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The New Critics and the Language of Poetry

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Preface

The present monograph is intended as an historical study of a central aspect of the new criticism—its concern with language. It is hoped that such a study will be useful, not only in providing a needed summary of well known facts, but also in exploring the relatively neglected relationship between the imagists and the school of I. A. Richards. Feeling that these two schools of criticism are best understood as different phases of the same basic movement, I include three imagists in my study of the new criticism—Ford Madox Ford, T. E. Hulme, and Ezra Pound. Previous writers on the new criticism have completely overlooked Ford. Furthermore, their interest in Hulme has emphasized his political and theological absolutism rather than his theory of poetic diction, while their interest in Pound has stressed not the nature of his critical theory but the extent of his influence on Eliot's poetry.

Since my purpose was to explore the relationship between imagism and the criticism called "new," I did not see that anything could be gained by discussing all of the many critics who derive from Eliot, Richards, and Empson—the three men who, I believe, may be said to have created the "new" school. Since the later members of this school are recognized as derivative, I selected one—Cleanth Brooks—to represent the whole group.

It would, of course, be presumptuous of me to attempt to settle what is probably the main problem of the new criticism—

how the language of poetry differs from the language of philosophy and science. This monogragh is an historical study, not an attempt at an original theory of poetic diction. But I cannot help expressing a conviction—which is no doubt shared by many—that the new critics err in attempting to make absolute a distinction that can only be relative, and that their ambition leads to error because it lends an unnecessary narrowness rather than a necessary breadth to our conception of poetry.

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Introduction

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena in the literary world of the present century has been the revolution in taste accomplished by what has come to be known as "the new criticism." While I. A. Richards is sometimes looked upon as the founder of this movement, I purpose to show that the imagists were its real founders. The imagists and the school of Richards may, of course, be treated as separate schools. But they may also be regarded, as I propose to regard them, as different phases of the same basic movement.

To include the imagists under the new criticism may seem to complicate the task of defining it. This is no doubt so if we conceive of the new criticism as the common denominator in the ideas of a particular group of men. But if we seek such a common denominator we may find ourselves eliminating the most revealing aspects of our subject. We should have to eliminate, for instance, Richards' emotive-cognitive dichotomy on the ground that no other new critic endorses this particular distinction between poetry and science. Yet Richards' doctrine is certainly of the essence of our subject and cannot be eliminated. In other words, the new criticism is not a set of doctrines shared by a group of men. It is rather the evolution of a problem.

One thing evident about this problem is that it has had to do with the nature of poetic diction. "We are witnessing in America today," wrote Allen Tate in 1942, "an exhaustive study of poetic

language such as criticism has not attempted either here or in Europe in any previous age."[1] Tate's remark agrees with a more recent one by Cleanth Brooks: "The rise of modern criticism is part of a general intensification of the study of language and symbolism."[2] Their central concern with language, however, is not only acknowledged by the new critics themselves; it is also pointed out by their principal contemporary adversaries, the Neo-Aristotelians. Thus the general objection that R. S. Crane and Elder Olson raise against the new criticism is that it attempts to confine the investigation of poetry to the question of its medium alone.[3]

In one sense of the word, every revolution in the theory of poetic diction is the same revolution: that is, it represents an effort to adapt the language of poetry to the current idiom. F. W. Bateson goes so far as to contend that linguistic changes constitute the only direct influence of an age upon its poetry.[4] Such a view is unacceptable because it disregards what Austin Warren and René Wellek have called the dialectical relation between language and literature.[5] Poetry influences the development of language—a fact that Bateson ignores. But Bateson is no doubt right in suggesting that an accumulation of changes in the spoken language tends to produce a new style of poetry and a new theory of poetic diction.

Like previous revolutions in the theory of poetic diction, the new criticism, accordingly, marks a return to the ideal of "natural speech." Ford Madox Ford, in reaction against the "artificial" language of the Victorians, advised the modern poet to reject the whole Spenserian tradition and to model his style upon that of the best prose fiction. Ford's views had a direct influence on Pound's criticism, through which they reached Eliot. The adoption of the ideal of "natural speech" was largely responsible for the attempted dislodgement of Milton associated with Pound, Eliot, and F. R. Leavis.

But the modern revolution in the theory of poetic diction involves a good deal more than merely a return to "natural speech." Linguistic changes alone cannot fully account for it. The concern of modern criticism with language, as Cleanth Brooks cautions, must not be narrowly conceived: "Words open out into larger symbolizations on all levels—for example, into archetypal symbol, ritual, and myth."[6] In effect, therefore, the modern theory of poetic diction involves the profounder question of the nature and function of poetry. It involves, as Murray Krieger recently maintained,[7] a new apology for poetry.

The fundamental fact about the new criticism is not its opposi-

tion to the "artificial" language of the Victorians, but its deep and unremitting awareness of the world of science. This awareness has both a negative and a positive aspect. On the one hand, the new critics exhibit an aversion to scientism—that is, to any fraternization between the organic world of art and the mechanistic world of science; and thus they find a new application for the old theological doctrine of "the double truth" by which things divine were separated from things natural in the Renaissance. On the other hand, the new critics borrow extensively from the various sciences. Modern criticism, as Stanley Edgar Hyman puts it, "could be defined crudely and somewhat inaccurately as the organized use of non-literary techniques and bodies of knowledge to obtain insights into literature."[8]

If, therefore, the new criticism consists, as we have suggested, not in a set of doctrines shared by a group of men, but in the evolution of a problem, we may define that problem as the task of affirming the importance of poetry within the scientific orientation of the age. The tension inherent in this problem of the new critics projects itself into their theory of poetic diction. To render poetry secure in a realm peculiarly its own, they draw an absolute distinction between poetic and scientific language; to abide by the scientific temper of their age, they not only, as Crane observes, deduce poetic form "materialistically" from an examination of the medium alone,[9] but also make scientific detachment and "tough-mindedness" a necessary part of the poetic use of words.

Desiring to establish an absolute distinction between the poetic and scientific uses of language, the new critics tend to banish the expression of ideas from poetry. Ford announces that the poet should render rather than tell and expresses an aversion to "romantic generalizers." The poet's medium, according to Hulme, consists of images, not of signs and counters that communicate ideas or utilitarian abstractions. Pound agrees with Hulme, regarding the image as the poet's pigment and declaring that the image is itself the poet's speech. Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" not only synthesizes these imagist doctrines but specifically extends their application to include narrative and dramatic poetry.

Though it generally avoids stressing the visual or physical character of poetic language, the school of Richards is no less opposed than the imagists to the admission of ideas in poetry. In fact, the effort to draw an absolute distinction between the poetic and scientific uses of language culminates in Richards' emotive-cognitive dichotomy. While later critics balk at denying a referen-

tial function to poetic language, they all adopt Richards' position that it is not what a poem says which matters, but what it is. Any questioning of this dogma is disposed of as "the fallacy of communication" or "the heresy of paraphrase." The dogma underlies Empson's doctrine of ambiguity. It pervades the criticism of Ransom, Tate, and Cleanth Brooks—all of whom regard "Platonic" poetry or a poetry of ideas not as poetry at all but as science masquerading as poetry.

But while the new critics seek to establish an absolute distinction between the poetic and scientific uses of language, they at the same time attempt to make poetic diction conform to the scientific temper of their age. This ambivalence is not difficult to explain. The new critics, after all, are the children of their time. Their effort to remove poetry from any possible competition with science by maintaining, in the words of Archibald MacLeish, that "A poem should not mean/But be," implies not only a concern for poetry, but also an overwhelming respect for science. Their differentiation, accordingly, of the language of poetry from the language of science takes one direction only: that of annihilating the most obvious common ground between poetry and science in the communication of ideas. But in another direction the new critics encourage the poet to emulate the scientist. Thus the qualities of diction which they regard as especially poetic are not power or nobility or charm, but detachment and "tough-mindedness."

The urge to emulate the scientist manifests itself in some of the doctrines of the imagists. Ford's demand that the poet should render rather than tell is aimed at attaining, not only a greater vividness of effect, but also a kind of scientific impartiality: the poet, like the naturalistic novelist, must assume the Creator's aloofness, presenting the world exactly as he sees it, uttering no comment, falsifying no issues. While he recognized that even the naturalistic novelist modifies his material, Hulme nevertheless preferred the treatment of beauty "in small, dry things" to the treatment of the transcendental beauty associated with the infinite. According to Pound, the poet should emulate the scientist by trying to be a discoverer of something regarding either life itself or the means of verbal expression.

Eliot, Richards, and their disciples recommend a more sophisticated and therefore less obvious method by which the poet should emulate the scientist. Eliot may be regarded as the founder of this method of being scientifically detached and "tough-minded." Connecting the alliance between levity and seriousness in metaphysical

poetry with Coleridge's conception of imagination as the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities, Eliot conceived his ideal of "unified sensibility"—a sensibility that in effect balances Sweeney against the nightingales or the nightingales against Sweeney. "If we start," as Jacques Barzun puts it, "with the disgusting Sweeney, we end with the nightingales singing near a convent; if we start with anything resembling beauty, we are catapulted into the mire."[10]

Eliot's concept of "unified sensibility" has its parallel in Richards' theory of the "poetry of inclusion"—a poetry which, because it combines conflicting impulses, "will bear an ironical contemplation." These views of Eliot and Richards lead to Empson's theory that the language of poetry is ambiguous and to Cleanth Brooks' theory that the language of poetry is the language of irony and paradox.

This method of emulating the detachment and "tough-mindedness" of the scientist has an advantage over the method suggested by the imagists: aside from being less obvious, it does not restrict the poet to a naturalistic point of view or to the treatment of beauty "in small, dry things." As Barzun points out, the principle of Sweeney and the nightingales bears some resemblance to romantic irony.[11] But there exists between them an important difference. The romantic ironist is motivated by his sense of the infinite; his irony is directed against his own illusions. The modern ironist, on the other hand, is motivated by his awareness of the world of science. His irony, therefore, is not directed against himself. On the contrary, the function of his irony is to protect him from the charge of softness or of sentimentality.

Their desire to draw an absolute distinction between poetic and scientific language and at the same time to emulate the scientist's detachment and "tough-mindedness" helps to explain why the new critics reject the Aristotelian or traditional theory of metaphor. The ideal metaphor, according to Aristotle, possesses not only novelty or surprise but also a kind of intrinsic truth: "Thus Pericles, for instance, said that the vanishing from their country of the young men who had fallen in the war was 'as if the spring were taken out of the year.'" Accordingly, Aristotle legislates against the far-fetched metaphor or conceit on the ground that the resemblances or relations on which it rests are not of sufficient force to present a new idea, a new fact, immediately to the mind.[12]

Contrary to Aristotle and tradition, the new critics contend that the resemblance between the ideas compared or identified is

of little or no significance in poetic metaphor. Poetic analogies, according to Hulme, are to be taken half-seriously, with a smile. Pound holds that the effect of poetic metaphor depends less on the perception of similarity in dissimilarity than on the principle of arrangement—with images taking the place of the lines and colors of painting. Eliot recommends the far-fetched metaphor or conceit, which unites ideas that are as remote from each other as possible. Reducing the factors which determine metaphoric identification to an effect on the nervous system, Richards emphasizes "disparity action" rather than resemblance as the significant ground of the metaphor. Cleanth Brooks, trying to synthesize the views of his contemporaries, concludes that poetic metaphor is purely functional: that it lacks any individual value or insight and is justified solely by its organic relation to the structure of the poem.

This rejection of the Aristotelian theory of metaphor largely results from the determination of the new critics to draw an absolute distinction between the poetic and scientific uses of language. Metaphors that depend upon some significant resemblance between the ideas identified or compared may occur in science or philosophy as well as in poetry. They abound, for instance, in Plato. The Periclean simile quoted above, which illustrates the Aristotelian ideal, comes not from a poem but from an oration; it might conceivably have come from even a treatise on war. But a metaphor that discards the principle of resemblance for that of arrangement, or that of "disparity action," or that of organicism constitutes a device peculiar to poetic language:

> The evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table.

Eliot's simile cannot be imagined in a scientific or philosophical treatise; in fact, it is quite incomprehensible outside the particular poem of which it is a part.

Oddly enough, however, the rejection of the Aristotelian theory of metaphor by the new critics owes something also to their desire that the poet emulate the scientist's detachment and "tough-mindedness." Aiming at power rather than at detachment and "tough-mindedness," the traditional metaphor makes use of its ambiguities not to divide the mind, not to evoke two contrary attitudes, but to give depth and amplitude to a single effect:

> Me—who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
> The else unfelt oppressions of the earth . . .

The ambiguities in Shelley's simile, while possibly suggesting an abnormality in the speaker, do not satirize his commendable humani-

tarianism; on the contrary, they intensify its effect. But the serious conceit or the purely functional metaphor adapts itself to the clash of opposite impulses, to the principle of Sweeney and the nightingales. It enables the poet to check any transcendental tendency with the introduction of a naturalistic tendency, and thus to pay homage to the age of science.

If, therefore, we were to attempt a definition of the new criticism, we should call it a theory of poetic diction derived from an ambivalent attitude toward science. Fearful of the effect of science on the future of poetry, the new critics advise the poet to withdraw behind a line they feel he can hold—a line that relinquishes a good deal, including the whole world of ideas. But to compensate for this feminine withdrawal from any competition with science, the poet is urged to be mature and masculine, impersonal and tough-minded in dealing with his subject: that is, in this respect let him emulate the scientist. Incorporating this ambivalence toward science into their theory of poetic diction, the new critics ultimately conclude that in its ideal form the language of poetry is likewise ambivalent, ambiguous, ironical, paradoxical.

I

Ford Madox Ford

THE name of Ford Madox Ford (originally Ford Madox Hueffer) has never, so far as I know, appeared on anybody's list of new critics. He is remembered today, nearly twenty years after his death, as a writer of numerous potboilers along with several good novels in the Jamesian tradition.[1] His verse is unimpressive, and his literary criticism—at least the best part of it—consists largely of autobiographical essays and editorial notes. Nevertheless, his views on the language of poetry deserve some attention. As founder of the distinguished journal, the *English Review*, in December, 1908, and as its editor for the first fifteen months of its existence, Ford exercised considerable influence on the young poets of that time who were struggling against the standards of Victorian taste.

Among these young writers was Ezra Pound, who, so to speak, was to direct a whole generation of poets. And at least Pound, if no one else, has more than once called attention to the importance of Ford as a precursor of the new taste, especially regarding the language of poetry: "The revolution of the word began so far as it affected the men who were of my age in London in 1908, with the LONE whimper of Ford Madox Hueffer."[2] Pound thought that Ford was "significant and revolutionary because of his insistence upon clarity and precision, upon the prose tradition; in brief, upon efficient writing—even in verse."[3] A brief account of Ford's neglected criticism should help to explain the meaning of Pound's remark.

Even as a critic, Ford gave more thought to the novel than to poetry. In *The Critical Attitude*, most of which had appeared as

editorial notes in the *English Review* in 1909, Ford outlined the
development of what he considered to be the best prose fiction of
Europe—a tradition "which, beginning with Richardson, crossed
the Channel to influence Diderot (we are thinking of his 'Rameau's
Nephew'), and the Encyclopaedists, to issue, as it were by means of
Chateaubriand into that wonderful group whose fervour for their
Art drew together Flaubert, Maupassant, Turgenev, the Goncourts
and the rest" (CA, 93).[4] Ford was convinced that modern poets
could bring new life into poetry by emulating these masters of prose
fiction. The principles underlying the novels of Flaubert and his
school had already been set forth, according to Ford, by Henry
James.[5] Ford's contribution was to conceive that these same prin-
ciples could be of use to poets.

Ford claimed in 1914 that for a quarter of a century he had kept
before him "one unflinching aim," and had urged other writers—
of both prose and verse— to have the same aim: namely, "to register
my own times in terms of my own time" (CP, 13). This "one un-
flinching aim" may be analyzed into three principles: Ford urged
poets to chose subject matter possessing significance for their own
age, to express themselves in an efficient language, and to project or
render rather than to report effects.

If he had a quarrel with modern verse, wrote Ford in 1910, it
was because modern poetry was out of touch with its age, dealing
in a "derivative manner with medieval emotions" (CA, 187). A
few years later he wrote: "Love in country lanes, the song of birds,
moonlight—these the poet, playing for safety, and the critic trying
to find something safe to praise, will deem the sure cards of the
poetic pack." In fact, however, "the anaemic shop-girl at the Ex-
hibition, with her bad teeth and her cheap black frock, is safer than
Isolde" (CP, 16-17). The sordid subjects of naturalistic fiction, Ford
was convinced, reflected the present, whereas the stock poetic
themes did not.

Ford's bias in the question of subject matter rests on the philo-
sophical assumptions of naturalism. He is therefore opposed not only
to the stock poetic but also to the cosmic theme. "We are losing
more and more the sense of the whole, the feeling of a grand design,
of the co-ordination of Nature in one great architectonic." Ac-
cordingly, we are nearer to the "empiricism of the Middle Ages"
than to the mental habits of the "romantic generalizers" (CR, 425-
426). The truly modern poet, writing "along the lines of his own
personality and his own personal experience," is more "sincere"
than some of his predecessors. Ford suspects poets like Tennyson

and William Michael Rossetti "of posing, of forcing the poetic note, of giving not so much what they ultimately liked as what they regarded as appropriate for a poet to like" (CA, 175, 179).

In the last analysis, however, Ford admitted that the critic could not dictate what the poet should write about. An author must write of subjects that spring to his throat; but why particular subjects spring to his throat he has no means of knowing (EN, 146). If, therefore, modern poetry dealing with stock poetic or cosmic subjects displeased him, it must be, Ford concluded, because such subjects led to uninspired treatment. "What worried and exasperated us in the poems of the late Lord Tennyson, the late William Morris, the late—well, whom you like—is not their choice of subject, it is their imitative handling of matter, of words, it is their derivative attitude . . ." (CP, 27). Criticism, therefore, should concern itself with treatment alone, with language and technique.

The tradition of efficient writing in English prose, according to Ford, can be traced to pre-Elizabethan times, to Cranmer's prayer book and the origins of the English Bible. But aiming at cleverness rather than efficiency, the Elizabethans made their prose as well as their blank verse sparkle "with trope, metaphor, image, simile, plays upon words, conceits and every type of verbal felicity," forgetting that "the business of words as of colts . . . is to carry things" and that "we tire reasonably soon of horse-play." Bunyan, Defoe, and Richardson recaptured the tradition of efficient writing for English prose (EN, 68-69, 71, 73). Then the tradition declined again until it was recently revived by the Anglo-American disciples of Flaubert—especially Joseph Conrad and Stephen Crane, both of whom possessed a "passion for elisions." The latter "never tired of exasperatedly declaring that it was his unattainable ambition to make every damned word do the work of six" (T, 26).

But while Ford finds the tradition of efficient writing often asserting itself in English prose, particularly before the nineteenth century, he apparently almost never finds it in English poetry. With an occasional exception, English poets, he feels, have cultivated the use of an artificial language that is incompatible with efficient writing. A French poet can write in a language that "any hatter can use." A German poet writes "exactly as he speaks." But an English poet writes, and is expected to write, in a "literary jargon" (CP, 12-14).

The use of jargon in English poetry, according to Ford, reaches a kind of climax in the nineteenth century. With a few exceptions, the poets of this century attempted to create a poetic language by

going back to the Elizabethans. Tennyson, for instance, attempted to build up a poetic language "out of Malory and Spenserian clichés," while Browning tried "to save himself from being stifled by using violences to almost any sort of vocabulary." Ford considers the general result quite unsatisfactory. "You will find nowhere in the world such a body of ill-written stuff as in the English nineteenth-century poets; nor so great an inattention to form either of sentences or stories; nor such tautology; nor yet such limp verbiage" (ML, 693, 698-699).

Attempts to read some of the major poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had led Ford and his friends in their teens to dislike poetry as a whole. "We seemed to get from them [Tennyson, Swinburne, Browning, and Pope] the idea that all poets must write affectedly, at great length, with many superfluous words— that poetry, of necessity, was something boring and pretentious." The poetry of their contemporaries— Dowson, Johnson, and Davidson—confirmed this impression: they were mere "nuisances, writing in a derivative language uninteresting matters that might have been interesting had they been expressed in the much more exquisite medium of prose." Ford and his young friends agreed that poetry is "an artificial, a boring, an unnecessary thing"; and Ford clung to this view until he founded the *English Review* in 1908 and discovered the poetry of Yeats, De la Mare, Flint, D. H. Lawrence, and Pound (CP, 22-25).

From the first, however, there was one poet—and a Victorian at that—whom Ford held in the highest esteem. This was Christina Rossetti, "the greatest master of words—at least English words—that the nineteenth century gave us." Ford regarded her verse at its best "as clean in texture and as perfect in the choice of words as any of Maupassant's short stories." But because her language was simple and precise, Ford thought of her "as being far more a prose writer than a poet at all." She had none of the affectations that poets were supposed to possess. One derived from her a pleasure comparable "to that to be had from reading Flaubert." Like Flaubert, she was devoted to *le mot juste* as though such devotion were her duty in life (CR, 422-424).

