the poet's performance, we must know *what he intended*.' Intention is design or plan in the author's mind. Intention has obvious affinities for the author's attidue towards his work, the way he felt, what made him write.

We begin our discussion with a series of propositions summarized and abstracted to a degree where they seem to us axiomatic.

1. A poem does not come into existence by accident. The words of a poem, as Professor Stoll has remarked, come out of a head, not out of a hat. Yet to insist on the designing intellect as a *cause* of a poem is not to grant the design or intention as a *standard* by

which the critic is to judge the worth of the poet's performance.

2. One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention. How is he to find out what the poet tried to do? If the poet succeeded in doing it, then the poem itself shows what he was trying to do. And if the poet did not succeed, then the poem is not adequate evidence, and the critic must go outside the poem—for evidence of an intention that did not become effective in the poem. 'Only one *caveat* must be borne in mind,' says an eminent intentionalist[2] in a moment when his theory repudiates itself; 'the poet's aim must be judged at the moment of the creative act, that is to say, by the art of the poem itself.'

3. Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work. It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of an artificer. 'A poem should not mean but be.' A poem can *be* only through its *meaning*—since its medium is words—yet it *is*, simply *is*, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant. Poetry is a feat of style by which a complex of meaning is handled all at once. Poetry succeeds because all or most of what is said or implied is relevant; what is irrelevant has been excluded, like lumps from pudding and 'bugs' from machinery. In this respect poetry differs from practical messages, which are successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention. They are more abstract than poetry.

4. The meaning of a poem may certainly be a personal one, in the sense that a poem expresses a personality or state of soul rather than a physical object like an apple. But even a short lyric poem is dramatic, the response of a speaker (no matter how abstractly conceived) to a situation (no matter how universalized). We ought to impute the thoughts and attitudes of the poem immediately to the dramatic *speaker*, and if to the author at all, only by an act of biographical inference.

5. There is a sense in which an author, by revision, may better achieve his original intention. But it is a very abstract sense. He intended to write a better work, or a better work of a certain kind, and now has done it. But it follows that his former concrete intention was not his intention. 'He's the man we were in search of, that's true,' says Hardy's rustic constable, 'and yet he's not the man we

were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted.'

'Is not a critic,' asks Professor Stoll, 'a judge, who does not explore his own consciousness, but determines the author's meaning or intention, as if the poem were a will, a contract, or the constitution? The poem is not the critic's own.' He has accurately diagnosed two forms of irresponsibility, one of which he prefers. Our view is yet different. The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it). The poem belongs to the public. It is embodied in language, the peculiar possession of the public, and it is about the human being, an object of public knowledge. What is said about the poem is subject to the same scrutiny as any statement in linguistic or in the general science of psychology.

A critic of our *Dictionary* article, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, has argued[3] that there are two kinds of inquiry about a work of art: (1) whether the artist achieved his intentions; (2) whether the work of art 'ought ever to have been undertaken at all' and so whether it is worth preserving.' Number (2), Coomaraswamy maintains, is not 'criticism of any work of art *qua* work of art,' but is rather moral criticism; number (1) is artistic criticism. But we maintain that (2) need not be moral criticism: that there is another way of deciding whether works of art are worth preserving and whether, in a sense, they 'ought' to have been undertaken, and this is the way of objective criticism of works of art as such, the way which enables us to distinguish between a skilful murder and a skilful poem. A skilful murder is an example which Coomaraswamy uses, and in his system the difference between the murder and the poem is simply a 'moral' one, not an 'artistic' one, since each if carried out according to plan is 'artistically' successful. We maintain that (2) is an inquiry of more worth than (1), and since (2) and not (1) is capable of distinguishing poetry from murder, the name 'artistic criticism' is properly given to (2).

II

It is not so much a historical statement as a definition to say that

the intentional fallacy is a romantic one. When a rhetorician of the first century A.D. writes: 'Sublimity is the echo of a great soul,' or when he tells us that 'Homer enters into the sublime actions of his heroes' and 'shares the full inspiration of the combat,' we shall not be surprised to find this rhetorician considered as a distant harbinger of romanticism and greeted in the warmest terms by Saintsbury. One may wish to argue whether Longinus should be called romantic, but there can hardly be a doubt that in one important way he is.

Goethe's three questions for 'constructive criticism' are: 'what did the author set out to do? Was his plan reasonable and sensible, and how far did he succeed in carrying it out? If one leaves out the middle question, one has in effect the system of Croce—the culmination and crowning philosophic expression of romanticism. The beautiful is the successful intuition-expression, and the ugly is the successful; the intuition or private part of art is the aesthetic fact, and the medium or public part is not the subject of aesthetic at all.

> The Madonna of Cimabue is still in the Church of Santa Maria Novella; but does she speak to the visitor of today as to the Florentines of the thirteenth century?
>
> *Historical interpretation* labours. . . to reintegrate in us the psychological conditions which have changed in the course of history. It... enables us to see a work of art (a physical object) as its *author saw it* in the moment of production.[4]

The first italics are Croce's the second ours. The upshot of Croce's system is an ambiguous emphasis on history. With such passages as a point of departure a critic may write a nice analysis of the meaning or 'spirit' of a play by Shakespeare or Corneille—a process that involves close historical study but remains aesthetic criticism—or he may, with equal plausibility, produce an essay in sociology, biography, or other kinds of nonaesthetic history.

III

I went to the poets; tragic, dithyrambic, and all sorts. . . I took

them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them.... Will you believe me?.... there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration.

That reiterated mistrust of the poet's which we hear from Socrates may have been part of a rigorously ascetic view in which we hardly wish to participate, yet Plato's Socrates saw a truth about the poetic mind which the world no longer commonly sees—so much criticism, and that the most inspirational and most affectionately remembered, has proceeded from the poets themselves

Certainly the poets have had something to say that the critic and professor could not say; their message has been more exciting: that poetry should come as naturally as leaves to a tree, that poetry is the lava of the imagination, or that it is emotion recollected in tranquillity. But it is necessary that we realize the character and authority of such testimony. There is only a fine shade of difference between such expressions and a kind of earnest advice that authors often give. Thus Edward Young, Carlyle, Walter Pater:

I know two golden rules from ethics, which are no less golden in *Composition*, than in life. 1. *Know thyself*; 2. *Reverence thyself.*

This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them: let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace's rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say: Be true, if you would be believed.

Truth! there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only *fineness* of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within.

And Housman's little handbook to the poetic mind yields this illustration:

> Having drunk a pint of beer at luncheon—beer is a sedative to the brain, and my afternoons are the least intellectual portion of my life—I would go out for a walk of two or three hours. As I went along, thinking of nothing in particular, only looking at things around me and following the progress of the seasons, there would flow into my mind, with sudden and unaccountable emotion, sometimes a line or two of verse, sometimes a whole stanza at once.

This is the logical terminus of the series already quoted. Here is a confession of how poems were written which would do as a definition of poetry just as well as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'—and which the young poet might equally well take to heart as a practical rule. Drink a pint of beer, relax, go walking, think on nothing in particular, look at things, surrender yourself to yourself, search for the truth in your own soul, listen to the sound of your own inside voice, discover and express the *vraie vérité*.

It is probably true that all this is excellent advice for poets. The young imagination fired by Wordsworth and Carlyle is probably closer to the verge of producing a poem than the mind of the student who has been sobered by Aristotle or Richards. The art of inspiring poets, or at least of inciting something like poetry in young persons, has probably gone further in our day than ever before. Books of creative writing such as those issued from the Lincoln School are interesting evidence of what a child can do.[5] All this, however, would appear to belong to an art separate from criticism—to a psychological discipline, a system of self-development, a yoga, which the young poet perhaps does well to notice, but which is something different from the public art of evaluating poems.

Coleridge and Arnold were better critics than most poets have been, and if the critical tendency dried up the poetry in Arnold and perhaps in Coleridge, it is not inconsistent with our argument, which is that judgement of poems is different from the art of producing them. Coleridge has given us the classic 'anodyne' story, and tells what he can about the genesis of a poem which he calls a 'psychological curiosity,' but his definitions of poetry and of the

poetic quality 'imagination' are to be found elsewhere and in quite other terms.

It would be convenient if the passwords of the intentional school, 'sincerity,' 'fidelity,' 'spontaneity,' 'authenticity,' 'genuineness,' 'originality,' could be equated with terms such as 'integrity,' 'relevance,' 'unity,' 'function,' 'maturity,' 'subtlety,' 'adequacy,' and other more precise terms of evaluation—in short, if 'expression' always meant aesthetic achievement. But this is not so.

'Aesthetic' art, says Professor Court Ducasse, an ingenious theorist of expression, is the conscious objectification of feelings, in which an intrinsic part is the critical moment. The artist corrects the objectification when it is not adequate. But this may mean that the earlier attempt was not successful in objectifying the self, or it may also mean that it was a successful objectification of a self which, when it confronted us clearly, we disowned and repudiated in favor of another.'[6] What is the standard by which we disown or accept the self? Professor Ducasse does not say. Whatever it may be however, this standard is an element in the definition of art which will not reduce to terms of objectification. The evaluation of the work of art remains public; the work is measured against something outside the author.

IV

There is criticism of poetry and there is author psychology, which when applied to the present or future takes the form of inspirational promotion; but author phychology can be historical too, and then we have literary biography, a legitimate and attractive study in itself, one approach, as Professor Tillyard would argue, to personality, the poem being only a parallel approach. Certainly it need not be with a derogatory purpose that one points out personal studies, as distinct from poetic studies, in the realm of literary scholarship. Yet there is danger of confusing personal as if it were poetic.

There is a difference between internal and external evidence for the meaning of a poem. And the paradox is only verbal and superficial that what is (1) internal is also public: it is discovered through the semantics and syntax of a poem, through our habitual know-

ledge of the language, through grammars, dictionaries, in general through all that makes a language and culture; while what is (2) external is private or idiosyncratic; not a part of the work as a linguistic fact: it consists of revelations (in journals, for example, or letters or reported conversations) about how or why the poet wrote the poem—to what lady, while sitting on what lawn, or at the death of what friend or brother. There is (3) an intermediate kind of evidence about the character of the author or about private or semi-private meanings attached to words or topics by an author or by a coterie of which he is a member. The meaning of words is the history of words, and the biography of an author, his use of a word, and the associations which the word had for *him*, are part of the word's history and meaning. But the three types of evidence, especially (2) and (3), shade into one another so subtly that it is not always easy to draw a line between examples, and hence arises the difficulty for criticism. The use of biographical evidence need not involve intentionalism, because while it may be evidence of what the author intended, it may also be evidence of the meaning of his words and the dramatic character of his utterance. On the other hand, it may not be all this. And a critic who is concerned with evidence of type (1) and moderately with that of type (3) will in the long run produce a different sort of comment from that of the critic who is concerned with (2) and with (3) where it shades into (2).

The whole glittering parade of Professor Lowes' *Road to Xanadu*, for instance, runs along the border between types (2) and (3) or boldly traverses the romantic region of (2). '"Kubla Khan,"' says Professor Lowes', 'is the fabric of a vision, but every image that rose up in its weaving had passed that way before. And it would seem that there is nothing haphazard or fortuitous in their return.' This is not quite clear—not even when Professor Lowes explains that there were clusters of associations, like hooked atoms, which were drawn into complex relation with other clusters in the deep well of Coleridge's memory, and which then coalesced and issued forth as poems. If there was nothing 'haphazard or fortuitous' in the way images returned to the surface, that may mean (1) that Coleridge could not produce what he did not have, that he was limited in his

creation by what he had read or otherwise experienced, or (2) that having received certain clusters of associations, he was bound to return them in just the way he did, and that the value of the poem may be described in terms of the experiences on which he had to draw. The latter pair of propositions (a sort of Hartleyan associationism which Coleridge himself repudiated in the *Biographia*) may not be assented to. There were certainly other combinations, other poems, worse or better, that might have been written by men who had read Bartram and Purchas and Bruce and Milton. And this will be true no matter how many times we are able to add to the brilliant complex of Coleridge's reading. In certain flourishes (such as the sentence we have quoted) and in chapter headings like 'The Shaping Spirit,' 'The Magical Synthesis,' 'Imagination Creatrix,' it may be that Professor Lowes pretends to say more about the actual poems than he does. There is a certain deceptive variation in these fancy chapter titles; one expects to pass on to a new stage in the argument, and one finds—more and more sources, more and more about 'the streamy nature of association.'[8]

'Wohin der weg?' quotes Professor Lowes for the motto of his book. 'Kein Weg! Ins Unbetretene.' :Precisely because the way is *unbetreten*, we should say, it leads away from the poem. Bartram's *Travels* contains a good deal of the history of certain words and of certain romantic Floridian conceptions that appear in 'Kubla Khan'. And a good deal of that history has passed and was then passing into the very stuff of our language. Perhaps a person who read Bartram appreciates the poem more than one who has not. Or, by looking up the vocabulary of 'Kubla Khan' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, or by reading some of the other books there quoted, a person may know the poem better. But it would seem to pertain little to the poem to know that *Coleridge* had read Bartram. There is a gross body of life, or sensory and mental experience, which lies behind and in some sense causes every poem, but can never be and need not be known in the verbal and hence intellectual composition which is the poem. For all the objects of our manifold experience, for every unity, there is an action of the mind which cuts off roots, melts away context—or indeed we should never have objects or ideas or anything to talk about.

It is probable that there is nothing in Professor Lowes' vast book which could detract from anyone's appreciation of either *The Ancient Mariner* or 'Kubla Khan'. We next present a case where preoccupation with evidence of type (3) has gone so far as to distort a critic's view of a poem (yet a case not so obvious as those that abound in our critical journals).

In a well known poem by John Donne appears this quatrain :

> Moving of th' earth brings harmes and feares,
> Men reckon what it did and meant,
> But trepidation of the spheares,
> Though greater farre, is innocent.

A recent critic in an elaborate treatment of Donne's learning has written of this quatrain as follows :

> He touches the emotional pulse of the situation by a skilful allusion to the new and the old astronomy. . . Of the new astronomy, the 'moving of the earth' is the most radical principle; of the old, the 'trepidation of the spheres' is the motion of the greatest complexity. . . . . The poet must exhort his love to quietness and calm upon his departure ; and for this purpose the figure based upon the latter motion (trepidation), long absorbed into the traditional astronomy, fittingly suggests the tension of the moment without arousing the 'harmes and feares' implicit in the figure of the moving earth.[9]

The argument is plausible and rests on a well substantiated thesis that Donne was deeply interested in the new astronomy and its repercussions in the theological realm. In various works Donne shows his familiarity with Kepler's *De Stella Nova,* with Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius,* with William Gilbert's *De Magnete,* and with Clavius' commentary on the *De Sphaera* of Sacrobosco. He refers to the new science in his sermon at Paul's Cross and in a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer. In *The First Anniversary* he says the 'new philosophy calls all in doubt.' In the *Elegy on Prince Henry* he says that the 'least moving of the center' makes 'the world to shake.'

It is difficult to answer argument like this, and impossible to answer it with evidence of like nature. There is no reason why Donne might not have written a stanza in which the two kinds of celestial motion stood for two sorts of emotion at parting. And if we become full of astronomical ideas and see Donne only against the background of the new science, we may believe that he did. But the text itself remains to be dealt with, the analysable vehicle of a complicated metaphor. And one may observe: (1) that the movement of the earth according to the Copernican theory is a celestial motion, smooth and regular, and while it might cause religious or philosophic fears, it could not be associated with the crudity and earthiness of the kind of commotion which the speaker in the poem wishes to discourage; (2) that there is another moving of the earth, an earthquake, which has just these qualities and is to be associated with the tearfloods and sigh-tempests of the second stanza of the poem; (3) that 'trepidation' is an appropriate opposite of earthquake, because each is a shaking or vibratory motion; and 'trepidation of the spheres' is 'greater far' than an earthquake, but not much greater (if two such motions can be compared as to greatness) than the annual motion of the earth; (4) that reckoning what it 'did and meant' shows that the event has passed, like an earthquake, not like the incessant celestial movement of the earth. Perhaps a knowledge of Donne's interest in the new science may add another shade of meaning, an overtone to the stanza in question, though to say even this runs against the words. To make the geocentric and heliocentric antithesis the core of the metaphor is to disregard the English language, to prefer private evidence to public, external to internal.

V

If the distinction between kinds of evidence has implications for the historical critic, it has them no less for the contemporary poet and his critic. Or, since every rule for a poet is but another side of a judgement by a critic, and since the past is the realm of the scholar and critic, and the future and present that of the poet and the critical leaders of taste, we may say that the problems arising in literary scholarship from the intentional fallacy are matched by

others which arise in the world of progressive experiment.

The question of 'allusiveness,' for example, as acutely posed by the poetry of Eliot, is certainly one where a false judgement is likely to involve the intentional fallacy. The frequency and depth of literary allusion in the poetry of Eliot and others has driven so many in pursuit of full meanings to the *Golden Bough* and the Elizabethan drama that it has become a kind of commonplace to suppose that we do not know what a poet means unless we have traced him in his reading—a supposition redolent with intentional implications. The stand taken by F. O. Matthiessen is a sound one and partially forestalls the difficulty.

> If one reads these lines with an attentive ear and is sensitive to their sudden shifts in movement, the contrast between the actual Thames and the idealized vision of it during an age before it flowed through a megalopolis is sharply conveyed by that movement itself, whether or not one recognizes the refrain to be from Spenser.

Eliot's allusions work when we know them—and to a great extent even when we do not know them, through their suggestive power.

But sometimes we find allusions supported by notes, and it is a nice question whether the notes function more as guides to send us where we may be educated, or more as indications in themselves about the character of the allusions. 'Nearly everything of importance. . . that is apposite to an appreciation of "The Waste Land",' writes Matthiessen of Miss Weston's book, 'has been incorporated into the structure of the poem itself, or into Eliot's Notes.' And with such an admission it may begin to appear that it would not much matter if Eliot invented his sources (as Sir Walter Scott invented chapter epigraphs from 'old plays' and 'anonymous' authors, or as Coleridge wrote marginal glosses for *The Ancient Mariner*). Allusions to Donne, Webster, Marvell, or Baudelaire doubtless gain something because these writers existed, but it is doubtful whether the same can be said for an allusion to an obscure Elizabethan :

> The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
> Sweeney to Mrs Porter in the spring.

'Cf. Day, *Parliament of Bees*:' says Eliot,

> When of a sudden, listening, you shall hear,
> A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring
> Actaeon to Diana in the spring,
> Where all shall see her naked skin.

The irony is completed by the quotation itself; had Eliot, as is quite conceivable, composed these lines to furnish his own background, there would be no loss of validity. The conviction may grow as one reads Eliot's next note: 'I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.' The important word in this note—on Mrs Porter and her daughter who washed their feet in soda water—is 'ballad.' And if one should feel from the lines themselves their 'ballad' quality, there would be little need for the note. Ultimately, the inquiry must focus on the integrity of such notes as parts of the poem, for where they constitute special information about the meaning of phrases in the poem, they ought to be subject to the same scrutiny as any of the other words in which it is written. Matthiessen believes the notes were the price Eliot 'had to pay in order to avoid what he would have considered muffling the energy of his poem by extended connecting links in the text itself.' But it may be questioned whether the notes and the need for them are not equally muffling. F. W. Bateson has plausibly argued that Tennyson's 'The Sailor Boy' would be better if half the stanzas were omitted, and the best versions of ballads like 'Sir Patrick Spens' owe their power to the very audacity with which the minstrel has taken for granted the story upon which he comments. What then if a poet finds he cannot take so much for granted in a more recondite context and rather than write informatively, supplies notes? It can be said in favour of this plan that at least the notes do not pretend to be dramatic, as they would if written in verse. On the other hand, the notes may look like unassimilated material lying loose beside the poem, necessary for the meaning of the verbal symbol, but not integrated, so that the symbol stands incomplete.

We mean to suggest by the above analysis that whereas notes tend to seem to justify themselves as external indexes to the author's *intention*, yet, they ought to be judged like any other parts of a composition (verbal arrangement special to a particular context), and when so judged their reality as parts of the poem, or their imaginative integration with the rest of the poem, may come into question. Mathiessen, for instance, sees that Eliot's titles for poems and his epigraphs are informative apparatus, like the notes. But while he is worried by some of the notes and thinks that Eliot 'appears to be mocking himself for writing the note at the same time that he want's to convey something by it,' Mathiessen believes that the 'device' of epigraphs 'is not at all open to the objection of not being sufficiently structural.' 'The *intention*,' he says, 'is to enable the poet to secure a condensed expression in the poem itself.' 'In each case the epigraph is designed to form an integral part of the effect of the poem.' And Eliot himself, in his notes, has justified his poetic practice in terms of intention.

> The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways : because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V.... The man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

And perhaps he is to be taken more seriously here, when off guard in a note, than when in his Norton Lectures he comments on the difficulty of saying what a poem means and adds playfully that he thinks of prefixing to a second edition of *Ash Wednesday* some lines from *Don Juan* :

> I don't pretend that I quite understand
> My own meaning when I would be very fine;
> But the fact is that I have nothing planned
> Unless it were to be a moment merry.

If Eliot and other contemporary poets have any characteristic fault, it may be in *planning* too much.

Allusiveness in poetry is one of several critical issues by which we have illustrated the more abstract issue of intentionalism, but it may be for today the most important illustration. As a poetic practice allusiveness would appear to be in some recent poems an extreme corollary of the romantic intentionalist assumption, and as a critical issue it challenges and brings to light in a special way the basic premise of intentionalism. The following instance from the poetry of Eliot may serve to epitomize the practical implications of what we have been saying. In Eliot's 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' towards the end, occurs the line: 'I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each,' and this bears a certain resemblance to a line in a Song by John Donne, 'Teach me to heare Mermaides singing,' so that for the reader acquainted to a certain degree with Donne's poetry, the critical question arises: Is Eliot's line an allusion to Donne's? Is Prufrock thinking about Donne? Is Eliot thinking about Donne? We suggest that there are two radically different ways of looking for an answer to this question. There is (1) the way of poetic analysis and exegesis, which inquires whether it makes any sense if Eliot-Prufrock *is* thinking about Donne. In an earlier part of the poem, when Prufrock asks, 'Would it have been worth while,... To have squeezed the universe into a ball,' his words take half their sadness and irony from certain energetic and passionate lines of Marvell 'To His Coy Mistress.' But the exegetical inquirer may wonder whether mermaids considered as 'strange sights' (to hear them is in Donne's poem analogous to getting with child a mandrake root) have much to do with Prufrock's mermaids, which seem to be symbols of romance and dynamism, and which incidentally have literary authentication, if they need it, in a line of a sonnet by Gérard de Nerval. This method of inquiry may lead to the conclusion that the given resemblance between Eliot and Donne is without significance and is better not thought of, or the method may have the disadvantage of providing no certain conclusion. Nevertheless, we submit that this is the true and objective way of criticism, as contrasted to what the very uncertainty of exegesis might tempt a second kind of critic to undertake: (2) the way of biographical or genetic inquiry, in which, taking advantage of the fact that Eliot is still alive, and in the

spirit of a man who would settle a bet, the critic writes to Eliot and asks what he meant, or if he had Donne in mind. We shall not here weigh the probabilities—whether Eliot would answer that he meant nothing at all, had nothing at all in mind—a sufficiently good answer to such a question—or in an unguarded moment might furnish a clear and, within its limit, irrefutable answer. Our point is that such an answer to such an inquiry would have nothing to do with the poem 'Prufrock'; it would not be a critical inquiry. Critical inquiries, unlike bets. are not settled in this way. Critical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle.

NOTES

1 *Dictionary of World Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley (New York, 1942), pp. 326-29.
2 J. E. Spingarn, 'The New Criticism,' in *Criticism in America* (New York, 1924), pp. 24-25.
3 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, 'Intention,' in *American Bookman, I* (1944), pp. 41-48.
4 It is true that Croce himself in his *Ariosto, Shakespeare and Corneille* (London, 1920), chap. VII, 'The Practical Personality and the Poetical Personality,' and in his *Defence of Poetry* (Oxford, 1933), p. 24, and elsewhere, early and late, has delivered telling attacks on emotive geneticism, but the main drive of the Aesthetic is surely towards a kind of cognitive intentionalism.
5 See Hughes Mearns, *Creative Youth* (Garden City, 1925), esp. pp. 10, 27-29. The technique of inspiring poems has apparently been outdone more recently by the study of inspiration in successful poets and other artists. See, for instance, Rosamond E. M. Harding, *An Anatomy of Inspiration* (Cambridge, 1940); Julius Portnoy, *A Psychology of Art Creation* (Philadelphia, 1942); Rudolf Arnheim and others, *Poets at Work* (New York, 1947); Phyllis Bartlett, *Poems in Process* (New York, 1951), Brewster Ghiselin (ed.), *The Creative Process: A Symposium* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952).
6 Curt Ducasse, *The Philosophy of Art* (New York, 1929), p. 116.
7 And the history of words *after* a poem is written may contribute meanings which if relevant to the original pattern should not be ruled out by a scruple about intention.
8 Chaps. VIII, 'The Pattern,' and XVI, 'The Known and Familiar Landscape,' will be found of most help to the student of the poem.
9 Charles M. Goffin, *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (New York, 1927), pp. 97-98.

MYTH, FICTION, AND DISPLACEMENT

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'MYTH' is a conception which runs through many areas of contemporary thought : anthropology, psychology, comparative religion, sociology, and several others. What follows is an attempt to explain what the term means in literary criticism today. Such an explanation must begin with the question : why did the term even get into literary criticism? There can be only one legitimate answer to such a question : because myth is and has always been an integral element of literature, the interest of poets in myth and mythology having been remarkable and constant since Homer's time.

There are two broad divisions of literary works, which may be called the fictional and the thematic. The former comprises works of literature with internal characters. and includes novels, plays, narrative poetry, folk tales, and everything that tells a story. In thematic literature the author and the reader are the only characters involved : this division includes most lyrics, essays, didactic poetry and oratory. Each division has its own type of myth, but we shall be concerned here with only the fictional part of literature, and with myth in its more common and easily recognized form as a work of literature.

When a critic deals with a work of literature, the most natural thing for him to do is to freeze it, to ignore its movement in time and look at it as a completed pattern of words, with all its parts existing simultaneously. This approach is common to nearly all types of critical techniques : here new and old-fashioned critics are at one. But in the direct experience of literature, which is something distinct from criticism, we are aware of what we may call the persuasion of continuity, the power that keeps us turning the pages of a novel and that holds us in our seats at the theatre. The continuity may be logical, or pseudo-logical, or psychological, or rhetorical : it may reside in the surge and thunder of epic verse or in some donkey's carrot like the identity of the murderer in a detective story or the first sexual act of the heroine in a romance. Or we

may feel afterwards that the sense of continuity was pure illusion, as though we had been laid under a spell.

The continuity of a work of literature exists on different rhythmical levels. In the foreground, every word, every image, even every sound made audibly or inaudibly by the words, is making its tiny contribution to the total movement. But it would take a portentous concentration to attend to such details in direct experience : they belong to the kind of critical study that is dealing with a simultaneous unity. What we are conscious of in direct experience is rather a series of larger groupings, events and scenes that make up what we call the story. In ordinary English the word 'plot' means this latter sequence of gross events. For a term that would include the total movement of sounds and images, the word 'narrative' seems more natural than 'plot', though the choice is a matter of usage and not of inherent correctness. Both words translate Aristotle's *mythos*, but Aristotle meant mainly by *mythos* what we are calling plot : narrative, in the above sense, is closer to his *lexis*. The plot, then, is like the trees and houses that we focus our eyes on through a train window : the narrative is more like the weeds and stones that rush by in the foreground.

We now run into a curious difficulty. Plot, Aristotle says, is the life and soul of tragedy (and by implication of fiction generally) : the essence of fiction, then, is plot or *imitation* of action, and characters exist primarily as functions of the plot. In our direct experience of fiction we feel how central is the importance of the steady progression of events that holds and guides our attention. Yet afterwards, when we try to remember or think about what we have seen, this sense of continuity is one of the most difficult things to recapture. What stands out in our minds is a vivid characterization, a great speech or striking image, a detached scene, bits and pieces of unusually convincing realization. A summary of a plot, say of a Scott novel, has much the same numbing effect on a hearer as a summary of last night's dream. That is not how we remember the book ; or at least not why we remember it. And even with a work of fiction that we know thoroughly, such as *Hamlet*, while we keep in mind a sequence of scenes, and know that the ghost comes at the beginning and the duel with Laertes at the end, still there is something oddly discontinuous about our possession of it.

With the histories this disappearance of continuity is even more striking. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* is an invaluable reference work largely because it is so good at summarizing all the fictional plots that one has forgotten but here is its summary of *King John*.

> The play, with some departures from historical accuracy, deals with various events in King John's reign, and principally with the tragedy of young Arthur. It ends with the death of John at Swinstead Abbey. It is significant that no mention of Magna Carta appears in it. The tragic quality of the play, the poignant grief of Constancé, Arthur's mother, and the political complications depicted, are relieved by the wit, humour, and gallantry of the Bastard of Faulconbridge.

This is, more or less, how we remember the play. We remember Faulconbridge and his great speech at the end; we remember the death scene of Prince Arthur; we remember Constance; we remember nothing about Magna Carta; we remember in the background the vacillating, obstinate, defiant king. But what *happened* in the play? What were the incidents that made it an imitation of an action? Does it matter? If it doesn't matter, what becomes of the principle that characters exist for the sake of the action, the truth of which we felt so vividly while watching the play? If it does matter, are we going to invent some silly pedantic theory of unity that would rule out *King John* as legitimate drama?

Whatever the final answer, we may tentatively accept the principle that, in the direct experience of fiction continuity is the centre of our attention; our later memory, or what I call the possession of it, tends to become discontinuous. Our attention shifts from the sequence of incidents to another focus: a sense of what the work of fiction was all about, or what criticism usually calls its theme. And we notice that as we go on to study and reread the work of fiction, we tend, not to reconstruct the plot, but to become more conscious of the theme, and to see all incidents as manifestations of it. Thus the incidents themselves tend to remain, in our critical study of the work, discontinuous, detached from one another and

regrouped in a new way. Even if we know it by heart this is still true, and if we are writing or lecturing on it, we usually start with something other than its linear action.

Now in the conception 'theme,' as in the conception 'narrative,' there are a number of distinguishable elements. One of them is 'subject,' which criticism can usually express by some kind of summarized statement. If we are asked what Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is about, we say that it is about—that is, its subject is—the Salem witch trials. Similarly, the subject of *Hamlet* is Hamlet's attempt at revenge on an uncle who has murdered his father and married his mother. But the Olivier movie of *Hamlet* began with the statement (quoted from an unreliable memory): 'This is the story of a man who could not make up his mind.' Here is a quite different conception of theme; it expresses the theme in terms of what we may call its allegorical value. To the extent that it is an adequate statement of the theme of *Hamlet*, it makes the play into an allegory and the chief character into a personification of Indecision. In his illuminating study of *The Ancient Mariner*, Robert Penn Warren says that the poem is written out of, and about, the general belief that the truth is implicit 'in the poetic act as such, that the moral concern and the aesthetic concern are aspects of the same activity, and that this activity is expressive of the whole mind.' Here again is allegorization, of a kind that takes the theme to be what Aristotle appears to have meant primarily by *dianoia*, the 'thought' or sententious reflexion that the poem suggests to a meditative reader.

It seems to me that a third conception of 'theme' is possible, less abstract than the subject and more direct than an allegorical translation. It is also, however, a conception for which the primitive vocabulary of contemporary criticism is ill adapted. Theme in this third sense is the *mythos* or plot examined as a simultaneous *unity*, when the entire shape of it is clear in our minds. In *Anatomy of Criticism* I use *dianoia* in this sense: an extension of Aristotle's meaning, no doubt, but in my opinion a justifiable one. The theme, so considered, differs appreciably from the moving plot: it is the same in substance, but we are now concerned with the details in relation to a unity, not in relation to suspense and linear progres-

sion. The unifying factors assume a new and increased importance, and the smaller details of imagery, which may escape conscious notice in direct experience, take on their proper significance. It is because of this difference that we find our memory of the progression of events dissolving as the events regroup themselves around another centre of attention. Each event or incident, we now see, is a manifestation of some underlying unity, a unity that it both conceals and reveals, as clothes do the body in *Sartor Resartus*.

Further, the plot or progress of events as a whole is also a manifestation of the theme, for the same story (i.e. theme in our sense) could be told in many different ways. It is, of course impossible to say how extensive the changes in detail would have to be before we had a different theme, but they can be surprisingly extensive. Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale* is a folk tale that started in India and must have reached Chaucer from some West-European source. It also stayed in India, where Kipling picked it up and put it into the Second Jungle Book. Everything is different—setting, details, method of treatment—yet I think any reader, on whatever level of sophistication, would say that it was recognizably the same 'story'—story as theme, that is, for the linear progression is what is different. More often we have only smaller units in common, of a kind that students of folklore call motifs. Thus in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* we have the motif of the two heroines, one dark and one light, that we have in *Ivanhoe* and elsewhere; in *Lycidas* we have the motif of the 'sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe,' the red or purple flower that turns up everywhere in pastoral elegy, and so on. These smaller units I have elsewhere called archetypes, a word which has been connected since Plato's time with the sense of a pattern or model used in creation.

In most works of fiction we are at once aware that the *mythos* or sequence of events which holds our attention is being shaped into a unity. We are continually, if often unconsciously, attempting to construct a larger pattern of simultaneous significance out of what we have so far read or seen. We feel confident that the beginning implies an end, and that the story is not like the soul in natural theology, starting off at an arbitrary moment in time and going on forever. Hence we often keep on reading even a tiresome

novel 'to see how it turns out.' That is, we expect a certain point near the end at which linear suspense is resolved and the unifying shape of the whole design becomes conceptually visible. This point was called *anagnorisis* by Aristotle, a term for which recognition is a better rendering than 'discovery.' A tragic or comic plot is not a straight line : it is a parabola following the shapes of the mouths on the conventional masks. Comedy has a U-shaped plot, with the action sinking into deep and often potentially tragic complications, and then suddenly turning upward into a happy ending. Tragedy has an inverted U, with the action rising in crisis to a peripety and then plunging downward to catastrophe through a series of recognitions, usually of the inevitable consequences of previous acts. But in both cases what is recognized is seldom anything new; it is something which has been there all along, and which, by its reappearance or manifestation, brings the end into line with the beginning.

Recognition, and the unity of theme which it manifests, is often symbolized by some kind of emblematic object. A simple example is the sixteenth century play, *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* the action of which is largely a great to-do over the loss of the needle, and which ends when a clown named Hodge gets it stuck in his posterior, bringing about what *Finnegans Wake* would call a culious epiphany. Fans, rings, chains and other standard props of comedy are emblematic talismans of the same kind. Nearly always, however, such an emblem has to do with the identification of a chief character. Birthmarks and their symbolic relatives have run through fiction from Odysseus' scar to the scarlet letter, and from the brand of Cain to the rose tattoo. In Greek romance and its descendants we have infants of noble birth exposed on a hillside with birth-tokens beside them; they are found by a shepherd or farmer and brought up in a lower station of life, and the birth-tokens are produced when the story has gone on long enough. In more complex fiction the emblem may be an oblique comment on a character, as with Henry James's golden bowl; or, if it is only a motif, it may serve as what T. S. Eliot calls an objective correlative.

In any case, the point of recognition seems to be also a point of identification, where a hidden truth about something or somebody emerges into view. Besides the emblem, the hero may discover who

his parents or children are. or he may go through some kind of ordeal (*basanos*) that manifests his true character, or the villain may be unmasked as a hypocrite, or, as in a detective story, identified as a murderer. In the Chinese play *The Chalk Circle* we have almost every possible form of recognition in the crucial scene. A concubine bears her master a son and is then accused of having murdered him by the wife, who has murdered him herself, and who also claims the son as her own. The concubine is tried before a foolish judge and condemned to death, then tried again before a wise one, who performs an experiment in a chalk circle resembling that of the judgment of Solomon in the Bible, and which proves that the concubine is the mother. Here we have : (*a*) the specific emblematic device which gives the play its name; (*b*) an ordeal or test which reveals character; (*c*) the reunion of the mother with her rightful child; and (*d*) the recognition of the true moral natures of concubine and wife. There are several other elements of structural importance, but these will do to go on with.

