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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A HISTORICODEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF LITERATURE FROM SIDNEY TO THE NEW CRITICS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

MELROSE HALE MCCRAW

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

1977

A HISTORICODEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF LITERATURE

FROM SIDNEY TO THE NEW CRITICS

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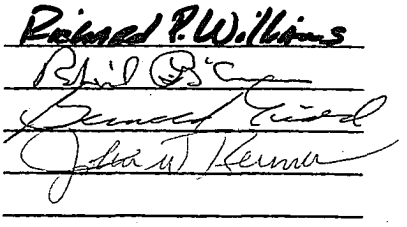

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ABSTRACT

This study, based upon Jean Piaget's historicodevelopmental method of examining knowledge, was concerned with the establishment of parallels between literature as collective social knowledge and the cognitive development of the individual.

Changes in the conceptions of literature's nature were isolated and identified as they developed from the period of English Neoclassicism in the seventeenth century to the period of Romanticism in the nineteenth century to the period of Anglo-American New Criticism in the twentieth century. It was found that in each literary period one particular approach to literature dominated, whereby one element oriented all literary concerns: for the Neoclassical period, the pragmatic approach with the audience as central; for the Romantic period, the expressive approach with the ppet as the outstanding element; and for the period of New Criticism, the objective with the work itself dictating all literary assumptions.

Application of Piagetian constructs to the evolution of literary concepts established parallels between collective literary thought and individual cognition: first, the static, limited conceptions of the Neoclassicists, who saw literature as a product, an imitation which furnished instruction and pleasure for the edification of the reader, found parallels with the phenomenistic and egocentric characteristics of the pre-operational child; next, the equilibrated state that the Romantics

reached in their view of literature as both a product and a process, an organic expression of the poet's mind and feelings, found parallels with the equilibrial properties of field extension, mobility, and stability, properties characteristic of the concrete-operational cognizer; and, last, the speculative instruments of the New Critics, which showed literature as a process, an autonomous organic structure of semantic and syntactic relationships, found parallels with the double reversibility central to the INRC group of four transformations, which Piaget uses as a model to adolescent thought.

This study demonstrates that critical concepts at a certain period of literary history show characteristics that are representative of a certain maturity and that this stage of collective thought is analyzable with that found in an individual cognizer at the same stage of maturity. It also shows that this research has implications for both the English curriculum and the study and instruction of literature at high school and college levels.

CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction and Need for the Study

In 373 B.C. Plato denounced poetry. Calling it false, trivial, and useless, he banished the poet from his ideal state. For centuries thereafter men reckoned with this indictment and endeavored to establish literature's value and justify its existence. But today the situation is quite different. Literature no longer needs its champion. On the contrary, it enjoys a place of prominence in twentieth-century culture, secure as a part of the curriculum of every American boy and girl from the first grade through the twelfth, and for some young people through the early part of college. Curriculum-wise its requirement as subject matter for twelve years more than justifies its value. Nevertheless, there is a problem in terms of the emphasis that literature receives in the classroom and the poverty of the pay-off, in terms of the shocking discrepancy between the number of class hours spent in its study and the few students who emerge from a twelve-year exposure as "readers," ones with a real understanding of the art form and a true aesthetic sense.

One national study, which investigated English programs in 168 of the "better" high schools across the nation, finding that literature "on an overall average occupied 52.2 percent of the emphasis in instruction," attributes this failure to the "superficial" nature of the instructional methods employed by teachers in these schools. Dr. James R. Squire,

Executive Secretary of The National Council of Teachers of English, director of the study, comments:

> Our real quarrel is with the incessant superficiality of much classroom study of literature--with, if you will, the evasion of literature represented in too many classrooms. Despite a decade of recommendations to the contrary, many teachers continue to teach the dates and places as if these and not the literary works were the essence of our subject: an over-reliance on history and geography, a preoccupation with the Elizabethan stage, a concern with definition and memory work (the Petrachian [sic] sonnet, the heroic couplet, the accepted definition of figures of speech)--these clutter the minds of too many teachers and students alike. Intelligently used to serve the interest of literary study, they can provide needed tools and understanding. Forced to center stage, they only divert attention. And center stage they too often occupy. Far more frequently than the classroom in which young people were learning to analyze a single text with insight and ability, we found this emphasis on the superficial.[1]

In view of its findings, this study, headed by Dr. Squire, along with others who have conducted research in the past decade,[2] has expressed a need for more effective literary instruction in the English classroom, instruction that will lead students to the heart of a literary selection, where they can become involved in experiences of identification and reaction.