In view of his predilection for the vernacular, for the idiom of contemporary speech, one might have expected Ford to claim descent from Wordsworth rather than from Christina Rossetti and Flaubert. In time he came to admire other nineteenth-century poets besides Christina Rossetti, including Keats and Browning and perhaps even Wordsworth. But his attitude towards Wordsworth

remained somewhat ambiguous. Unlike other romantic poets, who modeled their language upon the Elizabethans, Wordsworth aimed at "the language of a child or that of a field laborer purged of dialect and misspelling." Wordsworth's "priggishness of phrase," therefore, is less objectionable than the "ready-made phrases of poets using less bare language" (ML, 693, 701). But despite this approval of a simple vocabulary, Ford disavows Wordsworth's ideal because Wordsworth too often sought the ordinary word instead of the exact word.[6]

But the masters of prose can teach the modern poet not only to be satisfied with nothing less than the exact word, but also to adopt the most effective method of presenting his material. A writer cannot, after all, determine what subjects shall spring to his throat. While he must achieve an efficient style, the kind of language he employs is otherwise a "secondary matter." Ford preferred the language of his own day, even to the extent of recommending slang and vulgarity as a preventive against dullness. But what ultimately matters in literature is "the genuine love and the faithful rendering of the received impression" (CP, 28). To attain this desired result, the modern poet must follow the example of the best modern novelists not only in seeking *le mot juste*, but also in rendering or projecting instead of telling or reporting.

The prophet of this "canon of Impressionism" (T, 31), as Ford calls the new method of presenting material in literature, was Flaubert. It was Flaubert who "preached the doctrine of the novelist as Creator who should have a Creator's aloofness, rendering the world as he sees it, uttering no comment, falsifying no issues and carrying the subject—the Affair—he has selected for rendering, remorselessly out to its logical conclusion." Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Stephen Crane introduced Flaubert's method into English and American fiction. "All three treated their characters with aloofness; all three kept themselves, their comments and their prejudices out of their works and all three rendered rather than told" (EN, 129, 144).

Ford provides us with various illustrations of the difference between rendering and telling. For instance, ". . . if I say Monsieur Chose was a vulgar, coarse, obese and presumptuous fellow—that is telling. But if I say, 'He was a gentleman with red whiskers that always preceded him through the doorway,' there you have him rendered—as Maupassant rendered him" (EN, 129). The method is as applicable to the presentation of action as to the depiction of character. "You must never, that is to say, write: 'He saw a man

aim a gun at him'; you must put it: 'He saw a steel ring directed at him.' Later you must get in that, in his subconsciousness, he recognized that the steel ring was the polished muzzle of a revolver. So Crane rendered it in *Three White Mice* which is one of the major short stories of the world" (T, 31-32).

The method of rendering instead of telling is inconsistent with the role of prophet that the poet has often assumed in the past. Ford referred to the method as "the canon of Impressionism" because it restricted the writer to his direct and immediate reactions to experience. Christina Rossetti reminded him of Flaubert not only because of her "exquisite and precise language," but also because of her freedom from the prophetic tendencies of her contemporaries. "She dealt hardly at all in ideas: nearly every one of her poems was an instance, was an illustration of an emotion" (CA, 179). In other words, she did not report opinions but faithfully rendered her impressions. Her method, therefore, of presenting her material was similar to that of Flaubert.

Only by adopting this method, only by faithfully rendering his impressions, can the poet, according to Ford, fulfill art's unique and tremendously important function in modern society. "The artist to-day is the only man who is concerned with the values of life; he is the only man who, in a world grown very complicated through the limitless freedom of expression for all creeds and all moralities, can place before us how those creeds work out when applied to human contacts, and to what goal of human happiness those moralities will lead us." Ford maintained that "only in the arts can any safety for the future of the State be found"; and he referred approvingly to Flaubert's remark that if France had read his *Education Sentimentale,* she would have been spared the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War. But this highly important social function of art depends upon the artist's absolute sincerity; the artist's "actual and first desire must be always the expression of himself— the expression of himself exactly as he is, not as he would like other people to think of him, the expression of his views of life as it is, not as he would like it to be" (CA, 27-29, 33).

Because he insisted that the modern poet should emulate the masters of prose fiction in rendering rather then telling, in presenting exact impressions rather than opinions and generalizations, Ford claimed to be the founder of imagism, which flourished in the second decade of the century. In a discussion of Amy Lowell's anthology of 1915, *Some Imagist Poets,* he asserted that "for a quarter of a century I have preached the doctrine that my young friends

now inscribe on the banner of their movement." The doctrine to which Ford here alluded was the doctrine he had derived from certain novelists, from Flaubert and Henry James: "Simply that rendering of the material facts of life, without comment and in exact language, is poetry and that poetry is the only important thing in life." Ford recognized one important difference between himself and the imagists: they dismissed prose "with a sniff." But they were wrong in doing so because "they only exist by descent from the great prose writers."[7]

This account of the origin of imagism, of course, completely disregards the roles played in the movement by Hulme and Pound. Ford no more preached the doctrine of the image than he did the doctrine of the objective correlative, which we associate with Eliot. Both doctrines, however, are logical corollaries of the injunction not to tell but to render. Perhaps, therefore, the school of Flaubert, through Ford and Ford's early relation to Pound, had more to do with the origin of the new poetry and the new criticism than is generally suspected.

II

T. E. Hulme

A T the time of his death in France in 1917, T. E. Hulme was
little known outside a small group of intellectuals—includ-
ing Ezra Pound—who had gathered about him in London
during the years 1909-1912. His publications during his lifetime
were largely limited to a few poems and a number of essays and
reviews in the *New Age,* along with translations of Henri Bergson's
Introduction to Metaphysics and George Sorel's *Reflections on
Violence.* His posthumous fame dates from 1924, when the first
collection of his writings appeared under the title of *Speculations.*

Hulme is a theorist, even something of a philosopher. But none
of his theories can be said to be original. Perhaps he should there-
fore be called a propagandist rather than a thinker[1]—a propagan-
dist for a reactionary *Weltanschauung* and for the philosophy of
Bergson. But since Bergsonianism and the spirit of *L'Action fran-
çaise* possess no obvious or necessary kinship, their union in Hulme
renders his thought original at least to some degree.

The transcendental and immaterialist elements in Bergson's
theory of knowledge and theory of reality did not appeal to Hulme.
What attracted him was the French philosopher's sophisticated
anti-intellectualism. Unable to refute the naturalistic thought of
his time, and unable to accept any ennobling versions of it—"What-
ever colour the corpse is painted it remains a corpse" (FS, 55)[2]—
Hulme found a way to solve his problem in Bergson's *Essai sur les
donneés immédiates de la conscience.* The ideas of Bergson were
not new, according to Hulme, as new ideas in philosophy were no
longer possible; but he "has provided in the dialect of the time the
only possible way out of the nightmare" (FS, 36).

Hulme's views on the language of poetry constitute a part of his theory of art; and his theory of art, up to a certain point, is a restatement of Bergson's. There are, according to Hulme, two quite different categories of experience which parallel two quite different types of human personality, the disinterested and the utilitarian. In the latter type of temperament, which is by far the more common, perception "runs in certain moulds" designed to facilitate action. What most of us therefore see and hear is but a selection made by the senses for utilitarian purposes. This kind of selection provides us with but "a practical simplification of reality." We classify things "with a view to the use we can make of them," and what we perceive is this classification rather than "the real shape of things" (S, 158-159).

Fortunately, however, a few human beings in each age—the artists—escape this fate. Nature forgets "to attach their faculty for perception to their faculty for action." Born emancipated from this orientation of the mind towards action, they are able to perceive "just for the sake of perceiving," and to see things "as they are in themselves." But this freedom from the necessities of action is incomplete in any given case, for each artist is endowed with freedom in one direction only—"either in one of his senses or in his mind generally." Hence the division of the arts into painting, music, sculpture, poetry, etc. If the detachment from the necessities of action were complete, if the mind could see "freshly and directly in every one of its methods of perception"—then we would have an artist such as the world has never seen (S, 154-155).

The artist is able to see things "as they are in themselves" not only because he was born detached in a limited way from the necessities of action, but also because he cultivates the faculty known as intuition. Intellect, the analyzing and generalizing faculty, must necessarily govern in the conduct of our practical affairs, but it is totally incapable of ever apprehending the individuality of things. "But round the central intellect in man there is a fringe, a penumbra of instinct. This instinct, or, as it is better to call it here, intuition, is the faculty we must use in attempting to grasp the nature of reality" (FS, 6).

The artist, then, grasps something of the world which the scientist misses—its interior realities. Hulme calls these realities "intensive manifolds." Though finite, an "intensive manifold" is infinitely complex, so complex that it "cannot be said to have parts because the parts run into each other, forming a continuous whole, and whose parts cannot even be conceived as existing separately" (S,

180-181). An "intensive manifold" possesses this infinite complexity, which baffles the intellect, because it involves not only some aspect of the objective world but also the mind of the perceiver. For example, to describe the feeling of annoyance, ". . . you would have to describe at the same time the whole personality in which it occurs, which is only another way of saying that mental life forms a whole which cannot be analyzed into parts" (S. 185).

But the artist must also communicate his perceptions. He must therefore be detached not only from those habits of mind by which we perceive stock types, but also from those habits of mind by which we employ fixed and unoriginal modes of expression. This second form of emancipation, however, is not a gift of birth like the first but a reward for a "terrific struggle." Every artist must struggle against the recalcitrance of his medium. Thus the poet must struggle against the fixed ways of language; for "language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise—that which is common to you, me, and everybody" (S, 132). The feeling of "annoyance," for instance, is always colored by the whole personality of the person who experiences it; but to describe this particular state of annoyance, language "has to use the same word in every case, and is thus only able to fix the objective and impersonal aspect of the emotion" (S, 184-185).

This account of Hulme's theory of art is largely derived from his two essays on Bergson's aesthetics— "Bergson's Theory of Art" and "The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds." It essentially represents that portion of Bergson's philosophy which Hulme found completely acceptable, and which he incorporated into his own thought. But while Hulme adopted a good deal of the Bergsonian theory of art, he at the same time rejected an important aspect of it.

In Bergson the interior realities of the world, or what Hulme referred to as "intensive manifolds," combine to express one ultimate reality, a vital and immaterial metaphysical essence. In Hulme, on the other hand, they are left without this metaphysical unity.[3] "There is a difficulty in finding a comprehensive scheme of the cosmos, because there is none. The cosmos is only *organized* in its parts; the rest is cinders." "Philosophical syntheses and ethical systems . . . are seen to be meaningless as soon as we get into a bus with a dirty baby and a crowd" (S, 220, 228-229). These two quotations suggest the tenor of Hulme's "Cinders: A New Weltanschauung." There is a line of thought in Hulme that may be called philosophical nihilism, a scepticism that is not a mere rational conclusion but an axiomatic assumption.

But Hulme's philosophical nihilism is comprehensible only in relation to his reactionary bias and philosophical absolutism. All philosophy since the Renaissance, according to Hulme, is at bottom the same philosophy, resting on the same conception of the nature of man, and exhibiting the same inability to comprehend the true meaning and spirit of religion. Humanism, which helps us to understand the absolute distinction between the organic and inorganic, prevents us from understanding the same absolute distinction between the organic and the divine. The result is a confusion of both human and divine things, of imperfection and perfection. To destroy these "bastard phenomena," we must hold constantly before us the "absolute discontinuity" between vital and religious things. Only in this way can we recover the real significance of the religious attitude, which consists in the renunciation rather than acceptance of life (S, 8-13).

This reactionary, absolutistic element in Hulme was inconsistent with Bergsonianism and necessitated a modification of Bergson's theory of art before Hulme could adopt it. Hulme's theory implied that an intuitive approach to ultimate being and ultimate values was as inappropriate as a mechanistic approach to vital phenomena. Hulme objected that while Bergson (along with Nietzsche and Dilthey) had "recognized the chasm between the two worlds of life and matter," they had ignored the gap between the world of life and the world of ethics and theology (S, 7). In other words, the principle of discontinuity, according to Hulme, would have to be carried farther than Bergson saw fit to extend it: as logic should give way to intuition in the investigation of vital phenomena, so all speculation—whether logical or intuitive—about ultimate being and ultimate values should give way to an absolute creed.[4]

In "Notes on Language" and elsewhere Hulme applies his aesthetics to a specific critical problem—the distinction between poetry and prose. He conceives of prose as the linguistic medium for the communication of stock or utilitarian perceptions. "In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs and counters, which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process." The prose writer is the "derivative" man who manipulates signs and counters "without ever having been in actual contact with the reality of which he is speaking." The "creative" man or poet, on the other hand, "can always convey over the feeling that he has 'been there' " (FS, 9-10).

Being a "communal apparatus," language, unless creatively handled, imparts only the common aspect of an experience, allow-

ing the particular and unique to escape. The language of poetry, therefore, must possess originality, must avoid the stock expressions of prose. Hulme does not regard originality as a desirable quality in itself; but he considers it inseparable from qualities that are desirable in themselves—sincerity and accuracy. Originality is necessary because of the defects of language. "It is because language will not carry over the exact thing you want to say, that you are compelled simply, in order to be accurate, to invent original ways of saying things" (S, 162).

But an unconventional use of language is made necessary not only by the defects inherent in the communal character of words, but also by the survival of the creative use of language in the poetry of the past. Unlike dancing and acting, which possess an "immutable technique," poetry falls into decay, into imitativeness and sentimentality, unless it is revived from time to time by some new principle. This new principle, according to Hulme, is always a new verse form opening up new opportunities for the creative use of language (FS, 68-69). Thus the discovery of blank verse lies behind the "extraordinary efflorescence" of poetry in the Elizabethan period (S, 121-122). The heroic couplet helped to stimulate poets after the decay of the Elizabethan poetic drama, and the decay of the heroic couplet was followed by the "new lyrical poetry" introduced by Wordsworth. How ineffective a new school of poetry turns out to be which fails to reject the verse form of the preceding age is illustrated, according to Hulme, by the negligible achievement and rapid decay of the Parnassians (FS, 69-70).

Accordingly, Hulme recommends to modern poets that they adopt free verse as conceived by Gustave Kahn, a French Symbolist. "It consisted in a denial of a regular number of syllables as the basis of versification. The length of the line is long and short, oscillating with the images used by the poet; it follows the contours of his thoughts and is free rather than regular . . ." (FS, 70). Such a verse form can make possible a complete break with the romantic use of language, now in a state of decay. The lyrical medium introduced by the romantics achieves its effect through its musicality; it produces in the reader a kind of "hypnotic state" in which "suggestions of grief and ecstasy are easily and powerfully effective, just as when we are drunk all jokes seem funny." Free verse, however, will conduce to a visual poetry that will depend for its effect "not on a kind of half sleep produced, but on arresting the attention, so much so that the succession of visual images should exhaust one" (FS, 73).

Because of his insistence upon visual poetry, Hulme early gained
the title of the "father" of imagism. All poets, of course, employ
images in their work. But Hulme's theory is remarkable because
it presents the image as the *material* of the new poetry, in the sense
that clay is the material of sculpture. "This new verse resembles
sculpture rather than music. . . . It has to mould images, a kind of
spiritual clay, into definite shapes. This material, the ὕλη of
Aristotle, is image and not sound" (FS, 75). To express his particular
emotion with adequate precision, the poet constructs "a plaster
model" of his vision. In the perfect style "each sentence should be
a lump, a piece of clay, a vision seen; rather, a wall touched with
soft fingers. Never should one feel light vaporous bridges between
one solid sense and another" (FS, 78-9).

Hulme distinguishes between images in his sense of the word
and the "*vain* decorative and verbal images of ordinary poets"
(FS, 90). Images of this second type have their source in rhetoric,
"Where we get words divorced from any real vision" (FS, 78).
They do not have their source in the art of poetry, the images of
which are the very material which the poet shapes into a plastic
model of his experience.

But while Hulme insists upon the importance of physical ima-
gery in poetry, he is no advocate of sensuousness. He repudiates
realism in any form. "Art creates beauty (not art copies but beauty
in nature: beauty does not exist by itself in nature, waiting to be
copied, only organized pieces of cinder)" (FS, 97). Not even the
self-styled realist, according to Hulme, attempts a reproduction of
real life. Real life is a matter of "eating and dressing, buttoning,
with here and there a patch of vividness." Literature always deals
with this or that patch, and "Zola merely selects an interesting
group of sordid pieces" (FS, 99).

Hulme's rejection of realism is evident also in his theory of
"analogy" or metaphorical expression. Hulme sets the highest
value upon those analogies which "make an other-world through-
the-glass effect." Writers "work in an imaginary land, which all
of us carry about in desert moments." It is the function of analogies
in poetry to evoke this "other-world," this "imaginary land." Ulti-
mately, therefore, analogies in poetry must possess something more
than fresh physical images. The poet must find those analogies
"that add something to each, and give a sense of wonder, a sense of
being united in another mystic world" (FS, 87-88).

It soon becomes apparent, however, that this "mystic world,"
which poetic analogies should evoke, is not so much an ontological

concept as a literary effect, a device by which to "overawe" the reader. If a phenomenon like "the yellow girl leaning from the window in the morning" reminds Hulme of "an inexpressible something," he admits that he "must first have been educated into the idea that there was such a something." But he instantly discards this line of thought, which leads to Platonic or Christian idealism, to describe the "other-world" as "really the cinders drunk for a minute." Poetry is the "building-up of this *state of reference*" to something; but one must "avoid the term Ideal, like a plague, for it suggests easy comprehension where there is no easy comprehension" (FS, 88-90).

It is at this point, accordingly, that Hulme's deviation from the Bergsonian aesthetics manifests itself in his theory of the language of poetry. Except as a literary effect, his conception of the "mystic world" evoked by analogies tends to be rather illusory. "Literary man always first completely disillusioned and then deliberately and purposely creative of illusions" (FS, 94). As an "extraordinarily fixed and limited animal," man can grasp no more, even by intuition, than the "hurly-burly of existence" (S, 116, 130). Hulme objected to the mystic symbolism of Yeats because it reminded him of the romantic pursuit of the infinite that results in "spilt religion" (FS, 98; S, 118). Thus he stands midway between the personal mysticism of the French Symbolists and the orthodox supernaturalism of T. S. Eliot: in regard to the transcendent he preferred dogma to personal vision but failed to recognize the former as a legitimate object of intuition and art.

Hulme, however, conceives of analogies in poetry as independent not only of transcendent concepts but more or less of other ideas as well. Adherence to an idea may lead a poet to feign an emotion. "No use having a theory that motor-cars are beautiful, and backing up this theory by working up an emotion not felt." Whitman's belief "that everything in America must be glorious, was his snare, because it was only a theory" (FS, 97-98). The creative process properly begins in "some actual or vividly felt experience" and ends in the accurate communication of that experience (S, 161 ff.). Ideas are unnecessary from beginning to end.

In one sense of the word, of course, every poem has an idea, a conception. But even the idea in this sense of the word is nothing: what counts is the "holding on to the idea, through the absolutely transforming influence of putting it into definiteness" (FS, 80). The idea of the poem may have no existence apart from the analogies that express it, that is, "by a subtle combination of allu-

sions we have artificially built up in us an idea, which apart from these, cannot be got at" (FS, 83). The "decorative" analogy, which is illustrative of and not identical with the thing expressed, has no proper function in poetry. "The main function of analogy in poetry is to enable one to dwell and linger upon a point of excitement. To achieve the impossible and convert a point into a line" (FS, 91-92).

Unlike ideas, therefore, analogies in poetry, according to Hulme, are never true nor false but simply good or bad, depending upon the degree to which they fulfill a purely aesthetic function. "When I see in the changing shape of flame something which resembles a saw edge I may solely for the purposes of human communication call it that. But I have not by that altered the nature of the flame" (FS, 5). Divorced from their strictly aesthetic function, poetic analogies, "like the likenesses of babies," are "to be taken half seriously, with a smile" (FS, 85).

Thus Hulme's theory of analogy, by emancipating poetry from what may be called knowledge and science, recalls his championship of abstract art. Under the influence of Wilhelm Worringer,[5] Hulme came to feel that the geometric art of the past—Egyptian, Indian, and Byzantine—is not technically inferior to naturalistic art, but simply expressive of a different *Weltanschauung*; and he welcomed the re-emergence of geometric art in his own day as a sign of the breaking up of the humanistic attitude ushered in by the Renaissance (S, 78 ff.). Like a principle behind geometric art, Hulme's conception of poetic analogy defies the demands of science and common sense and gives the artist a kind of absolute freedom within the framework of his art.