So far, however, we have been speaking of strictly controlled forms, like comedy, where the end of the linear action also manifests the unity of the theme. What shall we find if we turn to other works where the author has just let his imagination go? I put the question in the form of this very common phrase because of the way that it illustrates a curious critical muddle. Usually, when we think of 'imagination' psychologically, we think of it in its Renaissance sense as a faculty that works mainly by association and outside the province of judgment. But the associative faculty is not the creative one, though the two are frequently confused by neurotics. When we think of imagination as the power that produces art, we often think of it as the designing or structural principle in creation, Coleridge's 'esemplastic' power. But imagination in this sense left to itself, can only design. Random fantasy is exceedingly rare in the arts, and most of what we do have is a clever simulation of it. From primitive cultures to the *tachiste* and action paintings of today, it has been a regular rule that the uninhibited imagination, in the structural sense, produces highly conventionalized art.

This rule implies, of course, that the main source of inhibitions

is the need to produce a credible or plausible story, to come to terms with things as they are and not as the story-teller would like them to be for his convenience. Removing the necessity for telling a credible story enables the teller to concentrate on its structure, and when this happens, characters turn into imaginative projections, heroes becoming purely heroic and villains purely villainous. That is, they become assimilated to their functions in the plot. We see this conventionalizing of structure very clearly in the folk tale. Folk tales tell us nothing credible about the life or manners of any society; so far from giving us dialogue, imagery or complex behaviour, they do not even care whether their characters are men or ghosts or animals. Folk tales are simply abstract story-patterns, uncomplicated and easy to remember, no more hampered by barriers of language and culture than migrating birds are by customs officers, and made up of interchangeable motifs that can be counted and indexed.

Nevertheless, folk tales form a continuum with other literary fictions. We know, vaguely, that the story of Cinderella has been retold hundreds of thousands of times in middle-class fiction, and that nearly every thriller we see is a variant of Bluebeard. But it is seldom explained why even the greatest writers are interested in such tales : why Shakespeare put a folk-tale motif into nearly every comedy he wrote; why some of the most intellectualized fiction of our day, such as the later works of Thomas Mann, are based on them. Writers are interested in still-life arrangements : because they illustrate essential principles of storytelling. The writer who uses them then has the technical problem of making them sufficiently plausible or credible to a sophisticated audience. When he succeeds, he produces, not realism, but a distortion of realism in the interests of structure. Such distortion is the literary equivalent of the tendency in painting to assimilate subject-matter to geometrical form, which we see both in primitive painting and in the sophisticated primitivism of, say, Leger or Modigliani.

What we see clearly in the folk tale we see less clearly in popular fiction. If we want incident for its own sake, we turn from the standard novelists to adventure stories, like those of Rider Haggard or John Buchan, where the action is close to if not actually across

the boundary of the credible. Such stories are not looser or more flexible than the classical novels, but far tighter. Gone is all sense of the leisurely acquiring of incidental experience, of exploring all facts of a character, of learning about a specific society. A hazardous enterprise is announced at the beginning and everything is rigorously subordinated to that. In such works, while characters exist for the sake of the action, the two aspects of the action which we have defined as plot and theme are very close together. The story could hardly have been told in any other narrative shape, and our attention has so little expanding to do when it reaches the recognition that we often feel that there would be no point in reading it a second time. The subordination of character to linear action is also a feature of the detective story, for the fact that one of the characters is capable of murder is the concealed clue on which every detective story turns. Even more striking is the subordinating of moral attitude to the conventions of the story. Thus in Robert Louis Stevenson's tale, *The Body-Snatcher*, which is about the smuggling of corpses from cemeteries into medical classrooms, we read of bodies being 'exposed to uttermost indignities before a class of gaping boys,' and much more to the same effect. It is irrelevant to inquire whether this is really Stevenson's attitude to the use of cadavers in medical study or whether he expects it to be ours. The more sinister the crime can be felt to be, the more thrilling the thriller, and the moral attitude is being deliberately talked up to thicken the atmosphere.

The opposite extreme from such conventionalized fiction is represented by Trollope's *Last Chronicle of Barset*. Here the main story line is a kind of parody of a detective novel—such parodies of suspense are frequent in Trollope. Some money has been stolen, and suspicion falls on the Reverend Josiah Crawley, curate of Hogglestock. The point of the parody is that Crawley's character is clearly and fully set forth, and if you imagine him capable of stealing money you are simply not attending to the story. The action, therefore, appears to exist for the sake of the characters, reversing Aristotle's axiom. But this is not really true. Characters still exist only as functions of the action, but in Trollope the 'action' resides in the huge social panorama that the linear events

build up. Recognition is continuous : it is in the texture of characterization, the dialogue and the comment itself, and needs no twist in the plot to dramatize a contrast between appearance and reality. And what is true of Trollope is roughly true of most mimetic fiction between Defoe and Arnold Bennett. When we read Smollett or Jane Austen or Dickens, we read them for the sake of the texture of characterization, and tend to think of the plot, when we think of it at all, as a conventional, mechanical, or even (as occasionally in Dickens) absurd contrivance included only to satisfy the demands of the literary market.

The requirement of plausibility, then, has the apparently paradoxical effect of limiting the imagination by making its design more flexible. Thus in a Dutch realistic interior the painter's ability to render the sheen of satin or the varnish of a lute both limits his power of design (for a realistic painter cannot, like Braque or Juan Gris, distort his object in the interest of pictorial composition) and yet makes that design less easy to take in at a glance. In fact we often 'read' Dutch pictures instead of looking at them, absorbed by their technical virtuosity but unaffected by much conscious sense of their total structure.

By this time the ambiguity in our word 'imagination' is catching up with us. So far we have been using it in the sense of structural power which, left to itself, produces rigorously predictable fictions. In this sense Bernard Shaw spoke of the romances of Marie Corelli as illustrating the triumph of imagination over mind. What is implied by 'mind' here is less a structural than a reproductive power, which expresses itself in the texture of characterization and imagery. There seems no reason why this should not be called imagination too : in any case, in reading fiction there are two kinds of recognition. One is the continuous recognition of credibility, fidelity to experience, and of what is not so much lifelikeness as lifeliveliness. The other is the recognition of the identity of the total design, into which we are initiated by the technical recognition in the plot.

The influence of mimetic fiction has thrown the main emphasis in criticism on the former kind of recognition. Coleridge, as is well known, intended the climax of the *Biographia Literaria* to be a

demonstration of the 'esemplastic' or structural nature of the imagination, only to discover when the great chapter arrived that he was unable to write it. There were doubtless many reasons for this, but one was that he does not really think of imagination as a constructive power at all. He means by imagination what we have called the reproductive power, the ability to bring to life the texture of characterization and imagery. It is to this power that he applies his favourite metaphor of an organism, where the unity is some mysterious and elusive 'vitality.' His practical criticism of work he admires is concerned with texture: he never discusses the total design, or what we call the theme, of a Shakespeare play. It is really fancy which is his 'esemplastic' power, and which he tends to think of as mechanical. His conception of fancy as a mode of memory, emancipated from time and space and playing with fixities and definities, admirably characterizes the folk tale, with its remoteness from society and its stock of interchangeable motifs. Thus Coleridge is in the tradition of critical naturalism, which bases its values on the immediacy of contact between art and nature that we continuously feel in the texture of mimetic fiction.

There is nothing wrong with critical naturalism, as far as it goes, but it does not do full justice to our feelings about the total design of a work of fiction. We shall not improve on Coleridge, however, by merely reversing his perspective, as T. E. Hulme did, and giving our favourable value-judgements to fancy, wit, and highly conventionalized forms. This can start a new critical trend, but not develop the study of criticism. In the direct experience of a new work of fiction we have a sense of its unity which we derive from its persuasive continuity. As the work becomes more familiar, this sense of continuity fades out, and we tend to think of it as a discontinuous series of episodes, held together by something which eludes critical analysis. But that this unity is available for critical study as well seems clear when it emerges as a unity of 'theme,' as we call it, which we can study all at once, and to which we are normally initiated by some crucial recognition in the plot. Hence we need a supplementary form of criticism which can examine the total design of fiction as something which is neither mechanical nor of secondary importance.

By a myth, as I said at the beginning, I mean primarily a certain type of story. It is a story in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity. Very seldom is it located in history : its action takes place in a world above or prior to ordinary time, in *illo tempore,* in Mircea Eliade's phrase. Hence, like the folk tale, it is an abstract story-pattern. The characters can do what they like, which means what the story-teller likes : there is no need to be plausible or logical in motivation. The things that happen in myth are things that happen only in stories; they are in a self-contained literary world. Hence myth would naturally have the same kind of appeal for the fiction writer that folk tales have. It presents him with a ready-made framework, hoary with antiquity, and allows him to devote all his energies to elaborating its design. Thus the use of myth in Joyce or Cocteau, like the use of folk tale in Mann, is parallel to the use of abstraction and other means of emphasizing design in contemporary painting; and a modern writer's interest in primitive fertility rites is parallel to a modern sculptor's interest in primitive woodcarving.

The differences between myth and folk tale, however, also have their importance. Myths, as compared with folk tales, are usually in a special category of seriousness : they are believed to have 'really happened,' or to have some exceptional significance in explaining certain features of life, such as ritual. Again, whereas folk tales simply interchange motifs and develop variants, myths show an odd tendency to stick together and build up bigger structures. We have creation myths, fall and flood myths, metamorphosis and dying-god myths, apocalyptic myths; and writers of sacred scriptures or collectors of myth like Ovid tend to arrange these in a series. And while myths themselves are seldom historical, they seem to provide a kind of containing form of tradition, one result of which is the obliterating of boundaries separating legend, historical reminiscence, and actual history that we find in Homer and the Old Testament.

As a type of story, myth is a form of verbal art, and belongs to the world of art, and unlike science, it deals, not with the world that man contemplates, but with the world that man creates. The total form of art, so to speak, is a world whose content is nature

but whose form is human; hence when it 'imitates' nature it assimilates nature to human forms. The world of art is human in perspective, a world in which the sun continues to rise and set long after science has explained that its rising and setting are illusions. And myth, too, makes a systematic attempt to see nature in human shape : it does not simply roam at large in nature like the folk tale.

The obvious conception which brings together the human form and the natural content in myth is the god. It is not the connexion of the stories of Phaethon and Endymion with the sun and moon that makes them myths, for we could have folk tales of the same kind : it is rather their attachment to the body of stories told about Apollo and Artemis which gives them a canonical place in the growing system of tales that we call a mythology. And every developed mythology tends to complete itself, to outline an entire universe in which the 'gods' represent the whole of nature in humanized form, and at the same time show in perspective man's origin, his destiny, the limits of his power, and the extension of his hopes and desires. A mythology may develop by accretion, as in Greece or by rigorous codifying and the excluding of unwanted material, as in Israel ; but the drive towards a verbal circumference of human experience is clear in both cultures.

The two great conceptual principles which myth uses in assimilating nature to human form are analogy and identity. Analogy establishes the parallels between human life and natural phenomena, and identity conceives of a 'Sun-god' or a 'tree-god.' Myth seizes on the fundamental element of design offered by nature—the cycle, as we have it daily in the sun and yearly in the seasons—and assimilates it to the human cycle of life, death, and (analogy again) rebirth. At the same time the discrepancy between the world man lives in and the world he would like to live in develops a dialectic in myth which, as in the New Testament and Plato's *Phaedo*, separates reality into two contrasting states, a heaven and a hell.

Again, myths are often used as allegories of science or religion or morality : they may arise in the first place to account for a ritual or a law, or they may be *exempla* or parables which illustrate a particular situation or argument, like the myths in Plato or Achilles'

myth of the two jars of Zeus at the end of the Iliad. Once established in their own right, they may then be interpreted dogmatically or allegorically, as all the standard myths have been for centuries, in innumerable ways. But because myths are stories, what they 'mean' is inside them, in the implications of their incidents. No rendering of any myth into conceptual language can serve as a full equivalent of its meaning. A myth may be told and retold : it may be modified or elaborated, or different patterns may be discovered in it ; and its life is always the poetic life of a story, not the homiletic life of some illustrated truism. When a system of myths loses all connexion with belief, it becomes purely literary, as Classical myth did in Christian Europe. Such a development would be impossible unless myths were inherently literary in structure. As it makes no difference to that structure whether an interpretation of the myth is believed in or not, there is no difficulty in speaking of a Christian mythology.

Myth thus provides the main outlines and the circumference of a verbal universe which is later occupied by literature as well. Literature is more flexible than myth, and fills up this universe more completely : a poet or novelist may work in areas of human life apparently remote from the shadowy gods and gigantic story-outlines of mythology. But in all cultures mythology merges insensibly into, and with, literature. The Odyssey is to us a work of literature, but its early place in the literary tradition, the importance of gods in its action, and its influence on the later religious thought of Greece, are all features common to literature proper and to mythology, and indicate that the difference between them is more chronological than structural. Educators are now aware that any effective teaching of literature has to recapitulate its history and begin, in early childhood, with myths, folk tales and legends.

We should expect, therefore, that there would be a great many literary works derived directly from specific myths, like the poems by Drayton and Keats about Endymion which are derived from the myth of Endymion. But the study of the relations between mythology and literature is not confined to such one-to-one relationships. In the first place, mythology as a total structure, defining as it does a society's religious beliefs, historical traditions, cosmo-

logical speculations—in short, the whole range of its verbal expressiveness—is the matrix of literature, and major poetry keeps returning to it. In every age poets who are thinkers (remembering that poets think in metaphors and images, not in propositions) and are deeply concerned with the origin or destiny or desires of mankind—with anything that belongs to the larger outlines of what literature can express—can hardly find a literary theme that does not coincide with a myth. Hence the imposing body of explicitly mythopoeic poetry in the epic and encyclopaedic forms which so many of the greatest poets use. A poet who accepts a mythology as valid for belief, as Dante and Milton accepted Christianity, will naturally use it; poets outside such a tradition turn to other mythologies as suggestive or symbolic of what might be believed, as in the adaptations of Classical or occult mythological systems made by Goethe, Victor Hugo, Shelley, or Yeats.

Similarly, the structural principles of a mythology, built up from analogy and identity, become in due course the structural principles of literature. The absorption of the natural cycle into mythology provides myth with two of these structures; the rising movement that we find in myths of spring or the dawn, of birth, marriage and resurrection, and the falling movement in myths of death, metamorphosis, or sacrifice. These movements reappear as the structural principles of comedy and tragedy in literature. Again, the dialectic in myth that projects a paradise or heaven above our world and a hell or place of shades below it reappears in literature as the idealized world of pastoral and romance and the absurd, suffering, or frustrated world of irony and satire.

The relation between myth and literature, therefore, is established by studying the genres and conventions of literature. Thus the convention of the pastoral elegy in *Lycidas* links it to Virgil and Theocritus, and thence with the myth of Adonis. Thus the convention of the foundling plot which is the basis of *Tom Jones* and *Oliver Twist*, goes back to Menandrine comedy formulas, thence to Euripides, and so back to such myths as the finding of Moses and Perseus. In myth criticism, when we examine the theme or total design of a fiction, we must isolate that aspect of the fiction which is conventional, and held in common with all other works of the

same category. When we begin, say, *Pride and Prejudice*, we can see at once that a story which sustains that particular mood or tone is most unlikely to end in tragedy or melodrama or mordant irony or romance. It clearly belongs to the category represented by the word 'comedy,' and we are not surprised to find in it the conventional features of comedy, including a foolish lover, with some economic advantages, encouraged by one of the parents, a hypocrite unmasked, misunderstandings between the chief characters eventually cleared up and happy marriages for those who deserve them. This conventional comic form is in *Pride and Prejudice* somewhat as the sonata form is in a Mozart symphony. Its presence there does not account for any of the merits of the novel, but it does account for its conventional, as distinct from its individual structure. A serious interest in structure. then, ought naturally to lead us from *Pride and Prejudice* to a study of the comic form which it exemplifies, the conventions of which have presented much the same features from Plautus to our own day. These conventions in turn take us back into myth. When we compare the conventional plot of a play of Plautus with the Christian myth of a son appeasing the wrath of a father and redeeming his bride, we can see that the latter is quite accurately described, from a literary point of view, as a divine comedy.

Whenever we find explicit mythologizing in literature, or a writer trying to indicate what myths he is particularly interested in, we should treat this as confirmatory or supporting evidence for our study of the genres and conventions he is using. Meredith's *The Egoist* is a story about a girl who narrowly escapes marrying a selfish man, which makes many references, both explicitly and indirectly in its imagery to the two best known myths of female sacrifice, the stories of Andromeda and Iphigeneia. Such allusions would be pointless or unintelligible except as indications by Meredith of an awareness of the conventional shape of the story he is telling. Again, it is as true of poetry as it is of myth that its main conceptual elements are analogy and identity, which reappear in the two commonest figures of speech, the simile and the metaphor. Literature, like mythology, is largely an art of misleading analogies and mistaken identities. Hence we often find poets, especially

young poets, turning to myth because of the scope it affords them, for uninhibited poetic imagery. If Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* had been simply a story about a willing girl and an unwilling boy, all the resources of analogy and identity would have been left unexplored: the fanciful imagery appropriate to the mythical subject would have been merely tasteless exaggeration. Especially is this true with what may be called sympathetic imagery, the association of human and natural life:

> No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,
> But stole his blood and seem'd with him to bleed.

The opposite extreme from such deliberate exploiting of myth is to be found in the general tendency of realism or naturalism to give imaginative life and coherence to something closely resembling our own ordinary experience. Such realism often begins by simplifying its language, and dropping the explicit connexions with myth which are a sign of an awareness of literary tradition. Wordsworth, for example, felt that in his day Phoebus and Philomela were getting to be mere trade slang for the sun and the nightingale, and that poetry would be better to discard this kind of inorganic allusion. But, as Wordsworth himself clearly recognized, the result of turning one's back on explicit myth can only be the reconstructing of the same mythical patterns in more ordinary words:

> Paradise, and groves
> Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
> Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
> A history only of departed things,
> Or a mere fiction of what never was?
> For the discerning intellect of Man,
> When wedded to this goodly universe
> In love and holy passion, shall find these
> A simple produce of the common day.

To this indirect mythologizing I have elsewhere given the name of displacement. By displacement I mean the techniques a writer uses to make his story credible, logically motivated or normally acceptable—lifelike, in short. I call it displacement for many rea-

sons but one is that fidelity to the credible is a feature of literature that can affect only content. Life presents a continuum, and a selection from it can only be what is called a *tranche de vie*: plausibility is easy to sustain, but except for death life has little to suggest in the way of plausible conclusions. And even a plausible conclusion does not necessarily round out a shape. The realistic writer soon finds that the requirements of literary form and plausible content always fight against each other. Just as the poetic metaphor is always a logical absurdity, so every inherited convention of plot in literature is more or less mad. The king's rash promise, the cuckold's jealousy, the 'lived happily ever after' tag to a concluding marriage, the manipulated happy endings of comedy in general, the equally manipulated ironic endings of modern realism —none of these was suggested by any observation of human life or behaviour: all exist solely as story-telling devices. Literary shape cannot come from life; it comes only from literary tradition and so ultimately from myth. In sober realism, like the novels of Trollope, the plot, as we have noted, is often a parody plot. It is instructive to notice, too, how strong the popular demand is for such forms as detective stories, science fiction, comic strips, comic formulas like the P. G. Wodehouse stories, all of which are as rigorously conventional and stylized as the folk tale itself, works of pure 'esemplastic' imagination, with the recognition turning up as predictably as the caesura in minor Augustan poetry.

One difficulty in proceeding from this point comes from the lack of any literary term which corresponds to the word 'mythology.' We find it hard to conceive of literature as an order of words, as a unified imaginative system that can be studied whole by criticism. If we had such a conception, we could readily see that literature as a whole provides a framework or context for every work of literature, just as a fully developed mythology provides a framework or context for each of its myths. Further, because mythology and literature occupy the same verbal space, so to speak, the framework or context of every work of literature can be found in mythology as well, when its literary tradition is understood. It is relatively easy to see the place of a myth in a mythology, and one of the main uses of myth criticism is to enable us

to understand the corresponding place that a work of literature has in the context of literature as a whole.

Putting works of literature in such a context gives them an immense reverberating dimension of significance. (If anyone is worrying about value-judgments, I should add that establishing such a context tends to make the genuine work of literature sublime and the pinchbeck one ridiculous.) This reverberating significance, in which every literary work catches the echoes of all other works of its type in literature, and so ripples out into the rest of literature and thence into life, is often, and wrongly, called allegory. We have allegory when one literary work is joined to another, or to a myth, by a certain interpretation of meaning rather than by structure. Thus *The Pilgrim's Progress* is related allegorically to the Christian myth of redemption, and Hawthorne's story, *The Bosom Serpent,* is related allegorically to various moral serpents going back to the Book of Genesis. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible,* already mentioned, deals with the Salem witch trials in a way that suggested McCarthyism to most of its original audience. This relation in itself is allegorical. But if *The Crucible* is good enough to hold the stage after McCarthyism has become as dead an issue as the Salem trials, it would be clear that the theme of *The Crucible* is one which can always be used in literature, and that any social hysteria can form its subject matter. Social hysteria, however, is the content and not the form of the theme itself, which belongs in the category of the purgatorial or triumphant tragedy. As so often happens in literature, the only explicit clue to its mythical shape is provided by the title.

To sum up. In the direct experience of a new work of literature, we are aware of its continuity or moving power in time. As we become both more familiar with and more detached from it, the work tends to break up into a discontinuous series of felicities, bits of vivid imagery, convincing characterization, witty dialogue, and the like. The study of this belongs to what we have called critical naturalism or continuous recognition, the sense of the sharply focused reproduction of life in the fiction. But there was a feeling of unity in the original experience which such criticism does not recapture. We need to move from a criticism of 'effects' to what

we may call a criticism of causes, specifically the formal cause which holds the work together. The fact that such unity is available for critical study as well as for direct experience is normally symbolized by a crucial recognition, a point marking a real and not merely apparent unity in the design. Fictions like those of Trollope which appeal particularly to critical naturalism often play down or even parody such a device, and such works show the highest degree of displacement and the least conscious of explicit relationship to myth.

If, however, we go on to study the theme or total shape of the fiction, we find that it also belongs to a convention or category, like those of comedy and tragedy. With the literary category we reach a dead end, until we realize that literature is a recontructed mythology, with its structural principles derived from those of myth. Then we can see that literature is in a complex setting what a mythology is in a simpler one: a total body of verbal creation. In literature, whatever has a shape has a mythical shape, and leads us towards the centre of the order of words. For just as critical naturalism studies the counterpoint of literature and life, words and things, so myth criticism pulls us away from 'life' towards a self-contained and autonomous literary universe. But myth, as we said at the beginning, means many things besides literary structure, and the world of words is not so self-contained and autonomous after all.

'DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY': MODERN SYMBOLIST READINGS OF LITERARY HISTORY

FRANK KERMODE

The primary pigment of poetry is the Image. (Blast)
The poetic myths are dead; and the poetic image, which is the myth of the individual, reigns in their stead. (C. Day Lewis)

WHEN the accounts come to be rendered, it may well appear to future historians that the greatest service done by early twentieth-century criticism to contemporary poetry has been this: it has shown poets a specially appropriate way of nourishing themselves from the past. It has shown them that their isolation, and their necessary preoccupation with the Image, do not cut them off from all their predecessors, and that there are ways of looking at the past which provide valuable insights into essentially modern possibilities and predispositions. The need was to bring literary history—and this involved other kinds of history too—to the support of the Image; to rewrite the history of poetry in Symbolist terms. The whole effort crystallized, in 1921, in Mr Eliot's famous announcement of the doctrine of the dissociation of sensibility, and although this was by no means so original an idea as it has been called, it will necessarily be at the centre of what I have to say about this extremely important phase of my subject.

The doctrine has lately been wilting under well directed criticism, though there is no doubt that it will continue whether under the same name or not, whether fallacious or not, to exert a powerful influence for a long time yet. My business here is merely to establish that it has a strong connexion with the development, in the present century, of the theory of the Image and to ask why it has had such success. What I say about its value as a key to literary history is really incidental to this.

Mr Eliot first used the expression 'dissociation of sensibility' in an essay on 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921), and his last

recorded comment upon the theory is in his British Academy lecture on Milton (1947). The first passage, as printed in *Selected Essays,* runs like this: Mr Eliot has been saying that the dramatic verse of the late Elizabethans and early Jacobeans 'expresses a degree of development of sensibility which is not found in any of the prose... In Chapman especially there is a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne...' He then compares a passage of Chapman's and one by Lord Herbert of Cherbury with bits of Tennyson and Browning, and comments:

> The difference is not a simple difference of degree between poets. It is something which had happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think: but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.
>
> We may express the difference by the following theory: The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino. In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden.

Observe that there are certain qualifications for poetry describ-

ed as operative now, though possessed by the poets of the seventeenth century and none since (until now?). There are other places in Mr Eliot's earlier criticism which amplify this statement, but we will content ourselves with his last pronouncement on the subject:

> I believe that the general affirmation represented by the phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' . . . retains some validity; but . . . to lay the burden on the shoulders of Milton and Dryden was a mistake. If such a dissociation did take place, I suspect that the causes are too complex and profound to justify our accounting for the change in terms of literary criticism. All we can say is, that something like this did happen; that it had something to do with the Civil War; that it would be unwise to say it was caused by the Civil War, but that it is a consequence of the same cause which brought about the Civil War; that we must seek the causes in Europe, not in England alone; and for what these causes were, we may dig and dig until we get to a depth at which words and concepts fail us.

In this passage Mr Eliot seems to be recommending, as desideratum, what had in fact already been done; for by 1947 supplementary enquiries into the dissociation had long ceased to be conducted entirely in terms of literary criticism. Almost every conceivable aspect of seventeenth-century life had been examined by scholars anxious to validate the concept, though it is true that the investigators were usually historians of literature by profession. In very general terms it might be said that the notion of a pregnant historical crisis, of great importance in every sphere of human activity, was attractive because it gave design and simplicity to history; and because it explained in a subtly agreeable way the torment and division of modern life. Feeling and thinking by turns, aware of the modern preference for intellect over imagination, a double-minded period measured itself by a serenely single-minded one. Poets tried again to be concrete, to charge their thinking with passion, to restore to poetry a truth independent of the presumptuous intellect. They looked admiringly to those early years of the seventeenth century when this was

normal, and the scholars attended them with explanations of why it was so, and why it ceased to be so. There was, I think, an implicit parallel with the Fall. Man's soul, since about 1650, had been divided against itself, and it would never be the same again —though correct education could achieve something.

It is a measure of Mr Eliot's extraordinary persuasiveness that thinkers in this tradition have for so long accepted the seventeenth century as the time of the disaster. As we see from his second pronouncement, he has himself stuck to this position, although he advises us to look back into earlier history for fuller explanations. Nor is his attitude difficult to understand; it is animated by a rich nostalgia for the great period of Anglican divinity, the period when the Church of England, beset on all sides by determined recusancy, confidently proposed itself as truly Catholic and apostolic—looking back, itself, to a vague past when the folly and arrogance of intellect had not yet begun the process of dissociating Christianity. This period ended with the Civil War, and the end of the first Anglo-Catholicism coincided with the end of an admired poetry and a great drama, both affected, to some extent, by ecclesiastically-determined attitudes, the drama remembering (but how faintly?) its devout origins, 'metaphysical poetry' the *concetto predicabile*. What happens is that the Civil War becomes a kind of allegory, with the Puritans as Pride of Intellect, and the King as Spiritual Unity.

The truth is that, if we look to Europe and not to England alone, we see that there was never much chance that the Church of England would be universally recognized as Catholic, and that 'something' had presumably 'happened' long before to predispose people against such recognition. And this is a characteristic situation. It is not merely a matter of wrong dates; however far back one goes one seems to find the symptoms of dissociation. This suggests that there is little historical propriety in treating it as a seventeenth-century event, even when the historian is serious and respectable enough not to assume that it really was an occurrence like, say, Pride's Purge, after which feeling disappeared from certain mental transactions, leaving a Rump of intellect with which we are still conducting our business. With more thoughtful chroniclers there is usually much emphasis on the dissociative

force of science, and on the un-dissociated condition of pre-Baconian and pre-Cartesian philosophy and theology. But it is easy enough to show that scientists were already under Elizabeth incurring odium and the suspicion of atheism for a variety of reasons, all coming in the end to the charge that they were setting nature against God. Bacon's position with respect to religious laws that were apparently contrary to reason is very similar to that of many philosophers, especially those affected by Averroes and the great Aristotelian tradition of Padua, from the thirteenth century onward, to Pomponazzi in the early sixteenth and to Cremonini, an influential teacher who was, incidentally, a friend of that very Lord Herbert of Cherbury who was used as an example of the un-dissociated poet. Obviously the rediscovery of Aristotle involved in some sense a dissociation of Christian thought, tending ultimately to some such escape-device as the 'double-truth' of Averroism, first condemned by a Church anxious to save rational theology, in the 1270s. And if we were to pursue the dissociation back into the past, we should find ourselves in Athens. Elizabethan 'atheism' was far more than a scientific issue; there was genuine anxiety, a real 'naturalist' movement widely affecting ethical and political conduct. Similarly, the condemnations of the 1270s referred not only to Averroism but to the book on love by Andreas Capellanus, and M. Gilson has spoken of 'a sort of polymorphic naturalism stressing the rights of pagan nature' as characteristic of the period as a whole. It would be quite as reasonable to locate the great dissociation in the sixteenth or the thirteenth century as in the seventeenth; nor would it be difficult to construct arguments for other periods. The truth may be that we shall never find a state of culture worth bothering about (from the literary point of view, that is) in which language is so primitive as to admit no thinking that is not numinous; in which there is no possibility of a naturalist assault on the society's beliefs. The Christian 'West' has never wanted to be as primitive even as the Song of Solomon, and its whole immense allegorical tradition is the result of applying intellectual instruments to the dissection of writings in which thought and feeling are, if they are anywhere, inseparable.

But it seems to me much less important that there was not, in

the sense in which Mr Eliot's supporters have thought, a particular and far-reaching catastrophe in the seventeenth century, than that there was, in the twentieth, an urgent need to establish the historicity of such a disaster. And the attempt to answer the question why there should have been takes us back to the Image. The theory of the dissociation of sensibility is, in fact, the most successful version of a Symbolist attempt to explain why the modern world resists works of art that testify to the poet's special, anti-intellectual way of knowing truth. And this attempt obviously involves the hypothesis of an age which was different, an age in which the Image was more readily accessible and acceptable.

When, in fact, the poets and aestheticians of the Image turn their attention to history, it is in search of some golden age when the prevalent mode of knowing was not positivist and anti-imaginative ; when the Image, the intuited, creative reality, was habitually respected; when art was not permanently on the defensive against mechanical systematic modes of enquiry. Since the order of reality postulated as the proper study of the poet tends, in one way or another, to be granted supernatural attributes, the ideal epoch is usually a religious one. Hence the medievalism or Byzantinism of Hulme and the Decadents, of Yeats and Henry Adams. Hulme, in particular—as we have seen—exposes the whole process; he has to go back, using Worringer as a guide, to a moment of crisis (using one that already existed for historians, but using it in a new way) and achieve the required antithesis between his two ages (undissociated and dissociated) by treating all thought between the Renaissance and his own time as of a piece. It was partly because this obviously would not do that the date of the crisis was moved on to 1650. But everybody in the tradition was agreed that there must have been such a crisis; it was necessary to their aesthetic, and the only point of dispute was its date.

There is a passage, to which I have already referred, in Pound's *Make It New*, that illuminates this aspect of the problem.

> When the late T. E. Hulme was trying to be a philosopher . . . and fussing about Sorel and Bergson . . . I spoke to him one

> day of the difference between Guido's precise interpretative metaphor, and the Petrarchian fustian and ornament, pointing out that Guido thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond to definite sensations undergone.... Hulme took some time over it in silence, and then finally said: 'That is more interesting than anything anyone ever said to me. It is more interesting than anything I ever read in a book.'

The only aspects of this odd interchange that I want to discuss are those which are relevant to what I am trying to say about the historiography of modern Symbolist aesthetics. One is that Pound is describing Cavalcanti as a poet of the integral image, and contrasting him with Petrarch, a poet of the ornamental image, the image appended to discourse, the flower stuck in sand. In the one there is 'a unification of thought and feeling;' in the other, a disssociation of them. Another is Hulme's reaction to what Pound said. The general idea could not have been unfamiliar to him; after all, it was the reason why he was fussing about Bergson. But a man is never more impressed by an argument than when it provides unexpected support for opinions he already holds, and Hulme could not have been less than charmed to discover that Petrarch, of all people—the First Man of that Renaissance he blamed so strenuously—already exhibited the symptoms of error that characterized the period, whereas Cavalcanti, an older contemporary of Dante, habituated to the hallowed concept of discontinuity, brought up on Original Sin, had precisely those Imagist qualities, that reluctance to glide away into abstraction, which for Hulme was the index of true poetry. Somewhere between Cavalcanti and Petrarch a dissociation of sensibility, it would seem, had set in; and from it, Hulme was willing to add, we have never recovered.

But we have now to remind ourselves that Mr Eliot claimed for the poets of the seventeenth century the very qualities of Dante, Cavalcanti, and Cino, and believed that the dissociation came after these later poets. It is not in the nature of the concept of dissociation that it should occur at random intervals, any more than it is of the Fall; only on some such theory as Yeats's can it occur more than once. What are we to conclude from this confusion?

The fact is that Mr Eliot's argument for a general dissociation that can be detected in art is meant to satisfy much the same need as Hulme's, and Yeats's. For Hulme, as we have seen, the Renaissance is the critical moment; men began to ignore the human limitations suggested by the doctrine of Original Sin, and nothing has been right since. Romanticism is just the new disease at the stage of mania. For Yeats the great moment in the present historical phase is 1550; for about a century before that there was a tense perfection, celebrated in some of his most splendid prose; but after that everything changed, art faced in the wrong direction, the artist became more and more an exile. In fact Yeats's history is written in terms of this doctrine, written in a world that offended him socially and imaginatively, a world of 'shopkeeping logicians,' the very existence of which he had to explain by exhaustive glosses on every conceivable aspect of the idea of dissociation. My own belief is that Yeats's expression of the whole aesthetic-historical complex is by far the most satisfactory and, in terms of poetry, the most fruitful. But the immediate point is that all these writers search history for this critical moment, and because they share much the same poetic heritage, they are all looking for much the same kinds of rightness and wrongness in historical periods. They seek, in short, a historical period possessing the qualities they postulate for the Image: unity, indissociability; qualities which, though passionately desired, are, they say, uniquely hard to come by in the modern world. That poets and critics so diverse in personality as Pound, Hulme, Yeats and Eliot, should all have made such similar incursions into Symbolist historiography is testimony to the great pressure the idea of the Image has exerted in the formative phase of modern poetic. Mr Eliot's attempt, distinguished from the others by the accident of his personal concerns in theology, is not essentially different from them. It has only been more successful, partly because of his prestige and persuasive force, partly perhaps because of the growing scholarly tendency to medievalize the Renaissance, so that a later date for the split became more acceptable.

The fact remains that Mr Eliot's is the version that has had wide currency. Like the others, it is, as I have been trying to

show, quite useless historically. It will not do to say that it is partly true, or true in a way, as some people now claim. A once-for-all event cannot happen every few years; there cannot be, if the term is to retain the significance it has acquired, dissociations between the archaic Greeks and Phidias, between Catullus and Virgil, between Guido and Petrarch, between Donne and Milton. As a way of speaking about periods the expression is much less useful than even 'baroque'. At its worst, it is merely a way of saying which poets one likes, and draping history over them. At its best it is an interesting primitivism, looking for an unmodern virtue, not as the noble savage was sought in the impossibly remote past or in Tahiti, but in Christian Europe right up to some moment in, or shortly after, what is vaguely called the Renaissance. The most deplorable consequence of the doctrine is that the periods and poets chosen to illustrate it are bound to receive perverse treatment; you must misrepresent them if you propose to make them justify a false theory. If the theory helps to produce good poetry (as it did) this is not worth complaining about, provided that it dies when this work is accomplished. But this theory shows every sign of surviving, and it is therefore a matter of importance to show how it has distorted Donne and Milton, the two poets most affected by it. Once again, the astonishing degree of distortion imposed here is a measure of the power generated by the Image in modern poetic.