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[1]James R. Squire, "The National Study of High School English Programs: Implications for Colleges and Universities," College English, 27 (May 1966): 614, 619.

[2]Louise Rosenblatt, "Literature: The Reader's Role," in The Subjects in the Curriculum, ed. by Frank L. Steeves (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1968), pp. 41-42; Walter J. Ong, "Literature, Threat, and Conquest," College English 27 (May 1966): 620-21; Robert C. Slack, "A Report on Project English," English Journal 53 (December 1964): 685; Roger K. Applebee, "National Study of High School English Programs: A Record of English Teaching Today," English Journal 55 (March 1966): 275.

In response to the need for more effective instruction in literature, it is the purpose of this chapter to present a plan for a "historicodevelopmental"[3] view of literature, one theoretically rooted in the method of Jean Piaget, the method whereby he examines the nature of knowledge.

Piaget in applying his strategy investigates the historical changes in the nature and conception of a particular knowledge form; then, by employing his psychological model of cognitive development, he attempts to find parallels between the collective thought of the knowledge form and the individual thought of the child. He postulates, moreover, that "knowledge undergoes a long period of evolution in the individual as well as in society," and believes that

> the study of this development at both levels might yield insight into the most mature (or at least latest) forms of collective and individual knowledge. For these reasons, both the genetic (or developmental) study of the child, and the historical study of knowledge, are relevant for problems of epistemology.[4]

So strong is Piaget's belief in this proposition that it has led him to investigate numerous disciplines--physics, biology, mathematics, sociology, and psychology[5]--and he is convinced that since his method is empirically based and its area is limited, it can furnish insights into subject matter and individual cognizer alike. "The issues," he feels, "should no longer be left solely for the speculation of philosophers but should be treated in a more objective manner."[6]

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[3]John H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1963), p. 256.

[4]Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 209.

[5]Flavell, p. 252.

[6]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 209.

Adopting Piaget's strategy of examining knowledge forms, this research will examine literature as a knowledge form, and in so doing, will bring together three disciplines: literature, psychology, and biology. The first two will be related developmentally; the third will provide the theoretical frame.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Stemming from an expressed need for more effective instructional methods in literature is the problem to be investigated. In essence, it concerns the historical changes in the concept of literature from the period of English Neoclassicism (1600-1800) to the period of New Criticism (1930-60), considering the relationship of this "evolution <u>across</u> a number of adult minds [those of critic-writers]" to the Piagetian notion of cognitive changes in the "evolution <u>within</u> a single immature [mind]."[7]

Such a problem--one which puts literature in a historical frame and compares it with the individual and his cognitive development--raises certain questions: (1) How specifically has the concept of literature changed from English Neoclassic times to those of Anglo-American New Criticism so that the characteristics that define it in one age mark it as different in the next? (2) How can these differences be accounted for? (3) What issues have been at stake in the past among literary critics as to the nature and value of literature? (4) What are the present-day issues that concern critics and divide them into camps? and (5) How do the historical changes in the conception of literature relate to the cognitive development of the individual? These questions deal with scope and comparison. Scope relates to the first part of the problem--the historical

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[7]Flavell, p. 252.

changes in the conception of literature--and includes the first four questions. Comparison, on the other hand, relates to the second part of the problem--the relationship that a historical view of literature bears to the cognitive development of the individual--and includes the last question.

The scope questions and, in turn, the first part of the problem will be answered by analyzing the following kinds of primary and secondary sources: specific selections of literature found in books and criticism found in books; journals; and conference reports. The comparison question, relating to the second part of the problem, will also be answered by analyzing primary and secondary sources found in books.

Further, the research-problem statement provides the basis for the major purpose of this investigation. This three-fold purpose purports to do the following: (1) to gain an understanding of the historical changes in the conception of English literature since Neoclassic times, whereby the parallels that exist between the periods of development in literary criticism and those in individual cognitive development can be pointed out; (2) to draw conclusions concerning these parallels; and (3) to discuss the implications that the conclusions have for the instruction of literature. A related purpose is to offer a secondary-level approach to literature study based on Piaget's INRC matrix of higher-thought processes, an approach that might prove fruitful in classroom instruction at high-school and college levels.