There is no evidence that Hulme found his theory of the language of poetry perfectly illustrated in any school or movement of the past—not even in the French Symbolists, whom he regarded as "a band of poets perhaps unequalled at any time in the history of French poetry" (FS 70). He never refers to Donne or Crashaw or Herbert, although an occasional conceit reminiscent of metaphysical poetry occurs in his verse:

> Oh, God, make small
> The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
> That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.
> (S, 267)

In other words, Hulme intended his theory of the language of poetry to apply to the immediate future, to a poetry not yet written.

He desired and foresaw the emergence of a *new* classical movement that would reject the language of Rousseau and romanticism.

Except for the "earthly and definite" element in Keats (S, 127), Hulme finds little to praise in nineteenth-century English poetry. In romantic poetry, according to Hulme, "you move at a certain pitch of rheoric which you know, *man being what he is,* to be a little high-falutin." There is a certain "classical" trait in the use of language—a trait highly valued by Hulme—which the romantics never achieve. For instance, no romantic poet, according to Hulme, could have written the last two lines of the first stanza of Shakespeare's Song from *Cymbeline*:

> Golden lads and girls all must
> Like chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Hulme singles out an alleged pun in "dust" and the use of the word "lad" as the two details that give these lines their classical quality. Apart from excluding the alleged pun, a romantic poet "would have to write golden youth, and take up the thing at least a couple of notes in pitch" (S, 120-121).

While nineteenth-century English critics extoll the poetry of the imagination, Hulme prefers the poetry of fancy. His terms, however, do not refer to Coleridge's distinction between organic and mechanical complexity, but to Ruskin's distinction between a serious and a playful attitude in poetry.[6] Imagination, according to Ruskin, can never be anything but serious because "she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly ever to smile."[7] Ruskin's position appeared to involve the metaphysical bias which in the question of beauty or the nature of art "always drags in the infinite"; but Hulme wanted to prove "that beauty may be in small, dry things" (S, 131). An "amusing" effect, according to Hulme, is not necessarily inferior to one of "dignified vagueness." It makes no difference in the evaluation of a poem whether the subject treated be "a lady's shoe or the starry heavens." The point is that all good poetry involves the same activity—"the avoidance of conventional language in order to get the exact curve of the thing" (S, 137-138).

Hulme's preference for the poetry of fancy, his basic distrust of the serious subject and the serious attitude, is reflected in his conception of the function or purpose of poetry. Poetry is for the "amusement of bankers and other sedentary arm-chair people in after-dinner moods" (FS, 92). His denial of a serious function to poetry, however, does not lead him to value it any the less. "Real work, history and scientific researches, the accidental, the ex-

cresences, like digging, and necessary just as digging is. Poetry the permanent humanity, the expression of man freed from his digging, digging for poetry when it is over" (FS, 77). The ultimate merit and the ultimate defect of Hulme is that he never confounds the struggle for meaning with the struggle for existence.

But despite his apparently cavalier attitude towards the purpose and function of poetry, Hulme defined the new sensibility better than had anyone before him. While Ford called for the language of poetry to conform to that of the best prose fiction, Hulme tried to distinguish the language of poetry, conceived as an artistic medium, from the language of prose, conceived as a utilitarian mode of communication. The apparent conflict, of course, between their points of view is largely verbal, resting on the different meaning that each assigned to the term "prose." But Hulme dealt more fully and more profoundly with a central problem of the new criticism—the language of poetry in an age of science.

III

Ezra Pound

I F Ford and Hulme began the "revolution of the word" in 1908-
1909, Pound within a few years was to become its acknowledged
leader. Arriving in London in 1908, the young American poet
soon entered the circles dominated by Ford and Hulme. Too in-
dependent for the role of a disciple, he nevertheless absorbed some
of the ideas of these two men—ideas which he developed and syn-
thesized in accordance with the spirit of his own genius, for he was
a much more gifted poet than either of his teachers. In 1946 T. S.
Eliot said of Pound's critical writing: "I still consider it to be
almost the only contemporary writing on the Art of Poetry, that a
young poet can study with profit."[1] Perhaps no one, at all events,
has had a deeper influence than Pound on the creation of the new
style in poetry.

At first Pound carried on the "revolution of the word" under
the banner of imagism. His *Ripostes* (1912) tentatively launched
the imagist movement through the inclusion of an appendix con-
taining five of Hulme's poems and Pound's prefatory note on *Les
Imagistes,* described as "descendants" of Hulme's "forgotten school
of 1909." Meanwhile H. D., Richard Aldington, and Pound agreed
on three principles reminiscent of the combined teachings of Ford
and Hulme. Pound included these three principles in the first
imagist manifesto, "A Few Dont's," which appeared in 1913 in
Harriet Monroe's newly founded *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse:*

1. Direct treatment of the thing, whether subjective or objec-
tive.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the
presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome (LE, 3).[2]

He further publicized the new movement by editing *Des Imagistes* (1914), an anthology that included poems by himself, Aldington, Amy Lowell, Ford, and others.

Without abandoning the original principles of imagism, or the doctrines of Ford and Hulme on which those principles were based, Pound dissociated himself from the new school after Amy Lowell assumed its leadership in 1915. His reasons for taking this step are given in a letter to Harriet Monroe, dated January, 1915: "The general weakness of the writers of the new school is looseness, lack of rhythmical construction and intensity; secondly, an attempt to 'apply decoration' to what ought to be a vortex as a sort of bill-poster, or fence wash" (L, 50). In other words, Pound felt that the later imagists were not sufficiently revolutionary, in particular that they had lost sight of the language of poetry as an artistic medium. Accordingly, Pound joined Wyndham Lewis and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska in the movement known as vorticism, whose organ was called *Blast*.

Pound's theory of the language of poetry, like his criticism in general, is impressionistic; that is, it ultimately rests on individual taste rather than upon a philosophical position. Besides having little interest in philosophy, Pound was suspicious of modern thought, regarding all speculation since Leibnitz as "a weak trailer after material science, engaging men of tertiary importance" (LE, 76). He therefore complained that Hulme's evenings were "diluted by crap like Bergson,"[3] and he preferred to talk about poetry with Ford.[4] All criticism, he felt, should be "professedly personal criticism" because in the end the critic can only confess his likes and dislikes (LE, 56).

Pound's aversion to philosophy, however, does not prevent him from conceiving a rather systematic poetics. His views on the language of poetry, therefore, are related to his theory that the serious artist, like the scientist, must be a discoverer of something—"either of life itself or of the means of expression" (LE, 56). "Your book," he wrote to William Carlos Williams from London in 1909, "would not attract even passing mention here. There are fine lines in it, but nowhere I think do you add anything to the poets you have used as models" (L, 8). In the ideal anthology, according to Pound, each poem selected will contain "an invention, a definite contribution to the art of verbal expression" (LE, 17). Like the scientist,

the writer should be multilingual in order to keep abreast of the latest foreign discoveries in his field (LE, 36).

Accordingly, Pound's advice to the poets of his own day, as put in the title of one of his books of criticism, is: *Make It New.*[5] "No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from books, convention, and cliché, and not from life . . ." (LE, 11). In each age, according to Pound, a few men "find something and express it"; then come the followers who "repeat and dilute and modify" (LE, 19). But such imitation never produces anything of significance because good writing is "coterminous with the writer's thought, it has the form of the thought, the form of the way man feels his thought" (ABCR, 113).

But Pound does not mean that poets should reject the "discoveries" of all their predecessors. The very best writers—the "masters"—are inventors who, apart from their own inventions, can "assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions" (LE, 23). Literary revolutions, according to Pound, are never "movements against good work and good custom." To "break with tradition" means only to desert "the more obvious imbecilities of one's immediate elders" (LE, 227). There would be no point, of course, in keeping abreast of the latest "discoveries" in poetic technique if one did not expect to derive some instruction from them.

The modern poet, according to Pound, could learn a good deal from prose fiction. Beginning with Stendhal, "the serious art of writing went over to prose, and for some time the important developments of language as means of expression were developments of prose" (LE, 31). It was for this reason that Pound set a very high value upon the critical remarks of Ford. It was Ford who had insisted, "in the face of a still Victorian press, upon the importance of good writing as opposed to the opalescent word, the rhetorical tradition." Ford had maintained that poetry should be written at least as well as prose, and Pound felt that this point of view would have "a wide result" (LE, 371, 373).

The result that Pound had in mind was the use in poetry of natural speech. He felt that the language of poetry should depart from the spoken idiom in no way "save by a heightened intensity" (L, 48). As he puts it elsewhere, "We would write nothing that we might not say actually in life—under emotion." The natural speech of one age, of course, often differs from the natural speech of another. In Shakespeare's time, for instance, it was the fashion of the

court to "parley Euphues," and Shakespeare's characters "use a florid speech to show their good breeding" (LE, 362). But that is precisely why the modern poet "will learn more about the art of charging words from Flaubert than he will from the floribund sixteenth-century dramatists" (LE, 32).

The sixteenth-century dramatists, however, are not the only English poets whom Pound considers unsatisfactory models as regards the use of language. He rejects also the poets of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In short, he holds that modern poets simply cannot learn to write by reading English (ABCR, 71). So far as the use of language is concerned, apparently the best model among English poets—at least since Chaucer—is George Crabbe. "If Englishmen had known how to select the best out of Crabbe they would have less need of consulting French stylists" (LE, 278). Wordsworth, however, will not quite do: he "got rid of a lot of trimmings, but there are vast stretches of deadness in his writing" (ABCR, 73). But the poet whose language Pound rails against most furiously is Milton.

In 1914, some years before the publication of T. S. Eliot's first strictures against Milton's language, Pound wrote: "Milton is the worst sort of poison. He is a thorough-going decadent in the worst sense of the term." Pound conceded that Milton contributed to the sonority of the English blank-verse paragraph but held that he did this at the cost of his idiom (LE, 216-217). As Pound explained it a few years later, Milton attempted "to turn English into Latin; to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, neglecting the genius of English, distorting its fibrous manner, making schoolboy translations of Latin phrases: 'Him who disobeys me disobeys.' " Pound refuses, however, to ascribe to Milton's "sin of vague and pompous words" any mark of originality. The "sin" had its origin in the Renaissance. Milton follows in the wake of Euphues and Gongora, "adding to their high-soundingness his passion for latinization" (LE, 238).

Thus the so-called dislodgment of Milton in recent criticism may be traced to Ford's theory that poetry should be at least as well written as prose—the theory that Pound predicted would have a "wide result." The aim of prose is direct and natural speech; but Milton's language, as Pound realized, does not conform to this ideal.

One of the traits of prose which Pound desires to find in poetry also is the use of natural word order. The chief source of error in translations of the classics, he maintains, is their neglect of "the

patent fact that inversions of sentence order in an uninflected language like English are not, simply and utterly *are not* any sort of equivalent for inversions and perturbations of order in a language inflected as Greek and Latin are inflected" (LE, 268). Milton, of course, disregarded this "patent fact" in the composition of *Paradise Lost,* and that is perhaps Pound's main objection to the Miltonic idiom. On the other hand, Yeats is to be commended because in certain lyrics "he has driven out inversion and written with prose directness" (LE, 379).

Another trait of good prose which the modern poet should cultivate, according to Pound, is the use of simple diction. "Every literaryism, every book word, fritters away a scrap of the reader's patience, a scrap of his sense of your sincerity. When one really feels and thinks, one stammers with simple speech . . ." (L, 49). Pound objects not only to the "large speech" of the Elizabethans and Milton—phrases like Shakespeare's "Multitudinous seas incarnadine" (LE, 238)—but also to archaic terms and poeticisms. For instance, he objects to Poe's use in "To Helen" of such expressions as "yore," "own native," "Wont to roam," "Naiad airs," and "yon" (L, 50). While "did go" and "did say" were appropriate in Golding's day, such phrases in modern poets indicate "impotent affectation, a definite lack of technique" (LE, 238). Pound also, however, warns the modern poet against the use of slang. "The slanger *wants* to get the real sound of speech as spoken, and can only get near it by using the expression of the moment" (L, 298).

Finally, Pound felt that poetry, like good prose, should restrict itself to the functional use of language, avoiding all rhetoric and ornament. "The reader's first and simplest test of an author will be to look for words that do not function; that contribute nothing to the meaning OR that distract from the MOST important factor of the meaning to factors of minor importance" (ABCR, 63). Poets should be on their guard especially against the use of superfluous adjectives (LE, 4). They should cultivate precision, accuracy. Pound praises Donne's *The Ecstasy* for "stating a thesis in precise and even technical terms" (ABCR, 140).

But while Pound agreed that poetry should be at least as well written as prose, he yet had a clear conception of their essential difference, which was perhaps lacking in Ford. The poet, according to Pound, must avoid the use not only of superfluous and inexact words, but also of neutral words, of words not adequately charged with meaning. He advised Iris Barry to revise a line describing leaves as "Too tender to have become grimed." Pound wrote: "Let

the grime *do* something to the leaves. 'All nouns come from verbs. To primitive man, a thing *is* what it *does.*' That is Fenollosa, but I think the theory is a very good one for poets to go by" (L, 82).

Pound defines great literature as "simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." His definition applies to prose as well as to poetry, but the language of poetry, according to Pound, is more highly charged than that of prose (LE, 26). That poetry is the most concentrated form of verbal expression is not a new theory: it is as old, Pound suggests, as the German language, whose word for poetry is derived from *dichten*—meaning "to condense" (ABCR, 36). Poetry, as distinguished from prose and drama, relies entirely on the "charge that can be put into the word" (LE, 29); it exhibits "that passionate simplicity which is beyond the precisions of the intellect" (LE, 53). Prose and drama, on the other hand, can attain poetic intensity only "by so arranging the circumstances that some perfectly simple speech, perception, dogmatic statement appears in abnormal vigour" (LE, 324, n.). Drama, in fact, is a "mixed art" that relies not only on "construction" but also on gesture, mimicry, and impersonation (LE, 29).

The indirect way of charging words through construction or architectonics is hardly less important in narrative poetry than in prose fiction or drama. One thinks, for instance, of how Wordsworth employs this method in *Michael* to impart an extraordinary intensity to the simple words "And never lifted up a single stone." But Pound seems to associate this method exclusively with prose and drama, in effect identifying poetry with lyric poetry. At all events he is mainly interested in the direct charging of words through what he calls phanopoeia, melopoeia, and logopoeia.

Though a form of verbalism, logopoeia is altogether different from the "bad verbalism" of rhetoric (LE, 283). Pound defines it as " 'the dance of the intellect among words,' that is to say, it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes account in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we *expect* to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play." Accordingly, it is untranslatable, although it may be paraphrased if one can discover an equivalent to the original author's state of mind. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century satire contains "a very limited sort of logopoeia," but its modern master is Laforgue, and its ancient master Propertius (LE, 25, 30, 33).

By melopoeia Pound means the music of poetry. He admits that melopoeia constitutes "a force tending often to lull, or to distract the reader from the exact sense of the language" (LE, 26). Though

he therefore respects the melopoeic achievements of Swinburne, he feels that modern readers—once their faculty for purely literary criticism is awakened—will read him with annoyance because he "neglected the value of words as words, and was intent on their value as sound" (LE, 292-293). But Pound, who had "consciously" thought about melopoeia for years before coming to London, was not prepared to follow Hulme in overlooking its possibilities in the future. Some of the poets of antiquity and the middle ages—including Homer, the troubadours, Dante, and Villon—had been able to cultivate melopoeia without the sacrifice of precision (LE, 27-28). On the other hand, some of the free verse of the present day reflected "a monotony of bad usage as tiresome as any typical eighteenth or nineteenth century flatness" (LE, 421).

In regard to versification, Pound was an advocate of "absolute" or "interpretative" rhythm—a type of rhythm that "corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed." As an integral part of the total meaning of the poem, absolute rhythm, like the poem as whole, is "uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable" (LE, 9). Absolute rhythm agrees with a tradition, to which Pound sympathetically refers, that among the troubadours it was considered plagiarism to borrow another poet's form, just as we now consider it plagiarism to take another writer's subject matter or plot (ABCR, 69). In effect, the principle behind absolute rhythm is that of rendering melopoeia conducive rather than detrimental to accuracy of meaning, of preventing the music of poetry from becoming the whole essence of poetry.

The principle behind absolute rhythm, therefore, applies to all melopoeic elements in poetry, and not merely to rhythm. It affects, for instance, Pound's conception of onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia ought to be, according to Pound, "not a mere trick of imitating natural noises," but "a mastery in fitting the inarticulate sound of a passage to the mood or to the quality of voice which expresses that mood or passion which the passage expresses." This is how onomatopoeia functions in Dante, who "in points of pure sound" has the advantage over Shakespeare, despite the latter's mastery of the "overtones and undertones of rhythm" (PE, 204).

But phanopoeia, the third direct way of charging language with meaning, is what probably interests Pound most; for in this element of poetry one finds the "greatest drive toward utter precision of word" (LE, 26). By phanopoeia Pound means simply the visual or physical element in poetry; his term is roughly equivalent to the term "imagism." It is opposed to "abstraction," regarded by Pound

as the "disease of the last century and a half" (LE, 59). Much bad
and mediocre poetry, according to Pound, "drips down from an
abstract received 'idea' or 'generality' held with fanaticism . . .
by men who NEVER take in concrete detail" (PE, 51). Pound would
restrict the poet's use of abstract expressions to "simple emotional
statements of fact, such as 'I am tired,' or simple credos like 'After
death there comes no other calamity'" (L, 90). Aside from such
simple statements, the language of poetry should exclude all ab-
stractions and consist of images alone. It should also exclude the
mixing of the abstract with the concrete (as in "dim lands of
peace"), for "the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol"
(LE, 5).

While Pound's theory of phanopoeia may owe something to
Ford, who advised poets to emulate Flaubert's method of render-
ing rather than telling, it owes still more to what may be con-
sidered Hulme's version of the same basic doctrine. Like Hulme,
Pound underscores the importance of the image by viewing it as
the special material or medium of the poet's art. "The image is
the poet's pigment. . . ." "Since the beginning of bad writing, writers
have used images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech"
(G-B, 100, 102). Accordingly, Pound is fascinated by the Chinese
language because its ideogrammic character naturally makes it just
such a poetic medium. In the words of Ernest Fenollosa, whose
essay on the Chinese language Pound edited and included in one
of his own works, "In reading Chinese we do not seem to be jug-
gling mental counters, but to be watching *things* work out their own
fate."[6] It seemed to Pound, as it had to Fenollosa, that such a lan-
guage could not but remain poetic (ABCR, 22).

Ultimately Pound incorporated into his theory of the image the
concept of the "moving" image—a concept found neither in Hulme's
writings nor in Pound's own early criticism. "The defect of earlier
imagist propaganda," wrote Pound in 1934, "was not misstatement
but incomplete statement." The earlier imagists "thought only of
the STATIONARY image." But we must think also of the "mov-
ing" image; otherwise "you will have to make a really needless divi-
sion of fixed images and praxis or action" (ABCR, 52). While one
is generally correct to look for Pound's influence on Eliot rather
than for Eliot's influence on Pound, this late modification of Pound's
theory was evidently prompted by Eliot's discussion of the "objective
correlative," which presented a concept of the image comprehensive
enough to include application to the drama.

Though ostensibly based on Aristotle, Pound's theory of meta-

phor, like his theory of the image, derives from Hulme. Pound's version of the Aristotelian definition of metaphor reads as follows: "The apt use of metaphor, arising as it does, from a swift perception of relations, is the hall-mark of genius" (PE, 201). Aristotle's phrase τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν is generally translated "to have an eye for resemblances" or "to perceive similarity in dissimilarity." Pound's version of the phrase—his addition of the word "swift" and the elimination of any word signifying resemblance or similarity—suggests a basic departure from the original. In fact, Pound shares with Aristotle little more than the conviction that metaphor is of supreme importance in poetry.

Pound's addition of the word "swift" to the Aristotelian definition brings to mind his fondness for "the 'language beyond metaphor,' that is, the more compressed or elliptical expression of metaphorical expression, such as antithesis suggested or implied in verbs and adjectives." Much of the beauty of Dante, according to Pound, results from his mastery of the elliptical metaphor (as in *dove il sol tace,* "where the sun is silent" or in *l'aura morta,* "the dead air"). Pound's predilection for the elliptical metaphor, however, did not lead him to recommend the use of symbolism. He desired metaphor to be not only swift but also definite. Modern symbolism, unlike Dante's elliptical metaphorical expression, was too vague to suit his taste: it was "sometimes allegory in three dimensions instead of two, sometimes merely atmospheric suggestion" (PE, 202-203). As Pound put the matter elsewhere, the "proper and perfect symbol is the natural object" (LE, 9).

But Pound's remarks on the elliptical metaphor, which he illustrates from Dante, do not necessarily add up to a departure from Aristotle; nor is their import especially modern. More interesting, therefore, is the second detail that we noted in his version of the Aristotelian definition of metaphor. In excluding the concept of resemblance from that definition, Pound is following Hulme's example of emancipating metaphor from ontology and science, of giving it complete freedom within a strictly aesthetic frame of reference. But the connection of this emancipation of the metaphor with the development of the theory of abstract art—a connection perhaps implied in Hulme—is first made expicit in Pound.