Milton and Donne have been involved in an unhappy relationship (existing only in the fantasies of historians) which has seemed to mean that one of them has to be occulted to enable the other to be lit. Milton was to be put out—though it may be noted that Mr Eliot's change of opinion about Donne was followed by an upward revision of his estimate of Milton. At the time when Donne was being admired for thinking passionately, Milton was being despised for writing monuments to dead ideas in a dead language. Milton, self-conscious postlapsarian that he was, obstinately thought and discoursed about feeling, divorcing the body and soul, the form and matter, of the image. Donne, writing before the same Fall, had his intellect at the tip of his senses.

Superficially this argument was attractive because it gave major status to an obscure poet whose diction was inartificial, even colloquial, and who lived in times supposed to be very like modern times, in that the established order was already being threatened by those 'naturalistic' forces which eventually dissociated sensibility. There is, of course, a contradiction here: Donne is admired because he was deeply troubled by the new philosophy, and also because he was lucky enough to live just before it became really troublesome. There is also an error of fact: Donne alludes frequently enough to the 'new philosophy,' but nobody who has examined these allusions in their context can seriously believe he was much put out by it, and considering his religious views it would indeed be surprising if he had been. It might have been useful to the dissociationist argument if somebody had been prepared to capitalize this point, by way of emphasizing Donne's pre-dissociation status; but there seems to have been a heavy commitment to the view that Donne was important to modern poets because of the ways in which his world resembled theirs, as well as because it was completely different from theirs, As usual, the history is feeble. But pure criticism has had very similar difficulties: Miss Tuve's now famous demonstration that Donne's images have a logical, or at any rate a pseudo-logical function, was a direct affront to the basis of the theory that he was a poet of the modern Image; but it can scarcely have surprised anybody who had read Donne open-eyed and seen how much he depends on dialectical conjuring of various kinds, arriving at the point of wit by subtle syllogistic misdirections, inviting admiration by slight but totally destructive perversities of analogue, which re-route every argument to paradox. Some of this Mr Eliot perhaps felt when he prematurely prophesied the demise of Donne during the tercentenary celebrations of 1931, and showed how far he had gone towards excluding Donne from the category of unified sensibility, saying outright that in him 'there is a manifest fissure of thought and sensibility.' Donne is, to say the least, of doubtful value to the Symbolist theory—less use than the poetic and critical experiments of some of his European contemporaries might have been. At first glance, one might be excused for wondering how Donne ever got mixed up with

the theory of dissociation; the explanation of course lies in nineteenth-century thought.

Mr F. W. Bateson, in a very important critique of the theory, has noticed in passing how little separates Mr Eliot's formula from the conventional nineteenth-century view, which he exemplifies by Stopford Brooke's opinion that the Restoration saw the end 'of a poetry in which emotion always accompanied thought.' And something like this view can in fact be found in Coleridge. But after Grosart's edition of 1872 some people were already noticing that Donne wrote poems in which the note of passion, the true voice of feeling, was audible despite the fact that they were love poems unpromisingly couched in terms of alchemy, astronomy and law. It was this discovery of the true voice of feeling in such surroundings that led to what was in effect a late Romantic glorification of Donne. This was contemporary with the assimilation of the parallel but more important phenomenon of French Symbolism—in short, with the emergence of the modern Image as it was understood by Symons (a great champion of Donne and the Jacobean drama), and those who came under his influence: Yeats, and later Pound and Eliot. One can watch the older thought-and-feeling formula developing from a Romantic into a characteristically Symbolist hypothesis. George Eliot, who knew Donne by the time she wrote *Middlemarch*, assumes like her master Wordsworth that the true voice comes from artists of higher organic sensibility than other men, but can write in that novel—doubtless unconscious of her role as critical pioneer—that the poet is 'quick to discern' but also 'quick to feel' because he possesses 'a soul in which knowledge passes instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge.'

This period of transition is greatly illuminated in a paper recently published by Mr J. E. Duncan in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy*. Anyone who has used the Victorian editions upon which much of our reading in seventeenth century poetry still depends must have occasionally felt that there was some hallucinatory resemblance between certain observations made by the enthusiastic clerical editors and those of Mr Eliot. Mr Duncan had collected a great deal of evidence to show, not

only that Donne was well and truly revived long before Eliot's essays, and indeed Grierson's edition, but that even 70 years ago people were talking about the poet in what we recognize as the modern way. By 1911, Courthope, in his *History*, was already complaining that it had probably gone too far. Grierson's great edition of the following year was accepted as merely setting the seal on Donne's reputation. But what is more interesting than this mere setting back of the starting post is the terminology in which the Victorian critics, pleased with their rediscovery of the conceit and of hard-thinking poetry, devised in order to praise the Metaphysical poets. They speak of its intellectual cunning *and* its power of 'sensibility' and then, quite early, we find ourselves approaching, with a sort of unconscious inevitability, the modern formula which combines these two qualities as two sides of a coin. Grosart says that Crashaw's thinking 'was so emotional as almost always to tremble into feeling;' Cowley's thought is 'made to pulsate with feeling.' Symons finds that Donne's 'senses speak with unparallelled directness;' Schelling that Donne's contribution to the English lyric was 'intellectualized emotion.' Poets began to find Donne-like qualities in their own work; in so doing, Francis Thompson spoke of his own 'sensoriness instinct with mind,' and the parallel was supported by Symons and by Mrs Meynell. The familiar comparison between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries began as early as 1900; after that it was easy to play the game of parallel poets, and both Brooke and Bridges were credited with resemblances to Donne. Gosse and Grierson alike saw the similarity between Donne and Baudelaire, and briefly hinted at the parallel between English-Jacobean and French-Symbolist which was to later to prove so fertile. Arthur Symons in fact developed the parallel to a considerable extent; he is the link between nineteenth- and twentieth-century orthodoxies of the Image, and of Donne and the seventeenth century.

Long before the great edition of Grierson, which made Donne relatively easy to read, and long before Mr Eliot's phrase had its remarkable success in the world, powerful aesthetic interests were being satisfied by the conversion of a little-known poet into an English Laforgue; and the same interests demanded a catastrophic start to the modern world shortly after the death of

Donne, and before *Paradise Lost*, that great dissociated poem which you must, said Mr Eliot, read once for the meaning and once for the verse, and which is therefore of no use either to that illiterate audience he desiderates for his unified Symbolist poetry, or for the next best thing, a highly cultivated audience that also likes its art undissociated. The strangest irony in all this—and it is all I have to say about the second of these perverted poets—is that Milton, rather exceptionally, actually believed in and argued for the unity of the soul (a continuum of mind and sense), allowed his insistence on the inseparability of form and matter to lead him into heresy; and believed that poetry took precedence over other activities of the soul because it was simple (undissociated by intellect), sensuous and passionate. But this did not matter; there were overriding reasons why Milton had to be bent or broken. He was the main sufferer in the great experiment of projecting on to an historical scale a developed Romantic-Symbolist theory of the Image. And although, as Mr Bateson has shown, Mr Eliot borrowed the phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' from Gourmont's peculiar account of the processes of poetry in the mind of an individual (specifically Laforgue) and applied it to the history of a nation's poetry, it is obvious that behind the theory there is the whole pressure of the tradition I have been discussing. The historical effort of Symbolism has been to identify a period happily ignorant of the war between Image and discourse, an un-dissociated age. In the end, it is not of high importance that any age selected for this role is likely to be found wanting, except of course for the tendency to exclude particular poets and periods from the canon. Hulme could never have justified his selection; Pound was driven to Chinese, and a dubious theory of ideograms; Yeats believed his own theory only in a specially qualified way, admitting that its importance lay in the present and not in the past. This is true of Mr Eliot also. The essays in which he proposed his theory represent a most fruitful and effective refinement of the Symbolist doctrine, yielding far more than Symons's, for instance, similar though they are in essentials. To attack his position has usually seemed to mean an assault on what most people are content to regard as the main tradition of modern verse.

One such attack, that of Mr Yvor Winters, seems to me both extremely intelligent and extremely revealing and it carries me on to the last phase of this essay, a cursory glance at the contemporary relation between Image and discourse. Mr Winters looks for inconsistencies in Mr Eliot's criticism, so that he can defend his own position, which is notoriously not a fashionable one. He insists that art is a statement of an understood experience, which it morally evaluates; and that poetry has, in consequence, the same *kind* of meaning as a cruder statement of the same sort, so that one would expect it to be paraphrasable. This position is, of course, frankly opposed to a cherished Symbolist doctrine, and Mr Winters is therefore very hostile to some of Eliot's opinions. For example, the famous sigh for an illiterate audience (analogous, by the way, to Yeats's desire for illiterate actors, and really a hopeless wish for an audience incapable of discourse and so cut off from intellection's universe of death) simply fans Winter's indignation, as does the cognate doctrine that meaning is only the burglar's bait for the housedog of intellect. So, when Eliot writes, in the beautiful essay on Dante, that 'clear visual images are given much more intensity by having a meaning—we do not need to know what the meaning is, but in our awareness of the image we must be aware that the meaning is there too,' and when Mr Winters bullies him about this, we have a clear picture of the fundamental opposition between a Romantic-Symbolist criticism and a criticism conscientiously in reaction against it. Mr Eliot says that a poem can be understood before its 'meaning' is taken, 'though the 'meaning' is not without importance. Winters replies: 'If the meaning is important in the creation of the poem, at any rate, it is foolish to suppose that one can dispense with it in the reading of the poem or that the poet did not take his meaning seriously. Only the frailest barrier exists between the idea of this passage and Poe's theory that the poet should lay claim to a meaning when he is aware of none.'

It is no use saying that Mr Winters has simply misunderstood; he knows very well what Eliot means, as he shows when he traces Eliot's theory of necessary disorder in modern art to Romantic doctrines of organic form, and speaks of *The Waste*

Land and *The Cantos* as belonging to the art of revery. He understands the roots of these poems, and even goes so far as to call Pound 'a sensibility without a mind,' which is, if nothing else, a very just punishment upon abusers of the word 'sensibility'. Mr Winters, as we should expect, is eccentric in his choice of major modern poets, but he is nevertheless the only critic of any fame who can take for granted the history of the kind of poetry and criticism he is opposed to. In the essay on Eliot he bases a very important argument upon a revealing sentence which is hidden away in the introduction to the *Anabasis* of St. Jean Perse: 'There is a logic of the imagination as well as a logic of concepts.' (We, I hope, understand what this means, and can see how sharply such a belief separates the modern from the 'Metaphysical' poet.) It is hard to resist Winters' argument that here 'the word *logic* is used figuratively,' that it indicates nothing but 'qualitative progression,' 'graduated progression of feeling.' Yet for all that the argument is false. It indicated no *progression* of any sort. Time and space are exorcised; the emblem of this 'logic' is the Dancer. This misunderstanding, slight as it seems, shows that the difference between these two critics is extremely wide. If you want to mean something, says Mr Winters, you must mean it in the usual way; in other words, form is not significant. But to Mr Eliot, and to many others, this is an admission that the speaker has no real notion at all of what art is. 'People who do not appreciate poetry,' says Mr Eliot, 'always find it difficult to distinguish between order and chaos in the arrangement of images.' But Mr Winters does appreciate poetry. The truth is that he is an anti-Symbolist critic, and this necessarily puts him in opposition to most of his countenance of *all* science and, as George Eliot called it, an aesthetic teacher. Since he does not believe that it deals in a different order of truth he has not the same difficulties about language, communication and paraphrase as the critics who oppose him.

I draw attention in this sketchy way to Mr Winters, because he leads us to an understanding of what is one of the main issues of modern poetic. This is the unformulated quarrel between the orthodoxy of Symbolism and the surviving elements of an empirical-utilitarian tradition which, we are assured, is characteris-

tically English. Yeats had a foot in both camps, the one stubbornly holding to the commonalty of the means of discourse and seeking to define those differences of degree which distinguish poetry, the other talking about images (sometimes indeed forgetting about words and their temporal behaviour altogether, or treating them as physical things like bits of string) and taking poetry to be a different kind of thing, different mode of cognition, involving, at least as a working hypothesis, a different order of reality from any available to ordinary intellection. The difficulty of the first party is to find some way of talking about poetry and its propositions that does not disqualify it from the serious attention of *honnêtes gens*; for example, Richards's 'pseudo-statement' is asking for trouble, Wellek's theory of genre is too technical. On the other side, nobody can any longer (in the present state of semantics) be so offhand about the linguistic problems of the Image as the French Symbolists were. Indeed a good deal of the best modern criticism is interesting as evidence of the oscillations and tensions in the minds of critics between the claims of the Image and the claims of ordinary discourse.

These tensions are visible also in poetry, and it is possible that in the controlling of them the immediate future of our poetry lies, as well as our criticism and ways of looking at the past. At the moment, perhaps, the movement of the thirties away from aesthetic monism, the new insistence on the right to discourse, even to say such things as 'We must love one another or die' (as Auden does in an exquisite poem) has ceased. There are good poets who cultivate a quasi-philosophical tone of meditation, but they are careful to have no design upon us, to place their meditation within the confines of reverie; there are others who prefer the ironies of stringently mechanical forms; but no Auden, nobody who wants, apparently, to go that way; and this is a pity. Recently Wallace Stevens has come to be more widely read in this country, and he is a poet who provides a unique, perhaps unrepeatable, solution to the image-and-discourse problem, by making the problem itself the subject of poems :

> Is the poem both peculiar and general?
> There's a meditation there, in which there seems

To be an evasion, a thing not apprehended or
Not apprehended well. Does the poet
Evade us, as in a senseless element?

Evade us, this hot, dependent orator,
The spokesman at our bluntest barriers,
Exponent by a form of speech, the speaker

Of a speech only a little of the tongue?

One thing Stevens insists upon, and no poet is now likely to forget it: it is a lesson that Romantic aesthetic has taught once and for all. The poem is

Part of the *res* and not i self about it.
The poet speaks the poem as it is,
Not as it was.

Only by knowing this can the poet be 'the necessary angel of the earth.' The sentiment is Blake's but it has become everybody's; yet Stevens's answer to the problem—it is the problem of dissociation—though very complete, and achieving in the late poem called 'The Rock' a most moving comprehensiveness, is not available to all poets, and they must seek their own.

Stevens's problems are the problems also of modern criticism (in its way and of necessity almost as obscure as the poetry). The unique power of the poet, however one describes it, is to make images or symbols, however one understands these,—as somehow visual, or, in the tradition of the new semantics, as the neologisms created by shifting contexts. How are these products related to discourse? Is there any way to talk of poetry without breaking up the monad and speaking of thought and image?

The one thing nearly everybody seems to be agreed upon is that the work of art has to be considered as a whole, and that considerations of 'thought' must be subordinated to a critical effort to see the whole as one image; the total work is not *about* anything—'a poem should not mean but *be*'—which is simply a vernacular way of saying what modern critics mean when they speak of it as 'autotelic' (they even speculate as to whether criticism is not also autotelic—the critic as artist once more). Put as simply as this, the position is not much changed since Mal-

larme : 'nul vestige d'une philosophie, l'éthique ou la métaphysique, ne transparaitra; j'ajoute qu'il faut incluse et latente... le chant jaillit de source innée, anté-rieure à un concept.' And many of the practical difficulties encountered by the holism of French Symbolism recur in modern critics. Take, for example, the problem which must sometimes arise, of what is the whole work of art. Is it the 'Voyage à Cythère' or is it the whole of *Les fleurs du Mal*? Is it 'They that have power to hurt' or the whole collection of Shakespeare's Sonnets? Professor Lehmann considers the first of these problems in his *Symbolist Aesthetic*. and seems to decide that the proper course is to take one poem at a time, since we know that *Les Fleurs du Mal* is not 'really a poem with a decisive organization overall' but 'poems loosely strung on a string of predominating attitude.' But how, it might be asked, can we be sure of this without trying 'the experiment of reading the whole book as a poem? Where do we get this important bit of information, which determines the whole question in advance? Certainly, on the purist view, from some illicit source —a knowledge of Baudelaire's intention. This may seem very extreme; but on the contrary it turns up with the regularity of an orthodoxy. We are told to read the whole of Shakespeare as one work. Mr Wilson Knight reads all the Sonnets as one poem; he won his spurs by pioneering the Symbolist criticism of the plays, and is the most thoroughgoing of the holist Symbolist critics, unless we dare to say that Mr Eliot, in his most famous essay, invites us to treat the whole of literature as one work.

There is a problem here, inherent in the Symbolist approach to poetry, which deserves more serious treatment than it gets, since it concerns the definition of what critics are talking about. In practice, of course, they cut the knot in silence, and assume the discontinuity of the poem they happen to be talking about, and even, for the purposes of exposition, talk about parts of poems as if they were wholes (just as they slyly paraphrase). Occasionally they even justify this practice. Mr W. K. Wimsatt has several good things to say about the problem in his book *The Verbal Icon*, for instance this:

Extreme holism is obviously contrary to our experience of lite-

rature. (We do not wait until the end of the play or novel to know whether the first scene or chapter is brilliant or dull—no long work in fact would ever be witnessed or read if this were so.) A poem, said Coleridge, the father of holism in English criticism, is a composition which proposes 'to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part.' The value of 'a whole poem, while undoubtedly reflecting something back to the parts, has to grow out of parts which are themselves valuable. *The Rape of the Lock* would not come off were not the couplets witty. We may add that good poems may have dull parts; bad poems, bright parts. How minutely this principle could be urged without arriving at a theory of Longinian 'sudden flashes,' of 'cathartically charged images,' of Arnoldian touchstones, of poetic diction, or of irrelevant local texture, I do not know. Nor what the minimal dimension of wit or local brilliance of structure may be; nor to what extent a loosely constructed whole may be redeemed by the energy of individual chapters or scenes. Yet the validity of partial value as a general principle in tension with holism seems obvious.

Something might be said against this defence of *litérature*, for the 'spatial' view of works of art, and it is worth considering that there are modern works (*Ulysses* is an obvious example) which are deliberately, and for long stretches, extremely tedious, and without any brilliance of local texture. Yet what Mr Wimsatt says is satisfactory to common sense, and in fact modern holist criticism is closely related, so far as poetry is concerned, to that other Symbolist article which sets up the lyric poem as the norm, so that for the most part only short poems get the full treatment.

Even so, the question of how to treat partial aspects continues to rise and trouble practical critics, and occasionally provides new insights. Mr Empson, for example, has developed a habit of referring regularly to the whole work in the discussions of its parts; Mr Ransom has raised a whole theory upon the assertion that the value of 'texture' resides precisely in its irrelevance to the structural concern of the poem, and he is further heretical

in allowing no poem to be without some embodied 'prose discourse', providing the logical relevance denied to the 'texture.' Mr Winters is right, I think, when he calls this an embarrassing doctrine, holding that Ransom 'does not know what to do with the rational content, how to account for it or evaluate it.' (Mr Winters of course does know this.) To put the matter so baldly is, of course, to do wrong to Mr Ransom's intense though urbane effort to solve an important problem; but my object here is merely to insist that the problem arises quite naturally out of the attempt (which must be made in any modern poetic) to find a place for discourse in a Symbolist poetry. Ransom accepts most of the Symbolist position,—he calls the poetry of the Image 'physical' and the poetry of discourse 'Platonic'—right down to the psychological theory of the artist as isolated or inhibited from action (the check on action he calls 'sensibility') and without a radical reorientation there is simply no room for discourse in the work of art so conceived. The problem comes up again in the associated criticism of Allen Tate. He also believes that art 'has no useful relation to ordinary forms of action,' and accepts a distinction similar to that of Ransom, finding the virtue of poetry in the *tension* between idea and image, or between abstraction and concretion, or between discourse and the symbol which can have no logical relation to it.

Such formulations, however fruitful they may be in the exegesis which stems from them (and it is arguable that they are not fruitful in this way at all) have the disadvantages, as well as the benefits, of their Romantic-Symbolist heritage. Mr R. W. Stallman, in his useful account of these critics asks us to distinguish between their 'formalism' and 'the aestheticism of the nineties;' but the differences are by no means as decisive as he suggests, and if one were able to construct a normal modern poetic it would be unlikely to contain much, apart from its semantic content, to surprise Arthur Symons. It is true that a new school of critics, the Chicago 'neo-Aristotelians,' are directing us back to the *Poetics* and away from that preoccupation with metaphor (the rhetorical vehicle of the Image) which is an essential component of modern poetic, but one can truly say, without comment on the quality of this criticism, that from the standpoint

of modern orthodoxy, it is clearly tainted with heresy, the heresy of abstraction. What still prevails is the Symbolist conception of the work of art as aesthetic monad, as the product of a mode of cognition superior to, and different from, that of the sciences. Any alternative is likely to be treated as heretical—dubbed, for instance, 'ornamentalist,' as degrading the status of the Image, and leading to another 'dissociation', another over-valuation of ideas in poetry similar to that effected by Hobbes. One result of this orthodoxy is that the practical business of criticim becomes enormously strenuous, despite the technical facilities provided by Richards and Empson; and that there is a good deal of what must be called cheating, for example in the matter of paraphrase. Good modern criticism is much more eclectic in method than most theoretical pronouncements suggest; it must not seem to believe in paraphrase (or, sometimes, in any form of historical approach to the work in question), yet these and similar forbidden techniques are in fact frequently employed. It may be said that the strenuousness, as well as the obscurity, of such modern criticism, is a direct consequence of its Symbolist inheritance.

The effects of this inheritance may be traced also, so far as I know them, in the philosopher-aestheticians whom critics tend to take notice of (it would not be easy to say why they take notice of some and not of others). There are naturally many variations; but, to take two recent books. the 'concrete universal' as proposed by Mr Wimsatt is the same thing as the Symbol of Mrs Langer under a slightly different aspect. Mrs Langer's is comfortably traditional in design, if not in execution. It starts from music, where the definition of symbol as 'articulate but non-discursive form' does not raise the same problems of 'content' and 'ideas' as it does in literature; so far she shares the 'aestheticism' of the 'nineties.' (It is interesting, by the way, to find her quoting with approval a passage from Arthur Michel about the dance which would have pleased Mallarmé and Symons and Yeats—the dancer is conceived as oscillating between two external poles of tension, thus transplanting the dancing body from the sensually existing atmosphere of materialism and real space into the symbolic supersphere of tension space;' and he speaks of 'the dissolution of the dancer into swaying tension').

When she arrives at the problem of the discursive content of poems, Mrs Langer's answer is that 'the poet uses discourse to create an illusion, a pure appearance, which is a non-discursive symbolic form.' She distinguishes between this position and that of 'pure poetry' as formulated by Moore and Bremond, accurately calling the latter's a magical solution; it is magical in so far as it is Symbolist, and so, perhaps, in its different way, is hers. But her's is distinguished further by arduous and delightful discriminations. She gives modified approval to Mr Pottle's view that 'Poetry should be no purer than the purpose demands,' but calls it a philosophical makeshift; exposes the mass of unphilosophical thinking that vitiates most attempts to distinguish between poetry and non-poetry, and argues that to maintain its interest in life poetry has to traffic with 'serious thought.' But 'the framework of subject-matter' becomes part of the symbolic whole; something has to be done to it, it must, in the Croce-Collingwood sense, be 'expressed', and it will then be part of the work of art which is 'a single indivisible symbol, although a highly articulated one.'

Mrs Langer has undoubtedly found a place for 'discourse' in her 'symbol'—so necessary, when the art is one which uses words—and the success of her books is probably an advance towards the dissociation of Romantic-Symbolist aesthetic from the anti-intellectualism with which it has been so persistently and inevitably associated from the beginning, and so potently since Rimbaud. An age of criticism, for so we tend to think of our epoch, is comforted by the assurance that reason can somehow get at poems, and that criticism itself should not be the autotelic act that Wilde as well as some later critics argued it must be (and as it indeed must, if art is the symbol by definition inexplicable). 'The situation,' says Mr Wimsatt, 'is something like this : In each poem there is something (an individual intuition—or a concept) which can never be expressed in other terms. It is like the square root of two or like pi, which cannot be expressed by rational numbers, but only as their *limit*. Criticism of poetry is like 1.414 ... or 3.1416 ... not all it would be, yet all that can be had and very useful.'

And this is all the critic can expect. He cannot give up the

autonomy of the symbolic work of art, a concept of form which has been near the heart of criticism since Coleridge. And so he cannot expect ever to achieve finality in his own work; he is doomed to be limited, even if he remembers the symbolic origin of the diiscourse he is extracting for discussion. Not that a good critic would wish it otherwise; he is so accustomed to *defending* poetry on these very grounds, his way of thinking about poetry is, in fact, inclined to be defensive, and even when he is asserting poetry's unique powers there is likely to be a cautious anti-positivism in his tone. Reviewing Mr Philip Wheelwright's recent book *The Burning Fountain*, Mr M. H. Abrams points out that this excellent writer is 'a prisoner of the theory he opposes' because he accepts the opposition between scientific and expressive language. And Mr Abrams goes on to suggest, in a most sympathetic way, that we ought now to go over to the offensive. 'An adequate theory of poetry must be constructed, not by a strategy of defence and limited counter-attack on grounds chosen by a different discipline, but by a positive strategy specifically adapted to disclose the special ends and structures and values, not only of poetry as such, but of the rich diversity of individual poems. What is needed is not merely a "metagrammar" and a "paralogic". What is needed, and what the present yeasty ferment in criticism may well portend, is simply, a poetic.'

If such a poetic emerges it will still, of course, be symbolist; but it will have a different place for discourse from any found for it during the nineteenth-century struggle with the positivists. It will owe much to modern semantics, but it will not call the discourse of poetry 'pseudo-statement.' Nor will its differences from scientific statement be reduced to differences of degree; it will not become statement transfigured by impassioned expression. The new poetic would be remote from the radicalism of Blake, have little to do with the forlorn hopes of Mallarmé, and less with the disastrous *derèglement* of Rimbaud. We have perhaps learnt to respect order, and felt on our bodies the effect of irrationalism, at any rate when the sphere of action is invaded by certain elements of the Romantic *rêve*. It will be a waking poetic. respecting order. 'Shape' has no chance of interfering with 'form,' to use Coleridge's distinction; but among good poets it never

had. But 'reason' will return to poetics, and perhaps Mrs. Langer has shown how to find it a *modus vivendi* with the symbol. One notes also that Mr Wimsatt, as his title suggests, is willing to allow both meanings of 'symbol' to the words of poetry, I mean those of the Semasiologist and of the Romantic critic.

But in the end, of course, these matters are solved by poets and not by critics, That is why, I think, Yeats is so important in what I have been saying. He had a matured poet's concern for the relation of symbol to discourse. He understood that one pole of Symbolist theory is sacramentalism, whether Catholic or theurgic :

> Did God in portioning wine and bread
> Give man His thought, or his mere body?

and was willing to see in the discourse, whether of language or gesture, of the dedicated, symbolic values. He, as we have seen, most fully worked out the problems of the Image and of the nature of the poet's isolation; he understood the importance of magic to Symbolist aesthetic; and he also found his solution to that most urgent problem of discourse, assuming that such a statement as 'The best lack all conviction,' in contact with the vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi,* puts on the knowledge with the power of that image. So the slaves of time, the non-poets, will find a validity in his symbolic poems that is, for them, absent from the pure poetry of the dream. They share with the poet not only Great Memory, but also the ordinary syntax of the daily life of action. 'Yeats's sun may be full of angles hymning Jehovah, but it is also a disc shaped somewhat like a guinea. This is not the dissociation of image that is complained of; it is an admission that art was always made for men who habitually move in space and time, whose language is propelled onward by verbs, who cannot always be asked to respect the new enclosure laws of poetry, or such forbidding notices as 'No road through to action.' Somehow, and probably soon, the age of dissociation—which is to say, the age that invented and developed the concept of dissociation—must end.

STRUCTURE, SIGN, AND PLAY IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

JACQUES DERRIDA

Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an 'event', if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural—or structuralist—thought to reduce or to suspect. But let me use the term 'event' anyway, employing it with caution and as if in quotation marks. In this sense, this event will have the exterior form of a *rupture* and a *redoubling*.

It would be easy enough to show that the concept of structure and even the word 'structure' itself are as old as the *epistèmè*—that is to say, as old as western science and western philosophy —and that their roots thrust deep into the soil of ordinary language, into whose deepest recesses the *epistèmè* plunges to gather them together once more, making them part of itself in a metaphorical displacement. Nevertheless, up until the event which I wish to mark out and define, structure—or rather the structurality of structure—although it has always been involved, has always been neutralized or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin. The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure—one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure—but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *freeplay* of the structure. No doubt that by orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the free-play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself.

Nevertheless, the center also closes off the freeplay it opens up and makes possible, *Qua* center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. At the center, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structure enclosed within a structure)

is forbidden. At least this permutation has always remained *interdicted* (I use this word deliberately). Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it. The center is at the center of the totality and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality) the totality *has its center elsewhere.* The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure—although it represents coherence itself, the condition of the *epistèmè* as philosophy or science—is contradictorily coherent. And, as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire. The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay based on a fundamental ground, a freeplay which is constituted upon a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of the freeplay. With this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game, of being as it were from the very beginning at stake in the game. From the basis of what we therefore call the center (and which, because it can be either inside or outside, is as readily called the origin as the end, as readily *archè* as *telos*), the repetitions, the substitutions, the transformations, and the permutations are always *taken* from a history of meaning (*sens*)—that is, a history, period—whose origin may always be revealed or whose end may always be anticipated in the form of presence. This is why one could perhaps say that the movement of any archeology, like that of any eschatology, is an accomplice of this reduction of the structurality of structure and always attempts to conceive of structure from the basis of a full presence which is out of play.

If this is so, the whole history of the concept of structure, before the rupture I spoke of, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center, as a linked chain of determinations of the center. Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the center receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix—if you will pardon me for demonstrating so little and for being so ellipitical in order to

bring me more quickly to my principal theme—is the determination of being as *presence* in all the senses of this word. It would be possible to show that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated the constant of a presence—*eidos, archè, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *aletheia,* transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth.

The event I called a rupture, the disruption I alluded to at the beginning of this paper, would presumably have come about when the structurality of structure had to begin to be thought, that is to say, repeated, and this is why I said that this disruption was repetition in all of the senses of this word. From then on it became necessary to think the law which governed, as it were, the desire for the center in the constitution of structure and the process of signification prescribing its displacements and its substitutions for this law of the central presence—but a central presence which was never itself, which has always already been transported outside itself in its surrogate. The surrogate does not substitute itself for anything which has somehow pre-existed it. From then on it was probably necessary to begin to think that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a being-present, that the center had no natural locus, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This moment was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse—provided we can agree on this word—that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification *ad infinitum.*

Where and how does this decentering, this notion of the structurality of structure, occur? It would be somewhat naïve to refer to an event, a doctrine, or an author in order to designate this occurrence. It is no doubt part of the totality of an era, our own, but still it has already begun to proclaim itself and begun to *work.* Nevertheless, if I wished to give some sort of indication by choosing one or two 'names,' and by recalling those authors in whose discourses this occurrence has most nearly maintained

its most radical formulation, I would probably cite the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, the critique of the concepts of being and truth, for which were substituted the concepts of play, interpretation, and sign (sign without truth present); the Freudian critique or self-presence, that is, the critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity and of self-proximity or self-possession; and, more radically, the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, of onto-theology, of the determination of being as presence. But all these destructive discourses and all their analogues are trapped in a sort of circle. This circle is unique. It describes the form of the relationship between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of the history of metaphysics. *There is no sense* in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics. We have no language—no syntax and no lexicon—which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest. To pick out one example from many: the metaphysics of presence is attacked with the help of the concept of the *sign*. But from the moment anyone wishes this to show, as I suggested a moment ago, that there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or the interplay of signification has, henceforth, no limit, he ought to extend his refusal to the concept and to the word sign itself—which is precisely what cannot be done. For the signification 'sign' has always been comprehended and determined, in its sense as sign-of, signifier referring to a signified, signifier different from its signified. If one erases the radical difference between signifier and signified, it is the word signifier itself which ought to be abandoned as a metaphysical concept. When Lévi-Strauss says in the preface to *The Raw and the Cooked* that he has 'sought to transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible by placing (himself) from the very beginning at the level of signs,' the necessity, the force, and the legitimacy of his act cannot make us forget that the concept of the sign cannot in itself surpass or bypass this opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. The concept of the sign is determined by this opposition: through and throughout the totality of its history and by its system. But we cannot do without the concept of the sign, we cannot give up this metaphysical complicity without also giving up the critique

we are directing against this complicity, without the risk of erasing difference (altogether) in the self-identity of a signified reducing into itself its signifier, or, what amounts to the same thing, simply expelling it outside itself. For there are two heterogenous ways of erasing the difference between the signifier and the signified: one, the classic way, consists in reducing or deriving the signifier, that is to say, ultimately in *submitting* the sign to thought; the other, the one we are using here against the first one, consists in putting into question the system in which the preceding reduction functioned: first and foremost, the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible. The *paradox* is that the metaphysical reduction of the sign needed the opposition it was reducing. The opposition is part of the system, along with the reduction. And what I am saying here about the sign can be extended to all the concepts and all the sentences of metaphysics, in particular to the discourse on 'structure'. But there are many ways of being caught in this circle. They are all more or less naïve, more or less empirical, more or less systematic, more or less close to the formulation or even to the formalization of this circle. It is these differences which explain the multiplicity of destructive discourses and the disagreement between those who make them. It was within concepts inherited from metaphysics that Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger worked, for example. Since these concepts are not elements or atoms and since they are taken from a syntax and a system, every particular borrowing drags along with it the whole of metaphysics. This is what allows these destroyers to destroy each other reciprocally—for example, Heidegger considering Nietzsche, with as much lucidity and rigor as bad faith and misconstruction, as the last metaphysician, the last 'Platonist'. One could do the same for Heidegger himself, for Freud, or for a number of others. And today no exercise is more widespread.

What is the relevance of this formal schéma when we turn to what are called the 'human sciences'? One of them perhaps occupies a privileged place—ethnology. One can in fact assume that ethnology could have been born as a science only at the moment when a de-centering had come about: at the moment when European culture—and, in consequence, the history of metaphysics and of its concepts—had been *dislocated,* driven from its locus, and forced to stop considering itself as the culture of

reference. This moment is not first and foremost a moment of philosophical or scientific discourse, it is also a moment which is political, economic, technical, and so forth. One can say in total assurance that there is nothing fortuitous about the fact that the critique of ethnocentrism—the very condition of ethnology—should be systematically and historically contemporaneous with the destruction of the history of metaphysics. Both belong to a single and same era.

Ethnology—like any science—comes about within the element of discourse. And it is primarily a European science employing traditional concepts, however much it may struggle against them. Consequently, whether he wants to or not—and this does not depend on a decision on his part—the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he is employed in denouncing them. This necessity is irreducible; it is not a historical contingency. We ought to consider very carefully all its implications. But if nobody can escape this necessity, and if no one is therefore responsible for giving in to it, however little, this does not mean that all the ways of giving in to it are of an equal pertinence. The quality and the fecundity of a discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which this relationship to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought. Here it is a question of a critical relationship to the language of the human sciences and a question of a critical responsibility of the discourse. It is a question of putting expressly and systematically the problem of the status of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for the deconstruction of that heritage itself. A problem of *economy* and *strategy*.