Tools of Analysis

To accomplish the purpose of this investigation, an analysis of the historical changes in the conception of English and American literature

will be conducted. Undoubtedly, such an analysis will prove most valid if empirically based. To obtain such a base, this study turns to Jean Piaget's historicodevelopmental method by which he has investigated the knowledge in various disciplines. As an explanation of this method, Flavell provides an illuminating description:

> Piaget will take a concept from a given scientific field, e.g. the concept of force in physics . . . and analyze how its scientific meaning has changed from Greek or pre-Greek times to the present. He then attempts to show crucial parallels between historical and ontogenetic evolutions of this concept: for example, in both evolutions there is a progressive shedding of egocentric adherences, rooted in personal experience of bodily effort, in favor of an objective conception which is independent of self. The subject of his historicodevelopmental analysis may be broader than a single concept, such as force; that is, it may subtend a group of interrelated concepts of even a whole field of knowledge, e.g., historical changes in the nature and conception of mathematics . . . But whatever the content, the general strategy is to apply the constructs of his developmental theory (progressive equilibration, egocentrism, decentration, and reversibility, etc.) to the historical process, the latter construed as an evolution <u>across</u> a number of adult minds at least partially analyzable in the same terms as the evolution <u>within</u> a single immature one.[8]

To attempt with literature what Piaget has accomplished with other knowledge forms seems a reasonable undertaking, one that may offer information of pragmatic worth. Be that as it may, however, adapting Piaget's paradigm to the examination of literature will mean a ". . . critical examination of past and present epistemological analyses"[9] of English and American literature—from English Neoclassicism to the period of Anglo-American New Criticism—followed by an analysis which employs Piaget's cognitive developmental model. This study, therefore, is doubly indebted to Piaget: first, for a method to proceed historically, and second, for a model to serve as an instrument for comparison.

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 258.

Relative to the tools of analysis the following data sources will be analyzed: primary source materials will be drawn from the writings of Jean Piaget in order to procure information related to the Piagetian models, both the historicodevelopmental and the model of cognitive development; similarly, secondary-source materials will come from writings of psychologists, several of who have either studied with Piaget or have participated in the tradition of the Festschrift--a "progress report on enterprises initiated by the teacher [Piaget, in this case]."[10] Specific titles to be used in this investigation are as follows: Jean Piaget: Genetic Epistemology, Introduction à l 'épistémologie génétique, The Language and Thought of the Child, The Origins of Intelligence in Children, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood, Psychology of Intelligence, Structuralism, and To Understand is to Invent: The Future of Education; Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget: The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence; David Elkind and John H. Flavell: Studies in Cognitive Development: Essays in Honor of Jean Piaget; John H. Flavell: The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget; Hans Furth: Piaget and Knowledge: Theoretical Foundations; Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper: Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction; Henry W. Maier: Three Theories of Child Development; Mary Ann Spencer Pulaski: Understanding Piaget: An Introduction to Children's Cognitive Development.

By using Piaget's developmental model as the tool for comparison and applying it to the preceding data sources, it should be possible to demonstrate that critical concepts at a certain period of literary history show

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[10]David Elkind and John H. Flavell, Studies in Cognitive Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. x.

characteristics that are representative of a certain maturity and that this stage of maturity in collective thought is analyzable with that found in an individual cognizer at the same stage of maturity. In other words, it should be possible to point out that literary concepts of Neoclassic scholars were "in a state of relative egocentrism and phenomenism"[11] and that this state of subjectivity became increasingly objective with the encounter of subsequent scholars whose views dominated the more advanced periods of Romanticism and New Criticism.

A further observation should be made regarding the tools of analysis--namely, that the comparison between the "collective minds" of literary criticism and that of the individual will begin with the pre-operational stage and proceed through the formal. (This is Piaget's method.) The sensorimotor period will not be used, since thought, other than a practical intelligence similar to that of animals, is not present at that level, beginning rather when language appears at the pre-operational stage. Similarly, theoretical and evaluative activities of English criticism did not formally, begin until the seventeenth century, although rudiments of criticism did exist earlier.

It should also be possible by applying the developmental model as a comparative measure to demonstrate the validity of the hypotheses as explained in the following section.