Jacob Epstein, according to Pound, was the first person in the Hulme circle to theorize on the subject of abstract art, to talk about "form, not the *form* of anything." Pound also states that he first heard of the principles of the new art from Epstein or from Hulme quoting Epstein. But Pound felt that Gaudier-Brzeska's "Vortex"

—which appeared in *Blast* for June, 1914—contained the definitive statement of the new principles:

> Sculptural feeling is the appreciation
> of masses in relation.
> Sculptural ability is the defining of
> these masses by planes. (G-B, 115-116)

Vorticism traced its origin to the following quotations from Walter Pater and James Whistler respectively: "All arts approach the conditions of music" and "We are interested in painting because it is an arrangement of lines and colours."[7] In effect, vorticism shifted the common ground of the arts from imitation to "arrangement."

Applying the principle of "arrangement" to poetry, Pound arrived at a novel conception of metaphor. "The pine-tree in the mist upon the far hills looks like a fragment of Japanese armour." But the "beauty of the pine-tree in the mist is not caused by its resemblance to the plates of armour," just as the armour, "if it be beautiful at all, is not beautiful *because* of its resemblance to the pine in the mist." The tree and the armour are beautiful "because their diverse planes overlie in a certain manner." The poet, working in words, casts on the reader's mind "a more vivid image of either the armour or the pine by mentioning them close together or by using some device of simile or metaphor . . ." (G-B, 146-147). In other words, metaphor consists in the effective juxtaposition of images, as in Pound's lines:

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
> Petals, on a wet, black bough.
>
> (G-B, 103)

This theory of metaphor is revolutionary because it tends to make the age-old problem of resemblance a fortuitous issue, and to reduce metaphor to a device for securing the juxtaposition of certain images in a poem.

This conception of metaphor as an effective juxtaposition of images may be said to represent Pound's contribution to the method of charging words through phanopoeia. While Pound had asserted that a "discovery" in literature may be "either of life itself or the means of expression," he manifests little interest in discoveries "of life itself." In fact, he does not bother to clarify this type of discovery, although one assumes that it refers to the substance as opposed to the means of expression. But Pound has little taste for the poetry of ideas; for "a man's message is precisely his *façon de voir*," and apart from that, a writer's ideas have little value (LE,

340-341). Like Ford and Hulme, Pound deprecates the role of literature as a vehicle of opinion (LE, 363).

Pound feels, nevertheless, that poets have a serious function to perform in society, and rejects Hulme's view that poems are "made for after-dinner speakers" (LE 65). Like Ford, he recognizes a direct relation between a healthy art and a healthy state. "Artists are the antennae of the race . . ." (LE, 294). The artist provides us with "lasting and unassailable data" regarding human nature; for he presents " the image of his desire, of his hate, of his indifference as precisely that"—quite unlike the theorist who projects universality upon "his own limits and predilections" (LE, 42, 46). Immorality in art, according to Pound, consists in making false reports; while "art that bears true witness" is never immoral (LE, 43-44). To bear true witness is especially important in the art that deals with words. When poets are not striving toward precision in the use of language, "the nation decays in its head" (PE, 5). Words, which are necessary for the preservation of thought, are constantly wearing out; poets are vital to society because they "new-mint the speech."[8]

In his conception of the language of poetry Pound modifies, develops, and synthesizes the ideas of Ford and Hulme. While his theories lack that breadth of application which characterizes the most durable criticism, to a less degree the same holds true of the critical views of Dryden and Wordsworth. Even more strictly than either Dryden or Wordsworth, Pound speaks for the poets of his age—and speaks for them as poets rather than as readers of poetry. His strictures against Milton—which were to be accepted and enlarged upon by later new critics—make no sense whatever except as a warning to modern poets not to imitate the Miltonic idiom. As Eliot implies, Pound's criticism should be regarded as "the notes of a poet on his craft."[9] Eliot's remark agrees with Pound's assertion that theoretically criticism "tries to forerun composition" (LE, 75), and that "the function of criticism is to efface itself once it has established its dissociations" (LE, 80). At all events, to the literary historian, Pound's critical writing will seem of value because it "foreran" the new poets and most of their predilections in the use of language, not because it mangled some of the greatest poets of the past.

IV

T. S. Eliot

THE critical writings of T. S. Eliot are full of apparent contradictions; but the contradictions are, so to speak, an integral part of his manner of thinking, an expression of his critical orthodoxy. He defines a heretic as "a person who seizes upon a truth and pushes it to the point at which it becomes a falsehood" (SE, 435-436).[1] Eliot himself avoids such "heresy" by never pushing a "truth" too far and by matching an extreme opinion with its opposite; so that his critical thought, both as a whole and on each separate question, appears to evolve more or less in accordance with a kind of Hegelian formula—from thesis to antithesis to synthesis. Generally speaking, however, it is not the final but the first stage of his thought on every point which has had the greatest influence on modern criticism.

Eliot's principle of orthodoxy is closely related to his sense of tradition, but the two concepts are complementary rather than identical. Tradition is "a way of feeling and acting which characterizes a group throughout generations." It is rooted in the unconscious and is of the blood rather than of the intellect; whereas orthodoxy "calls for the exercise of all our conscious intelligence."[2] Hence Eliot's account of what it means for a writer to be traditional contains an element of mysticism, like that in Burke's conception of civil society. To be traditional a man must write "not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (SE, 4). An individual work of art can

possess significance, therefore, only in relation to these larger organic wholes of which it is a part (SE, 12-13).

Eliot's theory of the language of poetry bears many points of similarity to Pound's; at the same time it is much more complicated because of its relation to Eliot's principle of orthodoxy and his sense of tradition. While Pound set about confidently distinguishing the "natural" from the "artificial" style, Eliot sometimes has his doubts about the validity of such a distinction and is sometimes hesitant to condemn poets on the basis of it. The metaphysical poets, he points out, "are simple, artificial, difficult, fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinizelli, or Cino" (SE, 247). There is no point, then, in Pound's strictures against the language of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets, for their alleged faults of style are found also in the foreign poets whose language Pound admired. For Pound's distinction, therefore, between the natural style and the artificial, Eliot tends to substitute the distinction between "unified sensibility" and "dissociation of sensibility."

Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry, according to Eliot, represents "a development of the English language which we have perhaps never equalled," a period "when the intellect was immediately at the tips of the senses" (SE, 185). While Shakespeare and his contemporaries often deviate from the conversational style, they frequently do so with reason; for if "we are to express ourselves, our variety of thoughts and feelings, on a variety of subjects with inevitable rightness, we must adapt our manner to the moment with infinite variations" (SE, 26). The metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, according to Eliot, are a direct and normal development of the age of Shakespeare. Though the structure of their sentences is sometimes involved, this trait is no defect because it results from a "fidelity of thought to feeling." Jonson and Chapman, especially the latter, "incorporated their erudition into their sensibility"; and this "direct sensuous apprehension of thought," this "recreation of thought into feeling," is exactly what we find in Donne and other metaphysical poets (SE, 245-246).

But after the metaphysical poets, according to Eliot, something "happened to the mind of England," so that English poets were almost never again to "feel their thought as immediately as the odour of the rose." The difference between the English poets before and after the Puritan rebellion is not a simple difference of degree. "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 two most power-
ful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden." Eliot apparently con-
ceives this "dissociation" as largely, if not entirely, an English (and
American) phenomenon. At all events he admires the language of
the French Symbolists and declares that "Jules Laforgue, and Tris-
tan Corbière in many of his poems, are nearer to the 'school of
Donne' than any modern English poet" (SE, 247, 249).

The "dissociation" that occurred in the seventeenth century had,
according to Eliot, two different effects—both undesirable—upon
later English poetry. One effect manifests itself in neo-classic poetry,
and the other in romantic poetry.

The effect of "dissociation" on neo-classic poetry, according to
Eliot, manifests itself in the development of the English language
independently of sensation and feeling. Eliot regards Philip Mas-
singer as the precursor of this phenomenon. Massinger's poetry
reveals that his "feeling for language had outstripped his feeling
for things; that his eye and his vocabulary were not in co-operation."
This seventeenth-century dramatist is "choice and correct," and ap-
parently employs the English language with more sophistication
than his predecessors; but his development of the language is not
"a development based on, or resulting from, a new way of feeling."
It seems, on the contrary, to conduct the reader "away from feeling
altogether." It suffers from "cerebral anaemia." Eliot points out
that an involved style is not necessarily a bad style. "But such a style
should follow the involutions of a mode of perceiving, registering,
and digesting impressions which is also involved." In Massinger's
case, according to Eliot, complication of style apparently develops
for its own sake, and not in response to some complication in the
poet's sensibility (SE, 185-187) .

Eliot traces this type of cleavage between language and sen-
sibility from Massinger to Milton, Dryden, and the typical poets of
the eighteenth century. From Marlowe through Jonson, according
to Eliot, English poetry exhibits the union of two qualities that
were soon to be separated: "wit and magniloquence." The separa-
tion of these qualities by Milton and Dryden suggests that their
sensibilities were less complex than those of the leading Elizabethan
and Jacobean poets. "Dryden was great in wit, as Milton in mag-
niloquence; but the former, by isolating this quality and making it
by itself into great poetry, and the latter, by coming to dispense
with it altogether, may perhaps have injured the language" (SE,
260). This twofold process of refining the language while allowing
the sensibility to become less complex is intensified in the eighteenth

century. "The language went on and in some respects improved; the best verse of Collins, Gray, Johnson, and even Goldsmith satisfies some of our fastidious demands better than that of Donne or Marvell or King. But while the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude" (SE, 247). Marvell's best poems, with their "alliance of levity and seriousness," satisfy Coleridge's elucidation of imagination as the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant qualities: they posses wit—"a quality of sophisticated literature." But in Gray and Collins "the sophistication remains only in the language, and has disappeared from the feeling" (SE, 255-256).

The second effect of "dissociation," according to Eliot, followed from the first, as the romantic poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "revolted against the ratiocinative, the descriptive." But this revolt against neo- classic taste did not produce a unification of sensibility; it only altered the symptoms of "dissociation." The romantic poets "thought and felt by fits, unbalanced; they reflected." While there are "traces of a struggle toward unification of sensibility" in Shelley's *Triumph of Life* and Keate's second *Hyperion*, "Keats and Shelley died, and Tennyson and Browning ruminated" (SE, 247-248). Eliot misses the quality of wit in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats (SE, 262); and he finds Tennyson's blank verse to be "cruder" than that of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets, "because less capable of expressing complicated, subtle, and surprising emotions" (SE, 100-101).

What Eliot means by the remark that the romantic poets "thought and felt by fits" may be illustrated by his comparison of Shelley's "To a Skylark" with Crashaw's "The Tear."[3] Eliot finds that Crashaw's images, "even when entirely preposterous," provide a kind of intellectual pleasure—"it is a deliberate conscious perversity of language, a perversity like that of the amazing and amazingly impressive interior of St. Peter's." But he derives no intellectual pleasure from the images in "To a Skylark." "For the first time perhaps in verse of such eminence, sound exists without sense." To support this charge, he quotes a stanza describing the moon, which he pretends to be unable to understand at all:

> Keen as are the arrows
> Of that silver sphere
> Whose intense lamp narrows
> In the white dawn clear,
> Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

When Shelley, according to Eliot, has something definite to say,

he merely says it; "keeps his images on one side and his meanings on the other":

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not:
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught;
> Our sweetest songs are made of saddest thought.

But the romantic phase of "dissociation" culminates, Eliot leads us to infer, not in Shelley, who allegedly thinks and feels by fits, but in Swinburne, who allegedly indulges only in feeling at the expense of both observation and thought. Eliot discovers a curious antithetical resemblance between Swinburne and Dryden, for Swinburne is concerned only with the suggestiveness of words as Dryden is concerned only with their denotation. If Swinburne's words "suggest nothing, it is because they suggest too much" (SE, 273). Swinburne's language is not in a healthy state, as language in a healthy state "is so close to the object that the two are identified." His diffuseness, however, matches the indefiniteness of his feeling; and no one but "a man of genius could dwell so exclusively and consistently among words as Swinburne" (SE, 285).

It should be evident by now that Eliot's concept of "dissociation of sensibility" is a kind of critical chameleon that changes its shade of meaning with each change in its surroundings. Among its apparent meanings we discover the following: any stylistic complication or sophistication that does not result from a corresponding complication or sophistication in the sensibility; the loss of complexity that follows the separation of magniloquence from wit or wit from magniloquence; using images whose references are in any degree vague or indefinite, or saying something definite without the use of images at all; using words that are not sufficiently suggestive, or using words that are too suggestive. Perhaps the least that one can say by way of protest is that a concept of such diverse and even antithetical meanings tends to lose its identity and to signify nothing when it is detached from the taste and personality of its author.

The theory of "dissociation" that we have just reviewed is developed by Eliot primarily in a series of early essays on seventeenth-century poets: "Philip Massinger" (1920), "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), "Andrew Marvell" (1921), "John Dryden" (1921), and "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (1928). His later criticism makes no important contribution to the theory; but this does not mean that Eliot ever completely abandoned it. "What I see," he wrote in 1933, "in the history of English poetry, is not so much

daemonic possession as the splitting up of personality. If we say that one of the partial personalities which may develop in the national mind is that which manifests itself in the period between Dryden and Johnson, then what we have to do is to re-integrate it: otherwise we are likely to get only successive alterations of personality" (UPUC, 84-85). Nearly fifteen years later Eliot stated that the concept of "dissociation of sensibility" still seemed to him to retain "some validity," although he suspected that the causes of "dissociation" are "too complex and too profound to justify our accounting for the change in terms of literary criticism" (M, 7).

But Eliot's criticism, as we suggested earlier, tends to evolve through contradictions. After developing the thesis that a "dissociation of sensibility" occurred in the seventeenth century, and that Milton and Dryden by their contributions to it perhaps injured the language, Eliot turns away from pushing his thesis too far and begins to develop an antithesis, first in regard to Dryden's language and eventually in regard to Milton's.

Eliot from the first rejected the romantic view that Dryden wrote not poetry but versified prose. "When we try," he said in 1921, "to isolate the essentially poetic, we bring our pursuit in the end to something insignificant; our standards vary with every poet whom we consider" (SE, 267). By 1932 he had come to look upon Dryden as a great reformer of the English language. Dryden, according to Eliot, restored the quality of naturalness to poetry after the vigorous style initiated by Donne had deteriorated into the artificial. If Dryden's language does not at first strike us as natural, that is "partly because the standards of good English in conversation were higher then, and partly because the spoken word, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, meant much more *public* speech than it does to us; it meant oratory and eloquence" (JD, 13-14). Nevertheless Dryden "established a *normal* English speech, a speech valid for both verse and prose"; we may gauge his achievement by the fact that hardly a word or phrase used by him has become quaint or obsolete in the course of nearly three hundred years (JD, 21, 24).

In brief, Eliot praises Dryden for much the same reason that Pound praised Crabbe, and Ford, Christina Rossetti: because his idiom was that of natural speech and possessed the qualities of good prose. While Eliot felt that "anything that can be said in prose can be said better in prose," he likewise held—and without any real inconsistency—that "poetry has as much to learn from prose as from other poetry," that "an interaction between prose and verse, like

the interaction between language and language, is a condition of vitality in literature" (UPUC, 152).

But while Eliot could maintain that Dryden reformed the language of poetry by returning to the spoken idiom, he obviously could not make such a claim for the author of *Paradise Lost*. To provide a balance to his charge of "dissociation of sensibility" against Milton, Eliot needed some other principle than the one that served in Dryden's case. Such a principle Eliot finally produced—but not immediately. Meanwhile, his attitude toward Milton's language—as reflected in an essay on Milton published in 1936—remained uncompromisingly hostile.

Milton's poetry, said Eliot in 1936, not only had a bad influence on Dryden and Pope, but "could *only* be an influence for the worse, upon any poet whatever." Eliot ascribes the essential peculiarity of Milton's style to the development of the "auditory imagination" at the expense of the visual and tactile—a development regarded as a natural tendency in Milton which was aggravated by his blindness. While Shakespeare's images—images like "procreant cradle" and "rooky wood"—both give a "sense of particularity" and "enlarge the meaning" of the individual words joined, Milton's images are alleged not to produce these desirable effects. Quoting Milton's lines,

> The sun to me is dark
> And silent is the moon,
> When she deserts the night
> Hid in her vacant interlunar cave,

Eliot remarks: "Here *interlunar* is certainly a stroke of genius, but is merely combined with 'vacant' and 'cave', rather than giving and receiving life from them." It may therefore be said that Milton writes English "like a dead language" (NVJM, 33-35).

The same conclusion, according to Eliot, may be drawn from Milton's involved syntax. A "tortuous style" may be called "dead" only when, as in Milton, "the complication is dictated by a demand of verbal music, instead of any demand of sense." Henry James complicates the sentence lest it lose any of "the real intricacies and by-paths" of his thought; but Milton's thought is simple and abstract, and the complication is introduced into the sentence for the sake of its musical value alone (NVJM, 35-36). Thus Milton's syntax, like his imagery, is determined solely by the auditory imagination.

Milton's overspecialization in the auditory imagination results, according to Eliot, in a kind of "rhetoric." While such "rhetoric"

is not necessarily bad in itself, Eliot contends that it is likely to be bad in its influence on other poets and "in relation to the historical life of a language as a whole." Dryden's development of the language, therefore, is to be preferred to Milton's, for Dryden at least preserved the tradition of conversational language in poetry. It seems easier to Eliot "to get back to healthy language from Dryden than to get back to it from Milton" (NVJM, 36-37).

But in *The Music of Poetry*, a lecture given in 1942, Eliot announces a point of view that makes possible a more favorable attitude toward Milton's language. While every revolution in poetry "is apt to be a return to common speech" (MP, 16), there are periods when the poet's task is not to "catch up" with the spoken idiom, but "to explore the musical possibilities of an established convention" of the relation of poetry to speech. At a time like ours, when poets are concerned with the former rather than the latter task, we tend "to exaggerate the importance of the innovators at the expense of the reputation of the developers: which might account for what will seem, surely, to a later age, our undue adulation of Donne and depreciation of Milton." The "developers," however, are also necessary, Eliot implies, for without them we would have a perpetual revolution in language, which is neither desirable nor possible (MP, 23).

Eliot's final and most complete view of Milton's language is presented in a lecture of 1947. Whereas originally Eliot had asserted that Milton could not but be a bad influence on any poet whatever, he now retracts that statement. But Eliot's final position regarding Milton's language represents not so much a "recantation"[4] as a readjustment of opinion, a synthesis of the contradictory attitudes presented in *A Note on the Verse of John Milton* (1936) and *The Music of Poetry* (1942).

Eliot's lecture on Milton in 1947 repeats nearly all his earlier charges against Milton's language, but these charges are followed by certain important qualifications. Milton's style, we are told, "illustrates no general principles of good writing." But its foreign idiom and lack of visual imagery are appropriate to the material of *Paradise Lost:* a more vivid picture of Eden, for instance, "would have been less paradisiacal" (M, 9-11). Furthermore, the time has now come when poets may study Milton "with profit to their poetry and to the English language" (M, 19).

Every important change in the idiom of poetry, according to Eliot, attempts to restore the natural relationship between poetry and contemporary speech. The revolution in taste which began

early in the present century is no exception to this general rule. One tenet of the modern poets was "that verse should have the virtues of prose, that diction should be assimilated to cultivated contemporary speech, before aspiring to the elevation of poetry." Another tenet was that the subject matter and imagery of poetry should be related to contemporary life, "that we were to seek the non-poetic, to seek even material refractory to transmutation into poetry, and words and phrases which had not been used before." The study of Milton could not help modern poets to realize these aims; it could only hinder them (M, 18-19).

But, Eliot points out, the situation has now changed. The revolution that began early in the twentieth century cannot continue forever. Today, therefore, poets may study Milton with profit because "poetry should help, not only to refine the language of the time, but to prevent it from changing too rapidly: a development of language at too great a speed would be a development in the sense of a progressive deterioration, and that is our danger to-day." What is needed today is the discovery of "new and more elaborate patterns of a diction now established." In seeking development of the language in this direction, poets might have much to learn from Milton—from his "extended verse structure," his "freedom within form." They might also, by studying Milton, avoid enslavement to "colloquial speech and current jargon" (M, 19).

Eliot's concept of a "unified sensibility" is central to his whole theory of the language of poetry. Hardly less important, however, is another of his concepts which has helped to shape the new taste— the doctrine of the "objective correlative." Eliot may have taken this term from Washington Allston's *Lectures on Art*.[5] But whatever its source, the term is perhaps best explained in relation to the imagist movement. Considered from an historical point of view, in any case, the doctrine of the "objective correlative" appears less confused and less confusing than Eliso Vivas has shown it to be when subjected to a semantic analysis.[6]

As expressed in "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919), Eliot's doctrine of the "objective correlative" is little more than an extension of Pound's theory of the "Image." "The only way," writes Eliot, "of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (SE, 124-125). As early as 1910 Pound had expressed a

similar doctrine: "Poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres and the like, but equations for the human emotions."[7] The relation of poetry to mathematics was probably suggested to Pound by Aristotle's theory of metaphor. Accordingly, Pound thought of the "equations" as pertaining solely to the language as distinguished from the action of a poem. This is suggested by his definition of the term "Image" in 1913: "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."[8] But Eliot's doctrine of the "objective correlative" extends the concept of "Image" to include "a chain of events" or action.