If I now go on to employ an examination of the texts of Lévi-Strauss as an example, it is not only because of the privilege accorded to ethnology among the human sciences, nor yet because the thought of Lévi-Strauss weighs heavily on the contemporary theroretical situation. It is above all because a certain choice has made itself evident in the work of Lévi-Strauss and because a certain doctrine has been elaborated there, and precisely in a *more or less explicit manner*, in relation to this critique of language and to this critical language in the human sciences.

In order to follow this movement in the text of Lévi-Strauss, let me choose as one guiding thread among others the opposition

between nature and culture. In spite of all its rejuvenations and its disguises, this opposition is congenital to philosophy. It is even older than Plato. It is at least as old as the Sophists. Since the statement of the opposition—*physis/nomos, physis/technè* —it has been passed on to us by a whole historical chain which opposes 'nature' to the law, to education, to art, to technics—and also to liberty, to the arbitrary, to history, to society, to the mind, and so on. From the beginnings of his quest and from his first book, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship,* Lévi-Strauss has felt at one and the same time the necessity of utilizing this opposition and the impossibility of making it acceptable. In the *Elementary Structures,* he begins from this axiom or definition: that belongs to nature which is *universal* and spontaneous, not depending on any particular culture or on any determinate norm. That belongs to culture, on the other hand, which depends on a system of *norms* regulating society and is therefore capable of *varying* from one social structure to another. These two definitions are of the traditional type. But, in the very first pages of the *Elementary Structures,* Lévi-Strauss, who has begun to give these concepts an acceptable standing, encounters what he calls a *scandal,* that is to say, something which no longer tolerates the nature/culture opposition he has accepted and which seems to require *at one and the same time* the predicates of nature and those of culture. This scandal is the *incest-prohibition.* The incest-prohibition is universal; in this sense one could call it natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural.

> Let us assume therefore that everything universal in man derives from the order of nature and is characterized by spontaneity, that everything which is subject to a norm belongs to culture and presents the attributes of the relative and the particular. We then find ourselves confronted by a fact, or rather an ensemble of facts, which, in the light of the preceding definitions, is not far from appearing as a scandal: the prohibition of incest presents without the least equivocation, and indissolubly linked together, the two characteristics in which we recognized the contradictory attributes of two exclusive orders. The prohibition of incest constitutes a rule, but a rule, alone of all the social rules, which possesses at the same time a universal character (p. 9).

Obviously there is no scandal except in the *interior* of a system of concepts sanctioning the difference between nature and

culture. In beginning his work with the *factum* of the incest-prohibition, Lévi-Strauss thus puts himself in a position entailing that this difference, which has always been assumed to be self-evident, becomes obliterated or disputed. For, from the moment that the incest-prohibition can no longer be conceived within the nature/culture opposition, it can no longer be said that it is a scandalous fact, a nucleus of opacity within a network of transparent significations. The incest-prohibition is no longer a scandal one meets with or comes up against in the domain of traditional concepts; it is something which escapes these concepts and certainly precedes them—probably as the condition of their possibility. It could perhaps be said that the whole of philosophical conceptualization, systematically relating itself to the nature/culture opposition, is designed to leave in the domain of the unthinkable the very thing that makes this conceptualization possible: the origin of the prohibition of incest.

I have dealt too cursorily with this example, only one among so many others, but the example nevertheless reveals that language bears within itself the necessity of its own critique. This critique may be undertaken along two tracks, in two 'manners'. Once the limit of nature/culture opposition makes itself felt, one might want to question systematically and rigorously the history of these concepts. This is a first action. Such a systematic and historic questioning would be neither a philosophical nor a philosophical action in the classic sense of these words. Concerning oneself with the founding concepts of the whole history of philosophy, de-constituting them, is not to undertake the task of the philologist or of the classic historian of philosophy. In spite of appearances, it is probably the most daring way of making the beginnings of a step outside of philosophy. The step 'outside philosophy' is much more difficult to conceive than is generally imagined by those who think made it long ago with cavalier ease, and who are in general swallowed up in metaphysics by the whole body of the discourse that they claim to have disengaged from it.

In order to avoid the possibly sterilizing effect of the first way, the other choice—which I feel corresponds more nearly to the way chosen by Lévi-Strauss—consists in conserving in the field of empirical discovery all these old concepts, while at the same time exposing here and there their limits, treating them as tools

which can still be of use. No longer is any truth-value attributed to them; there is a readiness to abandon them if necessary if other instruments should appear more useful. In the meantime, their relative efficacy is exploited, and they are employed to destroy the old machinery to which they belong and of which they themselves are pieces. Thus it is that the language of the human sciences criticizes *itself*. Lévi-Strauss thinks that in this way he can separate *method* from *truth*, the instruments of the method and the objective significations aimed at by it. One could almost say that this is the primary affirmation of Lévi-Strauss; in any event, the first words of the *Elementary Structures* are: 'One begins to understand that the distinction between state of nature and state of society (we would be more apt to say today: state of nature and state of culture), while lacking any acceptable historical signification, presents a value which fully justifies its use by modern sociology; its value as a methodological instrument.'

Lévi-Strauss will always remain faithful to this double intention: to preserve as an instrument that whose truth-value he criticizes.

On the one hand, he will continue in effect to contest the value of the nature/culture opposition. More than thirteen years after the *Elementary Structures*, *The Savage Mind* faithfully echoes the text I have just quoted: 'The opposition between nature and culture which I have previously insisted on seems today to offer a value which is above all methodological.' And this methodological value is not affected by its 'ontological' non-value (as could be said, if this notion were not suspect here): 'It would not be enough to have absorbed particular humanities into a general humanity; this first enterprise prepares the way for others ... which belong to the natural and exact sciences: to reintegrate culture into nature, and finally, to reintegrate life into the totality of its physiochemical conditions (p. 327).'

On the other hand, still in *The Savage Mind*, he presents as what he calls *bricolage* what might be called the discourse of this method. The *bricoleur*, says Lévi-Strauss, is someone who uses 'the means at hand', that is, the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and

and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogenous—and so forth. There is therefore a critique of language in the form of *bricolage*, and it has even been possible to say that *bricolage* is the critical language itself. I am thinking in particular of the article by G. Genette, 'Structuralisme et Critique littéraire', published in homage to Lévi-Strauss in a special issue of *L'Arc* (no. 26, 1965), where it is stated that the analysis of *bricolage* could 'be applied almost word for word' to criticism, and especially to 'literary criticism'.

If one calls *bricolage* the necessity of borrowing one's concepts from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is *bricoleur*. The engineer, whom Lévi-Strauss opposes to the *bricoleur*, should be the one to construct the totality of his language, syntax, and lexicon. In this sense the engineer is a myth. A subject who would supposedly be the absolute origin of his own discourse and would supposedly construct it 'out of nothing,' 'out of whole cloth', would be the creator of the *verbe*, the *verbe* itself. The notion of the engineer who had supposedly broken with all forms of *bricolage* is therefore a theological idea; and since Lévi-Strauss tells us elsewhere that *bricolage* is mythopoetic, the odds are that the engineer is a myth produced by the *bricoleur*. From the moment that we cease to believe in such an engineer and in a discourse breaking with the received historical discourse, as soon as it is admitted that every finite discourse is bound by a certain *bricolage*, and that the engineer and the scientist are also species of *bricoleurs* then the very idea of *bricolage* is menaced and the difference in which it took on its meaning decomposes.

This brings out the second thread which might guide us in what is being unraveled here.

Lévi-Strauss describes *bricolage* not only as an intellectual activity but also as a mythopoetical activity. One reads in *The Savage Mind*, 'Like *bricolage* on the technical level, mythical reflection can attain brilliant and unforeseen results on the intellectual level. Reciprocally, the mythopoetical character of *bricolage* has often been noted' (p. 26).

But the remarkable endeavour of Lévi-Strauss is not simply to put forward, notably in the most recent of his investigations,

a structural science or knowledge of myths and of mythological activity. His endeavour also appears—I would say almost from the first—in the status which he accords to his own discourse on myths, to what he calls his 'mythologicals'. It is here that his discourse on the myth reflects on itself and criticizes itself. And this moment, this critical period, is evidently of concern to all the languages which share the field of the human sciences. What does Lévi-Strauss say of his 'mythologicals'? It is here that we rediscover the mythopoetical virtue (power) of *bricolage*. In effect, what appears most fascinating in this critical search for a new status of the discourse is the stated abandonment of all reference to a *center*, to a *subject*, to a privileged *reference*, to an origin, or to an absolute *archè*. The theme of this decentering could be followed throughout the 'Overture' to his last book, *The Raw and the Cooked*. I shall simply remark on a few key points.

(1) From the very start, Lévi-Strauss recognizes that the Bororo myth which he employs in the book as the 'reference-myth' does not merit this name and this treatment. The name is specious and the use of the myth improper. This myth deserves no more than any other its referential privilege:

> In fact the Bororo myth which will from now on be designated by the name *reference-myth* is, as I shall try to show, nothing other than a more or less forced transformation of other myths originating either in the same society or in societies more or less far removed. It would therefore have been legitimate to choose as my point of departure any representative of the group whatsoever. From this point of view, the interest of the reference-myth does not depend on its typical character, but rather on its irregular position in the midst of a group (p. 10).

(2) There is no unity or absolute source of the myth. The focus or the source of the myth are always shadows and virtualities which are elusive, unactualizable, and nonexistent in the first place. Everything begins with the structure, the configuration, the relationship. The discourse on this acentric structure, the myth, that is, cannot itself have an absolute subject or an absolute center. In order not to short change the form and the movement of the myth, that violence which consists in centering a language which is describing an acentric structure must be

avoided. In this context, therefore it is necessary to forego scientific or philosophical discourse, to renounce the *epistèmè* which absolutely requires, which is the absolute requirement that we go back to the source, to the center, to the founding basis, to the principle, and so on. In opposition to *epistèmic* discourse, structural discourse on myths—*mythological* discourse—must itself be *mythomorphic*. It must have the form of that of which it speaks. This is what Lévi-Strauss says in *The Raw and the Cooked*, from which I would now like to quote a long and remarkable passage:

> In effect the study of myths poses a methodological problem by the fact that it cannot conform to the Cartesian principle of dividing the difficulty into as many parts as are necessary to resolve it. There exists no veritable end or term to mythical analysis, no secret unity which could be grasped at the end of the work of decomposition. The themes duplicate themselves to infinity. When we think we have disentangled them from each other and can hold them separate, it is only to realize that they are joining together again, in response to the attraction of unforeseen affinities. In consequence, the unity of the myth is only tendential and projective; it never reflects a state or a moment of the myth. An imaginary phenomenon implied by the endeavour to interpret, its role is to give a synthetic form to the myth and to impede its dissolution into the confusion of contraries. It could therefore be said that the science or knowledge of myths is an *anaclastic*, taking this ancient term in the widest sense authorized by its etymology, a science which admits into its definition the study of the reflected rays along with that of the broken ones. But, unlike philosophical reflection, which claims to go all the way back to its source, the reflections in question here concern rays without any other than a virtual focus ... In wanting to imitate the spontaneous movement of mythical thought, my enterprise, itself too brief and too long, has had to yield to its demands and respect its rhythm. Thus is this book, on myths itself and in its own way, a myth.

This statement is repeated a little farther on (p. 20): 'Since myths themselves rest on second-order codes (the first-order codes being theme in which language consists), this book thus offers the rough draft of a third-order code, destined to insure the reciprocal possibility of translation of several myths. This is why it would not be wrong to consider it a myth: the myth of mythology, as it were.' It is by this absence of any real and fixed center of the mythical or mythological discourse that the musical model chosen by Lévi-Strauss for the composition of his book is

apparently justified. The absence of a center is here the absence of a subject and the absence of an author: 'The myth and the musical work thus appear as orchestra conductors whose listeners are the silent performers. If it be asked where the real focus of the work is to be found, it must be replied that its determination is impossible. Music and mythology bring man face to face with virtual objects whose shadow alone is actual . . . Myths have no authors' (p. 25).

Thus it is at this point that ethnographic *bricolage* deliberately assumes its mythopoetic function. But by the same token, this function makes the philosophical or epistemological requirement of a center appear as mythological, that is to say, as a historical illusion.

Nevertheless, even if one yields to the necessity of what Lévi-Strauss has done, one cannot ignore its risks. If the mythological is mythomorphic, are all discourses on myths equivalent? Shall we have to abandon any epistemological requirement which permits us to distinguish between several qualities of discourse on the myth? A classic question, but inevitable. We cannot reply—and I do not believe Lévi-Strauss replies to it—as long as the problem of the relationships between the philosopheme or the theorem, on the one hand, and the mytheme or the mythopoem(e), on the other, has not been expressly posed. This is no small problem. For lack of expressly posing this problem, we condemn ourselves to transforming the claimed transgression of philosophy into an unperceived fault in the interior of the philosophical field. Empiricism would be the genus of which these faults would always be the species. Transphilosophical concepts would be transformed into philosophical naïvetés. One could give many examples to demonstrate this risk: the concepts of sign, history, truth, and so forth. What I want to emphasize is simply that the passage beyond philosophy does not consist in turning the page of philosophy (which usually comes down to philosophizing badly), but in continuing to read philosophers *in a certain way*. The risk I am speaking of is always assumed by Lévi-Strauss and it is the very price of his endeavour. I have said that empiricism is the matrix of all the faults menacing a discourse which continues, as with Lévi-Strauss in particular, to elect to be scientific. If we wanted to pose the problem of empiricism and *bricolage* in depth, we would probably end up very

quickly with a number of propositions absolutely contradictory in relation to the status of discourse in structural ethnography. On the one hand, structuralism justly claims to be the critique of empiricism. But at the same time there is not a single book or study by Lévi-Strauss which does not offer itself as an empirical essay which can always be completed or invalidated by new information. The structural schemata are always proposed as hypotheses resulting from a finite quantity of information and which are subjected to the proof of experience. Numerous texts could be used to demonstrate this double postulation. Let us turn once again to the 'Overture' of *The Raw and the Cooked*, where it seems clear that if this postulation is double, it is because it is a question here of a language on language:

> Critics who might take me to task for not having begun by making an exhaustive inventory of South American myths before analyzing them would be making a serious mistake about the nature and the role of these documents. The totality of the myths of a people is of the order of the discourse. Provided that this people does not become physically or morally extinct, this totality is never closed. Such a criticism would therefore be equivalent to reproaching a linguist with writing the grammar of a language without having recorded the totality of the words which have been uttered since that language came into existence and without knowing the verbal exchanges which will take place as long as the language continues to exist. Experience proves that an absurdly small number of sentences ... allows the linguist to elaborate a grammar of the language he is studying. And even a partial grammar or an outline of a grammar represents valuable acquisitions in the case of unknown languages. Syntax does not wait until it has been possible to enumerate a theoretically unlimited series of events before becoming manifest, because syntax consists in the body of rules which presides over the generation of these events. And it is precisely a syntax of South American mythology that I wanted to outline. Should new texts appear to enrich the mythical discourse, then this will provide an opportunity to check or modify the way in which certain grammatical laws have been formulated, an opportunity to discard certain of them and an opportunity to discover new ones. But in no instance can the requirement of a total mythical discourse be raised as an objection. For we have just seen that such a requirement has no meaning (p. 15-16).

Totalization is therefore defined at one time as *useless*, at another time as *impossible*. This is no doubt the result of the fact that there are two ways of conceiving the limit of totalization.

And I assert once again that these two determinations coexist implicitly in the discourses of Lévi-Strauss. Totalization can be judged impossible in the classical style: one then refers to the empirical endeavour of a subject or of a finite discourse in a vain and breathless quest of an infinite richness which it can never master. There is too much, more than one can say. But non-totalization can also be determined in another way; not from the standpoint of the concept of finitude as assigning us to an empirical view, but from the standpoint of the concept of *freeplay*. If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infinity of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field—that is, language and a finite language—excludes totalization. This field is in fact that of *freeplay*, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble. This field permits these infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field, as in the classical hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and founds the freeplay of substitutions. One could say—rigorously using that word whose scandalous signification is always obliterated in French—that this movement of the freeplay, permitted by the lack, the absence of a center or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*. One cannot determine the center, the sign which *supplements* it, which takes its place in its absence—because this sign adds itself, occurs in addition, over and above, comes as a *supplement*. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified. Although Lévi-Strauss in his use of the word supplementary never emphasizes as I am doing here the two directions of meaning which are so strangely compounded within it, it is not by chance that he uses this word twice in his 'Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss', at the point where he is speaking of the 'superabundance of signifier, in relation to the signifieds to which this superabundance can refer':

> In his endeavour to understand the world, man therefore always has at his disposition a surplus of signification (which he portions out amongst

things according to the laws of symbolic thought—which it is the task of ethnologists and linguists to study). This distribution of a *supplementary* allowance (*ration* supplémentaire)—if it is permissible to put it that way—is absolutely necessary in order that on the whole the available signifier and the signified it aims at may remain in the relationship of complementarity which is the very condition of the use of symbolic thought (p. xlix).

(It could no doubt be demonstrated that this *ration supplémentaire* of signification is the origin of the *ratio* itself.) The word reappears a little farther on, after Lévi-Strauss has mentioned 'this floating signifier, which is the servitude of all finite thought':

In other words—and taking as our guide Mauss's precept that all social phenomena can be assimilated to language—we see in *mana, Wakau, oranda* and other notions of the same type, the conscious expression of a semantic function, whose role it is to permit symbolic thought to operate in spite of the contradiction which is proper to it. In this way are explained the apparently insoluble antinomies attached to this notion ... At one and the same time force and action, quality and state, substantive and verb, abstract and concrete, omnipresent and localized—*mana* is in effect all these things. But is it not precisely because it is none of these things that *mana* is a simple form, or more exactly, a symbol in the pure state, and therefore capable of becoming charged with any sort of symbolic content whatever? In the system of symbols constituted by all cosmologies, *mana* would simply be a *valeur symbolique zéro*, that is to say, a sign marking the necessity of a symbolic content *supplementary* (my italics) to that with which the signified is already loaded, but which can take on any value required, provided only that this value still remains part of the available reserve and is not, as phonologists put it, a group-term.

Lévi-Strauss adds the note:

Linguists have already been led to formulate hypotheses of this type. For example: 'A zero phoneme is opposed to all the other phonemes in French in that it entails no differential characters and no constant phonetic value. On the contrary the proper function of the zero phoneme is to be opposed to phoneme absence' [R. Jakobson and J. Lutz, 'Notes on the French Phonemic Pattern', *Word* vol. 5. no. 2 (August 1949), p. 155]. Similarly, if we schematize the conception I am proposing here, it could almost be said that the function of notions like *mana* is to be opposed to the absence of signification, without entailing by itself any particular signification (p. 1 and note).

The *superabundance* of the signifier, its *supplementary* character, is thus the result of a finitude, that is to say, the result of a lack which must be *supplemented.*

It can now be understood why the concept of freeplay is important in Lévi-Strauss. His references to all sorts of games, notably to *roulette,* are very frequent, especially in his *Conversations,* in *Race and History* and in *The Savage Mind.* This reference to the game or freeplay is always caught up in a tension.

It is in tension with history, first of all. This is a classical problem, objections to which are now well worn or used up. I shall simply indicate what seems to me the formality of the problem: by reducing history, Lévi-Strauss has treated as it deserves a concept which has always been in complicity with a teleological and eschatological metaphysics, in other words, paradoxically, in complicity with that philosophy of presence to which it was believed history could be opposed. The thematic of historicity, although it seems to be a somewhat late arrival in philosophy, has always been required by the determination of being as presence. With or without etymology, and in spite of the classic antagonism which opposes these significations throughout all of classical thought, it could be shown that the concept of *epistèmè* has always called forth that of *historia,* if history is always the unity of a becoming, as tradition of truth or development of science or knowledge oriented toward the appropriation of truth in presence and self-presence, toward knowledge in consciousness-of-self. History has always been conceived as the movement of a resumption of history, a diversion between two presences. But if it is legitimate to suspect this concept of history, there is a risk, if it is reduced without an express statement of the problem I am indicating here, of falling back into an anhistoricism of a classical type, that is to say, in a determinate moment of the history of metaphysics. Such is the algebraic formality of the problem as I see it. More concretely, in the work of Lévi-Strauss it must be recognized that the respect for structurality, for the internal originality of the structure, compels a neutralization of time and history. For example, the appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about—and this is the very condition of its structural specificity—by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause. One can therefore describe what is peculiar to the structural organization only by not taking into account, in the very moment of this description,

its past conditions: by failing to pose the problem of the passage from one structure to another, by putting history into parentheses. In this 'structuralist' moment, the concepts of chance and discontinuity are indispensable. And Lévi-Strauss does in fact often appeal to them as he does, for instance, for that structure of structures language, of which he says in the 'Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss' that it 'could only have been born in one fell swoop':

> Whatever may have been the moment and the circumstances of its appearance in the scale of animal life, language could only have been born in one fell swoop. Things could not have set about signifying progressively. Following a transformation the study of which is not the concern of the social sciences, but rather of biology and psychology, a crossing over came about from a stage where nothing had a meaning to another where everything possessed it (p. xlvi).

This standpoint does not prevent Lévi-Strauss from recognizing the slowness, the process of maturing, the continuous toil of factual transformations, history (for example, in *Race and History*). But in accordance with an act which was also Rousseau's and Husserl's he must 'brush aside all the facts' at the moment when he wishes to recapture the specificity of a structure. Like Rousseau, he must always conceive of the origin of a new structure on the model of catastrophe—an overturning of nature in nature, a natural interruption of the natural sequence, a brushing aside *of* nature.

Besides the tension of freeplay with history, there is also the tension of freeplay with presence. Freeplay is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Freeplay is always an interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be radically conceived, freeplay must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or absence beginning with the possibility of freeplay and not the other way around. If Lévi-Strauss, better than any other, has brought to light the freeplay of repetition and the repetition of freeplay, one no less perceives in his work a sort of ethic of presence, an ethic of nostalgia for origins, an ethic of archaic and natural innocence, of a purity of presence and self-presence in speech—an ethic,

nostalgia, and even remorse which he often presents as the motivation of the ethnological project when he moves toward archaic societies—exemplary societies in his eyes. These texts are well known.

As a turning toward the presence, lost or impossible, of the absent origin, this structuralist thematic of broken immediateness is thus the sad, *negative,* nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauist facet of the thinking of freeplay of which the Nietzschean *affirmation* —the joyous affirmation of the freeplay of the world and without truth, without origin, offered to an active interpretation—would be the other side. This *affirmation then determines the non-center otherwise than as loss of the center.* And it plays the game without security. For there is a *sure* freeplay: that which is limited to the *substitution of given and existing, present,* pieces. In absolute chance, affirmation also surrenders itself to *genetic* indetermination, to the *seminal* adventure of the trace.

There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of freeplay. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology—in other words, through the history of all of his history—has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of the game. The second interpretation of interpretation, to which Nietzsche showed us the way, does not seek in ethnography, as Lévi-Strauss wished, the 'inspiration of a new humanism' (again from the 'Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss').

There are more than enough indications today to suggest we might perceive that these two interpretations of interpretation—which are absolutely irreconcilable even if we live them simultaneously and reconcile them in an obscure economy—together share the field which we call, in such a problematic fashion, the human sciences.

For my part, although these two interpretations must acknowledge and accentuate their difference and define their irreducibility, I do not believe that today there is any question of

choosing—in the first place because here we are in a region (let's say, provisionally, a region of historicity) where the category of choice seems particularly trivial; and in the second, because we must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the *différance* of this irreducible difference. Here there is a sort of question, call it historical, of which we are only glimpsing today the *conception,* the *formation,* the *gestation,* the *labour.* I employ these words, I admit, with a glance toward the business of childbearing—but also with a glance toward those who, in a company from which I do not exclude myself, turn their eyes away in the face of the as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the non-species, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.

FROM WORK TO TEXT

ROLAND BARTHES

Over the past several years, a change has been taking place in our ideas about language and, as a consequence, about the (literary) work, which owes at least its phenomenal existence to language. This change is obviously linked to current developments in, among other fields, linguistics, anthropology, Marxism, and psychoanalysis (the word 'link' is used here in a deliberately neutral fashion: it implies no decision about a determination, be it multiple and dialectical). The change affecting the notion of the work does not necessarily come from the internal renewal of each of these disciplines, but proceeds, rather, from their encounter at the level of an object that traditionally depends on none of them. Interdisciplinary activity, valued today as an important aspect of research, cannot be accomplished by simple confrontations between various specialized branches of knowledge. Interdisciplinary work is not a peaceful operation: it begins effectively when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down—a process made more violent, perhaps, by the jolts of fashion—to the benefit of a new object and a new language, neither of which is in the domain of those branches of knowledge that one calmly sought to confront.

It is precisely this uneasiness with classification that allows for the diagnosis of a certain mutation. The mutation that seems to be taking hold of the idea of the work must not, however, be overestimated: it is part of an epistemological shift (*glissement*) rather than of a real break (*coupure*), a break of the kind which, as has often been remarked, supposedly occurred during the last century, with the appearance of Marxism and Freudianism. No new break seems to have occurred since, and it can be said that, in a way, we have been involved in repetition for the past hundred years. Today history, our history, allows only displacement, variation, going-beyond, and rejection. Just as Einsteinian science

requires the inclusion of the relativity of reference points in the object studied, so the combined activity of Marxism, Freudianism, and structuralism requires, in the case of literature, the relativization of the scriptor's, the reader's, and the observer's (the critic's) relationships. In opposition to the notion of the work—a traditional notion that has long been and still is thought of in what might be called Newtonian fashion—there now arises a need for a new object, one obtained by the displacement or overturning of previous categories. This object is the Text. I realize that this word is fashionable and therefore suspect in certain quarters, but that is precisely why I would like to review the principal propositions at the intersection of which the Text is situated today. These propositions are to be understood as enunciations rather than arguments, as mere indications, as it were, approaches that 'agree' to remain metaphoric. Here, then, are those propositions: they deal with method, genre, the sign, the plural, filiation, reading (in an active sense), and pleasure.

(1) The Text must not be thought of as a defined object. It would be useless to attempt a material separation of works and texts. One must take particular care not to say that works are classical while texts are avant-garde. Distinguishing them is not a matter of establishing a crude list in the name of modernity and declaring certain literary production to be 'in' and others 'out' on the basis of their chronological situation. A very ancient work can contain 'some text', while many products of contemporary literature are not texts at all. The difference is as follows: the work is concrete, occupying a portion of book-space (in a library, for example); the Text, on the other hand, is a methodological field.

This opposition recalls the distinction proposed by Lacan between 'reality' and the 'real': the one is displayed, the other demonstrated. In the same way, the work can be seen in bookstores, in card catalogues, and on course lists, while the text reveals itself, articulates itself according to or against certain rules. While the work is held in the hand, the text is held in language: it exists only as discourse. The Text is not the decomposition of the work: rather it is the work that is the Text's imaginary tail. In other words, the Text is experienced only in an activity, a production. It follows that the Text cannot stop, at the end of a library shelf, for example: the constitutive move-

ment of the Text is a traversal (*traversée*): it can cut across a work, several works.

(2) Similarly, the Text does not come to a stop with (good) literature; it cannot be apprehended as part of a hierarchy or even a simple division of genres. What constitutes the Text is, on the contrary (or precisely), its subversive force with regard to old classifications. How can one classify Georges Bataille? Is this writer a novelist, a poet, an essayist, an economist, a philosopher, a mystic? The answer is so uncertain that manuals of literature generally chose to forget about Bataille; yet Bataille wrote texts—even, perhaps, always one and the same text.

If the Text raises problems of classification, that is because it always, implies an experience of limits. Thibaudet used to speak (but in a very restricted sense) about limit works (such as Chateaubriand's *Life of Rance*, a work that today indeed seems to be a 'text'): the Text is that which goes to the limit of the rules of enunciation (rationality, readability, and so on). The Text tries to situate itself exactly behind the limit of doxa (is not public opinion constitutive of our democratic societies and powerfully aided by mass communication defined by its limits, its energy of exclusion, its censorship?). One could literally say that the Text is always paradoxical.

(3) Whereas the Text is approached and experienced in relation to the sign, the work closes itself on a signified. Two modes of signification can be attributed to this signified: on the one hand, one can assume that it is obvious, in which case the work becomes the object of a 'science of the letter' (Philology); on the other hand, one can assume that the signified is secret and ultimate, in which case one must search for it, and the work then depends upon a hermeneutic, an interpretation (Marxist, psychoanalytic, thematic, for example). In brief, the work itself functions as a general sign and thus represents an institutional category of the civilization of the Sign. The Text, on the contrary, practices the infinite deferral of the signified (*le recul infini du signifié*): the Text is dilatory: its field is that of the signifier. The signifier must not be conceived as 'the first stage of meaning,' its material vestibule, but rather, on the contrary, as its aftermath (*après-coup*). In the same way, the signifier's infinitude does not refer back to some idea of the ineffable (of an unnamable signified) but to the idea of play. The engendering of the perpetual

signifier within the field of the text should not be identified with an organic process of maturation or a hermeneutic process of depending, but rather with a serial movement of dislocations, overlappings, and variations. The logic that governs the Text is not comprehensive (seeking to define 'what the work means') but metonymic; and the activity of associations, contiguities and cross-references coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy. The work (in the best of cases) is moderately symbolic (its symbolism runs out, comes to a halt), but the Text is radically symbolic. A work whose integrally symbolic nature one conceives, perceives, and receives is a text.

In this way the Text is restored to language: like language, it is structured but decentered, without closure (here one might note, in reply to the scornful insinuation of 'faddishness' which is often directed against structuralism, that the episetemological privilege presently granted to language proceeds precisely from our discovery in language of a paradoxical idea of structure, a system without end or center).

(4) The Text is plural. This does not mean just that it has several meanings, but rather that it achieves plurality of meaning, and irreducible plurality. The Text is not coexistence of meanings but passage, traversal; thus it answers not to an interpretation, liberal though it may be, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The Text's plurality does not depend on the ambiguity of its contents, but rather on what could be called the stereographic plurality of the signifiers that weave it (etymologically the text is a cloth; *textus*, from which text derives, means 'woven').

The reader of the Text could be compared to an idle subject (a subject having relaxed his 'imaginary'): this fairly empty subject strolls along the side of a valley at the bottom of which runs a wadi (I use wadi here to stress a certain feeling of unfamiliarity). What he sees is multiple and irreducible; it emerges from substances and levels that are heterogeneous and disconnected: lights, colors, vegetation, heat, air, bursts of noise, high-pitched bird calls, children's cries from the other side of the valley, paths, gestures, clothing of close and distant inhabitants. All these occurrences are partially identifiable; they proceed from known codes, but their combination is unique, founding the stroll in difference that can be repeated only as difference. This is what happens in the case of the Text; it can be itself only in its differ-

ence (which does not mean its 'individuality'); its reading is semelfactive (which renders all inductive-deductive sciences of texts illusory—there is no 'grammer' of the text) and yet completely woven with quotations, references, and echoes. These are cultural languages (and what language is not?) past or present, that traverse the text from one end to the other in a vast stereophony.

Every text, being itself the intertext of another text, belongs to the intertextual, which must not be confused with a text's origins: to search for the 'sources of' and 'influence upon' a work is to satisfy the myth of filiation. The quotation from which a text is constructed are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read; they are quotations without quotation marks. The work does not upset monistic philosophies, for which plurality is evil. Thus, when it is compared with the work, the text might well take as its motto the words of the man possessed by devils; 'My name is Legion, for we are many' (Mark 5:9).

The plural or demonic texture that divides text from work can carry with it profound modifications in the activity of reading and precisely in the areas where monologism seems to be the law. Some of the 'texts' of the Scriptures that have traditionally been recuperated by theological (historical or analogical) monism may perhaps lend themselves to a diffraction of meaning, while the Marxist interpretation of the work, until now resolutely monistic, may be able to materialize itself even further by pluralizing (if, of course, Marxist 'institutions' allow this).

(5) The work is caught up in a process of filiation. Three things are postulated here: a determination of the work by the outside world (by race, then by history) a consecution of works among themselves, and an allocation of the work to its author, literary research therefore learns to respect the manuscript and the author's declared intentions, while society posits the legal nature of the author's relationship with his work (these are the 'author's rights,' which are actually quite recent; they were not legalized in France until the Revolution).

The Text, on the other hand, is read without the father's signature. The metaphor that describes the Text is also distinct from that describing the work. The latter refers to the image of an organism that grows by vital expansion, by 'development' (a significally ambiguous word, both biological and rhetorical).

The Text's metaphor is that of the network, if the Text expands, it is under the effect of a combinatoral, a systematics (an image which comes close to modern biology's views on the living being).

Therefore, no vital 'respect' is owed to the Text: it can be broken (this is exactly what the Middle ages did with two authoritative texts, the Scriptures and Aristotle) The Text can be read without its father's guarantee: the restitution of the intertext paradoxically abolishes the concept of filiation. It is not that the author cannot 'come back' into the Text, in to his text; however he can only do so as a 'guest,' so to speak. If the author is a novelist, he inscribes himself in his text as one of his characters, as another figure sewn into the rug; his signature is no longer privileged and paternal, the locus of genuine truth, but rather ludic. He becomes a 'paper author'. His life is no longer the origin of his fables, but a fable that runs concurrently with his work. There is a reversal, and it is the work which affects the life not the life which affects the work; the work of Proust and Genet allows us to read their lives as a text. The world 'biography' reassumes its strong meaning, in accordance with its etymology. At the same time, the enunciations' sincerity, which has been a veritable 'Cross' of literary morality, becomes a false problem that writes the text is never, itself, anything more than a paper.

(6) The work is ordinarily an object of consumption. I intend no demagoguery in referring here to so-called consumer of culture, but one must realize that today it is the work's 'quality' (this implies, ultimately, an appreciation in terms of 'taste') and not the actual process of reading that can establish differences between books. There is no structural difference between 'cultured' reading and casual sub-way reading. The Text (if only because of its frequent 'unreadability') decants the work from its consumption and gathers it up as play, task, production, and activity. This means that the Text requires an attempt to abolish (or at least to lessen) the distance between writing and reading, not by intensifying the reader's projection in to the work, but by linking the two together in a single signifying process (*pratique significance*).

The distance separating writing from reading is historical during the era of greatest social division (before the institution

of democratic cultures), both reading and writing were class privileges. Rhetoric, the great literary code of those times, taught writing (even though speeches and not texts were generally produced). It is significant that the advent of democracy reversed the order: (secondary) school now prides itself on teaching how to read (well), and not how to write.

In fact, reading in the sense of consuming is not playing with the text. Here 'playing' must be understood in all its polysemy. The text itself plays (like a door on its hinges, like a device in which there is some 'play'); and the reader himself plays twice over: playing the Text as one plays a game, he searches for a practice that will reproduce the Text; but, to keep that practice from being reduced to a passive, inner mimesis (the Text being precisely what resists such a reduction), he also plays the Text in the musical sense of the term. The history of music (as practice, not as art) happens to run quite parallel to the history of the Text. There was a time when 'practicing' music lovers were numerous (at least within the confines of a certain class), when 'playing' and 'listening' constituted an almost undifferentiated activity. Then two roles appeared in succession: first, that of the interpreter, to whom the bourgeois public delegated its playing; second, that of the music lover who listened to music without knowing how to play it. Today, post serial music has disrupted the role of the 'interpreter' by requiring him to be, in a certain sense, the co-author of a score which he completes rather than 'interprets'.

The Text is largely a score of this new type: it asks the reader for an active collaboration. This is a great innovation, because it compels us to ask 'who executes the work'? (a question raised by Mallarmé, who wanted the audience to produce the book). Today only the critic executes the work (in both senses). The reduction of reading to consumption is obviously responsible for the 'boredom' that many people feel when confronting the modern ('unreadable') text, or the avant-garde movie or painting: to suffer from boredom, means that one cannot produce the text, play it, open it out, make it go.

(7) This suggests one final approach to the Text, that of pleasure. I do not know if a hedonistic aesthetic ever existed, but there certainly exists a pleasure associated with the work (at least with certain works) I can enjoy reading and re-reading

Proust, Flaubert, Balzac, and even why not? Alexandre Dumas: but this pleasure, as keen as it may be and even if disengaged from all prejudice, remains partly (unless there has been an exceptional critical effort) a pleasure of consumption. If I can read those authors, I also know that I cannot rewrite them (that today one can no longer write 'like that'); that rather depressing knowledge is enough to separate one from the production of those works at the very moment when their remoteness founds one's modernity (for what is 'being modern' but the full realization that one cannot begin to write the same works once again?) The Text, on the other hand, is linked to enjoyment (*jouissance*), to pleasure without separation. Order of the signifier, the Text participates in a social utopia of its own: prior to history, the Text achieves, if not the transparency of social relations, at least the transparency of language relations. It is the space in which no one language has a hold over any other, in which all language circulate freely.

These few propositions, inevitably, do not constitute the articulation of a theory of the Text. This is not just a consequence of the presenter's insufficiencies' (besides, I have in many respects only recapitulated what is being developed around me); rather, it proceeds from the fact that a theory of the Text cannot be fully satisfied by a metalinguistic exposition. The destruction of metalanguage, or at least (since it may become necessary to return to it provisionally) the questioning of it, is part of the theory itself. Discourse on the Text should itself be only 'test', search and textual toil, since the Text is that social space that leaves no language safe or untouched, that allows no enunciative subject to hold the position of judge, teacher, analyst, confessor, or decoder. The theory of the Text can coincide only with the activity of writing.

NOTES

BEN JONSON

EXTRACTS FROM *TIMBER*, OR *DISCOVERIES*

1 *Sufflaminandus erat* : he had been forcibly stopped.

Augustus : title meaning 'venerable', conferred as a mark of respect on Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (63 BC-AD 14), nephew of Julius Caesar and first emperor (27 BC-AD 14).

2 *Tully* : Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), a great Roman politician, orator and writer.

3 *Seneca* : Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4 BC-AD 65), Roman philosopher, dramatist and orator. His revenge tragedies such as *Phaedra*, *Oedipus*, *Medea*, and *Agamemnon* greatly influenced 16th century European literature, particularly English poetic drama between 1560 and 1620.

Aliquando....esse : 'Sometimes, like a second Anacreon, it is delightful to rave'.

Frustra....pulsavit : 'He who is his own master beats vainly at the gates of Poetry'. *(Ion)*

Nullum....mota mens : 'There has been no great genius who has not been touched by madness, nor can you say anything great above other things unless the mind is excited'. *(Poetics)*

Ovid : Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC-AD 17), famous poet, who wrote for the sophisticated and elegant society of Rome, but was banished by Emperor Augustus for the immorality of his *Ars Amatoria* (Art of Love). Ovid was one of the most read and influential poets in England, particularly from the 16th to the 18th century, and his popular work *Metamorphoses* has been repeatedly imitated and translated in England.

Est....venit : 'There is, in us, a god; by his urging, we grow warm; it is from the ethereal regions that the spirit comes'. *(Fasti)*

Lipsius, Justus (1547-1606) : Flemish humanist and classical scholar who taught at the Universities of Jena and Leyden. He edited the work of Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian of the 1st century.

Scio....aurae : 'I know that, without the divine breath, or inspiration, in abundance, no poet has become illustrious'.

solus Rex....nascitur: 'It is only a king or a poet who is not born every year'.

Virgil : Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 BC), greatest of all Roman poets, who has had a great influence on European culture. His *Aeneid* is one of the world's greatest epics.

4 *Scaliger*: Joseph Justus (1540-1609), probably the greatest scholar of the Renaissance. He taught at Leyden after Lipsius and has been described as the 'founder of historical criticism'.

Valerius Maximus : (flourished c. AD 20) Roman historian and moralist who wrote an important book of historical anecdotes for the use of rhetoricians.

Euripides : (c. 484-406 BC), last of the three great Athenian writers of tragedy, the other two being Aeschylus and Sophocles. Among his plays are *Alcestic, Medea* and *Hippolytus.*

Horace : Quintus Horatius Flaceus (65-8 BC), celebrated Roman poet. His poems include *Satires, Odes, Epistles* and the *Ars Poetica* (concerning the Art of Poetry) which became an important critical document for Europe and England in the 18th century.

5 *Statius* : Publius Papinius (c. AD 45-96), well-known Roman poet, author of *Thebaid* in 12 books, on the expedition of the brothers Polyneices and Eteocles for the throne of Thebes.

Homer: great Greek epic poet, author of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, supposed to have been born between 1050 and 850 BC.

Archilochus : (7th century BC) writer of the first Greek poetry extant that can properly be described as personal. He was particularly known for his satirical iambic verses.

Alcaeus : (c. 620-c. 580 BC) celebrated Greek lyric poet. He wrote hymns to the gods and songs of war and love.

Parnassus : a mountain near Delphi in Greece, regarded as the home

of Apollo and the nine Muses, associated with poetry, particularly aspiring poets.

Helicon: a mountain of Boeotia, sacred to the Muses who had a temple there. The fountains Hippocrene and Aganippe flowed from this mountain.

JOHN DRYDEN

FROM PREFACE TO *FABLES, ANCIENT AND MODERN*

6 *Chaucer*: Geoffrey (1341-1400), considered one of the finest poets of England. His most important work, *The Canterbury Tales*, is a collection of tales in verse told by a group of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. It was written in Middle English and hence justifies Dryden's contention to put it 'into our language', that is, into the modern English of Dryden's time.

Hobbes: Thomas (1588-1679), great English philosopher and psychologist. His most important book, *Leviathan*, expounded his political philosophy.

Boccace: Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75), famous Italian writer and humanist. His most important book was the *Decameron*, a collection of stories like *The Canterbury Tales*. He was a master of narrative fiction, and poets like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden, Keats, Tennyson and others found inspiration from his works.

Dante: Alighieri (1265-1321), probably the greatest figure in European literature, born in Florence from where he was eventually exiled. His greatest work was *The Divine Comedy* (or *Divina Commedia*), in which the poet imagines himself guided through Hell ('Inferno'), Purgatory ('Purgatorio') and Heaven ('Paradiso'). He did for Tuscan Italian what Chaucer did for East Midland English, that is, established it as the literary vehicle of Italian culture.

Petrarch: Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), celebrated Italian poet and scholar, regarded as the father of Italian humanism and initiator of the revived study of Greek and Latin literature. His influence was very strong on English poets in the 16th century, particularly on English sonneteers who emulated the idealism of his love sonnets to Laura. He was a friend of Boccaccio.

7 *Rhymer*: Thomas Rymer (1641-1713), rigid neoclassic critic, wrote plays, but mainly criticism, such as *Tragedies of the Last Age Considered* (1678), and *Short View of Tragedy* (1692) in which he condemned Othello.

8 *Versus....canorae* : 'Verses empty of matter, tribling songs' (Art of Poetry).

9 *Hector*: principal hero of Homer's *Iliad*, was the most valiant of the sons of Priam, King of Troy, in the Trojan war. He was eventually killed by the Greek hero Achilles.

Ulysses : or Odysseus, Greek hero, King of Ithaca, and principal character in Homer's epic *Odyssey* which narrates his adventures through unknown seas. He was considered as the wisest of the Greek heroes.

Dido : in Greek legend, the daughter of a King of Tyre, reputed to be the founder of the city of Carthage. Virgil brings her into his epic *Aeneid* where she falls in live with Aeneas, the hero whose descendants founded Rome.

Calypso : in Homer's *Odyssey*, a nymph who entertained Odysseus on his way home from Troy and kept him on her island of Ogygia for seven years. She promised Odysseus immortality, which he refused.

10 *Impiger....acer*: 'Energetic, angry, relentless, bitter' *(Art of Poetry)*.

Quo fata....sequamur: 'Where the fates lead us, let us follow.' *(Aeneid V)*

Longinus : Dionysius Cassius (1st century AD), a very important Greek critic. Though most of his works have been destroyed, yet the one that remains, the treatise *On the Sublime*, has been extremely influential, particularly through the translation made by the French critic Boileau, in the 17th century. The work mainly relates to ideas on style.

11 *Golden Age of the Roman Tongue* : the Augustan Age, the most illustrious period of Roman literature, when Augustus Caesar was the first Emperor (27 BC-14 AD). He was a patron of the letters, and his reign was essentially a great age of poetry when Virgil celebrated great traditions, Horace, the values of civilized private life, and Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid, as poets of pleasure, appealed to the refined taste of an elegant society. But generally Roman

literature flourished from the 4th century BC to the 2nd century AD in different phases, from writers like Plautus and Terence to Seneca, Juvenal and Tacitus.

11 *Persius* : Aulus Persius Flaccus (34-62), Roman satirist influenced by Horace.

Manilius : author of *Astronomica*, a Latin poem in five books on astrology and astronomy, written during the time of the Emperor Augustus and Tiberius

Palamon and Arcite : refers to the subject of 'The Knight's Tale' in Chaucer's, *The Canterbury Tales*. It was paraphrased in heroic couplets by Dryden under the title *Palamon and Arcite*.

Tale of Grizild : story of Griselda or Grissils, the virtuous maid treated in Chaucer's 'Clerk's Tale'. It was taken originally from *Decameron*.

Troilus and Cressida : well-known narrative poem by Chaucer dealing with the tragic story of two lovers during the Trojan war. It was probably written by Chaucer between 1372 and 1386. Subsequently Shakespeare also wrote a play on the same subject (1609)

12 *Montaigne* : Michel de (1533-1592), famous French essayist and inventor of the essay-form. His chief work was the *Essais* ('Experiments'), published in 1580 and 1588. These essays had an extensive influence upon English literature. Montaigne's sceptical, searching, flexible mind came to be much admired in the 17th century.

The Cock and the Fox : otherwise known as *The Nun's Priests Tale* from the *The Canterbury Tales*.

Baucis and Philemon : better known as *Philemon and Baucis*, a tale from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, about an aged couple, Philemon and Baucis, who were blessed by the gods Zeus and Hermes. Dryden prepared a version of this tale in English in 1693, and subsequently Swift wrote a poem on the subject (1709)

Tabard : inn on the south bank of the Thames, in the borough of Southwark, where Chaucer's pilgrims assembled before setting out for Canterbury in *The Canterbury Tales*.

12 *Ennius* : Quintus (239-169 BC), originator of Roman epic poetry. His most important work was *Annalium Libri XVIII*, a history of Rome from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy, of which only fragments survive.

inopem....fecit : 'Wealth has impoverished me.' (*Metamorphoses*)

13 *Bartholomew Fair*: farcical comedy by Ben Jonson, produced in 1614. The play presents scenes of a London holiday fair, with its ballad-singers, stall-keepers, bullies, bawds and cut-purses.

Lucan : Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39-65), Roman poet, wrote *Pharsalia*, an account of the struggle for power between Julius Caesar and Pompey. He was noted for his epigrams and rhetorical style.

Martial : Marcus Valerius Martialis (AD 38-41-c—103), wrote short poems or epigrams which throw valuable light on contemporary Roman life and manners. His poems, though witty, were often coarse.

14 *Rochester*: John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester (1647-80), famous wit and poet as well as a friend and contemporary of Dryden.

nimis poeta : too much of a poet.

Catullus: Gaius Valerius (84-54 BC), intensely emotional Roman poet, had extensive influence over English lyric poets of the 16th and 17th centuries including Ben Jonson and Marvell.

Tacitus: Cornelius (55-120), eminent Roman historian, who along with the satirical poet Juvenal, represented the last great phase of classical Latin literature. One of his well-known books was *Life of Agricola* which included an account of Britain under the rule of his father-in-law Julius Agricola, the most famous Roman governor of Britain.

auribus....accommodata : 'accommodated to the ears of the time.'

Lydgate : John (1373-1450), contemporary of Chaucer and a very popular poet of his time.

Gower: John (1330-1408), poet and friend of Chaucer. His best known book is *Confessio Amantis*.

15 *Lucilius* : Gaius (180-102 BC), Roman satirist.

Lucretius: Titus Lucretius Carus (1st century BC), Roman poet, whose most reputed work *De Rerum Natura*, a philosophical poem in hexameter and in 6 volumes, expounds that all reality is material.

Spenser: Edmund (1553-1599), considered among the greatest of English poets, well-known for his *The Faerie Queene*, a long and beautiful narrative poem. His other books were *The Shepherdes*

Calendar and *Amoretti* containing the masterly *Epithalamion* and *Prothalamion.*

Harrington: James (1611-77), political philosopher and friend of Charles I, who wrote *The Common Wealth of Oceana*, a political romance, and several tracts in defence of it.

Fairfax of Cameron: Thomas, 3rd Baron of Cameron (1612-71), parliamentary general in the English civil war who withdrew from public life in 1650.

Waller: Edmund (1606-87), British poet and politician, spent much of his life as a Member of Parliament and got generally involved in politics, mainly on the side of the King. His verse had a polished simplicity and provided some of the earliest examples of the heroic couplet, a form which prevailed in English poetry for the next 200 years. 'On a Girdle', 'Go, Lovely Rose', 'Panegyrick to My Lord Protector' and 'Of the Last Verses in the Book' are among his well-known works.

Denham: Sir John (1615-69), British poet and politician. Besides writing occasional verses and satires, his chief poetical work was *Cooper's Hill* (1642), a poem which combined descriptive landscape scenery and expressions of ethical and moral truism.

'Edward the Third, Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth': Edward III, Richard II and Henry IV were respectively Kings of England in the years, 1327-1377, 1377-1399 and 1399-1413. Generally they all patronized Chaucer.

'John of Ghant': John of Gaunt (1340-1399) (because he was born at Ghent in Belgium), Duke of Lancaster, third surviving son of Edward III, and an influential figure in contemporary politics, was a patron of Wycliffe and particularly Chaucer, who married his sister-in-law.

Mortimer: Edmund de (1391-1425), Earl of March, great-grandson of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the second surviving son of Edward III (1327-1377). Hence his claims to the throne of England were stronger than those of Henry IV (1399-1413), his contemporary, who was the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

'York': here refers to the House of York, that is , the successors of Edmund of York, fourth son of Edward III.

Augustus: this title was borne by all subsequent Roman emperors, yet 'Augustus' popularly refers only to Octavianus and the 'Augustan Age', The Golden Age of Latin literature, to his reign, when writers like Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Livy, Propertius, Tibullus et al. flourished.

Wycliffe : John (1320-84), contemporary of Chaucer and famous religious reformer, advocated the poverty of the clergy and attacked church endowments. He even attacked the Papacy and propagated the idea that wicked kings, popes and priests should have no power (refer his book, *De Dominio Divino*, 1376), asserting the right of every man to examine the Bible for himself. He also instituted the first translation into English of the whole Bible.

Piers Plowman : or *'The Vision Concerning Piers Plowman'*, an alliterative, allegorical poem which exists in three versions (known as A, B and C texts), attributed to William Langland and probably written between 1360 and 1399. In Middle English, it was next in importance only to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales.*

Monk, Canon, Fryar, Parson : characters from *The Canterbury Tales*, or more specifically, the persons designated by ecclesiastical rank, who along with others went on pligrimage to Canterbury and told their tales separately.

16 *Scandalum Magnatum* : '(Law of) slander extraordinary.'

'betwixt a King of England .....Canterbury' : refers to the quarrel between Henry II, the Plantagenet King of England (1154-1189), and Thomas A Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in which Becket was murdered by Henry's men. Becket came to be regarded as a martyr who had died for his beliefs. T.S. Eliot's play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, is based on this incident.

Prior laesit : 'He gave the first offence.'

17 *Reeve, Miller, Cook, Prioress, Wife of Bath* : characters in *The Canterbury Tales*, described vividly in the Prologue to the poem

JOSEPH ADDISON

THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION

19 *champaign* : flat, open country.

22 *statuary* : sculpture, statues.

America.... Emperor of Mexico : refers to Hernan Cortez, the

Spanish adventurer, and his encounter with Montezuma II, the Aztec ruler of Mexico in 1519.

23 *Elysiums* : in ancient Greek mythology, an imaginary island where the souls of the virtuous enjoyed perfect happiness after death.

anagram : transposition of letters of word or phrase to form a new word or phrase. A good example is the title of Samuel Butler's (1835-1902) famous book, *Erewhon*, which is an anagram of 'nowhere'.

acrostic : composition or poem in which the initial letters of each line make a word or words when read downwards.

doggerel rhyme : verse of loose and irregular measure. Now it describes rough, badly made verse, monotonous in rhythm and clumsy in rhyme, usually on a trivial subject.

pun : figure of speech which involves a play upon words.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

FROM *PREFACE TO THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE*

25 *Dennis* : John (1657-1734), dramatist and critic, whose critical works include *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701), *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), and *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare* (1712).

Voltaire : pseudonym of Francois-Marie Arouet (1694-1778), famous French philosopher whose writings prepared the way for the French Revolution (1789-94). In his writings on Shakespeare, he condemned Shakespeare for lack of taste and ignorance of the classical rules of drama (refer, *Lettre a l'Academie*, 1776).

31 *Sidney*: Sir Philip (1554-86), nobleman, poet and writer who exercised influence on the poets of his own and the following generation. His prose romance *Arcadia* with pastoral themes was published in 1590, and in its third edition (1598) included his well-known critical piece *Apologie for Poetrie*.

33 *Corneille* : Pierre (1606-84), along with Moliere (1622-73) and

Racine (1693-99), one of the great dramatists of 17th century France who had considerable influence on English drama of that time. They lived during the reign of Louis XIV (1638-1715), politically a very powerful king whose court was one of the richest, most aristocratic and cultured that Europe had ever seen. Corneille's drama include *Le Cid*, *Horace*, and *Cinna* He generally wrote on passion and honour and his tragedies were influenced by the neo-classic conception of the unities. He was also a pioneer in serious dramatic criticism (*cf. Examens and Discours*).

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

FROM *PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS*

34 *these poems*: *Lyrical Ballads with a Few other Poems*, published jointly and anonymously by Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798. The second edition (1800) had Wordsworth's name on the title page and included his Preface. The book was enlarged in the third edition in 1802. The fourth and final edition was published in 1805.

36 *popular poetry of the day*: Wordsworth considered the typical poetry of his day as too much inclined to 'gaudy and inane phraseology' and too remote from the 'deepest and purest' truths of human experience. Both he and Coleridge used the quatrain and similar popular stanzas for their own purposes.

frantic novels: class of Gothic novels dealing with the frightening and the supernatural, chiefly associated with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1765), the works of Ann Radcliffe *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), M.G. Lewis *The Monk* (1796) and C.R. Maturin *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).

37 *poetic diction*: vocabulary used by a writer, particularly the kind of language and artificial arrangement employed by many poets in the 18th century who were largely guided by the theory and practice of Neo-classicism.

38 *Gray*: Thomas (1716-71), poet and scholar, well known for his poem, *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, probably the most popular poem in the later 18th century. The quoted poem

'Sonnet on the Death of Mr Richard West', is dedicated to his friend.

42 *Aristotle, I have been told*: the reference is partially correct. Aristotle said that poetry is more 'philosophical' than 'historical', that is, than straight-forward narration.

The Aristotelian approach is an empirical and descriptive analysis of the subject; it focuses on the work and attempts to deal with its constituent parts and their relation to the whole without reference to its historical genesis or extrinsic moral values. It is opposed to the social and ethical approach inherent in Platonic criticism.

S.T. COLERIDGE

FROM *BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA*

46 *willing suspension of disbelief*: refers to the reader's acceptance of a work of imagination as real. In the area of literary assessment the phrase is as famous as 'negative capability' (Keats) and 'dissociation of sensibility' (Eliot).

47 *Ancient Mariner*: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a ballad and Coleridge's most famous poem, published in 1798 as part of *Lyrical Ballads*. Its theme is sin and expiation, and the form is the traditional English ballad style.

Christabel: another important, but unfinished poem of Coleridge, written in two parts, in 1797 and 1800 and published in 1816. The theme is borrowed from popular folk-ballad tradition and tells a visionary, supernatural story.

preface of considerable length: Wordsworth's theories of poetry were set out in the Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1800.

the whole long continued controversy: the controversy refers to Francis Jeffrey's (1773-1850) personal bias against romanticism and mysticism in the newly founded *The Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929), an important and influential Whig quarterly journal. Jeffrey was unsympathetic to Wordsworth and the other Lake poets; he coined the phrase the 'Lake School of Poetry', and the critical controversy he initiated, continued for the next 30 years.

acrimonious: bitterness of temper, manner and language.

inanity: emptiness, weakness.

48 *in what points I coincide with his opinions*: in the beginning Coleridge was in agreement with the opinions expressed in Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. But by 1802 he started thinking differently from Wordsworth, particularly about the theories of poetic language. Coleridge's views to this effect can be seen in *Biographia Literaria*, Chapters XVII-XX.

49 *Anacreon*: (C. 563-478 B.C.), famous lyric poet, who wrote many melodious verses on love and wine.

51 *Praecipitandus est liber spiritus*: 'The free spirit should be urged on'.

Bishop Taylor: Jeremy Taylor (1613-67), Anglican clergyman and writer. His writings were mostly devotional.

Burnet: Thomas (1635-1715) was a Yorkshire divine. He was the author of *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684-90), which was an imaginative and romantic cosmogony.

Isaiah: (flourished 8th century BC) the greatest of the prophets of the Old Testament.

fancy and imagination: Coleridge has said: (a) 'In the Scriptures they are the living edicts of the imagination; of that reconciling and mediatory power which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves and consubstantial with the truth of which they are the conductors.' (*The Statesman Manual* 1816)

(b) 'The Imagination then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fix-

ities and definites, The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.' (*Biographia Literaria*, Ch XIII).

52 *laxis effertur habenis* : 'Is carried along with loose reins.'

Davies : Sir John (1569-1626), solicitor, attorney-general and poet, educated at Oxford. His poem *'Nosce Teipsum'*, (1599) highly praised by Coleridge, was a philosophical poem on the soul. The present extract is from the poem *Of the Soul of Man*, (sec.4).

53 *Venus and Adonis* : a poem in six-lined stanzas, probably Shakespeare's first published work (1593).

Lucrece : *The Rape of Lucrece*, a poem in seven-lined stanzas by Shakespeare (1594), deals with Lucrece or Lucretia, a Roman lady of great beauty, whose rape was followed by death and political upheavals.

55 *Ariosto* : Ludovico (1474-1533), poet and playwright, whose famous poem *Orlando Furioso* (published in its final form in 1532), is probably the greatest of Italian romantic epics.

Wieland : Christoph Martin (1733-1813), German poet and writer of romances, particularly light, ironic verse-tales which he drew from medieval and oriental sources. He was the first to translate Shakespeare's plays into German prose.

concupiscence : sexual desire, lust.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

FROM *ON POETRY IN GENERAL*

60 *Moliere* : stage name of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622-73), the greatest French dramatist and comic genius at the court of Louis XIV. He wrote more than 30 plays and with one exception, all were comedies. He had a powerful influence on the English Comedy of Manners. His play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (The Middle-class

Gentleman) (1670) shows a sceptical, critical and inquiring bent towards contemporary society.

Lord Mayor's show : the annual procession of decorated vehicles in London on the day of the Lord Mayor's coming into office. Alexander Pope parodied this in his poem *The Dunciad.*

61 *Bacon* : Lord Francis (1561-1626), English statesman, philosopher and essayist, who influenced European thought for many centuries. His prose writings initiated the development of English rational prose. The present extract is from his *Advancement of Learning* (1605).

63 *Moore* : Edward (1712-57), wrote a comedy *Gil Blas* (1751) and a tragedy *The Gamester* (1753) which exposes the vice of gambling.

Lillo : George (1693-1739), pioneering dramatist whose *The London Merchant : or, the History of George Barnwell* (1731) was a famous prose domestic tragedy.

Burke : Edmund (1729-97), politician, statesman, philosopher and writer, had considerable influence on his contemporaries. His well-known book *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* was published in 1757.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE STUDY OF POETRY

67 *Sainte-Beuve* : Charles Augustin (1804-69), French critic who initiated new critical doctrines and generally influenced 19th century European criticism.

charlatan : a person who pretends to have more skill, knowledge or ability than he really has.

68 *from a poetical collection such as the present* : refers to Ward's *English Poets* (1880), a popular collection, for which the present essay was written as an introduction.

69 *politesse sterile et rampante* : superfluous and grovelling politeness.

Clement Marot: (1496-1544), one of the greatest poets of the French Renaissance who influenced the Elizabethans, particularly Spenser.

70 *Methuselah*: biblical character ('Genesis' 4), grandfather of Noah, who lived for 969 years.

71 *Imitation*: *De Imitatio Christi*, a famous Christian devotional book attributed to an Augustinian monk, Thomas á Kempis (1380-1471). It deals in four parts with the gradual progress of the soul to Christian perfection, its detachment from the world and its union with God.

cum....principium: 'when you have read and known many things it will behove thee always to return to the beginning'.

Caedmon: (flourished 658-680) Anglo-Saxon Christian poet who prepared poetical versions of the Biblical scriptures.

Chanson de Roland: *Song of Roland*, oldest French epic poem, an account of the heroic deeds of Roland, Oliver and their friends. They are among the famous twelve peers (known as paladins) of Charlemagne (742-814), the famous Christian king of the Franks and Emperor of the West. Roland, Oliver and others were killed in the Battle of Roncevaux (778), while returning to France as the rearguard of Charlemagne's army after a successful expedition in the north of Spain.

Taillefer: ballad-singer in the army of William the Conqueror, the Duke of Nomandy, sang a song on the Battle of Roncevaux at the Battle of Hastings in Sussex (1066), where William, after defeating Harold, the Anglo-Saxon king, became the king of England. Taillefer probably sang an earlier version of Roland songs.

72 *De plusurs....ki l'nurrit*: 'Then began he to call many things to remembrance—all the lands which his valour conquered, and pleasant France, and the men of his lineage, and Charlemagne his leige lord who nourished him'. *Chanson de Roland.*

73 *lo no piangeva....elli*: 'I wailed not, so of stone grew I within;—they wailed.' *Inferno* XXXiii. 39,40. (Temple Classics, 49, 50—Ed.)

lo son fatta....m'assale: 'Of such sort hath god thanked be His mercy, made me, that your misery toucheth me not, doth the flame of this fire strike me.' *Inferno*, ii. 91-93.

In la sua ....pace: 'In His will is our peace.' *Paradiso*, iii. 85.

76 *Anglo-Norman kings*: William I, The Conquerer, Duke of Normandy, (1066-87), and his successors who became kings of England after him. William II (1087-1100), Henry I (1100-1135), and Stephen (1135-54).

romance poems: tales written in one of the Romance languages (a form of Latin) spoken around the western Mediterranean in the early Middle Ages.Often these tales had loose and episodic construction. extravagant incidents and miraculous occurrences, and the stories were about the heroic adventures of knights or the affairs of passionate lovers. The legends about the court of King Arthur (in English) as well as those about Roland and Charlemagne (in French) were part of these tales. A good example was *Roman de la Rose*, a medieval verse allegory, dating from the 13th century, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, part of which was translated by Chaucer.

Brunetto Latini: (1220-94) Florentine scholar, politician and friend of Dante, contributed to the spread of French learning in Italy. He wrote an encyclopaedia entitled *Li Divres dou tresor*.

la parleure....toutes gens': 'the language is more delightful and more common to all people'.

77 *The right comment.... Dryden's*: refers to pages 13 and 17.

Gower: John (1330-1408) poet, contemporary and friend of Chaucer. His best known work was *Confessio Amantis*, an allegorical romance in English.

78 *Chaucer*: although Chaucer is often regarded as the father of English poetry, the claims of other 14th century poets, such as William Langland and the anonymous authors of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*, may also be considered. Chaucer certainly established the East Midland dialect of Middle English as the medium of all later major English literature. Besides, the poets who came after him followed his practice of using rhymed and regular metre and not the alliterative form of other 14th century poets. The next great poet, Edmund Spenser, acknowledge his indebtedness to Chaucer. Arnold's comment is therefore justified.

80 *Villon*: Francois (1431-637), French lyric poet, outstanding for his defiant gaiety in the face of adversity, was banished from Paris in 1463 after which nothing is known about him. About 3000 lines of his work survive which have elements of compassion and irony as well as a fascination with death and decay.

Elizabethan poetry: specifically that written during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). Generally it covers the period from 1580 to 1640. The other such terms are (post Elizabethan, chronologically), Jacobean, Caroline, Augustan, Romantic, Regency, Victorian, Edwardian and Modern, and (pre-Elizabethan) Medieval, Renaissance, and Tudor. From 1580 to 1640, we find the poetry of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Spenser, Donne and many others. Milton's poetry does not generally fall within this term.

Cowley: Abraham (1618-67), poet and essayist, wrote the first epic on classical models in English (*Davideis*, 1656). His poetry had the transitional quality between the Metaphysicals and the Augustans. His essays, too, combined the moral analysis of Francis Bacon with the personal elements that later characterized the essays of Addison, Steele and Lamb.

81 *Chapman*: George (1559-1634), Elizabethan poet and dramatist (*The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, his finest play), particularly famous for his translations of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* (Reference Keat's poem, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*). These were largely free translations but eminently suited the spirit of the time. These are comparable with Pope's translations in the early 18th century which also suited Pope's own time. Arnold in his essay 'On Translating Homer' (1861) speaks of Homer's rapid movement, plain diction, simple ideas, and noble manners and points out that both Chapman and Pope fail in one or more of these qualities though their verse is otherwise fine.

84 *Burns*: Robert (1759-96), an important fore-runner of the Romantics, used Lowland Scots as a poetic language. The best of his works were written between 1785 and 1790 and his *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) brought him fame. He wrote innumerable songs which are still popular ('Auld Lang Syne', 'Highland Mary') as well as satires ('Tam O' Shanter', 'The Jolly Beggars', 'Holy Willie's Prayers').

Clarinda, Sylvander: Clarinda was the name used by Mrs Agnes Maclehose in her correspondence with Burns who signed himself Sylvander. Burns was friendly with many women, one of whom, Jean Armour, he married.

86 *Xenophon*: (430 BC) Athenian Greek commander and historian, author of the famous history of the expedition of the Persians, and retreat of the Greeks *Anabasis* (Ref. T.S. Eliot's translation). As a disciple of Socrates, he wrote *Memorabilia*, a treatise of semi-

authentic dialogues on the character and thought of Socrates, and *Symposium*, a documentation of the doctrine and character of the great philosopher.

Socrates: (469-399 BC) philosoper and man of great wisdom. He wrote nothing, but the general method and tenets of his teaching have been preserved in the *Dialogues* of Plato and in *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.

87 *Byron*: Lord George Gordon (1788-1824), famous Romantic poet, lover and freedom-fighter. His poetry was not only extremely popular but with his romantic personality exerted a lot of influence both inside and outside England. His poems include *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which made him famous (1812-18) and *Don Juan* (1819-24), and *The Bride of Abydos* (1913) deals with broken-hearted love, ending in grief and death.

88 *Goethe*: Johann Wolfgang von (1749-1832), one of the giants of world literature was a critic, journalist, painter, theatre manager, statesman, novelist, educationist, playwright, poet, scientist and natural philosopher. His best known work is the dramatic poem *Faust* (1770-1832). The work consists of two parts, the first was published in 1808, and the second in 1832. It deals with the relationship between Mephistopheles, the Devil and Faust, and Mephistopheles' attempt to ensnare the soul of Faust—a recreation in the modern context of the older myth of men seeking great earthly power from demons at the cost of their immortal souls. It is no longer the struggle between earthly power and spiritual holiness, but between the cynicism of those who deny that there is goodness in the search for goodness, and the dedication of those who make the search.

Aristophanes: (450-388 BC) Athenian comic dramatist who satirized the manners, politics, statesmen and literary men of his age in such plays as *The Clouds*, *The Birds*, *The Frogs* and *Plutus*.

'Whistle owre the lace o't: 'Whistle over the rest of it'.

'Auld Lang Syne': 'the old long-ago.'

Shelley: Percy Bysshe (1792-1822), one of the second generation Romantic poets (along with Keats and Byron). He was a prolific writer. His works include *Revolt of Islam* (1818), *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819), *The Triumph of Life* (1822), *Prometheus Unbound* (1819) his best long poem (a verse drama) expounding his imaginative philosophy of revolution, the famous short lyric *Ode to the West Wind* and the famous elegy on Keats, *Adonais* (1821).

MATTHEW ARNOLD

FUNCTION OF CRITICISM AT THE PRESENT TIME

91 *Mr. Shairp's excellent notice of Wordsworth*: : refers to J. C. Shairp, Scottish critic, whose essay on Wordsworth was published in the *North British Review* (August, 1864).

this great man : in his essay on Wordsworth (1879) Arnold wrote, 'He is one of the very chief glories of English poetry : and by nothing is England so glorious as by her poetry.'

a trustworthy reporter: in W. Knight's *Life of Wordsworth* (1889).

92 *Irene* : an unsuccessful tragedy (1749) of Dr. Johnson which he himself rated low.

95 *Pindar*: (5th century BC), Greek poet, famous for his lyrical odes. These had strong religious tones and lofty emotions and acted as models for English poets from the 17th to the 19th century.

Sophocles : (495-406 BC), one of the three great ancient Greek dramatists, the other two being Aeschylus and Euripides. Of about the hundred plays that he wrote, only seven survive, including the famous Oedipus triology—*Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus,* and *Antigone.*

long and widely .... Germany: because of various political and cultural reasons, German ideas could not be coherently formed till the later part of the 18th century, when as result of political polarization in the emerging power of Prussia, the Germans could form coherent ideas of their own culture, which had a radical orientation as it had to work against the firmly established French orthodoxy. References may be made to the critic Gotthold Lessing (1729-91) who renewed the meaning of classical culture, as well as to the excitement of the 'Sturm und Drang' (Storm and Stress) movement led by the poets Herder (1744-1803), Goethe (1749-1892) and Schiller (1759-1805), which reached its climax in the 1770s. The movement laid emphasis on rational tradition, historical change and the conflict of the passions as against rationalism and the cosmopolitan neo-classicism of French cultural leadership. For Arnold, as for Carlyle (1795-1881) and many others of their time in England, Goethe represented the spirit of the age combining the best of classicism, 'Sturm und Drang', and romanticism in his own comprehensive genius.

Athens of Pericles: (5th century BC), particularly Pericles' period of power (460-429 BC) when Athens was at her zenith, politically and artistically.

96 *French Revolution*: the period normally assigned between 1789 and 1794 when the corrupt, feudal and incompetent reign of the Bourbon kings was overthrown and France was declared a Republic. One of the principle figures in the Revolution was Robespierre (1758-94) who played a leading role during the Reign of Terror and was himself eventually a victim of it. It virtually ended in 1799 with Napoleon's coup d'état. The Revolution brought a belief into European mind that static order was unnatural and change was historically inevitable. It also brought with it the modern ideas of democracy, nationalism and equality. The ground for the Revolution was prepared by such powerful French intellectuals and writers as Voltaire (1694-1778) and Rousseau (1712-78), who stood for free thought and nature against intolerance, superstition and unjustified privileges. The great English statesman and man of letters, Edmund Burke, wrote against the French Revolution in his book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). He was rebutted by the American colonial radical, Thomas Paine (1737-1809), in his book *The Rights of Man* (1791). The younger intellectuals in England generally supported Paine though at a later stage Wordsworth and Coleridge came round to a view closer to Burke's.

1642: the English Civil War – English Revolution during the reign of Charles I. It ended with the Restoration in 1660.

98 *Joubert*: Piet (1831-1900), Afrikaner general and politician.

Burke: Edmund (1729-97) whom Arnold considered as the 'greatest English prose writer'. Arnold refers to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

99 *Dr. Price*: Richard Price (1723-91), non-conformist minister, who had sympathies with the French Revolution.

George the Third: King of Great Britain and Ireland (1738-1820). He supported the Tories, particularly William Pitt the Younger, during his tenure (1783-1801) as Prime Minister. He was acknowledged to be violently insane by 1811 and his son became regent.

100 *Balaam*: prophet in the Bible (Numbers 22-24). He was initially assigned to curse the Israelites, but was rebuked by his ass for considering such an evil. He finally blessed them and prophesied their happiness.

curiosity: in 'Sweetness and Light', Arnold speaks of *curiosity* in a similar vein – 'With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity.'