Eliot's doctrine of the "objective correlative," however, is an extension not only of Pound's theory of the "Image" but also of his theory of metaphor. Like Pound, Eliot is not so much concerned with the perception of similarity in dissimilarity as with the selection and arrangement of images by means of which to evoke a particular emotion. The "utmost power of the poet," he writes, is "the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts" (SE, 228). But Eliot conceives of metaphor or a single juxtaposition of images as part of a larger structure, and implies that the effectiveness of the former depends upon its relation to the latter. The significance of this implication becomes apparent in Eliot's championship of the conceit. "The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into meaning . . . Hence we get something which looks very much like conceit . . ." (SE, 248). Eliot's famous comparison of the evening to a "patient etherized upon a table" may serve as an example of this type of metaphor: the comparison derives its justification entirely from its relation to the "objective correlative" of which it is a part. Detached from its context, the comparison is rather absurd and quite meaningless.

Aside from its relation to the imagist movement, especially as represented by Pound, Eliot's doctrine of the "objective correlative" embodies Eliot's so-called "Impersonal" theory of art. Eliot distinguishes between the emotions expressed through an "objective correlative" in art and the emotions experienced in life by either the poet or the reader. In "Tradition and Individual Talent," for instance, he likens the poet's mind to a catalytic agent that transforms its material—consisting of emotions and feelings—into poetry. This analogy gives emphasis to the argument that "the poet has, not a personality to express, but a particular medium . . . in which

impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways" (SE, 7-9). But as René Wellek points out, Eliot could not have meant that the poet is a mere catalyst or automaton: "The impersonality of the poet must be taken to mean that poetry is not a direct transcript of experience. However, it does not mean that poetry is devoid of personal, physiognomic characteristics: otherwise we could not distinguish between the works of different authors. . . ."[9]

Another puzzling remark in "Tradition and Individual Talent" is Eliot's reference to the two kinds of elements that enter the transforming catalyst, which he calls "emotions and feelings" (SE, 8). Aside from the bothersome distinction between emotions and feelings—a distinction not found in his later criticism—the remark implies that emotions and feelings alone constitute the stuff from which poetry is made, that ideas and intellect are to be banished from the province of the Muse. But such an interpretation of Eliot's meaning conflicts with the whole drift of his criticism toward the ideal of a "unified sensibility," the union of thought and feeling, the balanced and complex as opposed to the "partial" personality.

It is true, however, that in his early criticism Eliot hesitates to attach significance to the ideational element in poetry, so that his failure to mention it in his analogy of the catalyst cannot be called accidental. He no doubt felt, as had his immediate predecessors, that to stress the significance of ideas in poetry was to run the risk of encouraging the use of abstract language in poetic composition and the entertainment of didacticism in literary theory. Between this attitude, which he had inherited, and his own ideal of a "unified sensibility" some compromise was obviously necessary.

Eliot's first impulse was to evade the issue by drawing a distinction between two types of emotion, one type being the expression of a "unified sensibility" and the other not. Thus he wrote in 1927: "In reality there is precise emotion and there is vague emotion. To express precise emotion requires as great intellectual power as to express precise thought" (SE, 155). Poetry, he continues, is not a substitute for philosophy or theology; on the contrary, it has its own function to perform, and "this function is not intellectual but emotional." Ideas, of course, occur in poetry but apparently it is a mistake to regard them as significant. Dante "did not believe or disbelieve the Thomist cosmology or theory of the soul: he merely made use of it, for a fusion took place between his initial emotional impulses and a theory, for the purpose of making poetry" (SE, 118). But this manner of thinking, which re-

flects the influence of I. A. Richards, did not quite satisfy Eliot for long.

In the long run Richards' influence on Eliot was of a negative sort, that is, it inspired opposition rather than approval. After echoing Richards in 1927, Eliot was soon to turn his attention to an antithetical point of view. In 1929, for instance, he expresses disagreement with Richards' theory of "pseudo-statements"—that poets as poets have no beliefs (SE, 229-231, n.). Several years later he carries his disagreement with Richards farther still: ". . . if you stick too closely to the 'poetry' and adopt no attitude towards what the poet says, you will tend to evacuate it of all significance" (UPUC, 64). It is impossible, he contends, "to preserve emotions without the beliefs with which their history has been involved" (UPUC, 135). While some modern poets "perceive possibilities of intensity" through the elimination of "meaning" in poetry, Eliot does not think "that this situation is ideal" (UPUC, 151).

Having first developed the thesis that poetry expresses only emotion, then the contradictory view that poetry divorced from ideas and meaning can have no significance, Eliot next strives for a synthesis of these two apparently opposite points of view. Such a synthesis is attempted, for instance, in *The Social Function of Poetry*, a lecture delivered by Eliot in 1945. The philosophical poems of Dante and Lucretius, Eliot declares, "were not designed to persuade readers to an intellectual assent, but to convey an emotional equivalent for the ideas. What Lucretius and Dante teach you, in fact, is *what it feels like* to hold certain beliefs . . ." (SFP, 107). In other words, Eliot still holds that the function of poetry is emotional, but he now concedes that the emotion may be inseparable from ideas.

But Eliot is opposed in his late, as in his early, criticism to any poet's attempt to philosophize on his own. From the very beginning—as in his essay on Blake (1920)—he argued that the poet should have "a framework of accepted and traditional ideas" in order to concentrate his attention upon the "problems of the poet" instead of wasting his energy upon speculation (SE, 279-280). By 1945 this theory has become for Eliot the *via media* between two opposite extremes, both of which he would avoid: first, "that it is simply the value of the *ideas* expressed in a poem which gives the value of the poetry"; secondly, "that the beliefs of the poet do not matter at all." The *via media* is the consideration that "when a poet has expressed successfully a philosophy we find that it is a philosophy which is already in existence, not one of his own in-

vention." No poetry, according to Eliot, can be made out of ideas when they are "too *original*, or too *new*"; for the poet himself "must already have lived them, and lived them communally" (SFP, 107-108).

As the greatest poet of the new sensibility Eliot was indispensable to its success, not only in his role as poet but also in his role as critic. His theory of the language of poetry may be said to derive from Pound. This fact is evident in his advocacy of "natural speech," his strictures against Milton's language, and his doctrine of the "objective correlative"; it is implicit also in his habit of finding the hallmark of poetic genius not in metaphor in the traditional sense of the word but in "the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts" (SE, 228), although on this point we must take into account also the influence on Eliot of Coleridge's theory of imagination. But Eliot does not leave the problem of the language of poetry where he found it. His doctrine of the "objective correlative" enlarges Pound's concept of "Image" to include first dramatic action and then ideas. But perhaps his main contribution to the modern theory of the language of poetry is to be found in the consequences of his distinction between "unified sensibility" and "dissociation of sensibility." The consequences were: first, the glorification of the metaphysical poets; secondly, the emergence of the feeling that good poetry is complex. The second of these results prepared the way for the favorable reception of the theories of Richards and Empson.

V

I. A. Richards

I A. RICHARDS is commonly regarded as the founder of the new criticism. Though not strictly true, this claim is comprehensible. The new criticism emerged out of imagism: Ford, Hulme, and Pound are all directly connected with the imagist movement; and there are strong traces of imagism in Eliot. But the view that Richards created the new criticism persists, as he brought to the study of poetry both new methods and new insights. The main problem with which Richards deals—the problem of establishing an apology for poetry through the investigation of language—is the same problem that occupied Hulme. But Richards considers the identical problem from a new point of view—a point of view derived partly from Coleridge and partly from the new sciences of psychology and semantics.

Underlying Richards' theory of the language of poetry—especially as that theory is developed in his earlier criticism—is a psychological concept of value, the concept of beauty as a state of mind involving "synaethesis" or a harmonious balance of impulses. Richards' first book, *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922), written in collaboration with C. K. Ogden and James Wood, suggests a relationship between this concept of value and Confucius' doctrine of equilibrium and harmony. But much of this little volume is devoted to thumbnail sketches of other theories of beauty. For an adequate account of Richards' concept of value, as well as for its connection with his theory of the language of poetry, one must turn to his next three books—to *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), written in collaboration with Ogden, and to his first two inde-

pendent books, *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Science and Poetry* (1926).

Richards' theory of value is especially opposed to the "Aesthetic Hypothesis"—the belief that aesthetic experience is categorically different from ordinary experience. Richards points out that the postulation of a peculiar kind of experience, aesthetic experience, leads to the postulation of a peculiar kind of value, aesthetic value (PLC, 17) .[1] The final result of such postulations is to isolate poetry "from its place in life and its ulterior worths" (PLC, 79). In brief, the "Aesthetic Hypothesis" conflicted with Richards' utilitarian heritage. As D. W. Harding expresses it, Richards "intends primarily a position that can be defended against all those who regard art as something other than one of the practical affairs of life. He attempts in effect to meet the friendly and intelligent Philistine on his own ground."[2]

Anything is valuable, according to Richards, if it satisfies an impulse "without involving the frustration of some equal or more important appetency" (PLC, 48). While pleasure has an important place in Richards' theory of value, he does not regard pleasure as the end of art. (PLC, 70). What gives art its value is not the "thrill" it produces in the reader, but the degree to which it organizes his impulses for his living a free and full life. The enjoyment of art, according to Richards, has important after effects—"permanent modifications in the structure of the mind"; so that no one is ever quite the same again after an aesthetic experience (PLC, 132). He agrees with Shelley's argument in *A Defence of Poetry* that poetry is valuable and useful because it widens the sphere of human sensibility. (PLC, 67) .

While Richards denies, therefore, that aesthetic experience is a peculiar kind of experience, he nevertheless attributes to it a unique capacity for producing value, that is, for satisfying impulses without involving the frustration of equal or greater impulses. Most men, according to Richards, suppress nine-tenths of their impulses, being incapable of managing more than one-tenth; but the poet, in Coleridge's words, "brings the whole soul of man into activity"[3] and reconciles opposite tendencies. "Impulses which commonly interfere with one another and are conflicting and independent, and mutually distractive, in him [the poet] combine into a stable poise" (PLC, 189, 243). To illustrate his point, Richards refers to tragedy, where the opposite impulses of pity and terror are reconciled in a single response—"the *catharsis* by which Tragedy is recognized." But the reconciliation of opposite impulses is not peculiar to

tragedy; it is a characteristic of "all the most valuable experiences of all the arts" (PLC, 245, 248).

By reconciling conflicting impulses, art performs, Richards clearly implies, a quite practical function, for such conflicts "are the greatest evils which afflict mankind" (SP, 42). Richards admits his inability to explain the difference between a balance or reconciliation of impulses and a rivalry or conflict: to explain the difference we would have to know more than is known about the central nervous system. But we can feel the difference in our own experience of the two states: one of them makes us feel miserable, while the other "lends itself inevitably to transcendental descriptions" (PLC, 251-252).

The influence of his age and of T. S. Eliot, however, leads Richards to place a higher value on one kind of poetry than on another. This preference is evident in his distinction between the poetry of "inclusion" and the poetry of "exclusion." Not all poets, apparently, bring the whole soul of man into activity. "There are two ways in which impulses may be organized; by exclusion or by inclusion, by synthesis and by elimination." A great deal of poetry, though not the greatest poetry, "is content with the full, ordered development of comparatively special and limited experiences." Richards assigns to this variety of poetry such poems as Landor's "Rose Aylmer," Scott's "Coronach," Shelley's "Love's Philosophy," and Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break." These poems are "built out of sets of impulses which run parallel, which have the same direction." On the other hand, the poetry of inclusion—illustrated by Donne's "A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies Day," Marvell's "The Definition of Love," Scott's "Proud Maisie," and Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"—exhibits an "extraordinary heterogeneity of the distinguishable impulses." Lacking this inclusive character, poems belonging to the first group are comparatively unstable. "They will not bear an ironical contemplation" (PLC, 248-250).

Nevertheless, the poet's ability to order experience, whether in the "inclusive" or "exclusive" manner, is a prerequisite to his characteristic mastery of language. Richards looks upon the words of a poem as the "key" to a particular combination of impulses (SP, 36). He regards a given poet's style as the "direct way in which his interests are organized." Should the ordering of the words spring, not from "an actual supreme ordering of experience," but merely from a knowledge of poetic technique plus a desire to write, the poem will lack genuineness. A closer approach to such work will betray it (SP, 49-50).

As an actual concourse of impulses produces the words of a poem, so the words of a poem, according to Richards, produce a similar concourse of impulses in the reader (PS, 36). Richards distinguishes two ways by which words in poetry evoke attitudes in us: directly as sounds and less directly through their associations. But the sound qualities of words "only become important through such cumulative and hypnotic effects as are produced through rhythm and rhyme" (MM, 236). Unlike the advocates of free verse, therefore, Richards underscores the importance of meter. The effect, however, of a definite temporal pattern is not due "to our perceiving a pattern outside us, but to our becoming patterned ourselves" (PLC, 139). Even the apparent artificiality of meter presumably contributes to this result; for it imparts a "frame" effect, isolating the poetic experience from its surrounding irrelevancies (PLC, 145).

How words evoke attitudes through their associations brings us to Richards' analysis of the functions of language. Language, according to Richards, performs a variety of functions. A single sentence may involve: (1) the symbolization of a reference, (2) the expression of the author's attitude to the listener, (3) the expression of the author's attitude to the referent, (4) the promotion of the author's purpose or intention, (5) the relative ease or difficulty of the reference (MM, 224-227). Too often, according to Richards, we assume that communication means only the symbolization of a reference, that is, only a statement of fact. But language has a plurality of functions, and its referential function is not necessarily the dominant one. The more primitive the speech, Richards points out, the less important does the referential function appear to be (MM, 233).

But while language has a plurality of functions, normally one or more of these functions are "dropped" or "sacrificed"; so that in effect Richards tends to entertain a dualistic theory of discourse, or to distinguish between two uses of language—the symbolic and the emotive. The symbolic use of language is illustrated by science, which cultivates a technical vocabulary for the purpose of "dropping" all the functions of language except the referential function. On the other hand, poetry illustrates, or should illustrate, the emotive use of language. A poem "tells us, or should tell us, nothing. . . . What it does, or should do, is to induce a fitting attitude to experience" (MM, 158-159).

Richards proposes a simple test by which to distinguish the symbolic and emotive uses of language from each other. "The

best test of whether our use of words is essentially symbolic or emotive is the question—'Is this true or false in the ordinary strict scientific sense?' If this question is relevant then the use is symbolic, if it is clearly irrelevant then we have an emotive utterance." For example, if one observes that "The height of the Eiffel Tower is 900 feet," one is using words symbolically because they make a statement that is either true or false. But if one remarks that "Man is a worm," one is using words emotively because they make a statement whose truth or falsity is beside the point (MM, 149-150).

Richards admits that "beliefs" occur in poetry, but he denies that these beliefs possess a referential basis. They constitute "provisional acceptances, holding only in special circumstances (in the state of mind which is the poem or work of art), acceptances made for the sake of the imaginative experience which they make possible" (PLC, 278). Poets make not statements but "pseudo-statements," whose merit depends entirely upon what effect they have on our feelings and attitudes (SP, 70). The function of poetry is to induce attitudes, and what justifies any attitude is "its success for the needs of the being." Richards even goes so far as to assert that "the intermingling of knowledge and belief is indeed a perversion" (PLC, 281-283). He praises Eliot's *The Waste Land* for illustrating this thesis (SP, 76), and is gratified to find that "poetry seems about to return to the conditions of its greatness" (MM, 159). To regard the beliefs in a poem, according to Richards, as anything more than a means to an end is to miss the poem itself. "It is never what a poem *says* which matters, but what it *is*." A poem is an experience, a tide of impulses "sweeping through the mind." The words of a poem represent "this experience itself, not any set of perceptions or reflections" (SP, 34-35).

In arguing that a poem is something more than its prose sense, Richards was only re-stating a truism; but his method of arriving at the truism through a psychological theory of value and a semantic analysis of the functions of language produced the exaggeration contained in his dualistic conception of discourse, his distinction between an emotive and a referential use of language. As W. M. Urban says: "To be aesthetic the object must be enjoyed for its own sake and not for its practical, cognitive, or existential implications. But the *implications are still there.* Without these implications there would be no meaning, for meaning is always reference."[4] This is the fundamental fact that Richards overlooks in his dualistic conception of discourse—the fundamental fact that meaning is always reference.

Richards, however, was soon to discard the notion that poetry orders our minds but is irrelevant to the real world.[5] His later criticism disregards the distinction between an emotive and a referential use of language, and never refers to statements in poetry as "pseudo-statements." Without confounding poetry with science, he takes a much more sophisticated view than he had earlier of the element of reference in poetry. Our world—that is, the world of poetry—may rest, he still feels, on make-believe or faith. "But it is *our* world, mind you, that so rests, our world in which we live as men, so different from the bullet's world, in which *it* travels. And yet our world includes the bullet" (IW, 69-70).

Nor does Richards in his later criticism discuss poetry in terms of impulse and response. One possible reason why he may have abandoned this psychological approach to poetry is suggested by his *Practical Criticism* (1927), a work that may be said to stand between his earlier and his later criticism. Aside from marking a kind of turning-point in Richards' thought, this work is important because it introduces the laboratory method in the investigation of interpretation. Richards studied the comments on eleven specimen poems—comments submitted to him voluntarily by a large lecture-group at Cambridge University. The experiment revealed to Richards that even intelligent and sensitive persons—mainly students reading for Honors in English—made stock responses to poetry, that is, based their interpretations upon some platitude or other regarding the nature of beauty or the essentials of good metaphor. This discovery was obviously of profound interest to one who had previously maintained that poetry organizes our conflicting impulses, permanently modifies the structure of our minds. As one might expect, Richards now turned his attention to the problem of reading, and abated his enthusiasm for the theoretical effect of poetry upon one's nervous system.

At the same time, however, Richards' later criticism reflects the increasing influence of Coleridge. This is evident in his *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), without doubt the most important of his later critical works. As a confirmed Benthamite, Richards has little sympathy for Coleridge's theology and transcendental metaphysics. D. G. James, in fact, charges him with reducing Coleridge's theory of imagination to a modern form of associationism.[6] Be the case as it may, the affinity that Richards finds between Coleridge and Bentham applies not to their conclusions but to their starting-points: to "their common choice of Language as the problem of philosophy."[7] Furthermore, it is through regarding Coleridge's

theory of imagination from a semantic point of view that Richards comes to discard his earlier notion that the language of poetry is solely emotive.

Coleridge's "seminal principle" of imagination, according to Richards (involves two doctrines concerning the intercourse of the mind with nature: (1) the realist doctrine that the poet at moments "gains an insight into reality, reads Nature as a symbol of something behind or within Nature not ordinarily perceived"; (2) the projective doctrine that the poet "creates a Nature into which his own feelings, his aspirations and apprehensions, are projected." Richards reduces the apparent conflict between these two doctrines to a problem of language. Metaphysical speculation, he intimates, objectifies the verbal conflict between the two doctrines; and in that form he regards both doctrines as false. Combined, however, the two doctrines are both true—true in the sense that their combination describes "the fact of mind which is their ground and origin" (CI, 145-148). But Coleridge's wind-harp image expresses the coalescence of the two doctrines better than abstract language can. "It is the privilege of poetry to preserve us from mistaking our notions either for things or for ourselves. Poetry is the completest mode of utterance" (CI, 63).

This interpretation of Coleridge's "seminal principle" of imagination is important, not only because it demonstrates that Richards eventually admitted a referential element in the language of poetry, but also because it has influenced later critics in their dealing with the question of poetry and knowledge. But Richards' later theory of the language of poetry rests also upon another aspect of Coleridge's criticism—the distinction between fancy and imagination.

Richards takes issue with J. L. Lowes and others who would reduce this distinction to a difference of degree. He regards it as a categorical difference, based on "an observable difference between instances of mental process" (CI, 31 ff.). In examples of imagination, according to Richards, we find links of relevance or cross-connections among the words used; whereas in examples of fancy these links of relevance or cross-connections are absent. Furthermore, as we become aware of the verbal cross-connections in a work of imagination, we seem to be discovering not only the poet's meaning, but also something that we ourselves are helping to create (CI, 83). Accordingly, "an absence of syntax is a favourable condition for imagination" (CI, 91). Thus Richards, like Empson, tends to find that ambiguity is the essential characteristic of the language of poetry.

This theory of the language of poetry is developed more fully in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), *Interpretation in Teaching* (1938), and an essay entitled "The Interaction of Words" (1942). In these works Richards bases his doctrine of ambiguity on the "context theorem," which holds that the meaning of a word is "the missing parts of its context" (PR, 34), that "We understand no word except in and through its interactions with other words" (IW, 74). Richards dubs the context theorem a "policeman" doctrine because it arrests certain "bullying assumptions." For instance, it discourages us from assuming that "if a passage means one thing it cannot at the same time mean another and an incompatible thing" (PR, 38). The "old" rhetoric treated ambiguity as a fault in language; the "new" rhetoric sees it as "an inevitable consequence of the power of language and as the indispensable means of most of our important utterances—especially in Poetry and Religion" (PR, 40).

The novel aspect of the "context theorem" is that it attributes the force of a word not only to its relation to other words in the same passage, but also to its relation to similar words in other contexts. For instance, a word used in a particular passage may be influenced, according to Richards, by all the words in the language with which it shares a "morpheme," that is, by all words with which it has something in common in both meaning and sound. It is commonly thought that the so-called expressive words—words like flip, flap, flop, flitter—derive their force from a correspondence between their meaning and sound. Richards rejects this explanation. Such expressive words, he maintains, illustrate how the existence of a group of words that share a "morpheme" affects our response to a context in which any one of those words is used. Accordingly, in translating an expressive word into another language, one should not necessarily chose a word that sounds like the original; one should select a word "that is backed up by other words in a somewhat analogous fashion" (PR, 57-62).

Absent words may affect our response to a given context, according to Richards, even when they do not share a morpheme with the word used. For instance, the peculiar force of *blare* in a given passage may come in part from such words as *scare* and *dare*; yet all that it has in common with these other two words is a quality of sound. In fact, Richards considers the relations among words so complex that the force of a single word may be "a matter whose explanation will drag in the whole rest of the language." Accordingly, he compares a language to a human body: "As the movement of my hand uses nearly the whole skeletal system of the muscles and

is supported by them, so a phrase may take its power from an immense system of supporting uses of other words in other contexts" (PR, 63-65).

But this interdependence of words varies, of course, with the type of discourse. At one end of the scale is the language of science, many of the words of which have stable and independent meanings. At the other end of the scale, according to Richards, is a certain kind of poetry (PR, 48). Thus we encounter again Richards' earlier distinction between the poetry of inclusion and the poetry of exclusion. But he now draws the distinction on the basis of the interaction of words rather than in terms of parallel and conflicting impulses.

Richards illustrates the two different kinds of interaction among words in poetry by contrasting the opening lines of Donne's "The First Anniversary" with the opening lines of Dryden's "Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew." He obviously regards Donne's as the much superior poem. Expressed in ordinary language, what Donne has to say in this poem is quite commonplace (IW, 86). Its superiority to Dryden's work, according to Richards, is to be found in its use of language. Briefly, Richards maintains that the interaction of the words in Dryden's ode, in contrast to that in Donne's is mild and conventional. Dryden's words "do not effect revolutions in one another and are not thereby attempting to form a new order" (IW, 76). Richards uncovers no hidden meanings, for example, when he scrutinizes the interaction of the words in Dryden's first line, "Thou youngest virgin—daughter of the skies." But Donne's first line, "When that rich Soule which to her heaven is gone," repays close reading: Richards discovers a double force in "rich"— possessing much, giving much; and a double force in "her heaven"— she possessing it, it possessing her (IW, 81).

This preoccupation with the interaction of words in poetry is reflected in Richards' later theory of metaphor. In discussing metaphor in his earlier criticism, Richards had been mainly concerned with distinguishing between two uses of it, corresponding with his dualistic conception of discourse. Science and ordinary prose exposition, he then held, employ metaphor "to bring out or stress a structural feature in a reference" (MM, 240). The function of this referential use of metaphor is illustrative—to provide "a concrete instance of a relation which would otherwise have to be stated in abstract terms." The "emotive" metaphor, on the other hand, is a means of controlling feeling. "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" (PLC, 239-240).

In his later criticism, however, Richards is attracted by the opposite extreme of reducing all forms of metaphorical expression to a single essence. The result is an ambiguous terminology by the aid of which he carries on a meaningless attack on Aristotle, who theorized not about metaphor in general but about metaphor in poetry.[8] Richards finds in Aristotle "three evil asumptions" which have for more than two thousand years hampered the investigation of metaphor: first, that the command of metaphor is a rare gift; secondly, that it cannot be taught; and thirdly, that it marks a departure from the normal way in which a language works (PR, 89-90). Whether the command of metaphor is a rare gift, and whether it can or cannot be taught, depends, one would suppose, upon whether we are discussing poetry or teaching rhetoric to freshmen; and whether metaphor is a departure from the normal way in which the language works depends, one would likewise suppose, upon whether we are discussing linguistics or Dante. But Richards loses sight of all useful distinctions regarding metaphor in his new enthusiasm over the point that thought—all thought—is itself metaphoric (PR, 94; IW, 49).

The theory of metaphor developed in Richards' later criticism deserves study, however, not for its neglect of useful classifications, but for its analysis of the structure of metaphor as found in poetry. Taking Samuel Johnson's famous observation that metaphor "gives you two ideas in one," Richards begins his analysis by introducing two technical terms for these two elements of metaphor—the terms "tenor" and "vehicle." For example, in Othello's "Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips" Richards applies the term tenor to *poverty* and the term vehicle to the *fluid*—presumably the sea or a vat—in which Othello is to be steeped (PR, 104-105). Whether a word is being used literally or metaphorically, he points out, is sometimes difficult to determine; but if it presents both a tenor and a vehicle, he would call the use of the word metaphoric. To illustrate, he quotes Hamlet's "What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth?" Hamlet, he admits, may literally *crawl*; but the word here refers also to vermin, which is the vehicle, as Hamlet is the tenor (PR, 119-120).

While starting with Samuel Johnson's definition of metaphor, Richards radically departs from eighteenth-century taste by emphasizing variety in the modes of interaction between tenor and

vehicle. He admits, though, that this variety is illustrated only by the Elizabethans. The eighteenth century, less skilful than the Elizabethans, specialized in metaphors that used only certain types of interaction; and the romantics, revolting against this practice, only cultivated another form of specialization (PR, 93-94). Richards looks with disfavor upon any specialization in the use of metaphor because it conflicts with his conception of the function of metaphor —to intensify the verbal interdependence of the language of poetry. Accordingly, he rejects not only the neo-classic doctrine that one of the co-present ideas of metaphor is a "mere embellishment" of the other (PR, 100), but also Hulme's theory that successful metaphor involves visual imagery and the avoidance of the abstract (PR, 129).

Stressing variety in the modes of interaction between tenor and vehicle, Richards takes issue with the traditional view that the essence of metaphor is the perception of similarity in dissimilarity. The interaction between the two co-present ideas of metaphor may depend, according to Richards, "upon other relations between them, including disparities" (PR, 107-108). He does not go so far as to endorse the "clash them together—no matter what" view of metaphor advocated by André Breton and Max Eastman (PR, 123-126); nevertheless, he contends that the relation supporting the metaphor "may be obscure" (IT, 132), and that a metaphor may work well enough without our being able to say how it works (PR, 117). "Resemblances are commonly the ostensive ground of the metaphor, but the operative ground is usually much wider" (IT, 134).

In minimizing the role of resemblance in metaphor, Richards follows the example of his immediate predecessors—Hulme, Pound, and Eliot. But he arrives at his conclusions from a new angle, the "context theorem," seeing the function of metaphor as that of intensifying the interaction of words. One might take issue with Richards and point out that the purpose of any device of communication, including that of metaphor, is the intensification not of an indiscriminate, but of an appropriate, interaction of words, of an interaction that excludes irrelevancies. If this were not so, then we should expect, by detaching a word from its metaphoric use in a particular context, to reduce instead of enlarging the scope of its associations. But what happens is exactly the opposite. Shakespeare's use of the word "crawl," for instance, in the metaphor quoted above, excludes the detached word's possible association with babies.

In other words, we must take cognizance of what A. P. Ushenko aptly refers to as th "bearings" of a metaphor which "serve to repress the objectionable excess of meaning."[9] Perhaps the most

important factor in the bearings of a metaphor is the subject to which the metaphoric word applies.[10] But Richards ignores even this obvious aspect of the bearings. Hence he magnifies the operation of the disparities in metaphor at the expense of the resemblances.

This distortion, however, may not result entirely from Richards' neglect of the bearings of a metaphor; it may also owe something to his apparently narrow conception of the term "resemblance." For instance, Richards draws a broad division between metaphors that depend upon some resemblance between tenor and vehicle and metaphors that "work through some common attitude which we may (often through accidental and extraneous reasons) take up towards them both" (PR, 118). This distinction recalls his earlier classification of metaphors as "sense" metaphors or "emotive" metaphors.[11] In other words, by resemblance Richards means literally visible similarities. No wonder he can find no resemblance as the metaphoric ground in "Thou still unravished bride of quietness" (IT, 132), whose tenor (the Grecian urn) and vehicle (a virgin) possess several rather obvious points of similarity—beauty, freshness, the expression of an innocent and uncontaminated zest for life. In effect, Richards' use of the term "resemblance" excludes the operation of the imagination, without which there can be no poetry at all and therefore no theory of poetic metaphor.

Richards' later theory of metaphor, accordingly, is in some respects only an elaboration of his earlier concept of the "emotive" metaphor. This realization leads one to suspect that the disagreement between Richards' earlier and later criticism is in part merely verbal. Of his various contributions to modern criticism, two may be singled out as of special importance to the development of the modern theory of the language of poetry. First, his earlier doctrine that the greatest kind of poetry involves a heterogeneity of impulses prepared the way not only for his own theory of the interaction of words in poetry, but also for the cult of ambiguity associated with Empson. Secondly, by insisting upon the purely emotive quality of the language of poetry, Richards re-introduced into modern criticism the problem of the relation of poetry to science—the problem that had occupied Hulme. And by ultimately regarding this problem in the light, not of Bergson's aesthetics, but of Coleridge's theory of imagination, Richards led the way to a position—a kind of compromise between a sceptical and a transcendental conception of the poet's vision—which has become the prevailing view of his time.

VI

William Empson

THE association of the new criticism with a "return to the text," with the close reading of poetry, owes a good deal to William Empson. Neither in criticism nor in the teaching of literature can the close reading of poetry be regarded as something fundamentally new. But in his first and best known book, entitled *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), Empson provided his age with a method, previously little used, by which to subject the poet's language to a kind of microscopic examination. It is the use of this method—used to discover otherwise unnoticed ambiguities—which distinguishes the close reading of the new critic from the close reading of his predecessors.

In a prefatory note to *Seven Types* Empson states that his method was suggested to him by Robert Graves's analysis of one of Shapespeare's sonnets. But the greatest single influence on Empson comes from I. A. Richards, who was his teacher at Cambridge, and under whose supervision *Seven Types* was written. He acknowledges his indebtedness to Richards not only in the prefatory note just referred to, but again and again in his later works. As his later works especially show, Empson does not see eye to eye with Richards on a number of points; but he rightly insists that his indebtedness to his former teacher is apparent even in these instances of disagreement, because "a mistake by Richards . . . is a great deal more illuminating than the successes of other writers" (SCW, 15).[1] Empson is particularly indebted to Richards for his main thesis that "the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry" (STA, 3). The source of this thesis may be traced to Richards'

theory of value or beauty as a state of mind which balances a heterogeneity of impulses.

Empson's use of the term "ambiguity" involves an extension of its ordinary sense. We normally use the term to cover expressions that through word or syntax lend themselves to different interpretations. But Empson extends its use to include "any consequence of language, however slight, which adds some nuance to the direct statement of prose" (STA, 1). In other words, his term refers not only to ambiguity as we normally understand it, but to any device or technique by which a poet, consciously or unconsciously, complicates and enriches the logical structure of meaning.

But if Empson extends the sense of ambiguity in one direction, he precludes its extension in another. "In a sufficiently extended sense," he admits, "any prose statement is ambiguous." For instance, a simple statement, "The brown cat sat on a red mat," may be analyzied into a series of simpler statements, each of which in turn can be subdivided into another series, *ad infinitum*; the notion of "sat" might involve a course in anatomy, and the preposition "on" the theory of gravitation. But this kind of ambiguity, we are told, is irrelevant to his purpose. He is concerned with ambiguity as an aesthetic quality, and not with ambiguity as a condition of all language (STA, 1).

One of Empson's assumptions, apparently, is that there is no alternative to his doctrine of ambiguity but a magical view of poetry which subordinates meaning to "Pure Sound" or to "Atmosphere." The belief in "Pure Sound," Empson admits, is supported by an important piece of evidence, namely "the extreme oddity of the way poetry acts; the lines seem beautiful without reason" (STA, 10). But he confesses that unexplained beauty arouses an irritation in him. The reasons behind the effectiveness of a line of verse, he believes, "are like the reasons for anything else" (STA, 12).

Empson agrees with Samuel Johnson that we often "ascribe to the numbers the effects of the sense."[2] Empson finds this thesis demonstrated by the fact that very similar devices of sound may correspond effectively to very different meanings. He quotes Milton's lines about Vulcan to show that no correspondence between sound and sense is needed in poetry:

> flung by angry Jove
> Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from dawn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewey eve,
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropped into Lemnos the Aegean isle. . . .

The most important function of sound in poetry, according to Empson, is merely "to connect two words by similarity of sound so that you are made to think of their possible connections"; that is, such devices as assonance and alliteration are significant only in calling attention to the interactions of words.

Empson's tendency to reduce the role of sound in poetry to that of enforcing ambiguity is also evident in his discussion of meter. Meter, according to Empson, imposes "a sort of intensity of interpretation" upon the grammar of poetry. Empson's explanation may be briefly summarized as follows: meter forces the poet to depart from colloquial English; the reader is therefore led to think of various colloquial equivalents of the poet's meaning; but since none of these colloquial equivalents eliminates the others, he arrives at the poet's meaning through their synthesis. Thus poetry "can be more compact, while seeming to be less precise, than prose" (STA, 36-37).

But Empson does not regard this relationship between meter and ambiguity as inevitable and constant. An interest in rhythm, he points out, may make a poet long-winded; while ambiguity is "a phenomenon of compression." This explains why Empson finds but few relevant ambiguities in Spenser, Marlow, and Sidney. The method of these poets is "to sustain a poetic effect for so long that the poetic knot can be spread out at length, and one does not see that the separate uses of a word would be a pun if they were drawn together" (STA, 40, 41). Accordingly, Empson regards the diffuseness of these poets as an alternative to, or as a peculiar variety of, ambiguity. Their method, foreign to later developments of the language, is most clearly illustrated by "those lovely sestines of Sidney" where the key words—mountains, valleys, forests, music, evening, morning—are used in various contexts until each accumulates a rich ambiguity of meaning (STA, 45 ff). Not belonging to a detachable context, however, this kind of ambiguity is excluded from Empson's "seven types."

If an interest in rhythm that produces diffuseness accounts for the absence of ambiguity in Spenser, Marlow, and Sidney, a preoccupation with "Atmosphere" accounts for its inconspicousness in the poets of the ninetenth century. Empson does not deny the importance of what might be called atmosphere in poems, lest he seem to identify meaning in poetry with the bare ideas into which it may be paraphrased. But he accuses the romantic poets of believing in atmosphere as "an undifferentiated mode of being," in atmosphere as a mysterious effect that defies verbal analysis. This conception of atmosphere, according to Empson, explains in part "the badness

of much nineteenth-century poetry, and how it came to be written by critically sensitive people." To their alleged theory he opposes his own assumption that atmosphere is the consciousness of what is implied by the grammer (STA, 22-23).

But there is another reason for the comparative lack of ambiguity in romantic poetry. The romantic poets, according to Empson, never grew up. They surrendered the concerns of adults to science while they themselves "exploited a sort of tap-root into the world of their childhood." Whatever their subject, "they would suck up from this limited and perverted world an unvarying sap which was their poetical inspiration." They did not need, therefore, to make language meaningful through ambiguity; and the mode of approach to them should be psychological rather than grammatical (STA, 26-27).

The poet who provides Empson with more examples of ambiguity than any other is Shakespeare. This is not only because Shakespeare's use of language exhibits an "unparalleled richness" (STA, 64), but also because three centuries of scholars and critics have collected material useful to Empson. Traditional Shakespearean scholarship "allows a structure of associated meanings to be shown in a note, but not to be admitted." An editor, for instance, will assume that a Shakespearean word can have but one meaning; nevertheless, he will refer to other interpretations beside the one he is in favor of. There is no doubt, according to Empson, how such a note affects the reader: it makes him bear in mind all the meanings referred to and therefore suggests that the language of poetry is ambiguous (STA, 102-103).

But Empson's examples of ambiguity are by no means drawn exclusively from Shakespeare. As one might expect, there are many from the metaphysical poets. More surprising are the number drawn from Chaucer, Milton, and the neo-classicists. Though on the whole slighted, even romantic poetry makes a token contribution to Empson's collection. In short, his examples cover about every major period of English literature from Chaucer to Eliot.

Empson's examples of ambiguity are drawn likewise from nearly every genre in English poetry. Empson admits that in long narrative poems the stress on particular phrases is generally slight. But he holds that there are "dramatic points" in such works where the meaning needs to be concentrated (STA, 81). Accordingly, he is able to find ambiguities in poems ranging from the sonnet to the epic.

Empson classifies ambiguity into seven types "arranged in order

of increasing distance from simple statement and logical exposition"
(STA, 8). The sequence, more or less in Empson's own words, is as
follows:

1. When a passage, though making only one statement, is
effective in several ways at once (STA, 3).

2. When two or more meanings in a passage all add to
the single meaning of the author (STA, 62).

3. When two ideas, which are connected only by being
both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simul-
taneously (STA, 130).

4. When two or more meanings of a statement do not agree
among themselves, but combine to make clear a more com-
plicated state of mind in the author (STA, 168).

5. When the author is discovering his idea in the act of
writing, or not holding it all in his mind at once, so that, for
instance, there is a simile which applies to nothing exactly,
but lies half-way between two things when the author is mov-
ing from one to the other (STA, 195).

6. When a statement says nothing, by tautology, by contra-
diction, or by irrelevant statements, if any; so that the reader
is forced to invent statements of his own and they are liable
to conflict with one another (STA, 223).

7. When the two meanings of the word, the two values of
the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the
context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental divi-
sion in the writer's mind (STA, 244).

One difficulty with this sequence is that it introduces a con-
fusion in Empson's use of the term "ambiguity." The sequence dis-
regards the extended sense of the term, which is employed in the
rest of the book, and returns to something like the ordinary mean-
ing of ambiguity. One example of the first category of ambiguity,
according to Empson (STA, 3), is the line in Shakespeare's seventy-
third sonnet which describes boughs in late fall as "Bare ruin'd
choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." One of his examples of the
seventh type of ambiguity (STA, 290) is the following stanza from
George Herbert's "The Sacrifice":

> Herod in judgment sits, while I do stand;
> Examines me with a censorious hand.
> I him obey, who all things else command.
> > Was ever grief like mine?

Herbert's stanza, rich in irony and paradox, is more ambiguous
than the example from Shakespeare if we use that word in its

ordinary sense. But who is to say that it is more remote from "simple statement and logical exposition"?

Another difficulty with Empson's sequence is that it suggests an implication not supported by the evidence. If there are degrees of *aesthetic* ambiguity, which is the essence of poetry, one is led to expect that the seventh type of ambiguity—"the most ambiguous that can be conceived" (STA, 244)—will exhibit the Muse in her unquestionably highest flights. But there is absolutely no relationship between the poetic merit of the examples and their position in the series.

To these defects in Empson's categories of ambiguity, one may add the weakness noted by the author himself—their tendency to overlap. Empson makes the following comment on his fourth category: "Evidently this is a vague enough definition which would include much of the third type, and almost everything in the types which follow . . ." (STA, 168). One must conclude that Empson's categories of ambiguity serve a rhetorical rather than a critical purpose: they impose a semblance of order upon the otherwise unorganized mass of details which comprise his first book. As Empson himself finally admits, his "seven types form an immediately useful set of distinctions, but to a more serious analysis they would probably appear trivial and hardly to be distinguished from one another" (STA, 322).

But in addition to classifying his examples by degree of ambiguity in seven categories, Empson sometimes refers to them as metaphors, puns, illustrations of ambiguous syntax, and instances of irony or paradox. Based on traditional rhetoric, these incidental classifications are at least more comprehensible than the "seven types." Empson, however, does not use them in a manner to affect the drift of his thought. He submerges them in the "seven types" —and for a very good reason. In fact, their systematic adoption would have reduced his concept of ambiguity to the relatively unimportant position of a possible common denominator among otherwise quite different poetic techniques and devices.