101 *long peace*: the last important battles, in which Britain was involved, were the European battles in Napoleonic wars which ended in 1815. There was general peace till Matthew Arnold's time. In fact this peace lasted for about a century till 1914 when the First War began. This period of peace coincided with the reign (1837-1901) of Queen Victoria, a period of the greatest prosperity, power and influence that Britain had ever known. Arnold speaks of this period as the epoch of expansion, when rapid material progress ('our passionate material progress') continued alongside serious intellectual ferment, social reforms and scientific advances. Culturally too it was a very rich period, and particular reference may be made to thinkers like Carlyle, Mill, Arnold, Ruskin, Tennyson as well as to the great achievement of novelists like Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope, the Brontes, Gaskell and Henry James.

102 *Revue des Deux Mondes*: French periodical founded in 1829 and suspended in 1944; it has appeared since 1948 as *Revue de Literature, Histoire, Arts et Sciences des Deux Mondes*. Noted for its critical influences, the *Revue* has included such contributors as Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Victor Hugo, Taine and Earnest Renan.

The Edinburgh Review: (1802-1929) a serious review of moderate left (Whig) principles. It was very influential in the 19th century. It was mainly literary till 1830.

The Quarterly Review: founded in 1809 having right wing (Tory) leanings. It took less interest in literature after 1830.

British Quarterly Review: founded in 1845, merged with the Congregational Review in 1887. It is now not published any more.

The Times: British newspaper founded in 1785 as *The Daily Universal Register* and took its present name in 1788

103 *Home and Foreign Literature*: formerly *The Rambler* founded in 1848, changed to its present name in 1862. It is defunct.

Dublin Review: quarterly started in 1836 in London published by W. Spooner. It is defunct.

104 *Adderley*: Sir Charles Adderley and John Arthur Roebuck were politicians of the period. The former was Conservative and the latter, a well-known Liberal reformer.

church rates: taxes imposed by the Church of England.

six-pound franchise: the right to vote possessed by all citizens owning property worth £6 or more a year. Universal franchise, permitting all men and women above twenty-one to vote, was enacted in England in 1928.

dithyramb: Greek choric hymn in honour of the god Dionysius, irregular and vehement in rhythm.

105 *Ilissus*: river near Athens.

107 *Lord Somers*: (1651-1716), statesman, chief minister to King William III; appointed Lord-Chancellor (1697); noted interpreter of the English constitution.

Philistines: race of Aegean origin inhabiting the southern coast of Palestine in biblical times (cf. Books of 'Samuel' and 'Joshua'). Subsequently the term came to be applied to those who were indifferent or actively hostile to artistic and cultural values. Arnold applied it to the middle class individual who was primarily interested in making money. In his essay on 'Barbarians, Philistines and Populace' in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) he divided English society into three classes of cultural indifference: the aristocracy or the upper class (the 'Barbarians'), the prosperous commercial or middle class (the 'Philistines'), and the working class (the 'Populace'), and maintained that 'culture seeks to do away with classes and with all artificial forms of inequality' —an equality that 'materializes the upper class, vulgarizes the middle class, brutalizes the lower class'.

Cobbett: William (1763-1835), journalist and political leader of the working class, particularly of rural labour. He was independent-minded with strong democratic leanings. His most important work, *Rural Rides* (1820-30), is an account of his tours through England on horseback. The book gives a racy, vigorous description of the countryside in clear and lively language.

Carlyle: Thomas (1795-1881), essayist, historian and philosopher, often revered by his countrymen as a 'sage'. He urged against spiritual mediocrity, easy contentment with material prosperity and willing surrender to scientific scepticism and analytic reasoning, in short, against the ill-effects of immense technical advances resulting from the Industrial Revolution. His books include *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), where he advocates a life of spiritual affirmation against

tendencies to intellectual scepticism and spiritual denial, *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (1814), *Past and Present* (1843), where he refers to the mediocrity of 19th century middle-class values and *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850), in which he attacks the quasi-scientific treatment of social questions by the rationalist political economists.

Ruskin: John (1819-1900), writer, critic and artist, involved with the social philosophies of contemporary political economists. He never accepted 'art for arts' sake' but always art for the 'spiritual health of man', with the fundamental belief that great art is moral. Like Carlyle, he spoke against the mediocre aspects of industrial culture and attempted to awaken the working classes of industrial England, whom he believed to be spiritually impoverished, to the nature of their combined artistic and moral improvement. His most famous book *Unto This Last* (1862), a strong indictment against the contemporary utilitarian political economy of Bentham, Ricardo, Malthus, James and John Stuart Mill, pointed out how uncivilized that economy was since it omitted the cultural values that should underlie wealth. His other works are *Modern Painters* (1843-60), *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), *The Political Economy of Art* (1857) and *Sesame and Lilies* (1865).

terrae filii: 'Sons of the earth'.

the liberal party: a change of name of the former Whig party by 1830 due to an extension of its range of supporters, from mainly the landed aristocracy to the newly enfranchised industrial middle class (first Parliamentary Reform Bill, 1832). The members increasingly called themselves liberals, and by 1860 it became the accepted name for the party. The strength of the Liberals declined after 1823 with the rise of the Labour Party in England.

108 *Obermann*: a psychological romance in letter form by E.P. de Senancour (1770-1846), a French novelist. Arnold refers to Obermann in his 'Stanzas in Memory' and 'Obermann once more'.

Perissons en resistant: 'Let us perish while resisting'.

Bishop Colenso: John William (1814-83), Bishop of Natal in South Africa. He attacked the literal interpretation of the Bible in his book *Pentateuchanel Book of Joshua Critically Examined.* Arnold thought the book 'naive and unscholarly'.

Stanley: Arthur Penrhyn (1815-81), whose work Arnold contrasted with Colenso's.

109 *High Church*: in the mid-19th century, as a result of the Oxford or

Tractarian Movement, divisions of opinion took place in the Church of England into High Church, Low Church and Broad Church. The High Church was composed of Anglicans who were essentially Catholic in belief though they rejected the authority of the Pope.

Evangelican : The Evangelical Movement came as a Protestant revival in the Church of England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and was partly inspired by John Wesley's (1703-91) Methodist revival. In principle the Evangelicals attached importance to strength of faith and biblical guidance. Also they were strongly motivated by social and humanitarian responsibilities. Among their important leaders were William Wilberforce (1759-1833), who devoted his life to the cause of abolishing slavery and slave-trading in British dominions, and Lord Shaftesbury (1801-85), who worked to improve the social and working conditions of the working classes in England.

Renan : Ernest (1823-92), French writer, philologist and historian who wrote a number of books relating to Christianity, including *Life of Jesus* (1863) where he mainly applied the methods of a historian to the Biblical narrative.

Cobbe : Frances Power (1822-1904) philanthropist, an advocate of women's suffrage and a religious writer. Arnold refers to her book *Broken Lights* (1864).

Luther: Martin (1483-1546), famous leader of the Reformation in Germany. Besides translating the Bible into German (Lutheran Bible) he composed popular hymns.

Strauss : David Friedrich (1808-74), German author, whose *Life of Jesus* (1835) was translated into English by George Eliot (1846).

110 *Four Gospels* : the four New Testament accounts of Christ's life, ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Quiconque .... pas : 'Whoever imagines he can write it better does not understand it'.

Cicero : Marcus Tullius (106-43 BC), Roman statesman and writer on rhetoric, politics and philosophy. His rolling, musical prose style influenced the 16th century English prose writers, and Ben Jonson's tragedy *Catiline* featured Cicero as its hero.

nemo doctus.... dixit esse : 'No learned man has said that it is inconsistent to change one's mind.'

111 *Hygeia* : or Hygieia, Greek goddess of health worshipped together with Asclepius, god of medicine. She is usually portrayed in the act of feeding a serpent from a dish.

112 *Protestantism* : term used for all varieties of Christian belief which broke away from Roman Catholicism during the Reformation in the 16th century. It began as a protest against Emperor Charles V's condemnation of the reformers in Germany (1526). In Britain it includes Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists et al.

Bossuet : Jacques-Benique (1627-1704), French bishop, a leading figure at the Court of Louis XIV, and a famous preacher. His *Discourse on Universal History* (1681) is a summary in which he argues that all historical events had been divinely guided to lead to and benefit the Catholic Church. In contrast, Luther's doctrine held that grace comes only through faith, regardless of one's deeds.

113 *Ab integro....ordo* : 'Order is born from the renewal of generations'.

WALTER PATER

FROM *THE RENAISSANCE*

118 *La Gioconda* : also known as the Mona Lisa, the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci done between 1503 and 1506.

Carrara : town in central Italy, famous for its white marble which was used by the famous sculptor Michelangelo.

Pico of Mirandola : Italian Renaissance philosopher (1463-94) who was interested in Harmetic and Zoroastrian writings.

De se borner ....accomplis : 'To limit themselves to know lovely things near at hand, and to nourish themselves upon them, like refined amateurs, like accomplished humanists.'

119 *William Blake* : (1757-1827), famous English poet, mystic and engraver who often illustrated his poems with pictorial engravings. His books include *Songs of Innocence* (1789), *Songs of Experience* (1794), and such prophetic books like *The Book of Urizen* (1794), *Jerusalem* (1804) and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790). His thought and vision have congeniality with the 20th century thinkers and poets.

Renaissance : French word for 'rebirth'. An intellectual and cultural movement that began in Italy in the 14th century, then subsequently spread to northern Europe. It lasted till the mid -16th century. Basi-

cally it consisted in the revival of classical learning, art and architecture (Greek and Roman art, architecture and literature) and the concept of the dignity of man. The latter characterized humanism, an intellectual movement that provided the inspiration and basis of Renaissance culture, and took man's mind away from the exclusively theological bias of the medieaval thinkers towards considerations of human achievement in the arts and sciences. The earliest Renaissance poet and scholar was Petrarch (14th century). The great writers of the Italian Renaissance were Dante, Boccaccio, Machiavelli and Ariosto; the great artists, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo who belonged to the High Renaissance, the period between about 1500 to 1520. Other painters and sculptors included Giotto, Masaccio, Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, Pisano, Donatello, Ghiberti and Verrocchio. In the 16th century, the Renaissance spread to northern Europe as depicted in the art of Durer, the scholarship of Erasmus, the plays of Shakespeare, and particularly in the court of Elizabeth I of England.

Middle Ages : the period in European history beginning from the 5th century with the decline of the Western Roman Empire, and ending with the Renaissance (15th century). During this period of about 1000 years, general developments could be traced, such as, the growth of nation-states of Western Europe, the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, the growth of the Papacy as an international religious and political power, the creation of a feudal society and the rise to power of the landed gentry and unprecedented urban growth and development of trade.

120 *Joachim du Bellay* : (1522-60), French poet who influenced English lyric poets of the 15th century and asserted that the French were capable of producing modern literature at least equal to that of the Italians.

ascesis : 'severe training'.

121 *Pericles* : Pericles (495-429 BC), statesman who presided over Athens' Golden age which comprised such eminent men as the playwright Sophocles, the philosopher Anaxagoras and the sculptor Phidias. He had initiated the great programme of public work on The Acropolis (of Athens).

Lorenzo : Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449-92), member of the Medici family that ruled Florence. He was an outstanding patron of Renaissance artists and scholars, including Botticelli, Michelangelo, Ficino and Politian (Angelo Poligiano).

Winckelmann : Johann Joachim (1717-68), German art historian

who through his writings *History of the Art of the Ancients* (1764) promoted the critical study of Greek and Roman art.

Hellenism : the influence of ancient Hellenic or Greek culture, particularly its ideals of intellectual enlightenment and the cultivation of beauty. Matthew Arnold contrasted Hellenism with Hebraism which was concerned with right and wrong conduct *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

123 *Philosophiren.... vivificiren* : 'to philosophize is to throw off inertia, to come to life'.

Novalis : (1772-1801) pen name of Friedrich Leopold Freihern von Hardenberg, romantic poet and writer who wrote on love and death.

124 *Comte* : Auguste (1798-1857), French philosopher and sociologist well-known for his positivism, i.e. the view that society could be studied scientifically by natural science methods and is subject to general laws.

Hegel : George Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831), German philosopher and one of the most influential thinkers of the 19th century. His books include *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) and *The Philosophy of Right* (1821).

Hugo : Victor (1802-85), French poet, dramatist and novelist and leader of the Romantic movement in France.

T.S. ELIOT

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

125 *Writing several years ago* : refers to Eliot's earlier essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' from which the extract has been quoted.

126 *a fortiori* : with stronger reason.

preposterous : completely contrary to reason or sense.

autotelic : directed towards an end by itself.

otiose : which serves no practical purpose or is not required.

impostor : a person who pretends to be what he is not.

Sunday park : refers to Hyde Park, an extensive public park in the West of London. The park which has long been known as a centre of free speech for amateur orators, has an enclosure known as Speaker's Corner.

127 *Middleton Murry* : (1889-1957), editor and critic. He edited *Athenaeum* (1919-21) and *Adelphi* (1923-48), important literary journals. His books include, *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925), *William Blake* (1933), *Jonathan Swift* (1954), a biography of D.H. Lawrence, *Son of Woman* (1931) and his own autobiography *Between Two Worlds* (1935). He was married to Katherine Mansfield, the short-story writer, and published much about her after her death in 1923.

obnubilation : rare word, meaning obscuration, the act of darkening, or the state of being darkened or obscured.

Gothic cathedrals : an art-style which flourished in Europe from the mid-12th to the end of the 15th century and closely associated with church architecture. It made full use of stained glass (coloured glass panels) characterized by elaborate tracery and brilliant colours, besides having a design of rib and shaft and pointed arch. The famous Notre Dame cathedrals were in Paris (1163-1240), Chartres (mid-13th century) and Reims (1211).

Classicism : term used for aesthetic qualities associated with the visual arts and literature of ancient Greece and Rome and which served as ideals for various subsequent European artistic movements. These aesthetic qualities include harmony and balance of form, clarity of expression and emotional restraint.

Romanticism : term related to a basic development in Western art, literature and music in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was a reaction against that aspect of classicism which put emphasis on unquestioned authority of reason and tradition in favour of an affirmation of faith in man's innate powers of creativity. Besides, it was concerned with the relationship between man and his natural environment and showed a new interest in the primitive and the irrational. In literature, some main exponents were, Wordsworth and Coleridge in England, Goethe and Schiller in Germany, and Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo in France. Besides, the influence of Romanticism could be seen in the works of such painters as Turner and Delacroix and in musical compositions from the time of Beethoven until the early 20th century.

128 *quibbling* : to avoid the main point of an argument.

Lloyd George: David (1863-1945), statesman and Prime Minister of England (1914-22) who led Britain to victory in the First World War. He enacted a number of welfare policies including old-age pensions and national insurance.

football match at Swansea: football is a popular game in Britain, and Swansea is a city port and an important industrial centre in South Wales.

129 *pantheism*: doctrine that considers the natural world, including man, as a part of the divine. It is an important tendency in Hinduism and to some extent influenced the 19th century European philosophers. Wordsworth in England was strongly attracted towards pantheism.

Hudibras: mock-romance written by Samuel Butler (1612-80) where the poet satirized contemporary society, particularly the fanaticism and intellectual hypocrisy of the Puritans.

Teutonic element: refers to Germanic origin of English people, that is, Anglo-Saxon races.

Latin countries: refers mainly to Italy and France.

130 *French in the year 1600*: during the century the major prose works in French literature were the comic masterpieces of Rabelais and the *Essais* of Montaigne. (Ref. Rabelais' famous works, *Pantagrual*, 1532, and *Gargantua*, 1534)

132 *regnant*: reigning.

133 *T. E. Hulme*: Thomas Ernest (1883-1917), British poet and thinker who was untimely killed during the First World War. Most of his poems and articles were posthumously published. His books include *Speculations* (1924), *Further Speculations* (1955) and *Notes on Language and Style* (1929). His poems were short but they had a sharpness of image and meaning.

Remy de Gourmont: (1858-1915), French critic and very important member of the French Symbolist movement of the 1890s. He also wrote novels, stories and poems.

Professor Ker: William Paton (1855-1923), Professor of English Literature at the University College, London, and subsequently Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He was a genial and inspiring teacher and had deep knowledge of medieval literature and history. His books include *Epic and Romance* (1897), *The Dark Ages* (1904) and *Essays on Medieval Literature* (1905).

cadavers: corpses.

Notes and Queries: Periodical founded in 1849 by W. J. Thomas (1803-85) and used as 'a medium of intercommunication for literary men, artists, antiquaries, genealogists etc'. Its publication has been taken over by the Oxford University Press since 1943, and it continues to be used as an important source of information on literature and learning.

134 *Coleridge's Hamlet*: the most complete collection of Coleridge's writings on Shakespeare is *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. by T. M. Raysor, 2V, 1930.

T.S. ELIOT

TO CRITICIZE THE CRITIC

135 *F. H. Bradley*: Francis Herbert (1846-1924), eminent philosopher and Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. His most original and influential work was *Appearance and Reality* (1893). His other books include *The Principles of Logic* (1883) and *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914). Eliot did a research on Bradley at Harvard, and his dissertation was published posthumously.

136 *Paul Elmer More*: (1864-1937), American scholar and philosopher who along with Irving Babbitt was a leading exponent of New Humanism. His informal writings ('causeries') on literary as well as other subjects were published as *Shelburne Essays* (1 vol. 1904-21) in which be advocated 'a return to classic values in a period of romantic stress'. His other books include *Platonism* (1817) and *Hellenistic Philosophies* (1923).

Desmond Macarthy: the foremost dramatic and literary critic of his generation was the principal book-reviewer for the *Sunday Times*. His books are *Portraits* (1931), *Criticism* (1932) and *Experience* (1933).

Edmund Gosse: Sir Edmund (1849-1928), scholar, essayist and biographer, regularly reviewed books for the *Sunday Times*. His books include *Jeremy Taylor* (1904), *Sir Thomas Brown* (1905) and *Henrik Ibsen* (1908). But his best and one of the finest books

of the time was his autobiographical account *Father and Son* (1907), which specifically showed Victorian dilemma of religion and doubt before the path of science.

George Saintsbury: George Edward Bateman (1845-1933), journalist, teacher and one of the leading literary historians and scholar-critics whose lively style and wide knowledge made his works popular and authoritative. His books include *A History of Criticism* (3 vols. 1900-1904), *A History of English Prosody* (3 vols. 1906-1910) and *Peace of the Augustans* (1915).

Paul de Kock: Charles-Paul (1793-1871), profilé author of discreetly pornographic novels about Parisian life that were extremely popular reading throughout Europe.

Flaubert: Gustave (1821-80), novelist regarded as the pioneer of the Realist school of French literature. His most important work and one of the great 19th century French novels, was *Madame Bovary* (1857), which was a realistic picture of small town bourgeois life. He was noted for his form, style and severe objectivity. His other books include *L'Education sentimentale* (1869) and *Salammbo* (1862).

Charles Whibley: (1859-1930), journalist and essayist wrote continuously for *Blackwood's Magazine* and his books include *The Book of Scoundrels* (1897), *Essays in Biography* (1913) and *Letters of an Englishman* (1915).

Urquhart: Sir Thomas (1611-60), author, man of encyclopaedic learning and translator, associated with King Charles II in his younger days, and the British Civil War. He wrote on mathematics, linguistics as well as the well-known account of *The Admirable Crichton.*

Petronius: (1st century AD), one of Emperor Nero's companions and author of *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon*, a prose satirical romance which has survived in a fragmentary state.

Quiller-Couch: Sir Arthur (1863-1944), wrote under the pseudonym 'Q', novelist, story-teller, reputed scholar and teacher. He was KING EDWARD VII Professor of English Literature at the University of Cambridge. He edited the *Oxford Book of English Verse* (1900) and wrote novels and stories on Cornwall, his native country. His books include *On the Art of Writing* (1916), *Studies in Literature* (1918-29). *English Prose* (1925); *Memories and Opinions* (1944).

137 *Wilson Knight*: George (1897-1985), taught English literature at the University of Leeds (1946-62) and University of Toronto (1931-

40). He was mainly famous for his original insight into the different symbols of Shakespeare's plays which he termed as 'imaginative universe' of each play. His books include *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), the best and most famous of his books, *The Imperial Theme* (1931) and *The Burning Oracle* (1939). Eliot wrote the Introduction to *The Wheel of Fire*.

Racine : Jean (1639-99), outstanding tragedian of the French classical period. His major plays were written between 1664 and 1677. These plays include *Andromaque* (1667), *Britannicus* (1669), *Berenice* (1670) and *Phedre* (1677). Dryden's 'heroic dramas' were influenced by him.

Pascal : Blaise (1623-62), French mathematician, physicist and theologian, was so moved by a mystical experience at the age of thirty-one that he devoted more time to religion. His most important work was *Pensees* (1669), a metaphysical work on human nature where Pascal while criticizing Descartes (1596-1650) shows the limitations of reason in dealing with ultimate mysteries.

139 *Irving Babbit* : (1865-1933), American thinker and University teacher, a leading exponent of New Humanism. He advocated a system of thought antagonistic to Romanticism and largely in line with the New Criticism of the next generation. His books include *The New Laokoon* (1910), *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919) and *Democracy and Leadership* (1924).

Church of England : The Church of England is the state Church, under the Crown, only in England. Elsewhere (that is, Scotland, Wales, the Commonwealth etc.) members of Churches originally derived from the Church of England are known as Episcopalians. The Church has three divisions—High Church, composed of Anglicans who are essentially Catholic in belief though they reject the authority of Pope, Low Church, which feels itself to be Protestant, and Broad Church, which is specially active in social and political reform. The history of the Church of England is closely linked with the political and social history of England. Its divisions have given rise to the divisions in the political parties (Whigs and Tories, or Liberals and Conservatives). The social divisions have also followed a parallel development. Eliot's sympathies were with the High Church group.

140 *Georgian criticism* : Poetry and criticism written in England in the first two decades of this century, mainly during and before the First World War, the name being derived from George V who ascended the throne in 1910. Poetry particularly, came out in a series of verse

anthologies entitled *Georgian Poetry* of which 5 volumes appeared between 1912 and 1922.

The Egoist: avant-garde magazine (1914-1919) first fortnightly, then monthly. It was a medium for the Imagist poets.

141 *Harriet Weaver*: (1876-1961) was known for her close association with The Egoist which she co-founded and edited, and the support, financial and otherwise, she gave to James Joyce.

Richard Aldington: (1892-1962), poet, novelist, biographer and editor. Apart from his association with The Egoist, he was a leading Imagist poet, others being Pound, F.S. Flint and Hilda Doolitle (H.D.) whom he married in 1913. His books include *Collected Poems* (1928), *A Dream in the Luxemburg* (1930), *Death of a Hero* (1929), one of the outstanding novels of World War I and *Portrait of a Genius But* (1950), the biography of D.H. Lawrence.

Ezra Pound: Ezra Loomis (1885-1972), an American and a good friend of Eliot, came to stay in London from 1908 to 1920 and subsequently settled on the continent. A powerful poet, widely admired as a poetic technician and for the stimulus and encouragement he provided to others. His poems include *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), *Cantos* (1917, 117 Cantos in one volume in 1975) and *Collected Shorter Poems* (1968). His many critical pieces have been collected in a volume entitled *Make It New*.

Henry James: (1843-1916), an American settled in England, and a very powerful novelist, whose reputation soared after the Second World War. His books include *Washington Square*, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *Portrait of a Lady* (1881). His prefaces to his own novels initiated a new and fresh approach in novel-criticism.

Bruce Richmond: Sir Bruce (1871-1964), editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* from 1902 to 1937. His competence established the *Supplement* as among the foremost journals of the time.

142 *Baudelaire*: Charles (1821-67), Symbolist poet and author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857, revised 1861). His poetry had a powerful impact on modern poets, including T.S. Eliot.

Laforgue: Jules (1860-87), Symbolist poet, most of whose poetry was written in Berlin. He greatly influenced several later French and foreign poets, notably Eliot.

Marlowe .... Ford: these were Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) was the author of *Tam-*

burlaine the Great, The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, and *Edward II.* John Webster (1580-1625) wrote *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613). Cyril Tourneur. (1575-1626) wrote *The Atheist's Tragedie* (1611) and *The Revengers' Tragedie* (1607). Thomas Middleton (1570-1627) wrote *Women Beware Women* (1621) and *The Changeling* (1622) in collaboration with W. Rowley. John Ford (1586-1639), the last major figure of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, wrote *The Broken Heart* (1630) and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1632).

one brief imitation of Dante : in *Little Gidding* (1942).

The Criterion : quarterly critical review founded and edited by Eliot from 1922 to 1939. Its first number included Eliot's *The Waste Land.* Its contributors included James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, W.H. Auden, Ezra Pound, among others.

143 *Donne* : John (1572-1631), metaphysical poet and the greatest of the school. He became an Anglican priest in 1615 and Dean of St. Paul's in 1621. His poems combined passionate feelings for God, woman and humanity with brilliant intellectual wit.

Milton : John (1608-74), epic poet of England, next in stature only to Shakespeare, and author of outstanding works like, *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes.*

epiphenomenal : a phenomenon that occurs with and seems to result from another.

144 *Lancelot Andrewes* : (1555-1626), bishop and leader of the Church of England at its most important, formative years (1550-1650), and a powerful intellectual defender of the Anglican religious position, along with Richard Hooker (1553-1600), against the Puritans (Hooker) and the Catholics (Andrewes). He was famous for his sermons comparable in quality with those of John Donne. These were full of rich imagery and imaginative suggestiveness. Andrewes was an important contributor to the revised version of *The Holy Bible* prepared in 1611, under the direction of King James I.

145 *Lamb* : Charles (1775-1834), essayist and critic. His best-known work was *Essays of Elia* (2 vols, 1823 and 1833), describing his life and times. He also wrote on Shakespeare and his contemporaries in *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived About the Time of Shakespeare.*

Grierson : Sir Herbert (186-1960), scholar and Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Edinburgh (1915-35).

He edited *The Poems of John Donne* (1912), *Metaphysical Poets* and *Donne to Butler* (1921) and was largely responsible for reviving interest for the Metaphysical poets in the 20th century. His other well-known publications include, *The Background of English Literature* (1925), *Lyrical Poetry from Blake to Hardy* (1928) and *Cross Currents in the Literature of the 17th Century* (1929).

Corbieré : Tristan (1845-75), poet, remarkable for his innovative use of irony, slang and the rhythm of common speech. His only volume of poetry, *Les Amours Jaunes* (1873) dealt with love, Paris, the sea and his native province of Brittany. He influenced Laforgue, Pound and Eliot.

146 *Mallarme* : Ste'phane (1842-98), French Symbolist poet who generally believed that the function of poetry was to evoke the ideal essences that lay behind the world of actual appearances. His best-known works include, *Herodiade* (1864) and *'L' Apres-Midi d'un faune* (1865).

Herbert : George (1593-1633), one of the best poets of the Metaphysical school. In 1625 he renounced worldly ambitions and became a clergyman in a small parish (Bemerton) near Salisbury. Herbert's poetry was influenced by the popular emblem books. He used direct, unassuming language of the common man, simple and concrete imagery to convey deep 'philosophical insight, sensuous response and courtly graciousness', and even at times painful, emotional and spiritual conflict. His most important book was *The Temple; Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* published soon after his death.

epigoni : successors.

147 *Hardy* : Thomas (1840-1928), novelist and poet, wrote with great sympathy and insight about the rural regions of south-western counties of England in his Wessex novels (The name 'Wessex' was taken from the 6th century Saxon kingdom of Wessex which was approximately coterminus with those counties, i.e. Hampshire, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Berkshire etc.) which included his famous 'novels of character and environment', such as *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886). He wrote short stories as well as very distinguished poetry characterized by intense feeling and sincerity.

Lawrence : David Herbert (1885-1930), one of the greatest creative writers of the 20th century, novelist, poet, critic as well as an excel-

lent letter-writer, and in his work-life, art, criticism, poetry and teaching were all closely related. Initially he was a controversial figure but his reputation grew gradually and steadily. A deeply religious writer he believed that modern man is perverting his nature by the wilful divorce of his consciousness from his spontaneous feelings. Some of his best books are *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1929) first published in full in England 1960 as well as short pieces like *St. Mawr, The Daughters of the Vicar, The Captain's Doll, The Prussian Officer, The Horsedealer's Daughter* and *The Virgin and the Gipsy*. F.R. Leavis wrote an outstanding book of criticism on Lawrence entitled *D.H. Lawrence, Novelist* (1955).

Lambeth: a district of London, south of the Thames. It includes Lambeth Palace, official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury since the 12th century.

149 *Valery*: Paul (1871-1945), poet essayist and critic, initially wrote Symbolist verse. His best poetry combined sensuous lyricism with intellectual force. His works include *La Jeune Parque* (1917), *Charmes* (1922), poetical volumes, *Cahiers* (20 vols 1957-60), a record of his daily speculations from 1894 until his death, and many collections of essays on literary, scientific and political topics.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

POETRY: A NOTE ON ONTOLOGY

150 *ontology*: branch of metaphysics concerned with the properties of existence or the essence of things.

Kant: Immanuel (1724-1804), foremost thinker of the Enlightenment, famous German philosopher and teacher, who contributed the doctrine of transcendental idealism. His famous book *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) explored the limitations of reason by which mankind interprets experience. His other books include *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *Critique of Judgement* (1790) dealing with ethics, aesthetics and theological judgements.

151 *Imagists*: poets who belonged to Imagism, a literary movement which began in England in 1912. It aimed at composing poetry with

concise expression of pure visual images. It was inspired by T.E. Hulme who rejected the prevailing sentimental romanticism in favour of clarity and hardness. Ezra Pound was the leader of the movement and he edited an Imagist anthology entitled *Des Imagists* (1914), which included poems by Richard Aldington, Hilda Doolittle and American poet Amy Lowell (Miss Lowell) who succeeded Pound as the leader of the movement.

152 *Hume* : David (1711-76), philosopher and historian, spent most of his time either in London or in Edinburgh. In his influential book *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), he distinguished between impressions and ideas, and claimed that impressions have more force than ideas. Also his analysis of cause and effect as no more than 'constant conjunction' influenced 20th century philosophers.

Croce : Benedetto (1866-1952), philosopher and thinker. His theory was expounded in *Philosophy of Mind* (4 vols 1900-1910) where he discusses about mental reality and its twin aspects, theoretical and practical. In philosophical terminology he was an 'idealist' and 'anti-romantic'. His aesthetic ideas, found in the book *The Essence of Aesthetics* (1921), which he considers as essential parts of intuition, have become very influential.

primordial : in existence at or from the beginning.

dialectical : habit of critically examining mental processes.

154 *Moore* : George Augustus (1852-1933), novelist and man of letters, a well-known and respected person in the contemporary literary circles. His books include *Esther Waters* (1894), *A Mummer's wife, Confessions of a Young Man, The Brook Kerith, Aphrodite Aulis* and *Conversations in Ebury Street*. He was an important figure of the aesthetic movement at the end of the 19th century and had elements of aestheticism, Celtic revivalism as well as naturalism in his works.

Full fathom.... made : from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

plenum : fullness.

catalysis : the action of a catalyst, that is, a substance which either speeds up or slows down a chemical reaction.

155 *Poe* : Edgar Allan (1809-1849), American poet, short-story writer and critic, was famous for his prose tales and horror stories. his tales include *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Black Cat* (1843), *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846), and the first detective story ever written *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841).

His poems include 'The Raven', 'To Helen', 'The City in the Sea', and 'The Haunted Palace'.

de la Mare: Walter (1873-1956), poet, novelist and anthologist whose work has a general atmosphere of mystery and magic. His best-known works are the poem "The Listeners' (1912), the fantastic novel *Memoirs of Midget* (1921) and the anthologies *Come Hither* (1923) and *Love* (1943).

156 *ideation*: the formation of ideas.

The year's .... with the world: from Browning's poem 'Pippa Passes'.

homiletics: the art of preparing sermons and preaching.

Hegel: George Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831), one of the greatest and most influential thinkers and philosophers of the 19th century. His books include *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817) and *The Philosophy of Right* (1821).

pedagogical: pertaining to teachers or to education.

arraignment: the act of indictment, that is, to accuse or to call to account.

157 *Allen Tate*: (1899-1982), poet and critic, and leader in the New Criticism movement, held a prominent and influential place among the contemporary intellectuals of American literature. His poetry had fine metaphysical qualities and his criticism was acutely intelligent and perceptive. His works include *Ode to the Confederate Dead* (1926), *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas*, (1936), *The Fathers* (1938), *Reason in Madness* (1941), *The Forlorn Demon* (1952) and *Collected Poems* (1978).

I fall upon .... I bleed: from Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'.

predatory: praying upon others.

Logos: Greek for 'reason' or 'plan', a term used with several different philosophical and theological interpretations. Refers here to the influence of the Stoics (300 BC) who thought that all the rationality or rational elements in the universe originated from a kind of god.

158 *Pharisaic*: related to Pharisees, a member of an ancient Jewish sect known for strict obedience to written laws and for pretensions to sanctity.

161 *The Canonization* : a poem by Donne.

Lycidas : a poem by Milton.

Schopenhauer: Arthur (1788-1860), German philosopher and exponent of a metaphysical doctrine of the will that prepared the way for Existential philosophy and Freudian psychology. He believed that the ideal state of man lies in contemplative freedom to be achieved through art. *The World as Will and Idea* (1819) was his most important book.

162 *percipienda or sensibilia* : perception or sensibility.

167 *Wolfe* : Humbert (1885-1940), well-known poet of the twenties. His books include, *London Sonnets* (1919), *Kensington Garden* (1923), *News of the Devil* (1926), among others.

169 *mediaeval Schoolmen* : followers of the philosophy taught in the episcopal schools (schools under Bishops) which were first set up under the French emperor Charlemagne in the 8th century. The philosophy was generally known as Scholasticism which included a variety of philosophical and theological forms of thought that dominated the Western Church between 1100 and 1500. It aimed at reconciling the logic of ancient Greek philosophy (ref. Aristotle, Plato) with the teachings of Christian faith. Some important scholastics were, Scotas Erigena (9th century Irish philosopher), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274, Italian thinker) and Duns Scotus (1266-1308, Scottish philosopher). With the coming of the Renaissance the association of reason with theology was challenged, and philosophy was sought to be liberated from its status as 'the handmaid of theology'.

HERBERT READ

THE NATURE OF CRITICISM

173 *Adler*: Alfred (1870-1937), Austrian physician and associate of Sigmund Freud, the great psychologist, introduced the concept of inferiority complex and maintained that each individual is a unique entity striving to compensate for feelings of inferiority. His books include *The Neurotic Constitution* (1912).

174 *Freud*: Sigmund (1856-1939), famous and influential Austrian psychologist and pioneer of psychoanalysis. His books include *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

Jung: Carl Gustav (1875-1961), Swiss psychologist and pioneer psychoanalyst pupil and close associate of Freud till 1912, after which he proceeded independently. His major work was *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912).

176 *Andre Gide*: (1860-1951), French novelist, critic and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1947. Much of his work was semi-auto-biographical and his *Journal* which he kept from 1885 until his death was a major work of literary autobiography. His other books generally dealing with the conflict between desire and discipline include, *Fruits of the Earth* (1897), *The Immoralist* (1902), *Strait is the Gate* (1909) and *The Counterfeiters* (1926).

177 *Poincare*: Jules Henri (1854-1912), mathematician, theoretical astronomer and philosopher of science, who wrote on the nature of mathematical creativity, particularly its intuitional aspects.

178 *Hebrew prophets*: ancient religious leaders and visionaries of Israel. Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings known as 'Former Prophets' and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets known as 'Latter Prophets'. Their books are included in the Bible. The Jews consider Moses as the greatest of the prophets.

Plato: (429-347 BC), philosopher and follower of Socrates. His most famous work was his 'Socratic' *Dialogues*. His other works include *Laws and Republic*. Together with Aristotle, he was a major influence on European thought.