Nevertheless, inasmuch as the "seven types" tend to fall to pieces, Empson's concept of ambiguity tends to suffer just such a reduction as we have described. One comes to recognize it as nothing more than an attempt to identify the common denominator of various poetic techniques and devices. But the existence of such a common denominator, even if discovered, is not likely to be of much use in criticism. For instance, the common qualities of metaphor and paradox, whatever they may be, are less important than

the differences in attempting to explain the effectiveness of a passage where metaphor or paradox occurs. Unaware of this basic limitation of his concept of ambiguity, Empson tends to ascribe to a possible common denominator effects which are traceable to the differentia.

Empson's discussion of the ambiguities in Pope's *Rape of the Lock* illustrates this confusion. The fundamental device of the Augustan style, according to Empson, is to produce ambiguity by putting together two different meanings of a verb. For example, in the lines—

> There thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes council take, and sometimes tea—

Pope puts together two of the many meanings of the verb *take* (STA, 89-90). What Empson overlooks is that Pope is using a device of mock-heroic poetry, and that the effectiveness of the lines depends far more upon the peculiar aspect of this device than upon any possible common trait, like ambiguity, which it may share with other devices. The peculiar aspect of this device of mock-heroic poetry consists in equating the important with the unimportant, the momentous with the trival. Pope's use of the verb "take" in a double sense does not explain the effectiveness of the lines just quoted; it merely emphasizes somewhat the incongruous equation. Elsewhere in the same poem, for instance, Pope obtains an identical effect regardless of whether he uses his verbs in a double or a single sense:

> Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
> Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
> Or stain her honour or her new brocade,
> Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade. . . .

Aside from the question of "types," the main problem raised by Empson's doctrine is how to distinguish relevant from irrelevant ambiguities. Empson admits that looking for ambiguity "rapidly leads to hallucinations, as you can train yourself always to hear a clock ticking" (STA, 86). The subsidiary meanings uncovered by verbal analysis, he points out, must be relevant; and "if an ambiguity is to be unitary there must be 'forces' holding its elements together." These "forces," we are told, are essential to the totality of the poem (STA, 296-297). But we are not clearly told what these "forces" are.

While Empson's reputation as a critic rests largely on *Seven Types*, his two later books—*Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935) and *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951)—are of interest also; for

they reflect an attempt to deal with the main problem raised by his first book—the problem of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant meanings in an ambiguity. As the Preface to his second edition of the *Seven Types,* printed in 1947, indicates, Empson still holds that all good poetry is ambiguous. But as he suggests elsewhere, he now discards the classification of ambiguity into seven types, to concentrate upon the forces that render an ambiguity unitary: ". . . the term Ambiguity, which I used in a book title and as a kind of slogan, implying that the reader is left in doubt between two readings, is more or less superseded by the idea of a double meaning which is intended to be fitted into a definite structure" (SCW, 103, n.) .

What Empson means by "a double meaning which is to be fitted into a definite structure" is elucidated by his concept of "pastoral" and his concept of "complex words." His term "pastoral" refers to an element in literature which produces a feeling of solidarity between social classes (SVP, 19), and his versions of it include works as unlike as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Marvell's "The Garden." His term "complex words" refers to key words which, so to speak, embody the meaning of whole poems. Both "pastoral" and "complex words," according to Empson, possess a kind of double meaning—a meaning derived from myth and a meaning derived from what we may call the spirit of the age.

Myth, according to Empson, pervades the language of all true poetry. He finds that proletarian literature always defeats its ostensible purpose in proportion to its success as art, for in depicting the life of the humble a true artist cannot avoid the influence of the pastoral myth (SVP, 21), which reconciles the conflicts between social classes. The argument in Donne's "Exstasie," we are told, does not depend on its puns; for the puns themselves depend upon something deeper. "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" (SVP, 135-136).

Empson refers to Richards' account of romantic nature poetry in *Coleridge on Imagination* as a good illustration of how the language of poetry breaks down later distinctions of thought for fuller and more primitive conceptions. Richards' examples reveal that "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." While the realist and the projective views of nature are essentially unlike, their difference varies in degree from

one occasion to another; so that we can imagine a "supreme condition" in which the difference seems negligible. But this identification of the realist and projective views of nature should always be joined to humility, as "it is effective only through the admission that it is only a hint." Thus Empson finds the "pastoral" suggested in the whole imaginative apprehension of reality which distinguishes poetry from science (SVP, 136).

But Empson does not completely agree with Owen Barfield's thesis that poetic diction simply revives older modes of consciousness. Barfield is led to this conclusion by his view that language develops "from homogeneity towards dissociation and multiplicity" —illustrated by the breakdown of the "old, concrete, undivided meaning" of the Greek word πνεῦμα into the less rich words *breath, wind,* and *soul.*[3] According to Empson, however, the process of building up words with "total meanings" may take place at any time and is not peculiar to a "prelogical" era of thought. Words acquire complex structures, Empson maintains, through their use as metaphor; and the primitive process at work in metaphor is the quasi-identification of different objects "from a vague magical belief that they have connections of cause." The invention of such words may be connected with the invention of myths—but not necessarily with myths in the sense of tales about the gods (SCW, 375-377). In Empson's view, therefore, poetic diction mixes older modes with current modes of consciousness.

Empson finds a mixture of this nature behind the ambiguity in the language of poets as unlike as Marvell and Pope. The main point of Marvell's "The Garden," according to Empson, is given in the crucial double meaning of the lines:

> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade.

These lines are ambiguous because they suggest "either contemplating everything or shutting everything out" and because they raise the question whether the "all' was made in the mind of the poet or of the Creator. "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 external world by thought." Except that the scene described is peaceful, the magical half of the ambiguity recalls "the Orpheus idea, that by delight in nature when terrible man gains strength to control it" (SVP, 119-120).

A similar mixture of primitive with current modes of thought,

according to Empson, pervades Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. Empson locates the meaning of this poem in the use of the key word "wit," which "appears on the average every sixteen lines of the Essay." In every use of it throughout the poem he finds that the suggestion of a joke is always present, reflecting the usual meaning of the term in the "smart milieu" that Pope was addressing (SCW, 84-87). One must, in fact, read the poem in the light of its social tone— "largely a matter of getting the right play out of *wit*"—or irrelevant problems arise (SCW, 94-95). Nevertheless, the key word of the poem draws some of its power from another source also—namely, from myth. "The poet-outcast idea is no less strong in Pope than in Byron; he must be expected to be despised because of his merits, so if he is to use the language of the world he must at least pretend to despise himself" (SCW,96). Thus myth and a fashion of worldliness combine to produce that mixture of delight and contempt which characterizes the mood of the poem.

In defining the language of poetry as a mixture of primitive with current modes of consciousness, Empson explicitly rejects Richards' earlier emotive-referential dichotomy (SCW, 5 ff.), including the distinction between emotive and cognitive metaphors. In fact, he virtually returns to the Aristotelian conception of metaphor, which had been abandoned not only by Richards but also by Hulme, Pound, and Eliot. Empson considers metaphor a matter of *insight*: ". . . it may be used to survey a whole complicated matter as if from a height; it is a device for letting you handle the proportions of the matter intuitively, instead of fiddling about with first one part and then another" (SCW, 339). Like Aristotle, too, he insists that metaphor works through resemblance.

But perhaps out of deference to his former teacher, Empson attempts to minimize his disagreement with Richards. When one examines Richards' theory of metaphor carefully, he believes, one finds Richards maintaining that the point of likeness need play only a minor part in the total effect. One can agree with this view, he continues, and still believe "that the hatpeg is functionally important even when hidden by the hat" (SCW, 331). Empson feels that Richards' theory of "disparity action," though perhaps not applicable to true metaphor, is illustrated clearly enough in a ballad refrain like the following:

> She leaned her back against the thorn
> (Fine flowers of the valley)
> And there she has her young child born
> (And the green leaves they grow rarely).

Even here Empson finds points of likeness between the flowers in the valley and the girl on the hill, between the birth of the child and the growth of the plant. But he feels that the stanza is effective also through its use of contrast, and suggests that a device of this nature be called "Mutual Metaphor" (SCW, 347-348).

Empson must be assigned an important place in the history of the new criticism because he determined the course it was to take after Richards. By transforming his former teacher's theory of value into the doctrine of ambiguity, he not only shifted the center of attention from the reader's nervous system to the poetic context, but also raised a problem that was to dominate the next phase of the new criticism—the problem of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant meanings in the language of poetry. That such a problem should even arise attests to the wide influence of Empson's first book. His two later books attempt to deal with the problem by reducing the concept of ambiguity to a tension between primitive and modern modes of consciousness and by studying this tension in a poem as a whole through its character as "pastoral" or through its recurrent use of some key word. But Empson's two later books have not had the wide influence of his first book, which raised without attempting to solve the problem that they tentatively deal with.

VII

Cleanth Brooks

EXCEPT for Hulme, who had been killed in World War I, all the critics whom we have hitherto discussed were in various degrees still active during the period 1935-1950. But probably the most significant work during these years was done by others—by new critics who had not produced criticism before 1935 or whose main critical works were to appear after that date. Among these we may perhaps include the British critic, F. R. Leavis. An overwhelming majority of the new critics of this period, however, belong to our own country. We may therefore say that during the years 1935-1950 the center of activity of the new criticism shifted from England to America.

None of the main American new critics of this period is a slavish follower of his immediate predecessors. On the contrary, each exhibits a degree of independence. R. P. Blackmur, the outstanding practical or technical critic of the group, does not in effect attempt to develop a critical theory per se. Yvor Winters combines insights drawn from the new criticism with the ethical approach of Irving Babbitt. Kenneth Burke, stressing the dramatistic interpretation of poetry implicit in Richards' theory of value, conceives all literature as symbolic action. John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, provoked by Richards' emotive-cognitive dichotomy, describe poetry as "the linguistic embodiment of a special kind of knowledge."[1]

But in proportion to their adherence to the new criticism, the basic methods and principles of which had already been worked out, the American new critics of this period lack the novelty of their immediate predecessors. Their significance as new critics depends partly upon their success in synthesizing the ideas of Hulme,

Eliot, Richards, and Empson. In fact, the main task left for a new critic after the publication of Richards' *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934) was to effect a synthesis of existing theories rather than to produce new ones. We may conclude our study, therefore, by considering the American critic of this period who most consistently sought to construct such a synthesis.

Cleanth Brooks, to whom I am referring, is quite aware of his relation to his immediate predecessors. He points out that in the early thirties, some years before the publication of his own first book of criticism, he read Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* through some fifteen times (EC, 496).[2] Elsewhere, he acknowledges borrowing not only from Richards but also from Eliot, Empson, Blackmur, Ransom, and Tate; and he modestly says of his *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (1939): ". . . such credit as I may legitimately claim, I must claim primarily on the grounds of having possibly made a successful synthesis of other men's ideas rather than on the originality of my own" (MPT, x). The essence of this remark applies also both to his later book, *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947), and to his uncollected essays.

An adequate synthesis of the new criticism would not, of course, have to include every idea of every new critic. Nor does Brooks give us such a hodgepodge. Certain aspects of the new criticism he justifiably suppresses. The later criticism of Eliot, Richards, and Empson involved modifications of their original attitude or methods; and the criticism of Blackmur, Ransom, and Tate agrees in general with these modifications. Aware of these adjustments in the new criticism, Brooks stresses those aspects of it which had mutual support from one another and which thus acquired at least some stability. He shares Eliot's admiration for metaphysical poetry but extends his conception of it to include a good deal of neoclassic and romantic poetry; he agrees with Richards' theory of a basic difference between the language of poetry and the language of science but discards Richards' emotive-cognitive dichotomy; he adopts Empson's method of verbal analysis but applies it to the whole poem instead of to detachable ambiguities.

But Brooks not only expresses the more stable opinions of the new criticism but also molds them into a single grand concept. In 1938 he and Robert Penn Warren compiled an anthology for college students, which they called *Understanding Poetry*. In the preface the editors announced that a satisfactory method of teaching poetry should embody three principles. The first two of these principles are such as a preface to any anthology for college stu-

dents might be expected to make: that emphasis should be kept on the poem as a poem and that the treatment should be concrete and inductive. We suspect, however, that no preface to any previous anthology had ever expressed the third principle: "A poem should always be treated as an organic system of relationships, and the poetic quality should never be understood as inhering in one or more factors taken in isolation."[3] Brooks's subsequent career as a critic was to be devoted to the elucidation of this sentence; it sums up his interpretation of the significant trends of the new criticism.

Since Brooks shares the antiromantic prejudices of his age, it seems ironical that the cardinal principle of his criticism should recall the concept of "organic form" which is expounded by romantic critics from Herder to Croce. The modern critic, according to Brooks, "approaches the poem by emphasizing the total context; and since each context is a unique whole, each poem becomes a special case, to be read in the light of its own nature" (PO, 40). A statement like this cannot but bring to mind the romantic distinction between mechanical regularity and organic form, which Coleridge expresses as follows:

> The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material;—as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes, as it develops, itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form.[4]

This ironical affinity between Brooks and Coleridge ought not, of course, to surprise us. We have already noted a similar affinity between other new critics and Coleridge. Murray Krieger, who recently investigated this phenomenon in some detail, concludes that the new critics tend to follow "the example of Coleridge, who, seeing the inadequacy of a concept of imagination inhibited by a mechanical psychology of association, turned to the organicism of German transcendental philosophy." Krieger further points out that while the new critics abhor the views of Thomas Paine and William Godwin, they have something in common with the conservative and antirational tendencies embodied in "Germanic" romanticism.[5] Krieger's observation helps to explain, among other things, why Shelley has fared less well among the new critics than has any other major English poet of the nineteenth century.

The immediate source of Brooks's "romantic organicism," ac-

cordingly, did not have to be Coleridge or any other romantic theorist. The organic view of poetry was deeply rooted in the new criticism itself. If the organic concept had profound significance for Brooks, it was because he saw it as the likeliest means by which to synthesize the views of his contemporaries. In Brooks's own words, ". . . it is this general concept of organic structure which has been revolutionary in our recent criticism; our best 'practical criticism' has been based upon it; and upon it rests, in my opinion, the best hope that we have for reviving the study of poetry and of the humanities generally" (IIP, 237).

Serving as a means by which to synthesize the new criticism, Brooks's concept of "organic structure" reflects some important differences from its romantic prototype. One variation is that the metaphorical term "organic" ceases to be essential. To be sure, an essay by Brooks is entitled "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure." But in the same essay the metaphor sometimes shifts. We are told, for instance, to "think of a poem as a fabric with a unity of its own—an architecture in which stresses are balanced against each other and internal stresses are reciprocated . . ." (PO, 36). Elsewhere, Brooks suggests that the most helpful analogy by which to suggest the structure of a poem is drama (WWU, 86-87), and in a note he points out that there are "large areas of agreement" between this view and Burke's theory of poetry as symbolic action and Blackmur's theory of poetry as gesture.

Furthermore, whether his analogy be organism or drama, Brooks emphasizes the autonomous structure of the poem for reasons more or less peculiar to his age. He is not concerned, as the romantics were, with opposing the mystery of genius to the "rules" of eighteenth-century criticism. He is concerned, rather, with opposing the complexity of the poem to the "paraphrastic heresy." By stressing "the importance of the total concept of the poem as the area in which the terms of the poem work, it may cause us to look at the poem as a poem—as a totality, and not in terms of its prose paraphrase or its incidental illustration of a personality or period" (PO, 37). By simplifying the meaning of the poem, the "heresy of paraphrase" brings poetry "into an unreal competition with science or philosophy or theology" (WWU, 184).

But Brooks emphasizes the autonomous structure of the poem not only because it embodies a refutation of the "paraphrastic heresy," but also because it seems to settle most of the embarrassing problems which had been raised by the modern effort to define and defend poetry by concentrating on its use of language. In distinguish-

ing between the poetic and scientific uses of language, Richards had set up his disturbing emotive-cognitive dichotomy. One problem was to dispose of this distinction without falling into the "paraphrastic heresy."

Ransom and Tate, both of whom are especially concerned with this problem, agree with Richards in rejecting the "paraphrastic heresy" or "fallacy of communication." Poetry that attempts to be communicative they dub "Platonic Poetry," since it scorns "things" for "ideas" and futilely tries to do the work of science. The mood of Platonic poetry is "positive" so long as the poet is enthusiastic over his program of action; but when reality dissipates this naive enthusiasm, the tone of Platonic poetry is "negative." Another term for negative Platonism is "romantic irony."[6]

But while Ransom and Tate agree with Richards in belittling the "poetry of ideas," they refuse to accept his theory that poetry has no cognitive value but only emotive value. Ransom, in effect, returns to Hulme's position on the subject of poetry and knowledge. The world given us by science, according to Ransom, is "a scheme of abstract conveniences," while poetry recovers for us "the world which is made of whole and indefeasible objects."[7] Poetry treats "an order of existence" which cannot be treated in scientific discourse; it offers us "a kind of knowledge which is radically or ontologically distinct."[8] Tate's opinion on this subject is similar to Ransom's: "Literature is the complete knowledge of man's experience, and by knowledge I mean that unique and formed intelligence of the world of which man alone is capable."[9]

One difficulty with this position is that it does not deal directly enough with what Richards had called the "pseudo-statements" of poetry. It is possible to believe that poetry gives us the kind of knowledge described by Ransom and Tate and still not be able to explain satisfactorily why a "lie" in a poem is not a lie. Tate, however, had dealt with this aspect of the problem in an earlier work. Tate admits that the lines

> Out, out brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more . . .

are "certainly not 'true'; we know that life is not a shadow, it is a vast realm of biological phenomena; nor is it a player." But neither, according to Tate, are the lines false: ". . . they represent a stage in the dynamic unfolding of Macbeth's character, the whole created image of which is the whole play Macbeth. . . ."[10] In other words,

we should not ask whether a remark in a poem is true or false; we should, instead, attempt to determine what function it has in the poem as a whole.

Brooks's solution to the problem of poetry and knowledge likewise appeals to the total context. A poem is to be judged, according to Brooks, "not by the truth or falsity as such, of the idea which it incorporates, but rather by its character as drama—by its coherence, sensitivity, depth, richness, and tough-mindedness" (WWU, 229). In effect, this makes poetic truth synonymous with Richards' phrase "the poetry of inclusion." But Brooks avoids Richards' emotive-cognitive dichotomy by refusing to consider a poetic statement in isolation. An isolated poetic statement may seem an obvious truism for some readers, for others it may seem questionable or false. To argue the matter, Brooks points out, only leads us away from the poem and into metaphysics. A statement in a poem, therefore, is to be justified "in terms of the context" and not in any other way (IIP, 233).

Closely related to the problem of poetry and knowledge is the problem of metaphor. Hulme, Pound, Eliot, and Richards had all in one way or another questioned the Aristotelian theory that metaphor works through resemblance. Though Empson eventually returned to the Aristotelian theory, his original doctrine of ambiguity implied the importance, not of resemblance but of "disparity action." Brooks too entertains an anti-Aristotelian view of metaphor: "The poet who is at the mercy of a narrow decorum, logical and scientific, is apt to depend too much on the likeness existing between the objects which he compares." But while the "Platonic" poet assumes that the function of metaphor is to illustrate an idea, the metaphysical poet (the ideal of the new critics) employs conceits and thus avoids confounding his poetry with science (MPT, 44-45).

But if metaphor does not work through resemblance, how are we to evaluate it? How are we to distinguish a metaphor that exhibits insight from one that does not? The impressionist might say that such a distinction must rest on individual taste, and some of the earlier new critics like Hulme and Pound hardly go beyond impressionism on this point. But Brooks has a different answer supplied by his concept of the poem as a complex and autonomous structure: "In Donne's famous comparison of the lovers to a pair of compasses, the compasses are poetic in the only sense in which objects can ever be legitimately poetic—they function integrally in a poem" (MPT, 12). In other words, what distinguishes a good from a bad metaphor is its relation to the total context.

Brooks supports his argument with numerous examples drawn from various sources. Some of the personifications in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," he points out, are neither fresh nor vivid; what justifies them is their relation to the total poem: they project the pomp implied by the ornate burial-place of the rich; they are meant, in contrast to the description of the country churchyard, "to seem empty, flat, and lifeless" (WWU, 101). Detached from its context, the daggers "breech'd with gore" in Macbeth's account of the murder of Duncan may seem fantastic; what justifies it, according to Brooks, is its relation to the imagery running through the whole poem. Though Miss Spurgeon does not include the passage in her study of the clothes imagery in *Macbeth*, it "represents one more varient of this general symbol" (WWU, 35-36). The lines in Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode"

> The Moon doth with delight
> Look round her . . .

owe their "special force," according to Brooks, to their relation to other images in the poem (WWU, 118-119). Thus even those metaphors which *seem* in themselves "intrinsically beautiful—show on inspection that they are 'poetic' because of their relation to a particular context" (IIP, 232).

Closely related to this point of view is the distinction which Brooks draws between the "functional" and the "decorative" metaphor. Following Urban, he calls a metaphor "decorative" when it illustrates an idea or assertion, so that the whole of its meaning can be paraphrased or even put into abstract language. He classifies a metaphor as "functional," on the other hand, when it alone expresses the desired meaning (WWU, 232). This distinction recalls Hulme's strictures against the "decorative" image. But Brooks ultimately gives his terms a new meaning by extending them to include another distinction—the distinction, drawn earlier by Ransom and Tate, between Platonic and metaphysical poetry.

The neoclassic and romantic poets—given to writing "Platonic" poetry—had little taste for the bold and extravagant tropes of the metaphysicals. Addison classified metaphysical conceits as "false wit."[11] Wordsworth condemned them as fanciful, as revealing "the want of individual value."[12] Brooks admits that metaphysical tropes may be unpleasing and difficult; but he maintains that they display this "want of individual value" because they are "functional" and cannot be torn intact from their context (MPT, 1 ff.). By "functional" metaphor, therefore, he tends to mean a trope that lacks "individual value" but is demonstrably effective in its context;

and by "decorative" metaphor he tends to mean a trope that can be detached from its context without losing its vitality and power.

To state the distinction in these words, however, does violence to Brooks's purpose; for he does not wish to suggest that the power of the "decorative" metaphor is indestructible, while the power of the "functional" metaphor is not. On the contrary, he wishes to suggest that the "decorative" metaphor should be banished from poetry altogether on the ground that it is alien to art and more proper to philosophy and science. The ideal poet, according to Brooks, "does not deal in eternal likenesses and approximation" (MPT, 45). In other words, a metaphor in poetry should derive its power not from any real insight, as a philosophic or scientific observation should, but only from its organic or dramatic relation to the total poem of which it is a part.

Traditional criticism, of course, has not been altogether oblivious of the existence in poetry of what Brooks calls the "functional" metaphor. But traditional criticism has always regarded it as a special use of metaphor; as an exception to the general rule that metaphors should be able to justify themselves by their insight and not, like prepositions, have to rest their case upon their contextual function alone. Every word, after all, in any excellent piece of writing, whether in prose or in verse, is in one sense of the term functional. To restrict the application of the term to a particular type of metaphor, one must first restrict the term. And this, of course, is what Brooks has done. The novelty of his position is that he has attempted to substitute an exception for a general rule, to convert the "functional" metaphor in his narrow sense of the term into the ideal of all metaphor.

But whatever the limitations of Brooks's theory of metaphor, it carries the opinions of earlier new critics to a logical conclusion. Hulme, Pound, Eliot, and Richards had all discarded the Aristotelian theory of metaphor without completely developing a new theory, without clearly explaining how a metaphor works if it does not work through resemblance. Brooks synthesizes and completes their views by deducing an answer to this question from the conception of a poem as an autonomous structure.

The conception of the poem as an autonomous structure determines Brooks's treatment of another problem peculiar to the new criticism—namely, the problem created by the doctrine of ambiguity. This doctrine emphasized the disruptive character of poetic diction in a way that seemed to transform the meaning of a poem into a little chaos. Quite aware of this consequence of his *Seven*

Types of Ambiguity, Empson later tried to get rid of it by turning from the analysis of detachable ambiguities to the analysis of a double meaning pervading the total work. Winters, Ransom, and Tate respond to the same problem by considering the rational element in the poem. Tate, for instance, places the meaning of the poem in its "tension"—by which he means the literal statement of a poem qualified and complicated by all the nuances in its language.[13]

Extremely sensitive to the danger of the "paraphrastic heresy" (WWU, 183), Brooks avoids thinking in terms of the literal meaning or rational structure of the poem. But he too desires to obviate the charge that "the critical analyst seems to be pulling rabbits out of a hat" (PO, 32). Even Empson realized, Brooks points out, that "the mere process of spinning out complexities and ambiguities is not sufficient to validate a poem." The complexities and ambiguities must be "functional in developing the poet's total effect" (EC, 502-503). Their function is "to modify, qualify, and develop the total attitude which we are to take in coming to terms with the total situation" (WWU, 191).

Another term for Brooks's concept of "functional" ambiguity is "irony." He defines irony as "the warping or modification of a statement by the context" (IIP, 232). While the tendency of science is to stablize its terms or make them independent of their context, the poet's terms "are continually modifying each other, and thus violating their dictionary meanings" (WWU, 8). But the meanings of the poet's terms are not rabbits pulled from a hat: they are both elicited and controlled by their organic context.

If Brooks's concept of irony is designed to free the relevant and suppress the irrelevant ambiguities of the poem, his concept of paradox—a kind of sub-species of irony[14]—is likewise designed for this purpose. This purpose, however, is not served by his theorizing on the general subject of poetry and paradox. Even the most direct and simple poet, according to Brooks, is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument; for he must work by analogies or metaphors, which "do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge" (WWU, 9). Theorizing like this suggests that Brooks had temporarily lost sight of the distinction between relevant and irrelevant ambiguities. The "overlappings, discrepancies, and contradictions" which accrue to the poet's medium do not thereby possess a functional character within the framework of a specific poem. Quite obviously paradoxes that belong to the "language of poetry" belong as much to one poem as to another. But by "para-

dox" Brooks generally means a particular kind of irony, that is, a particular kind of qualification of a statement by its context.

Thus in the same book in which he makes the misleading remark just noted, Brooks in practice offers us analyses, not of paradoxes in the poet's medium as such, but of the "paradoxical situation" in this or that poem. We are told, for instance, that the line "Apparelled in celestial light," describing youth's vision of nature, is paradoxical because it suggests that the "light," like a garment, can be taken off (WWU, 116); but we are also told that this paradox is functionally related to the theme of Wordsworth's "Ode," which is about the imagination, the faculty that reconciles the realist and projective views of the world (WWU, 136). In like fashion the contradictory phrase "Cold Pastoral" suggests, according to Brooks, the central paradox of Keate's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (WWU, 150) —the paradox that the Grecian urn is deathless because it is lifeless (WWU, 144). Another of Brooks's examples is the paradox in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium":

> gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity

The paradoxical "artifice," Brooks contends, is related to the total attitude expressed by the poem, which celebrates the world of pure being—but not in an unqualified or absolute way (WWU, 171).

Aside from their explicit relation to the structure of the poem, Brooks's concepts of irony and paradox are similar to Empson's types of ambiguity. Like Empson's types of ambiguity, they derive from Richards' concept of "the poetry of inclusion," which in turn derives from his theory of value. In fact, Brooks proposes that Richards' distinction between "the poetry of exclusion" and "the poetry of inclusion" might be used as a scale to determine the value of any poem. Low in the scale he would place "poems of simple affection, positive, 'external' satires, etc." Higher in the scale he would place "poems in which the variety and clash among the elements to be comprehended under a total attitude are sharper" (WWU, 229-230).

This glorification of "poems that bear their own self-criticism" (MPT, 95) by "some sort of mingling of the approbative and the satricial" (MPT, 29) represents, of course, an attempt to establish the metaphysical style as the standard language of poetry. Poetry should possess, according to Brooks, "an ambiguity as to the poet's ultimate attitude," such as one finds in Donne (MPT, 209). But the scientific tendency towards order and simplification, which spread to the arts with the Restoration, "succeeded in destroying

metaphysical poetry" (MPT, 203). This was unfortunate because Donne and his contemporaries knew that they were "dealing with another order of description from that in which science indulges" (MPT, 47). The neoclassic and romantic poets who followed, on the other hand, conceived of poetry as mere statement, losing sight of the objective independence of the poem and confusing imaginative with scientific organization (PO, 24).

But while Brooks fully shares Eliot's bias in favor of metaphysical poetry, he in effect stretches his ideal sufficiently to include a good deal of neoclassic and romantic poetry. His criteria of the poetic—irony and paradox—prove flexible enough to apply, like Empson's concept of ambiguity, to almost any poet one has a mind to apply them to. We are told, for instance, that Blake breaks through "the deadening influence of Hobbes" and represents "something very close to metaphysical wit" (MPT, 245), that "the typical Wordsworth poem is based upon a paradoxical situation" (WWU, 4) , and that even Tennyson "was not always successful in avoiding the ambiguous and the paradoxical" (WWU, 153).

This attempt to make neoclassic and romantic masterpieces conform as much as possible to a metaphysical prototype enables Brooks to retain the bias of his age without completely rejecting the poetry produced between 1660 and the present century. It also gives his criteria for the evaluation of poems some semblance of wide applicability and thus strengthens his hand against the critical relativism recommended by Frederick Pottle (WWU, 206 ff.). Nevertheless, it has at least one unfortunate result. It leads Brooks, as it had previously led Empson, to ignore completely the existence of genres and their influence on individual works of art. Brooks treats Pope's *Rape of the Lock* and Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" as though there were no categorical difference between them. He admits that his principles "have removed the basis on which satire has been distinguished from other forms in the past" (MPT, 229-230).

But it was not Brooks's aim to make use of any of the critical insights of the past which his group of contemporaries had either ignored or discarded. Brooks seldom refers to any of the great critics of the past except Coleridge, in dealing with whom his mind is with his heart—and that is with Richards. He derives all his insights from half a dozen living men; he is concerned only with the critical discoveries of his own day. Although, therefore, he has fulfilled his purpose of selecting and organizing the critical views of his contemporaries, his theory seems even more conspicuously "dated" than that of any other new critic.

Conclusion

THE question of the relation of poetry to science is not a question quite peculiar to our own age. In one sense of the word, this same problem occupied James Thomson, an eighteenth-century poet who felt that Newton's discoveries were a better subject matter for poetry than were folklore and myth. The relation of poetry to science occupied many a poet and critic of the nineteenth century: Keats, who feared that science was destroying poetry by depriving the world of its magic and mystery; Arnold, who believed that a primary function of poetry in the future would be to relate new scientific discoveries to man's sense of conduct and his sense of beauty.

How, then, do the new critics, in their concern with this problem, differ from their predecessors? Not only, our answer would be, by their intense concentration on the differences between poetic and scientific discourse, but also by a certain sharp ambivalence in their attitude. The new critics wish at one and the same time to put poetry beyond the reach of scientific enchroachment and to compel it to conform to a scientific ideal, as opposed to a humanistic one.

While previous writers on our present subject—particularly the Neo-Aristotelians—have hinted at this ambivalence in some of the new critics, they have not, so far as I can see, attempted an elaboration of the point, or recognized its significance as the descriptive basis of a larger critical movement—a movement embracing the imagists as well as the school of Richards. Our account of the development of the new criticism, therefore, involves more than a useful summary of well-known facts and opinions. Contrary to custom, it classifies the imagist movement as the first phase of the new criticism; it presents Eliot—that is, the Eliot of the earlier criticism—as a transitional figure between the imagists and the school of Richards; and it points out that the same force—an ambivalent attitude toward science—which produced imagism also produced the doctrine of ambiguity.

Richards' school and the imagists agree in their attempt to establish an absolute distinction between poetic and scientific discourse. They concur even as to the best method of achieving this end, for both groups identify the idiom of poetry with one of its elements. But while the imagists identify this element with imagery, Richards' school identifies it with ambiguity. Nevertheless, in each case the underlying motive is the same: to save poetry from scientific encroachment by converting it into an uncommunicative art, a pure and independent aesthetic entity.

Both Richards' school and the imagists, however, possess an ambivalent attitude toward science: they feel impelled not only to establish an absolute distinction between poetic and scientific discourse, but also to make poetry emulate the scientific spirit. They want poetry to exhibit detachment and "tough-mindedness." Taking their cue from naturalistic prose fiction, the imagists call for the aloof treatment of dry or sordid subjects. Deriving from a psychological theory of value as a balance of impulses, Richards' school recommends a kind of skeptical inconclusiveness in poetry. There are differences between these two recommendations, but their fundamental aim is the same—to emulate the scientific spirit.

Accordingly, the new criticism really begins not with Richards but with the imagists—with Ford and Hulme. By attempting to make poetry amoral as well as uncommunicative, the imagists virtually divorced it not only from science but also from the humanities. Stripped in this manner of all readily comprehensible significance, poetry became something for poets alone, concerning others only indirectly and remotely through its influence on the nation's language and destiny. Without abandoning the imagists' desire to justify poetry within the scientific orientation of the age, Richards tried to avoid their *reductio ad absurdum* by arguing that poetry contributes to the health of the reader's nervous system. But Richards' effort in this direction led away from literary criticism altogether. In the end, therefore, both Richards and his disciples are content to view the poem simply as a verbal structure that derives its value from the complexity of its cross-connections; in effect, that is, they lead us back, after merely exchanging the concept of ambiguity for that of the image, to something very like the original *reductio ad absurdum*. Thus both the imagists and Richards' school end in the same paradox: in proportion to their success in justifying poetry within the scientific orientation of their age, they create a greater problem than the problem which they were attempting to resolve.

Notes

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] Preface to *The Language of Poetry*, ed. Allen Tate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942), p. vii.

[2] Foreword to *Critiques and Essays in Criticism, 1920-1948*, ed. Robert Wooster Stallman (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. xix.

[3] See Crane's "Cleanth Brooks; or, the Bankruptcy of Critical Monism," *Modern Philology*, XLV (1948), 226-245, and Olson's "William Empson, Contemporary Criticism and Poetic Diction," *Modern Philology*, XLVII (1950), 222-252. Both these essays are reprinted in *Critics and Criticisms, Ancient and Modern*, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

[4] *English Poetry and the English Language* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934), p. vi.

[5] *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), p. 178.

[6] Foreword to *Critiques and Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stallman, p. xix.

[7] See Krieger's *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1956).

[8] *The Armed Vision: A Study in the Methods of Modern Literary Criticism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 3.

[9] *Critics and Criticism, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Crane, p. 106.

[10] *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1947), p. 168.

[11] *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*, p. 167.

[12] For Aristotle's discussion of metaphor, see his *Poetics* 1459[a] and his *Rhetoric* 1410[a]-1412[a].

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1] Cf. Robie Macauley, "The Good Ford," *Kenyon Review*, XI (1949), 269-288.

[2] *Polite Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937), p. 50.

[3] *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1954), p. 377.

[4] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to Ford's works cited more than once:

CA—*The Critical Attitude*. London: Duckworth and Co., 1911.

CP—*Collected Poems*. London: Max Goschen Limited, 1914.

CR—"Christina Rossetti," *Fortnightly Review*, XCV (1911), 422-429.

EN—*The English Novel*. Philadelphia and London: Lippincott Co., 1929.

ML—*The March of Literature*. London: George and Unwin Ltd., 1938.

T—"Techniques," *Southern Review*, I (1935), 20-35.

[5] *Henry James: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1913), p. 152.

[6] See Pound, *Literary Essays*, p. 373.

[7] "A Jubilee," *Outlook*, XXXVI (July 10, 1915), 46-47.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] Cf. Sam Hynes (ed.), *Further Speculations by T. E. Hulme* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. xii.

[2] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to Hulme's works:

FS—*Further Speculations*. See preceding note.

S—*Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., Ltd., 1936.

[3] Cf. Stanley Coffman, Jr., *Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), pp. 57-58.

[4] Cf. Francis W. Nelson, "Valet to the Absolute: A Study of the Philosophy of T. E. Hulme," *The Municipal University of Wichita Bulletin*, Vol. XXV, No. 4 (Oct., 1950).

[5] Author of *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Berlin, 1908).

[6] Cf. Murray Krieger, "The Ambiguous Anti-Romanticism of T. E. Hulme," *English Literary History*, XX (1953), pp. 300-314.

[7] *Ruskin as Literary Critic: Selections*, ed. A. H. R. Ball (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1928), p. 122.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] "Ezra Pound," in *An Examination of Ezra Pound: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Peter Russell (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950), p. 29.

[2] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to Pound's works cited more than once:

ABCR—*ABC of Reading*. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1934.

G-B—*Gaudier-Bruzeska: A Memoir*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head; New York: John Lane Co., 1916.

L—*The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D. D. Paige. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950.

LE—*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1954.

PE—*Polite Essays*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937.

[3] "This Hulme Business," *Townsman*, II (Jan., 1939); reprinted in Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1951), p. 308.

[4] "Status Rerum," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, I (Jan., 1913), 124.

[5] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935.

[6] *Instigations* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920), p. 363.

[7] *Pavannes and Divisions* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918), p. 251.

[8] "The Wisdom of Poetry," *Forum*, XLVII (1912), 499.

[9] "Ezra Pound," in *An Examination of Ezra Pound*, ed. Russell, p. 30.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to Eliot's works cited more than once:

JD—*John Dryden*. New York: Terence and Elsa Holliday, 1932.

M—*Milton*, British Academy Lecture. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege Amen House, 1947.

MP—*The Music of Poetry*. Glasgow: Jackson, Son, and Co., 1942.

NVJM—"A Note on the Verse of John Milton," in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, Vol. XXI, pp. 32-40. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936.

SE—*Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950.

SFP—"The Social Function of Poetry," in *Critiques and Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stallman, pp. 105-116. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949.

UPUC—*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. London: Farber and Farber, Ltd., 1933.

[2] *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934), p. 31.

[3] *For Lancelot Andrews: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), pp. 122-124.

[4] See William York Tindall, "The Recantation of T. S. Eliot," *The American Scholar*, XVI (1947), 431-437.

[5] See Robert Wooster Stallman, *The Critic's Notebook* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950), p. 116.

6 "The Objective Correlative of T. S. Eliot," *The American Bookman,* I (1944), 7-18; reprinted in *Critiques and Essays in Criticism,* ed. Stallman, pp. 389-400.

7 *The Spirit of Romance* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1910), p. 5.

8 *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound,* p. 4.

9 "The Criticism of T. S. Eliot," *The Sewanee Review,* LXIV (1956), 9.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1 I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to Richards' works cited more than once:

CI—*Coleridge on Imagination.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935.

IT—*Interpretation in Teaching.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938.

IW—"The Interaction of Words," in *The Language of Poetry,* ed. Allen Tate. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942.

MM—*The Meaning of Meaning,* 3rd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1930. (Written in collaboration with C. K. Ogden.)

PR—*The Philosophy of Rhetoric.* New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

PLC—*Principles of Literary Criticism,* 5th ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934.

SP—*Science and Poetry.* New York: Norton and Co., Inc., 1926.

2 "I. A. Richards," *Scrutiny,* I (March, 1933), 329.

3 *Biographia Literaria,* ed. John Shawcross (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907), II, 12.

4 *The Language of Reality: the Philosophy of Language and the Principles of Symbolism* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1939), p. 460.

5 Cf. William Van O'Connor, "A Short View of the New Criticism," *College English,* XI (1949), 69.

6 *Scepticism and Poetry: An Essay on the Poetic Imagination* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1937), p. 61.

7 See his review of C. K. Ogden's *Bentham's Theory of Fictions,* in *Scrutiny,* I (March, 1933), 407.

8 Cf. Manuel Bilsky, "I. A. Richards' Theory of Metaphor," *Modern Philology,* L (1950), 130-137.

9 "Metaphor: A Term of Praise," *Thought,* XXX (1955), 428.

10 Cf. Abraham Kaplan, "Referential Meaning in the Arts," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* XII (1954), 473.

11 *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929), pp. 221-222.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to works by Empson cited more than once:

STA—*Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1930.

SVP—*Some Versions of Pastoral*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1935.

SCW—*The Structure of Complex Words*. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1951.

[2] *The Works of Samuel Johnson,* ed. Arthur Murphy (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.) I, 149.

[3] *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), pp. 63-65.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

[1] H. Trowbridge, "Aristotle and the 'New Criticism,'" *Sewanee Review,* LII (1944), 545.

[2] I use in this chapter the following abbreviations in references to works by Cleanth Brooks which are cited more than once:

EC—"Empson's Criticism," in *Accent Anthology,* 1940-1945, ed. Kerker Quinn and Charles Shattuck, pp. 496-508. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946.

IIP—"Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry," *College English,* IX (1948), 231-237.

MPT—*Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. New York: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.

PO—"The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure," in *English Institute Annual,* 1940, pp. 20-41. New York: University of Columbia Press, 1941.

WWU—*The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947.

[3] *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1938), p. xv.

[4] *Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare and Some Other Old Poets and Dramatists* (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1907), pp. 46-47.

[5] *The New Apologists for Poetry,* pp. 31 ff.

[6] See Ransom's *The World's Body* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 120 ff. and Tate's *Reason in Madness: Critical Essays* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941), 72 ff. The phrase "romantic irony," as used by Ransom and Tate, is of course not to be confused with its traditional sense, which is illustrated in Bryon's *Don Juan.*

[7] *The World's Body,* pp. x-xi.

[8] *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941), p. 221.

[9] *Reason in Madness,* p. 19.

[10] *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 106-107.

[11] See *The Spectator,* ed. George Washington Greene (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1879), I, 181 ff.

[12] See *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism,* ed. Nowell C. Smith (London: Henry Frowde, 1905), p. 164.

[13] *Reason in Madness,* p. 72.

[14] Cf. R. S. Crane, "Cleanth Brooks; or, the Bankruptcy of Critical Monism," in *Critics and Criticism, Ancient and Modern,* ed. Crane, p. 94.

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