179 *Aquinas*: St. Thomas (1225-74), theologian and scholastic philosopher of the Middle ages. His most influential works were *Summa contra gentiles* (1259-64), written for the use of missionaries and *Summa Theologica* (1266-73), the first systematic work on Latin theology. His reconciliation of Aristotle's philosophy with Christianity and his arguments to prove the existence of God were distinct contributions of Christian thought and theology.

rationalists: 17th century philosophers who practised the study of supernaturalism in religion in a way consonant with reason, in the form of deductive and mathematical methods, rather than sense-experiences. Some rationalists were Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-77), Arnauld (1612-94) and Leibniz (1646-1716).

183 *putative* : that which is usually known or commonly reputed to be.

Jones : (Alfred) Ernest (1879-1958), psychoanalyst, friend and follower of Freud who founded the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1920) and helped to establish psychoanalysis in Britain and North America. His books include *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949) and *Sigmund Freud: Life and Work* (3 vols, 1953-56).

186 *Robertson* : John Mackinnon (856-1933), scholar and politician, who frequently wrote on a wide variety of topics including Shakespeare. He was the foremost exponent of the disintegration theory of Shakespeare, and maintained that a large part of Shakespeare Canon contained much material not written by him (*The Shakespeare Canon* 5 vols. 1922-1930). References to Robertson's theories may be found in Eliot's famous essay, 'Hamlet and His Problems'.

188 *Burckhardt* : Jacob Christoph (1818-97), Swiss art and cultural historian who taught in Basle University, Switzerland. His most important work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) is a very thorough analysis of the period.

I.A. RICHARDS

THE IMAGINATION

191 *Gibbon* : Edward (1737-94), one of the greatest English historians and author of the famous book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88).

192 *chapter-xxiv* : refers to Richards' own *Principles of Literary Criticism.* Its heading is *The Normality of the Artist,* where discussing on 'imagination' Richards writes—'There is nothing peculiarly mysterious about imagination. It is no more marvellous than any other of the ways of the mind'.

Edison : Thomas Alva (1847-1931), the most prolific inventor of all time, who had 1300 inventions to his credit, including the electric light bulb and the gramophone. He perfected motion pictures equipment among others.

196 *agnostic* : one who believes that nothing can be known abut God or of anything beyond material phenomena.

Manichean : relates to Manicheanism, a religion influenced by both Gnosticism and Christianity and founded by Mani in the 3rd century AD. It maintained that matter is entirely evil and man can be liberated from material entanglements only by the presence of.a divine spark in his own soul.

197 *Falstaff* : Sir John, comic hero of *Henry IV* (Parts I & II) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and second only to Hamlet as Shakespeare's most famous creation.

chapter II, chapter X : these are also from *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and the chapters are entitled as 'The Phantom Aesthetic State' and 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake' respectively.

198 *Break, Break, Break* : Tennyson.

Coronach : Scott.

Rose Aylmer : Landor.

Love's Philosophy : Shelley.

Ode to the Nightingale : Keats.

Proud Masie : Scott.

Sir Patrick Spens : Anon

The Definition of Love : Marvell.

Nocturnall upon S. Lucie's Day : Donne.

199 *The War Song of Dinas Vawr* : Peacock (1785-1866).

Endymion : Keats.

200 *This Extasie doth unperplex* : Donne.

I.A. RICHARDS

METAPHOR

203 *Shelley's observation* : refers to Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*.

Bentham: Jeremy (1748-1832), philosopher and pioneer of Utilitarianism which maintained, that, the best action is that which results in the greatest happiness and least pain for the greatest number of people.

Vaihinger: Hans (1852-1953), philosopher, reputed for his philosophy 'As If' for which he worked out a theory of 'fictions'.

207 *Moore*: George Edward (1873-1958), philosopher and Professor of Cambridge who supported 'New Realism' in opposition to the idealism of F. H. Bradley. He appealed to reason and common sense and believed that the function of philosophy was to clarify statements and arrive at fully intelligible definitions. His principal book was *Principia Ethica* (1903).

Lord Kames: Henry Home, Lord (1696-1782), judge and psychologist whose books *Introduction to the Art of Thinking* (1761) and *Elements of Criticism* (1762) were well-known and widely read in the 18th century.

Lessing: Gotthold Ephraim (1729-81), German dramatist, writer and critic whose books include *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755), a tragedy with middle-class protagonists, *Minna Von Barnhelm* (1767), a comedy, and *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767-69), essays on his dramatic theories.

211 *Monboddoe*: James Burnett, Lord (1714-1799), jurist and pioneer anthropologist who explored the origins of language and society.

Harris: John (1666-1719), editor who compiled a *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1704), an early encyclopaedia.

Campbell: George (1719-96), English writer.

vertiginous: turning round, whirling.

nystagmically: related to nystagmus meaning, in pathology, continual rapid oscillation of the eye-balls.

J.W. KRUTCH

THE TRAGIC FALLACY

218 *Ghosts*: drama dealing with inherited disease and guilt (published, 1881) by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), playwright and considered as

the founder of modern prose drama. Ibsen's other plays include, *A Doll's House* (1879), *An Enemy of the People* (1882) *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), among others.

Weavers: drama dealing with social themes (published, 1892) by Gerhart Hauptmann, dramatist and recipient of the Nobel Prize in 1912. His other dramas include *Before Dawn* (1889) and *The Assumption of Hannels* (1893). He also wrote novels and poetry.

Bowling Green: small field where the game bowling (or tenpin bowling) is played.

Great Prairies: extensive grasslands in North America, occupying a broad north-south belt, where wheat is cultivated.

219 *Medea*: in greek mythology, a magician, daughter of King Aeetes. of Colchis, who helped Jason to steal the Golden Fleece. Here the reference is to her character in *Medea* (431 BC) by Euripides (480-406 BC), dramatist, one of the three major writers of Greek tragedy, the other two being Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Oedipus: three famous plays of Sophocles (496-406 BC) dealing with King Oedipus and Thebes. The plays are *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*.

220 *Achilles*: Greek hero whose exploits have been narrated in Homer's *The Iliad*.

Hector: Trojan hero, the son of King Priam, who fought against the Greeks. Andromache was his wife.

221 *Miranda*: the heroine in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*.

224 *Oswald Alving*: the main character in *Ghosts*.

226 *Elsinore to Skien*: Elsinore refers to the location in *Hamlet* and Skien in *Ghosts*.

228 *All for Love*: Dryden's play *All for Love* (1678) or *The World Well Lost* deals with the love between Antony and Cleopatra on which Shakespeare had earlier written his play *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-07).In fact Dryden's was considered a truer adaptation.

229 *Nietzche*: Friedrich (1844-1900), philosopher and poet who in his writings, while rejecting Christianity and its morality, argued that 'will to power' was the crucial human characteristic. In his famous

book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-92) he spoke of man who is free, titanic and powerful. His other books include *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), a justification of tragedy in the modern context.

231 *Santayana*: George (1863-1952), Professor of Philosophy at Harvard (1889-1911), whose many books include *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress* (5 vols 1905-6) *Platonism and the Spiritual Life* (1927), *The Last Puritan: A Memoir in the form of a Novel* (1935), *The Realm of Being* (1942), besides poems and autobiographical writings.

F.R. LEAVIS

LITERARY CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHY

233 *Wellek*: Rene, scholar, critic, teacher (he taught at Yale) and author of the monumental work, *History of Modern Criticism.* His review of Leavis' book *Revaluation* (1936) was published in *Scrutiny* which provided the basis for the present essay, 'Literary criticism and Philosophy', Leavis' rejoinder.

238 *Ash-Wednesday*: title of a sequence of poems by T.S. Eliot (1930). The first day of the religious season of Lent (the period of 40 days fasting before Easter), a day of penitence, when in the Catholic Church, the penitents have their foreheads marked with ash.

240 *from Morn.... the Aegean isle*: *Paradise Lost* Book I.

241 *in my book*: refers to Leavis' own book *Revaluation.*

Prelude: Wordsworth's autobiographical poem.

242 *Whitehead*: Alfred North (1861-1947), Professor of Applied Mathematics in the Imperial College of Science, London, and subsequently Professor of Philosophy at Harvard, whose books include *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell (1910-13), *Science and the Modern World* (1925), *The Aims of Education* (1925) and *Adventures of Ideas* (1933).

F.R. LEAVIS

REALITY AND SINCERITY

245 *Smith* : Alexander (1830-67), lace-pattern designer, who published sonnets on the Crimean War in 1855 and *City Poems* in 1857, containing *'Glasgow'*, probably his finest poem. He also wrote descriptive prose (*Summer in Skye*, 1865) and essays.

Emily Bronte : (1818-48), novelist of *Wuthering Heights*, was also a powerful poet.

Oxford Book of English Verse : an anthology of English poetry edited by Quiller-Couch and published in 1990 and 1939.

LIONEL TRILLING

THE SENSE OF THE PAST

Chapman : John Jay (1862-1933), poet, dramatist and critic who attacked the materialistic morality of American people through his political actions and in his writings.

De Quincey : Thomas (1785-1859), essayist and critic of the first generation of romanticism (along with Wordsworth and Coleridge, the poets) and extended its range and medium of expression. His prose was generally influenced by the early 17th century prose writers, and it had elements of sensitive imagination and sharp understanding. His books include *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822), a sensitive autobiography, *Murder as One of the Fine Arts* (1827), *The English Mail-Coach* (1849), and a piece of exceptional literary criticism on *The Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth.*

Lovejoy : critic, scholar and philosopher, famous for his book *The Great Chain of Being.*

258 *genesis* : beginning, starting point. The 'genetic method' refers to that which is studied at its beginning.

259 *calisthenic* : exercises designed to develop strong and graceful bodies. Thus 'intellectual calisthenic ritual' suggests mental exercises analogous to bodily exercises.

New Critics: term applied to a 'movement' in literary criticism which developed in the 1920s, mostly in American academic circles. John Crowe Ransom's book, *New Criticism* (1941), provided the name of the influential mid-20th century school of criticism which included such figures as Ransom, Allen Tate, R.P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren and Yvor Winters as well as English-born critics such as I.A. Richards and William Empson. The critical writings of T.S. Eliot had a notable influence on the movement. Three influential journals, *Sewanee Review*, *Kenyon Review* and *Southern Review* as well as Brooks and Warren's famous textbook *Understanding Poetry* (1938) significantly contributed to the spread of the principles of New Criticism on the American academic scene. The movement was basically opposed to Romanticism and concentrated on a philosophical and linguistic approach to poetry and imaginative prose. The New Critics advocated close reading and detailed textual analysis of poetry ('The new criticism has taught a generation to read.... and to read literature requires a reading of life') rather than an interest in the mind and personality of the poet, sources,the history of ideas and political and social implications. It generally put emphasis on ambiguities in texts and on semantics and made an effort to see a work of art complete in a verbal form.

ineluctably: that cannot be escaped from.

Thucydides: (5th-4th century BC), historian, whose history of the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BC), included a number of political speeches, and the great 'Funeral Oration' by Pericles. It was probably the earliest scrupulously accurate historical work in European literature.

260 *kaleidoscope*: instrument through which changing patterns are seen and hence it refers to frequently changing patterns of bright scenes.

261 *Scott*: Sir Walter (1771-1832), poet and novelist, who initially wrote highly narrative poems such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). He turned his attention to novels as a means of expression to his wide erudition, humour and his sympathies. Starting from *Waverley* (1814), he turned out a novel every year till his last *Castle Dangerous* (1831). Scott's influence was wide spread, encouraging an interest in the past and developing a taste for the wild landscape (specially the Highlands).

Romantic Movement: term used to refer to the work of a number of writers between 1790 and 1830, particularly to six poets—

William Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. They had certain qualities in common which generally set them apart from the writers of the preceeding 18th century. These related to a reliance on the imagination, a response to natural environment, a distinct feeling for man in solitude as against man in society, a tendency to be 'inward-turning' (introverted) rather than outward-looking, a close interest in problems of growth and process, both in life and in art, initially a strong admiration for the French Revolution, a desire to use language with more freedom and informality than the 18th century poets and a tendency towards a greater looseness of form (Refer, 'Romanticism', p. 127).

262 *admirable poetry text-book* : *Understanding poetry.*

apposite : suitable, right for the purpose or occasion.

264 *Stolls* : Elmer Edgar (1874-1959), scholar, critic and teacher who wrote on Shakespeare, as against the then dominant criticism of A.C. Bradley who advocated a study of the plays in the context of the period (refer his Othello, 1915). His stand against impressionism in Shakespearean criticism earned him many followers. His books are *Othello, Hamlet* (1919), *Shakespeare Studies* (1927), *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (1933), among others.

266 *Semantics* : the study of the meaning of words, emphasizing the relationship between signs or words including such concerns as naming denotation, connotation and truth. It also focuses on such topics as meaning changes through time and the interrelationship of language structure, thought and meaning.

tyranny of words : propagandish manipulation of languages (reference may be made to Stuart Chase's important book *The Tyranny of Words* (1938), re-written as *The Power of Words* (1954).

Dickens : Charles (1812-70), novelist, one of the greatest and most popular of the 19th century writers who wrote about contemporary Victorian society and of many forces that went to shape it with a very acute and powerful intelligence and perception. His books include *Pickwick Papers* (1837), *Oliver Twist* (1837-38), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), *Dombey and Son* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Bleakhouse* (1852-53), *Hard Times* (1854) *Little Dorrit* (1857-58), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61).

267 *Nazism* : political ideas of the National Socialist German Workers Party, founded in 1919 by Anton Drexler and led by Adolf Hitler from 1921 until his suicide in 1945.

268 *Beethoven*: Ludwig von (1770-1827), great exponent of music of the European Romantic movement, Europe's greatest composer, a child prodigy, who went deaf at the age of 30. This deepened his loneliness and eccentricity, but did not stop him from composing. About 600 of his works survive including 9 symphonies, 5 piano concertos, 16 string quartets, 20 violin and piano sonatas, 2 ballets, 1 opera and 200 song settings. His famous *Emperor* piano concerto was composed in 1809 and *Kreutzer Sonata in* 1803.

Berlioz: (Louis) Hector (1807-69), Romantic composer and conductor whose first important musical work was *Symphonic Fantastique* (1830-31) inspired by his love for an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson (1800-54) whom he married. His other popular works include the dramatic symphony *Harold in Italy* (1834), the choral symphony *Romeo and Juliet* (1839), the opera *The Trojans* as well as a cantata *The Damnation of Faust* (1846) and an oratorio *The Childhood of Christ* (1850-54).

Delacroix: Eugeune (1798-1863), greatest French Romantic painter, whose use of colour was influential in the development of both Impressionist and Post-impressionist painters. His paintings were inspired from historical or contemporary events (Massacre at Chios, 1824) or literature (Death of Sardanapalus, 1827). He executed many great decorative works, the first being the murals in the Palais Bourbon (1833) and some of the most celebrated for the Museum of History at Versailles (1837).

Karl Marx: Karl (Heinrich) (1818-93), the world's most famous and probably most influential German philosopher, economist and revolutionary who was exiled from Germany and subsequently from Paris, and from 1849 till his death, stayed in London. Together with Friedrich Engels he published *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and a part of *Das Kapital* in 1867 the rest being published posthumously.

270 *acuity*: acuteness.

L.C. KNIGHTS

FROM *HOW MANY CHILDREN HAD LADY MACBETH ?*

272 *Shakespeare criticism*: Probably the earliest critical reference to Shakespeare was in Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia Wit's Trea-*

sury (1598). But the first and most important critic of Shakespeare was Ben Jonson. Others were John Dryden (17th century), Nicholas Rowe (Preface to his edition of Shakespeare, 1709), Joseph Addison (18th century), Samuel Johnson (Preface to his edition, 1765), Maurice Morgann (*Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, 1777), Walter Whites (*A specimen of a Commentary of Shakespeare*,1794), S.T. Coleridge (19th century, *Shakespeare's Judgement Equal to his Genius, Recapitulation and Summary of the Characteristics of Shakespeare's Dramas* and others), William Hazlitt (19th century) and Edward Dowden (*Shakespeare: A Critical study of his Mind and Art*, 1875). In the 20th century the critical approaches have become varied. The major figures are, A.C. Bradley, E.E. Stoll, T.S. Eliot, L.C. Knights, F.R. Leavis, G. Wilson Knight and D. Traversi.

273 *Archer*: William (1856-1924), dramatic critic and playwright, translated Ibsen's plays generally patronized Shaw and ardently advocated new intellectual drama in the latter part of the 19th century. His critical books include *The Theatrical World* (1893-97) and *The Old Drama and the New* (1923).

Bradley: Andrew Cecil (1851-1935), scholar, teacher and critic who taught in Liverpool, Glasgow and Oxford Universities. His *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) initiated new, powerful critical ideas in Shakespeare criticism. His other important book is *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909).

278 *Arden editor*: The Arden Shakespeare first appeared in 1899 under the general editorship of W. J. Craig and R. H. Case. It was published in a number of volumes, each volume devoted to one play, mainly for advanced scholars, incorporating scholarly text with variants, critical notes from various sources, lengthy introductions and excerpts from important sources.

282 *The Clarendon Editors*: Shakespeare texts published by Oxford University Press.

284 *sentimentalized Macbeth*: 'Yet the soul of Macbeth never quite disappears into the blackness of darkness. He is a cloud without water, carried about of winds; a tree whose fruit withers, but not, even to the last, quite plucked by the roots' could have a bearing on Edward Dowden's *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (1875).

290 *slightly parodied*: Lady Macbeth, the tragic heroine of *Macbeth* aptly described as 'magnificent in sin', was imperious, bold and had denied feminity to herself, hence no children. Thus the parody referred to in the title.

WILLIAM EMPSON

MARVELL'S GARDEN

294 *argument in Mencius*: refers to I. A. Richards's book *Mencius on the Mind* (1932).

301 *Sackville-West*: Victoria Mary (1892-1962), poet, novelist, travelogue-writer and a well-known figure in the contemporary society. An intimate friend of Virginia Woolf, her best work ranked among the classics of the period. With her husband, Sir Harold Nicolson, she edited *Another World Than This* (1945).

Whitman: Walt (1819-92), poet, well-known for his democratic ideas, who initiated the writing of free verse and introduced innovative techniques in poetry. His famous book *Leaves of Grass* (1855), was revised and enlarged in nine editions during his lifetime.

Folio, Quarto: Shakespeare's earliest published plays are referred to as folios or quartos according to the folding of the printed sheets and therefore the size of the book, folios being large tall volumes, and the quartos usually smaller and squarer. The First Folio (F1) came out in 1623 and the fourth (F4) in 1685. Though quarto texts had been there even before 1623, the real 'quarto era' began in the 1760s. This was done by Edward Capell, a scholar and editor, who spent about 20 years collecting quartos and his edition of Shakespeares' plays in 10 volumes, based on quarto was published in 1768.

310 *Touchstone*: keen-witted jester at Duke Frederick's court in *As You Like It*, a man who 'uses his folly like a stalking horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.'

CLEANTH BROOKS

THE LANGUAGE OF PARADOX

317 *Chesterton*: Gilbert Keith (1874-1936), writer of essays, stories, novels and poems, a very witty polemicist, one of a group that included Shaw, Wells and Bellock. His period of greatest influence was between 1900 and 1914. His books include critical studies on Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, Chaucer as well as *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913) the Father Browne series.

320 *Mr. Wordsworth before us*: refers to Coleridge, p. 46.

323 *Chase*: Stuart, scholar and thinker who wrote on the effects of machine age on human welfare. His books include *Men and Machines* (1929), *The Economy of Abundance* (1934) and *The Proper Study of Mankind* (1948), see p. 266.

329 *Huxley*: Aldous Leonard (1894-1963), essayist, novelist and friend of D. H. Lawrence who edited his *Letters* with an excellent introduction. He wrote a number of novels which transcended from being brilliant, witty and ironical to sombre, satirical and bitter. They include *Crome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923) *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), *Point Counter Point* (1928), *Brave New World* (1932), *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), *After Many a Summer* (1939) and *Ape and Essence* (1948). The reference here is to the vision of a conditioned world in *Brave New World.*

330 *reveals itself in the balance .... with more than usual order*: from *Biographia Literaria*, p 52. Perhaps it was written to honour *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1600), a poem attributed to Shakespeare, an elegy in 67 lines, heavily allegorical with an impersonal cast which has led to speculations about its meaning. Some think that it was a political allegory suggesting the tragic love affair of Elizabeth I and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. Others interpret it as an allusion to Sir John Salisbury (1566-1612), poet and patron, who married Ursula Stanley, illegitimate daughter of Henry Stanley, 4th Earl of Derby, and to whom Robert Chester's *Loves Martyr* (1601), which included *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, was dedicated. Another theory was that the poem refers to an unhappy love affair which allegedly took place between Sir John and his wife's sister. Still others see it as a reference to Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford (1580-1627), patroness of poets,

spoken of as a 'paragon of virtue and of beauty' and her husband Edward Russell, 3rd Earl of Bedford, or it was probably a dirge for Anne Lyne, a Catholic recusant, who was executed approximately at the time when the poem was written. Wilson Knight thinks that the poem celebrates the fusion of the 'feminine' and 'masculine' principles or 'bisexual integration'.

K. K. WIMSATT AND M. C. BEARDSLEY

THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY

333 *Lewis* : Clive Staples (1898-1963), scholar, novelist and writer of children's books. His works include such well-known books as *The Allegory of Love : A Study of Medieval Tradition* (1936), *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942), *Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1954), and others.

Tillyard : (1889-1962), professor and author reputed for his books on Shakespeare and Milton, most important of which is *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943), a study of an era in what he saw an 'optimistic world view'.

335 *Coomaraswamy* : Ananda Kentish (1877-1947), wrote on Indian art and culture as well as on problems of aesthetics, literature, philosophy and religion. He was much respected as a scholar and original thinker.

336 *Longinus* : Dionysius Cassius Longinus (flourished 1st century AD), author and critic whose treatise *On the Sublime* was an extremely influential work. It is about literary style and deals with qualities of expression that go to make true 'impressiveness'. Boileau translated it into French in 1674, and through him it influenced 18th century English ideas on style.

337 *Young* : Edward (1683-1765), poet, was much admired during his time. His famous poem *Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742-45) incorporated the eloquence of Milton along with rational tradition of Pope and was the starting point of the cultivation of the sensibility in the later part of the 18th century

Housman : Alfred Edward (1859-1936), poet, who distinguished himself as a classical scholar. His two poetry books, *The Shropshire Lad* (1896) and *Last Poems* (1922) as well as his lecture, *The Name and Nature of Poetry* achieved considerable popularity and fame.

340 *Lowes* : John Livingstone (1867-1945), Professor of English at Harvard (1918-1939), scholar and critic whose books include, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (1919) and *Road to Xanadu* (1927), his most famous book, analysing Coleridge's creative imagination. The discussions that follow in pages 340 and 341 relate to this book.

341 *Hartley* : David (1705-57), philosopher, well-known for his theory of association of ideas based on the thoughts of Newton and John Locke in the 17th century. He influenced both Wordsworth and Coleridge.

342 *well known poem* : Donne's poem *Valediction for Mourning.*

Kepler : Johannes (1571-1630) astronomer, was one of the first supporters of Copernicus' (1473-1543) heliocentric theory of the solar system.

Galileo : Galilei (1564-1642), mathematician, physicist and astronomer, was the fore-runner of experimental method of scientific inquiry. Supporter of Copernicus' theory, he put down his views in a witty and vigorous book *Dialogue on Two World Systems* (1632).

Gilbert : William (1544-1603), pioneer researcher into magnetism and physician to Elizabeth I, an early adherent of the experimental method (*De magnete*, 1650) was the first scientist to accept the ideas of Copernicus.

344 *The Golden Bough* : book by Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941), anthropologist, mythologist and writer. It is a description of 'the long evolution by which the thoughts and efforts of man have passed through the successive stages of magic, religion, and science'. The structure of Eliot's *The Waste Land* was influenced by *The Golden Bough.*

Matthiessen : (1902-50), scholar and teacher, his books include *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1935), one of the finest books on Eliot, *American Renaissance* (1941), a seminal book, *Henry James' The Major Phase* (1944) and *The Responsibilities of the Critic* (1952). He committed suicide in 1950.

Miss Weston's book : *From Ritual to Romance.*

345 *Bateson* : (1901-78) well-known scholar, critic and founder-editor of *Essays in Criticism*, a literary quarterly.

347 *Nerval* : Gerard de (1808-55), pseudonym of Gerard Labrume, poet whose work anticipated the techniques of symbolism and surrealism. His works include the story *Sylvie* (1854), the sonnets *Les Chimeres* (1854), and the collection of prose and poetry, *La Reve et la Vie* (1855). He had a mental breakdown and committed suicide in 1855.

NORTHROP FRYE

MYTH, FICTION AND DISPLACEMENT

351 *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* : first of the Oxford Companions, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey (died 1948) was originally published in 1932. In the Preface to the First Edition, Sir Paul wrote—'This volume will serve its purpose if it proves a useful companion to ordinary everyday readers of English literature. It is necessarily a work of compilation and selection, because the range of the subject matter is so great'. The Fifth edition, revised by Margaret Drabble was published in 1985.

352 *Miller* : Arthur (1915-), American dramatist and liberal intellectual whose well-known drama is *Death of a Salesman* (1949). His other dramas include *All My sons* (1947), *The Crucible* (1953), *A View from the Bridge* (1955) and *After the Fall* (1964) which is in part, a portrait of his late wife, the film-star Marilyn Monroe. Miller has been actively engaged in politics and one of the main themes of his plays relates to social responsibility.

Olivier movie : Sir Laurence Olivier (1907-) famous actor and director of the National Theatre Company from 1961-1973, had a number of outstanding roles in the plays of Shakespeare, Chekov, O'Neill and Ionesco. He played the leading role in the screen adaptations of *Henry V* (1944), *Hamlet* (1948), *Richard III* (1956) and *Othello* (1965).

353 *Sartor Rasartus* : Carlyle's book (see p. 107).

Pardoner's Tale : the tale told by the Pardoner, one of the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* The story is a grim allegory about the attempt of three 'rioters', that is, dissolute characters, to seek out and destroy 'Death' which ended in the rioters coming to a pile of gold over which they fought and killed one another.

Kipling : Rudyard (1865-1936) writer and poet, spent a part of his life in India (1882-89). His fame rests principally on his short stories dealing with India.His publications include *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887), *Barrack Room Ballads and other Verses* (1892) as well as *The Jungle Book* (1894), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895) and *Kim* (1901). His children's stories have become minor classics (about 4 volumes). He won the Noble Prize in 1907.

Hawthorne : Nathaniel (1804-64), novelist and short story writer whose two best known novels, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), one of the best novels in American literature, and *The House of Seven Gables* (1851) have strong symbolic significance dealing with the psychological effects of puritanism in New England. His book *The Marble Faun* (1860) is based on his travels in Italy (1857).

354 *Gammer Gurton's Needle* : lively verse comedy of uncertain authorship, first acted in 1566 and printed in 1575. Gammer is the old woman who loses her needle and after a lot of confusion finally finds it in the seat of a man's breeches.

Finnegans Wake : novel by James Joyce (1882-1941), one of the most powerful novelists of this century and author of *Ulysses* (1922). The book has a most difficult structure and is probably the most original experiment ever undertaken in the novel form. It deals with one night in the life of a Dublin public-house keeper, H. C. Earwicker, who is asleep and his experiences are all those of dreams. An important influence on Joyce was the psychological ideas of Sigmund Freud.

epiphany : manifestation related to Church festival (Twelfth Night festival). Joyce in his writings has used a device which he called 'epiphanies', that is sketches in which the incident, though often in itself slight, manifests or reveals the inner truth of a character.

James : Henry Joyce (1843-1916), novelist and critic who dealt with the problems of Americans confronting European culture in many of his novels. His novels include *Roderick Hudson* (1875), *Daisy Miller* (1879), *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1885), *What Masie Knew* (1897), *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). James was particularly fond

of the 'nouvelle' (short story) form and he wrote more than a hundred short works of fiction of which *The Turn of the Screw*, a ghost story, is best known. He was also an influential critic, and his prefaces to his novels are important theoretical statements on the novel. (Ref. *The House of Fiction*, ed by Lionel Edel).

355 *The Chalk Circle* : refers to *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944-5), a play in six scenes, by Bertholt Brecht (1898-1956), the famous German dramatist and initiator of 'epic theatre'.

Solomon : third king of Israel, son of David and Bathsheba, famous for his wisdom, reigned in the 10th century BC. His story is to be found in the Old Testament.

356 *Cinderella* : heroine of a folk-tale which probably dates from the 9th century. The story is of a girl, treated cruelly by her step-mother and two step-sisters. She is helped by her fairy god-mother and finally marries a prince. The story was probably introduced into England from France in the 17th century.

Bluebeard : European folk-tale character, who murders successive wives and locks their bodies in a forbidden room. His last wife discovers the bodies and is threatened with death, but she is finally rescued by her brothers.

Thomas Mann : (1875-1955), novelist and essayist whose *Buddenbrooks* (1901), his first novel, is an autobiographical account of the decay of his family. His other novels include *Death in Venice* (1903), *The Magic Mountain* (1924), *Joseph and His Brethren* (1933-43), *Dr. Faustes* (1947), *The Holy Sinner* (1951) and *Confession of Felix Kruk* (1954). Mann opposed Nazism and emigrated to the USA in the 1930s. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1929.

Leger : Fernand (1881-1955), painter associated with cubism and deeply influenced by modern industrial technology, who developed 'machine art' or a style characterized by monumental mechanistic forms in bold colours arranged in highly disciplined combinations.

Modigliani : Amedeo (1884-1920), painter and sculptor, was influenced by Cezanne as well as by Negro masks.

Haggard : Sir Henry Rider (1856-1925), writer, well-known for his many adventure novels and romances, the best known of which are *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *She* (1887).

Buchan : John, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir (1875-1940), Britain's Director of Information during World War I, Governor-General of Canada

(1935), wrote a number of vigorous adventure novels that included *The Thirty Nine Steps* (1915) and *The Three Hostages* (1920).

357 *Stevenson*: Robert Louis (1850-94), famous novelist who wrote adventure novels. His books include *Treasure Island* (1883), *Kidnapped* (1885) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889).

Trollope: Anthony (1815-82), novelist who wrote a series of novels set in the imaginary county of Barsetshire with a cast of predominantly clerical characters. His books include *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1887), as well as novels with a political background such as *Phineas Finn* (1869) and *Eustace Diamonds* (1873).

358 *Defoe*: Daniel (1660-1731), novelist, economist and journalist whose famous novels, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack* (1722) were written late in his career.

Bennett: Arnold (1837-1931), novelist and editor who published his first novel at the age of 61 (in 1898). His novels are about life in the potteries area of Staffordshire where he grew up. They include *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), *The Old Wives Tale* (1908) and *Clayhanger* (1910).

Smollett: Tobias George (1721-71), satarical novelist, especially brilliant in the rendering of comic character types. His novels include *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771).

Jane Austen: (1775-1817), novelist who lived an outwardly uneventful life with her family in the south of England. Her major novels include *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815-16) and *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Her heroines are drawn from the rural landed-gentry and her novels are distinguished by her sensitive insight into personal and social tensions.

Braque: Georges (1882-1963), painter who with Picasso developed cubism. His favourite subjects were still-lifes and one of his important innovations was the use of lettering in compositions.

Gris: Juan (1887-1927), cubist painter who worked in Paris from 1906. In contrast to Picasso and Braque, his approach to cubism was mathematical. He promoted the art of collage and wrote an influential study of painting (1924).

Shaw: George Bernard (1856-1950), one of the greatest dramatists of the present century, and starting with *Widowers' House* (1892)

he wrote more than 405 plays besides novels, essays and long prefaces to most of his own plays. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1925.

Corelli : Marie (1854-1924), novelist and musician who wrote a series of popular romantic novels that include *Barabbas* (1893), *The Murder of Delicia* (1896) and *The Secret Power* (1921).

360 *Cocteau* : Jean (1889-1963), dramatist, novelist, poet and a leading figure in contemporary arts in France, a practitioner, advocate or commentator whose numerous writings include verse plays *Orphe* (1927), *La voix Humaine* (1930), *La Machine Infernale* (1934), and novel *Les Enfants Terribles* (1929), wherein he has retold ancient myths in modern context.

361 *Apollo, Artemis, Endymion, Phaethon* : in Greek mythology, Apollo was a god of many aspects: symbol of light, of reason, and of male beauty. He was identified with prophecy (Apollo's Oracle at Delphi), music, poetry and the care of animals and crops and the like. Artemis was Apollo's sister, a stern goddess and usually invoked during childbirth. She is identified with the moon as is Apollo with the sun. Endymion was a beautiful youth, who was put into an everlasting sleep by Selene, goddess of the moon, so that she could enjoy his beauty forever. Phaethon was the son of the sun god Helios, who granted him his wish to drive the chariot of the sun for one day. He soon betrayed his incapacity and the horses departed from their usual course, threatening the earth with conflagration. Zeus, perceiving the disorder, hurled a thunderbolt and killed him.

accretion : increase by organic addition or growth.

362 *Zeus* : in Greek mythology the supreme deity identified with the Roman Jupiter. He was the sky and weather god and usually portrayed as a bearded man, with thunderbolts and the eagle as his symbols.

Drayton : Michael (1563-1631), poet, born a year before Shakespeare and came from the same county of Warwickshire. Though not original, his poetry was uncommonly fresh, *Nymphidia* (1627), a fairy fantasy, *Endymion and Phoebe* (1955), *Ballad of Agincourt*, a historical poem and *Polyoblion* (1613-22), a survey in verse of England.

Keats about Endymion : refers to Keats' well-known poem *Endymion* (1819).

Hugo : Victor (1802-85), poet, novelist, dramatist and leader of the Romantic movement in France was honoured as a national literary figure. His major works include *Hernani* (1820), *Les Contemplations* (1856) and *Les Miserables* (1862).

Yeats : William Butler (1856-1939), poet and dramatist, considered as one of the two greatest English poets of contemporary times, the other being Eliot. His major poetical volumes comprise *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1929). He won the Nobel Prize in 1923.

Lycidas : Milton's poem (1637)

Myth of Adonis : in Greek mythology, Adonis was a youth of great beauty from Cyprus, beloved of Aphrodite, goddess of love (called Venus by the Romans). Adonis was venerated in many festivals as a vegetation God, his death and revival representing the seasonal decay and regeneration of nature (cf. Shakespeare's poem Venus and Adonis).

364 *Plautus* : Titus Maccius (254-184 BC), dramatist, whose twenty-one surviving plays influenced the early development of comic drama in England and France.

Meredith : George (1828-1909), poet and novelist, whose poem *Modern Love* (1862) deals with his own unhappy marriage. His novels include *The Egoist* (1879) and the *Tragic Comedians* (1880).

Andromeda : in Greek mythology, daughter of King Cepheus of Ethiopia who was sacrificed to a sea-monster. She was rescued by Perseus who married her.

Iphigeneia : in Greek mythology, the daughter of Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks in the Trojan War. When the Greeks on their way to the Trojan War were detained by contrary winds at Aulis, they were told that Iphigeneia must be sacrificed to appease the wrath of Artemis, whose stag Agamemnon had killed. Agamemnon reluctantly consented, and as the priest was about to deliver the fatal blow, Iphigeneia disappeared and a deer was found in her place. Artemis, moved by Iphigeneia's innocence had borne her away to Tauris and entrusted her with the care of her temple. The story of Iphigeneia was made the subject of plays by Aeschylus and Sophocles (now extant), and notably by Euripides; also in modern times by Racine and Goethe.

366 *Wodehouse* : Sir Pelham Grenville (1881-1975), humorous writer

who wrote a number of comic novels about English upper-class society in the 1920s.

367 *The Pilgrim's Progress* : novel by John Bunyan (1678).

McCarthyism : name given to the anti-communist witch-hunt led by Republican senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy (1908-57) during the cold war. This witch-hunt came to an end in 1954 when McCarthy was censured by the Senate.

FRANK KERMODE

DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY

MODERN SYMBOLIST READINGS OF LITERARY HISTORY

372 *admired poetry and a great drama* : refers to Metaphysical poetry and Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.

Pride's Purge, Rump : both refer to the Long Parliament summoned by Charles I in 1640 which lasted until 1653 when dissolved by Oliver Cromwell. After his death it reassembled and continued till 1660, the year of the Restoration, when it dissolved itself. The 'Pride's Purge' refers to the situation in 1648, when members favourable towards King Charles were expelled by Colonel Pride; the others who continued to sit were nicknamed the 'Rump'.

373 *pre-Baconian and pre-Cartesian* : Francis Bacon (1567-1626), statesman, philosopher and essayist, exercised great influence on the European mind. He laid emphasis on strictly scientific aims and methods, and advocated inductive experimental habits and cleared the way for later natural philosophers. Rene Descartes (1596-1650), well-known philosopher and mathematician, was the first advocate of the total reliance on reason and rationalism that came to influence the ways of thought in the later 17th century and 18th century.

Averroes : Ibn Roshd (1126-98), Muslim philosopher and judge whose commentary on Aristotle greatly influenced the philosophy of medieval Christianity. He maintained that faith and reason are not necessarily in conflict but are separate ways of arriving at the truth (Reference 'Double Truth').

374 *Decadents*: group of late-19th century symbolist poets and their contemporaries in England. A journal entitled *Le Decadent* was published in France from 1886 to 1889. The poets linked with the movement were Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarme from France, and Arthur Symons, Oscar Wilde and Ernest Dowson from England. They believed in liberating art from moral and social constraints (Ref. Aesthetic movement of the late 19th century and its slogan 'art for arts' sake).

Adams: Henry (1838-1918), historian, novelist and journalist, wrote a long history of early democracy in America. His most important and influential work was *Mont-Saint-Michel* and *Chartres* (1904), a study of the unity of art and religion in the middle ages.

Symbolist: group of poets in the late 19th century who regarded poetry as a means of transcending reality and who believed in the power of words and images to evoke responses in the subconscious mind. They included Mallarme, Verlaine, and Rimbaud and acknowledged the influence of Baudelaire. (see Decadents' p. 374, and refer 'Aesthetic movement')

Cavalcanti: guide (1255-1300), poet and a friend of Dante, wrote about 50 poems on themes of love and emotional suffering.

Original Sin: interpreted as a condition of sinfulness or the sinfulness 'born into' each baby. It refers to the tendency towards sinfulness which is held by many to be inherent in mankind.

Cino: Cino da Pistoia (1270-1336), jurist, poet and prose writer whom Dante called the best Italian love poet. His poetry was characterized by philosophical treatment of love and grace and by directness and clarity of diction.

377 *baroque*: style in art, architecture and music which became dominant in Roman Catholic countries during the 17th and early 18th centuries.

379 *Brooke*: Stopford (1832-1916), Unitarian Minister, wrote on literary and religious subjects.. His *Primer of English Literature* (1876) was a very popular book.

380 *Courthope*: William John (1842-1917), Civil Service Commissioner, scholar and Professor of Poetry at Oxford, whose major work was *A History of English Poetry* (6 vols 1895-1909).

382 *Winters*: Arthur Yvor (1900-68), respected and distinguished scholar, critic and teacher whose books include *Primitivism and*

Decadence (1937), *Maule's Course* (1938), *The Anatomy of Nonsense* (1943), *The Function of Criticism* (1957) and *In Defence of Reasons.*

384 *Stevens*: Wallace (1879-1955), lawyer and poet, considered as one of the finest poets of modern times. Beginning from the tradition of the Romantics he soon moved to the French Symbolists and wrote highly civilized verse. His books include *Collected Poems* (1954), *Opus Posthumous* (1957) and a book of criticism, *The Necessary Angel* (1951).

385 *neologisms*: coining or using of new words.

Autotelic: having or being a purpose in itself. Term used in New Criticism suggesting that a poem has no other end or purpose but to be. Hence didactic, moral or any other additional purpose is unnecessary for a poem.

386 *nul vestige d'une .... a un concept*

'no trace of a philosophy, ethics or methaphysic will appear, I add that it must be included and concealed .... the song burst forth from a hidden source, prior to a concept.'

387 *The Rape of the Lock*: (1712-14) narrative poem in four volumes by Alexander Pope (1688-1744). It is a witty account of contemporary society.

387 *Ulysses*: written by James Joyce (1822-1941) it is a stream of consciousness epic portraying a single day in the lives of several Dubliners, published in 1922.

388 *discourse*: learned discussion on philosophical, political or religious topics.

Chicago neo-Aristotelians: A group of critics including R. S. Crane and Elder Olson associated with the University of Chicago who in 1952 published a collection of critical essays on *Critics and Criticism : Ancient and Modern.* In general it drew attention to the relevance of Aristotelian theories in the assessment of modern literature.

389 *eclectic*: borrowing freely from various sources.

390 *pure poetry*: the theories and ideas of true poetry were originally developed by Edgar Allan Poe (*The Poetic Principle*, 1850), and

are closely associated with symbolism. Used by the French authors Baudelaire, Mallarme, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Valery it is close to a form of music. George Moore (*Pure Poetry* 1924) and Abbe Bremond (*La Poesie* 1926) were important 20th century advocates of pure poetry. Moore, with a reference to Poe, talked of poetry as 'almost free from thought' and Bremond associated poetry with prayer, a type of mystical experience which rises towards an 'ineffable and 'incantatary' conditions. T.S. Eliot also refers to pure poetry in his essay 'From Poe to Valery'.

Pottle : E.A., Professor of English and public orator at Yale University reputed as a James Boswell scholar.

Collingwood : R.G. (1889-1943) Professor of Metaphysical philosophy at Oxford—an expert on Roman History whose important works include *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (1933), *The Principles of Art* (1938) and *The New Leviathan* (1942).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

1. Addison : Joseph (1672-1719) poet, politician and essayist, son of a parson, he was well-versed in classical education, qualified for diplomatic service where he held a number of important positions, and was an M.P. with Whig sympathies from 1708 till his death. His early well-known poem was *'THE CAMPAIGN'* (1704) which celebrated the victory of Blenheim. His classical tragedy *Cato* (1713) was a great success at that time. Addison's best and most enduring work lies in his essays which he contributed to the *Tatler* (1709-11) which appeared thrice weekly, and the *Spectator* (1711-12 and 1714) a daily. A notable creation in his essays was Sir-Roger de Coverley, an eccentric country gentleman. Addison's critical essays illustrate the taste and critical approach of the informed English society of the time. They reveal the neoclassic reaction away from ingenuity for its own sake and towards a sophisticated but simple elegance. The examples were the papers on the old ballad *Chevy Chase* and *Paradise Lost* (18 papers starting with No. 267). The open-minded interest of English neoclassicism in the psychology of art can be seen in the series of papers entitled *'The Pleasures of the Imagination'* in the *Spectator* (No. 409 and Nos. 411-21, of which No. 412, in part and No. 416 are printed

here). The books and essays on Addison include Samuel Johnson's Life of Addison in *Lives of the Poets; Life* by P. Smithers; *Essays in Biography* by B. Dobree; C.S. Lewis in *Essays Presented to David Nichol Smith.*

2. Arnold : Matthew (1822-88) poet, critic and educationist worked as a government inspector of schools from 1851 to 1886. Son of Thomas Arnold, himself a famous educator and Headmaster of Rugby School. His poems, mainly written between 1849 and 1867, expressed his moral beliefs and doubts and were meditative and melancholic in tone. They included such well-known pieces as *Sohrab and Rustum* (1853), *Scholar Gypsy* (1853), *Thyrsis* (1867) and *Dover Beach* (867). As a critic he has been more influential, and has been much admired by Richards, Eliot, Leavis and Trilling. His best known critical works are *Essays in Criticism* (1865; 1888), *On Translating Homer* (1861) and *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Their relevance lies in Arnold's studies of contemporary culture and the ways he discussed the relationship of literature to industrial civilization. In general Arnold asserted literary and cultural values as an antidote to the progressive materialism of Victorian society. Through him English criticism, which had subsided into mediocrity after Coleridge and Hazlitt, became animated and broadened. 'It became aware of the alert critical intelligence at work in mid-nineteenth century France, and was reminded once again of the wide aims of classical theory' (Bates). The books on Arnold include *Matthew Arnold* by Lionel Trilling; *Matthew Arnold* by J.D. Jump; and *Arnold: A Study in Conflict* by E. K. Brown.

3. Beardsley : Monroe C. (1915-) taught philosophy and aesthetics at Yale, Mount Holyoke College, Swarthmore College and Temple University. His publications include *Aesthetics : Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958) and *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (1966). He collaborated with W. K. Wimsatt to write two important critical documents of New Criticism—*The Intertienal Fallacy* and *The Affective Fallacy.*

4. Brooks : Cleanth (1906-) born at Kentucky, educated at America Universities and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He taught at Louisiana State University and then as Professor of English at Yale University. He edited *Southern Review* (1936-42) with Robert Penn Warren and others and made it a very distinguished quarterly. He was a chief exponent of the New Criticism movement

in America and his books had considerable influence in academic circles. While discussing structural and linguistic factors in poetry, he put emphasis on verbal precision in the face of paradoxical nature of language which he demonstrated through close analyses of chosen texts. His *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939) was a very able analysis of the strength and sources of modern poetry, and *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947) a very perceptive revaluation of English poetic tradition . In merit and influence, both the books are comparable to F. R. Leavis *New Bearings in English Poetry and Revaluation*. His other influential books, which he produced were, *Understanding Poetry* (1938),and *Understanding Fiction* in collaboration with Robert Penn Warren (1943) and *Understanding Drama* (1947) in collaboration with Robert Heilman.

5. Coleridge : Samuel Taylor (1772- 1834) poet and critic, son of the Vicar of Ottery, St. Mary, was educated at Christ's Hospital School, Devon, and Jesus College, Cambridge. Subsequently his life became, to some extent, desultory and he continually changed jobs. During the last 15 years he settled down, under the patronage of his friends and devoted his time to study, writing, lecturing and giving talks. In 1795 he met Wordsworth and their joint publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) marked a decisive break with 18th century poetry, and was the effective starting-point of the English Romantic movement. His finest poems, such as *Kubla Khan* (1797) and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1797-98) were written at this time. His other poems include *Christabel, Frost at Midnight, The Lime Tree Bower* and *Dejection : An Ode* (1802). He was an original thinker and he attempted to give to his literary criticism a profound philosophical basis. His best known and most important volume of criticism was *Biographia Literaria* (1817) which was a major work of humorous autobiography, philosophy and literary criticism. The autobiography related to his beginnings as a poet and co-author of *Lyrical Ballads*, the philosophy to his advocacy of a more spiritual and religious interpretation of life as against the limitedly rationalistic trends of 18th century thought and criticism specially to the poetry of Wordsworth. He was one of the first critics to give close critical attention to language, and his important contribution to critical thinking was his conception of the profoundly organic nature of poetic (and all artistic) creation, involving the whole personality of the poet. Equally important were his distinctions between understanding and reason, between two sorts of imagination (primary and secondary), and between imagination and fancy which initiated more elaborate

thinking about works of art and their making. Besides *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge's other critical works include *Literary Remains* (1836-39), *Anima Poetae* (1895), *Specimens of the Table Talk* (1835), *Shakespearean Criticism* (ed. Rayson, 1930) and *Miscellaneous Criticism* (ed. Rayson, 1936). The books on Coleridge include *Coleridge* by H. House, *The Road to Xanadu* by J. L. Lowes, *Coleridge on Imagination* by I. A. Richards, *Coleridge as Philosopher* by J. H. Muirhead, *Coleridge : A Biographical Study* by E. K. Chambers, and *Coleridge the Visionary* by J. B. Beer.

6. Derrida : Jacques (1930-) French philosopher, scholar, teacher and critic, was born in El Biar, Algiers and subsequently came over to Paris to work where he is currently teaching philosophy. His range of scholarship has been very broad and he has written remarkably influential essays in almost every field of the human sciences : philosophy, literature, psychoanalysis, anthropology and linguistics. Beginning with a systematic mistrust of all forms of metaphysical thought he has elaborated a way of reading texts, a strategy of deconstruction and suggests that one has to think in terms which neither affirm nor oppose but 'resist' metaphysical concepts. He has applied the deconstructive strategy to a variety of texts, both literary and philosophical, and his readings have achieved a radical and salutary transformation of perspective. His books include *Speech and Phenomena* (1967, trans. 1973), a study of Husserl, *Writing and Difference* (1967, trans. 1978), two collections of essays, and *Of Grammatology* (1967 (trans. 1976). Works on him are mostly to be found in journals such as, *New Literary History, Critical Inquiry, Diacritics, Boundary* and *Oxford Literary Review.*

7. Dryden : John (1631-1700), poet, critic and dramatist, was born in Northamptonshire in the vicarage of Aldwinkle All Saints. He was educated at Westminster under Busby and at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1654 he settled in London and attempted to earn his living by writing. In the beginning he wrote a number of poems, adapted to the changing times. He concentrated on plays (1663-1681) and became prosperous and well-known. He became a member of the Royal Society in 1662, and later succeeded Sir William D'Avenant (1606-68) as poet laureate (1668). He got married in 1663 to Lady Elizabeth Howard, eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, though probably it was not a happy marriage. He became a Catholic on the succession of James II (1685). But when the Catholic James was deposed in 1688 and Protestant William III

succeeded, he lost his position as laureate and other royal appointments. Therefore he was hard pressed during his later years and he had to support himself by constant writing which included this translation of *Virgil* (the complete work appeared in 1697) which fetched him good money. But inspite of these changes in fortune, Dryden continued to be admired and respected as the principal poet of the age until his death. His poetic achievement included *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681-82), *The Medal* (1682) and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), all outstanding verse satires written with power, economy and intellectual conciousness. In criticism he was the first to make systematic surveys of individual writers and works and combined classical authority with independent judgement. He wrote extensively and his important pieces include *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (1668) and *Preface to the Fables* (1700). For his pioneering and original work in criticism, he has been called the 'Father of English criticism'. The standard edition of Dryden's criticism is *Essays*, (ed. by W. P. Ker, 2 vols. 1900) which includes Ker's introduction and notes. In addition, other books include *Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* by L. I. Bredvold, *Homage to John Dryden* and *John Dryden, the Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic* by T. S. Eliot, *Dryden* (*in Lives of the English Poets*) by Samuel Johnson, *The Poetry of John Dryden* by Mark Van Doren and *John Dryden* by K. Young.

8. Eliot : Thomas Stearns (1888-1965), was a very influential poet, critic and dramatist. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri (U.S.A.) and was educated at Harvard and in Europe. He later settled in England where he briefly worked in London as a bank clerk. His first volume of poetry *Prafrock and other Observations* or a collection of innovatory poems was published in 1917 and *The Waste Land*, his best known work in 1922, though *Four Quartets* (1935-41) is generally considered as his major poetic achievement. He edited *The Criterion* from 1922 to 1939, when it became one of the most influential literary reviews of the time, the other being *Scrutiny*, edited by F. R. Leavis. During this period he also wrote a considerable amount of influential literary criticism which were mainly collected in *Selected Essays* (1932) and later in *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). He became an Anglo-Catholic and a British subject in 1927. His verse dramas include *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939), *The Cocktail Party* (1950) and *The Elder Statesman* (1958). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1949. Eliot's achievement as a poet was linked with his achievement as a critic and vice versa, so much so, that together they effected the most significant reordering and renewing

of literary taste and sensibility in the century. His poetry enlarged the range and form of poetic expression as a medium of the modern consciousness. His criticism made a general plea for an increased objectivity in poetry, re-examined problems of form and style in particular writers or groups of writers of the past and reassessed the English poetic tradition in terms of reviving admiration for the metaphysical poets or more broadly for the English tradition of wit while implicitly rejecting the nineteenth century and the strains of Spenser and Milton in English poetry. The books on Eliot include *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* by R. O. Matthiessen, *Invisible Poet* by Hugh Kenner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot* by Helen Gardener, *T. S. Eliot: The Dialectical Structure of His Theory of Poetry*, by Fei-Pai Lu and *The Literary Criticism of T.S. Eliot* ed. by David Newton-De Molina.

9. Empson: Sir William (1906-1984), was born in Yorkshire and read mathematics and later English literature under I. A. Richards, Cambridge University. He had spells of Professorship, before and after World War II, in Japan (Tokyo) and China (Peking), after which beginning from 1953, he joined as Professor of English literature in the University of Sheffield (U.K.). He is a poet and critic, and in both, more so as a critic, he has been remarkably influential. His poetry which includes *Poems* (1935), *The Gathering storm* (1940) and *Collected Poems* (1955), is almost a conscious revival of the metaphysical style and shows a keen ear for colloquialism and formal finish, and generally makes a strong plea against the surrender of mind to emotion. His criticism includes *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951) and *Milton's Gods* (1961), of which the first book, written when he was a graduate student, has been the most influential and famous and has played an important role in generating modern Anglo-American literary criticism (New Criticism). Empson's main contribution to criticism has been in his analysis of the nature of language when it is used in imaginative writing, particularly poetry. In this he was generally influenced by linguistic philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein and more particularly by his teacher I. A. Richards. *Seven Types*, particularly, discusses how various semantic ambiguities can be singularly relevant for a true assessment of poetry. Subsequently, in his later books be developed psychological and philosophical aspects of this approach, though generally these books could not be as influential as the first one. The books on Empson include, *William Empson: The Man and His Work* (1974), ed. by Roma Gill, and *The God Approached: A Com-*

mentary on the Poems of William Empson (1978) by Philip Gardener.

10. Frye: Hermann Northrop (1912-), was born in Toronto (Canada) and educated at Oxford. He entered the Church in 1936 and subsequently started teaching English literature at Victoria College, Toronto, where he continued on a permanent basis and came to be acknowledged as an eminent thinker and critic. His first important work was *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) where he gave an interpretation of the mythology of William Blake. But his most famous and most original work was *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) where through the 'techniques of anthropology ' and 'motifs of rebirth' he has correlated various genres of literature with different phases of the mythology of the seasons. In fact his concern with mythology, or more particularly the literary adoptions of mythology as a force in social life, remained central to his work. Frye's wide ranging interest in literature was matched by his own encyclopaedic knowledge,and they together made his work difficult but profound.

11. Hazlitt: William (1778-1830), essayist and critic, was born at Maidstone, the son of a Unitarian minister of strong liberal views, and himself took the liberal side in politics throughout his life. Though his early life was spent in a village near Shrewsberry, he later settled in London and married twice (1808 and 1824). He wrote almost continuously for the contemporary periodicals, including the *Edinburgh Review* and *The Examiner* (Leigh Hunt's weekly periodical). In general he supported the practical and dissenting side of contemporary England which was traditionally liberal in politics and religion and pragmatic in morals. He was acquainted with Wordsworth and Coleridge (*My First Acquaintance with Poets* 1823), and though later they drifted apart, he always admired Wordsworth's early poetry for its integrity and disinterestedness. His writings may be generally divided into three categories : 1) his familiar essays on miscellaneous subjects, such as on 'Going a Journey', 'Going to a Fight' which became models for the later Victorian use of the familiar essay; 2) his discussions on political, economic and social subjects (*The Spirit of the Age*, 1825), including studies on Bentham, Malthus, Godwin and Wordsworth, who based their thoughts on experience though he rated the rational theorists as more remote from reality in comparison to the poets who gave form to their experience directly and 3) his literary criticism, most valuable and best among his writings. His works apart from the two mentioned earlier include, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818-19), *English*

Comic Writers (1819), *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820) and *Table Talk or Original Essays on Men and Manners* (1821-22). Hazlitt was one of the greatest of contemporary journalists and as a critic his 'depth of taste' was highly praised by Keats. His interest with the way human mind and emotions respond to art, with moral theory and its relation to psychology and with the romantic values of 'gusto' and emotional excitement in art make him acceptable as the most representative critic in English romanticism, though he knew the dangers of emotional subjectivism and advocated the moderation of English thought in all periods. Books on Hazlitt include, *Life* by P.P. Howe, *Life* by H. Baker, *The Aesthetics of Hazlitt* by E. Schneider, *The Political Ideas of English Romantics* by C. Brinton and *Hours in Library* by L. Stephen.

12. Johnson : Samuel (1709-84), was critic, poet, lexicographer and essayist. Inspite of his many personal disadvantages and poverty at an early age, he acquired great eminence and prestige as a man of letters, and an almost legendary fame in the Augustan England as an intellectual leader. An account of his life written by James Boswell, his friend and disciple, has come to be regarded as the greatest biography in English literature. As a critic, Johnson is best known for his Preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1765) and for his *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81), which consisted of 52 biographies with critical estimates of 52 poets beginning from Cowley, and which is considered as a 'great critical classic, which is a monument to Augustan taste at its best'. Some of the best essays in the *Lives* are on the greatest poets such as Milton, Dryden, Pope and others. As a critic Johnson basically believed that the aim of all art should be the mental and moral enlargement of man, and art attains its end only through a moving and imaginative presentation of truth. That is why in speaking of Shakespeare he pointed out that 'there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature'. In his discussions Dr. Johnson never lost sight of what is centrally important. The critics agree that the outstanding quality of his writings is its sanity and it had, as Eliot pointed out, immense 'intellectual' and 'moral significance'. His works include, apart from the *Lives* and Prefaces, *London* (1738) and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), two satirical poems, *The Rambler* (1750-52) a periodical entirely written by him, *Rasselas* (1759), a philosophical romance, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) and *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). The books on him include, *'Life'* by James Boswell, *Young Sam Johnson* by J.L. Clifford, *Six Essays on Johnson* by W. Raleigh *The*

Prose Style of Samuel Johnson by W.K. Wimsatt, *Samuel Johnson's Literary Criticism* by J. H. Hagstrum and *Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson* by J. E. Brown.

13. Jonson : Ben (1572-1637), poet, dramatist and critic, probably the most distinguished rival of Shakespeare, and an influential personality during his time. He was both a traditionalist as well as an admirer of Renaissance ideas, that is, he admired both the qualities of ancient Roman culture as well as the traditional virtues of English society, and in general, exhibited a deep concern for the 'restraining and directing qualities of civilization.' His dramas included acknowledged masterpieces such as, *Volpone* (1605), and *The Alchemist* (1610), comedies, *Sejanus* (1603), a satirical tragedy, as well as *Epicone, or the Silent Woman* (1609), *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), and *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) among others. His non-dramatic poetry included a body of fine poetry which combined grace of manner with intellectual control. His prose miscellany, entitled *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter* (1640) contained his critical views on the virtues of poetic and dramatic discipline which generally illustrated the historical development of neo-classicism from Sydney to Dryden. These related to an emphasis on the moral function of art as well as on the imaginative power of mind (a goodness of natural wit), on continual 'exercise' and 'habit' in writing and study and imitation of past writers ('to convert the substance, or Riches of another Poet, to his own use'). The books on Jonson include the introduction and notes in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* by J. E. Spingarn, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* by L. C. Knights and *The Broken Compass* by E. B. Patridge.

14. Kermode : John Frank (1919-), was born on the Isle of Man at Douglas, and read at Liverpool University. After an academic career in a number of universities in Britain, he became Lord Northcliffe, Professor of Modern Literature at London, from 1967, and King Edward VII Professor at Cambridge, from 1974. Though his initial studies were about the Renaissance, subsequently beginning with *Romantic Image* (1957), which first made his reputation as a significant critic, and from where an extract has been taken here, he gave increasing attention to the field of modern studies, in which area he is now acknowledged as one of the finest critics. He was the General Editor of the 'Fontana Modern Master' series and with John Hollander edited the excellent *Oxford Anthology of English Literature*. His other books include *Puzzles and Epiphanes* (1962) and *The Sense of an Ending* (1967).

15. Knights : Lionel Charles (1906-), a very fine critic and teacher, was educated at school and university in Cambridge, and subsequently occupied professional chairs in a number of universities in Britain, including Sheffield, Bristol and Cambridge. In the thirties he collaborated with F. R. Leavis to become a founder-editor of *Scrutiny*, where a large part of his critical works devoted to historical and scholarly interpretation of Renaissance poetry and drama were published. His criticisms, marked by fine sensitiveness and an acute intelligence, include *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937), three volumes of critical essays entitled *Explorations* (1946, 1965, 1975) and a considerable amount of Shakespearean criticism, from which an extract has been taken here. Professor Knight's interest in exploring the capacity of language 'to express the deepest truths of our nature' ranks him among the most perceptive critics of modern times:

16. Krutch : Joseph Wood (1893-1970), born in Tennessee, graduated from the State University (1915), served in World War I, and received his Ph. D. from Columbia (1923). He was for a long time on the faculty of Columbia (1925-31, 1937-52) and on the editorial staff of *The Nation* (1942-52) mainly as a drama critic. His books include *Edgar Allan Poe : A Study in Genius* (1926), an analytical biography employing psychoanalysis; *The Modern Temper* (1929), a pessimistic analysis of contemporary life by a 'modern intellectual' who finds that science has destroyed his faith in a beneficent universe, and psychology his belief in his own nobility, so that he 'finds only in the pursuit of knowledge that which makes life worth living; *Five Masters : A Study in the Mutations of the Novel* (1930), an analysis of Boccaccio, Cervantes, Richardson, Stendhal and Proust, to determine whether their greatness springs from the life of their times or from an essential universality; *Experience and Art* (1932); *Was Europe a Success?* (1934); *The American Drama Since 1918* (1939); Scholarly biographies, *Samuel Johnson* (1944) and *Thoreau* (1948); *Modernism in Modern Drama* (1953) and the *Measure of Man* (1954), a return to the theme of *The Modern Temper*, with a humanistic plea for 'Moral Discourse'. After he moved to Arizona, many of his books dealt with natural history, the Western scene, and a humanist's view of man and his environment including *The Desert Year* (1952), *The Best of Two Worlds* (1953), *The Great Chain of Life* (1957), *Human Nature and the Human* (1959), *The Forgotten Peninsula, A Naturalist in Baja California* (1961) and *More Lives Than One* (1962) recalls his varied experiences.

17. Leavis : Frank Raymond (1895-1978), one of the most eminent critics of modern times, was born and educated at Cambridge, and also spent his entire teaching career at Cambridge University. In collaboration with his wife Q. D. Leavis, a fine critic herself and with friends like L. C. Knights and Denys Thompson, he started *Scrutiny*, probably the best and most influential critical journal of the 20th century and ran it from 1932 to 1953. He wrote extensively on English literature, thereby doing a radical 'revolution' which turned out to be extremely influential. He traced a 'great tradition' in the English novel, highlighting the central moral and social importance of great fiction, and spoke of a vital organic culture which alone can nourish literature meaningful to life in an age of cultural crisis. He valued D.H. Lawrence more than anybody else in the 20th century, as being the person whose writings encourage reverence for life. The same thing can be said about Dr. Leavis—his criticism makes us aware of the centrality of life as no one else's does. His books include *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932), *Revaluation* (1936), *The Great Tradition* (1948), *The Common Pursuit* (1952), *D. H. Lawrence, Novelist* (1955), *English literature in Our Time and the University* (1969), *Now Shall My Sword* (1972), *The Living Principle : English as a Discipline of Thought* (1975) and *Thought, Words and Creativity* (1976). The books on him include *The Moment of Scrutiny* (1979) by Francis Mulhern and *The Literary Criticism of F. R. Leavis* (1979) by R. P. Bilan.

18. Pater : Walter Horatio (1839-1894), was a well known scholar, essayist and critic. He read in Canterbury and Oxford and was elected to a fellowship in Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1864. Initially he was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, a largely art-movement, which opposed mere technical skill without inspiration and extolled the virtues of medieval culture. Subsequently he became an important influence in the cult of art which led to the Aesthetic Movement of the late 19th Century. It was largely a reaction against the materialism and commercialism of the Victorian industrial era, and Pater's contribution was of putting emphasis on the value of ecstatic experience. His two influential books to this extent were *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), a collection of essays on Italian painters and writers from 14th to 16th century, and *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), a philosophic romance. Particularly the first book, from which the present extracts have been taken, advocated a 'fusion of psychic, moral and sensuous ecstasy' and came to be accepted as a manifesto of the aesthetic movement. His other books include *Imaginary*

Portraits (1887), *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* (1889) and *Plato and Platonism* (1893). All Pater's works on art and poetry are noted for their highly polished prose style.

19. Ransom : John Crowe (1888-1974), poet and critic, was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, U.S.A., and went to school and university at Vanderbilt at Nashville, and then to Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar and subsequently joined Kenyon College, Ohio, as Professor of English from 1937 till 1959, when he retired. At Vanderbilt he founded the *Fugitive*, an important magazine which flourished in the 1920s and which developed the idea of the South in the American cultural tradition. At Kenyon college he founded the School of Letters and edited the *Kenyon Review* from 1939 to 1959, which became a leading journal for a new critical movement. In this he was ably supported by his pupil Allen Tate and Donald Davidson, Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks, all famous critics, and together they produced a body of criticism which became extremely influential as New Criticism of which Crowe Ransom came to be accepted as the leading theorist. Though he is usually being reckoned as a 'formalist' critic, that is, a person who devotes more attention to the form and style of a poem than to its contents, his perception goes deeper than that, and he puts forth the idea of a critic being 'ontological', that is, being concerned with the very being of a poem, not just 'meaning' and 'form' but a fusion of both in a total poetic life. Crowe Ransom's poetry books include *Chills and Fever* (1924) and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (1927), and criticism includes *God without Thunder* (1930), *The World's Body* (1939) and *The New Criticism* (1941). Books on him include *Homage to John Crowe Ransom*, ed. by Allen Tate and *John Crowe Ransom* by J. L. Stewart.

20. Read : Sir Herbert Edward (1893-1968), was born in Yorkshire, U.K., and educated at the University of Leeds. He served in World War I, and after that as Assistant Keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1922-31). Subsequently he held university appointments as Lecturer and Professor of Fine Art (at the University of Edinburgh, 1931-1933) and also as Professor of Poetry at Harvard. He wrote verse and prose as well as a large number of articles on both fine and applied art. He was particularly concerned to defend and promote innovating styles in art. As a literary critic, his critical interests were varied though chiefly concerned with Romantic poets. He was interested to explore different approaches to literature, including psychological, as illustrated in the present essay. His books include *The Meaning of Art (1931)*,

Art and Industry (1934), *Art and Society* (1936), *The Philosophy of Modern Art* (1952), *English Prose Style* (1928), *Wordsworth* (1930), *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism* (1938), *Poetry and Experience* (1967), *The Cult of Sincerity* (1969) and *Collected Poems*, (1966).

21. Richards : Ivory Armstrong (1893-1979), eminent critic, poet and linguist, was born at Cheshire, U. K., and educated at Clifton and Cambridge. He held University positions at Cambridge, in Peking at China, and later at Harvard where he became Professor of English from 1944 to 1963. His early teaching at Cambridge was extremely influential and helped to create a powerful impetus for the study of English literature in that University and elsewhere (his pupils among others, included William Empson and F. R. Leavis). His teaching was mainly concerned with mutually fruitful contact of literature with psychology on the one hand, and with the science of semantics on the other, and encouraged the growth of textual analysis as a leading academic discipline in literary study. In his early, influential writings such as *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), *Science and Poetry* and *Practical Criticism* (1929), he has discussed about the content, nature and relevance of poetry in the context of modern life, and though he generally referred to the utilitarian aspect of poetry, his main concern was with the value of poetry as guide to wholesome living and as providing initiation and experience in necessary kinds of human feelings as a kind of 'post-religious salvation' in the chaos of modern unbelief. He was a great educator like Leavis, and his involvement with the problems of teaching and learning and how to interpret literary texts led him, as it happened with Leavis, to a belief in imaginative products of man, and in the capacity of literature, which is more than a mere play with language, to support man in his 'loneliness' and 'ignorance' within 'the inconceivable immensity of the universe'. His other books include *The Meaning of Meaning* (with Ogden 1923), *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), *Interpretation of Teaching* (1938) and *How to Read a Page : A Course in Effective Reading* (1942). The books on him include *The Armed Vision* by Stanley Hyman, and *I. A. Richards Essays in his Honour*, ed. by R. Brower, H. Vendler and J. Hollander.

22. Trilling : Lionel (1905-75) critic, teacher and novelist was born in New York and was educated at Columbia University where he became Professor of English from 1948. He established an international reputation as a leading literary critic and held var-

ious appointments at Harvard, Oxford and elsewhere. He was considered as one of America's outstanding critics of literature and culture, and had a continuing interest in sociological as well as historical criticism. His first work was *Matthew Arnold* (1939), which was followed by *E. M. Forster* (1943), both of which are remarkable studies in their respective areas. His best known work is *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), from which the present essay has been taken. While pointing to the inevitable connection between literature and politics, it sets to examine the validity of liberal or progressive ideas and assumptions to organize the elements of life. This preoccupation could be seen in his novel *The Middle of the Journey* (1947) as well as in his critical works such as *The Opposing Self* (1955), *Beyond Culture* (1965) and *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972), where his overall emphasis on humanism could be seen through a synthesizing study of literature, society and morality as related to the ideas of self, culture and social alienation. His other books include *A Gathering of Fugitives* (1956), and *Mind in the Modern World* (1973). The books on him include *Three American Moralists* by Nathan A. Scott Jr. and *Art, Politics and Will : Essays in Honour of Lionel Trilling*, ed. by Quentin Anderson, Stephen Donadio and Steven Marchs.

23. Wimsatt : W.K. (1907–) was Professor of English at Yale University, where he taught since 1939.He was one of the most important persons among the American New Critics, who dominated the American critical scene in the forties and fifties. His publications include *The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson* (1941), *The Verbal Icon : Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954), from where the present essay 'The International Fallacy' has been taken, *Literary Criticism : A Short History* (1957), written in collaboration with Cleanth Brooks, and *Hateful Contraries : Studies in Literature and Criticism* (1965). The essay 'International Fallacy' points out that the enquiries into the origins of any work of art in the personal experience of the artist distracts the 'objective' valuation of the concerned work of art, and should be avoided, and it is as wrong as putting emphasis on the effect of any work of art on particular individuals (affective fallacy). This essay as well as the other one, 'The Affective Fallacy', both of which Wimsatt wrote in collaboration with Beardsley, maintain that to achieve true objective criticism, attention should be focused only upon the meaning of the work itself, and not on its creator or the audience—a strong New Criticism point of view which may be compared with the views of Eliot, Richards and Leavis.

RELEASED 9/12/94

24. Wordsworth : William (1770–1850), the great Romantic poet, was born in Cumberland, in England, and read in Hawkshead, near his birthplace and Cambridge University. In 1795 he received a legacy which made him financially independent. Thereafter, from around 1799 onwards, he settled down with his sister Dorothy at Grassmere, in the midst of the Lake Country. His famous poems were mainly written between 1797 and 1807, and they generally dealt with the growth of the human spirit through communion with the natural environment. Though a great poet, Wordsworth's critical output was very limited, and his reputation as a critic solely rests on his Preface to the 1800 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. It expressed his theory of poetic diction which maintained that in order to go to the deepest, purest, and simplest feelings in the human personality, the poet should use a diction as natural and direct as that of the most natural speech, best seen in the lives and language of men of the simplest kind like the peasants of the Lake District. This view of the poet is closely related to his ideas about poetry, which he maintains is a man's developed response to the ordered meaning and permanent forms of concrete nature, and other things such as, urban life, and the fashions of society are only accidental and temporary rather than basic and permanent, and only help to provide colour to the language. His later, and less familiar preface to his collected poems (1815) was devoted almost solely to a discussion of the imagination. It is, he points out, an ability to draw upon all the resources of the mind ('to centralize and unify sense impressions, to combine them with intuitions, and value, and with realizations won from past experience'), and to grasp things as they really are as 'living and meaningful totalities' rather than as collections of isolated parts and fragments, and then to convert these total conceptions into 'active responses or feelings'. Editions of Wordsworth's criticism include, *Prose Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart (1876), *Prose Works*, ed. by W. Knight (1896) and *Literary Criticism*, ed. by N. C. Smith (1905). The books on Wordsworth include *William Wordsworth : His Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations* (1922), by Arthur Beatty, and *The Mind of a Poet : A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to 'The Prelude'* by R. D. Havens.

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