Historical Model and Hypotheses

Broadly, the historical model for this study is that of literary evolution. Literary evolution is the intrinsic study of literature and as such is "concerned with the processes underlying the production of

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[11]Flavell, p. 256.

literature rather than with the particular products." It deals with two aspects of literature: "the forms and species that make up literary morphology; or with modifications in the spirit and functions of literature, which it is the province of literary criticism to consider."[12] This research will touch briefly on the evolution of literature as it was conceived by the ancients; the emphasis, however, will center on the conceptions of literature (based as they were on classical postulations) as they evolved from the period of English Neoclassicism to that of Anglo-American New Criticism.

More specifically, the study will be based on a model of critical theories suggested by Meyer Howard Abrams in his book The Mirror and the Lamp.[13] "The division of theories presented in this text is one among many possibilities, adopted because it is relatively simple," so Preminger comments in his encyclopedia on poetics. He then goes on to explain:

> [and] because it stresses the notable extent to which later approaches to poetry were expansions . . . of Greek and Roman prototypes; and [also] because it defines in a provisional way certain large-scale shifts of emphasis during 2,500 years of Western speculation about the identity of poetry, its kinds and their relative status . . . and the criteria by which poems are to be evaluated. But like all general schemes, this one must be supplemented and qualified in numerous ways before it can do justice to the diversity of individual points of view.[14]

But before delineating the ways in which this scheme will be modified, it is advisable to explain the Abrams' model of critical theories.

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[12]Richard Green Moulton, The Modern Study of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 109.

[13]M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 3-29.

[14]Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke, and O. B. Hardison, Jr., eds., Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 639.

In recognizing that literature is an artifact, a man-made product, this model considers the following contingencies: the work of art, the creator, the milieu, and the audience. For "a poem is produced by a poet, takes its subject matter from the universe of men, things, events, and is addressed to an audience of hearers or readers," and

> . . . although these four elements play some part in the all-inclusive accounts of poetry, they do not play an equal part. Commonly a critic takes one of these elements or relations as cardinal, and refers the poem either to the external world, or to the audience, or to the poet as preponderantly the 'source and end and test of art'; or alternatively, he considers the poem as a self-sufficient entity, best regarded in theoretical isolation from the causal factors in the universe from which the poem derives its materials, or the tastes, convictions, and responses of the audience to which it appeals, or the character, intentions, thoughts, and feelings of the poet who brings it into being. These varied orientations give us, in a preliminary way, four broad types of poetic theory, which may be labeled mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective. (Italics mine.)[15]

Utilizing this model, the following outline will direct the research:

I. Mimetic Theory (Introductory) -- The Ancients (4th century B. C.): early Greek philosophers, the fountainhead of criticism--criticism oriented toward the universe

   A. Plato -- dialectical approach to poetry

   B. Aristotle -- analytical approach to poetry

II. Pragmatic Theory -- The Neoclassicists (17th to the 19th century) -- criticism oriented toward the audience

   A. Sir Philip Sidney -- poetry as an imitation of the ideal with an inspirational value

   B. John Dryden -- poetry as an imitation of human nature with a value of instruction and pleasure

   C. Samuel Johnson -- poetry as an imitation of general nature with a value of instruction and pleasure

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[15]Ibid., pp. 639-40.

III. Expressive Theory -- The Romantics (19th century) -- criticism oriented toward the poet

A. William Wordsworth -- poetry as a psychological experience in the mind of the poet, as a concrete, sensuous illustration of both a fact and a relationship which provides pleasure and shows its universal importance

B. Samuel Taylor Coleridge -- poetry as Imagination, a psychological event, a fusing and synthesizing power in the mind of the poet which provides pleasure in the parts as well as the whole

IV. Objective Theory -- The New Critics (20th century) -- criticism oriented toward the poem

A. I. A. Richards -- poetry as applied psychology with a value of knowledge

B. John Crowe Ransom -- poetry as a totality of logical structures and local texture with a value of knowledge

C. Allen Tate -- poetry as a totality of multiple tensions in equilibrium with a value of knowledge

D. Cleanth Brooks -- poetry as a totality of ambiguities, ironies, and paradoxes with a value of knowledge

This outline alters the model to the extent that the mimetic theory, wherein the critics' views are basically in terms of the universe, will serve as a necessary introduction to the theories that follow, those that provide a frame for the history proper (pragmatic, expressive, and objective). The pragmatic theory, then, representative of the Neoclassic period, the first period in the evolution (1600-1800), becomes intelligible as a theory oriented toward the audience or reader when the theories that the ancients held concerning literature are made clear in the introductory material of the mimetic. Similarly, this material illuminates the expressive theory, representative of the Romantic period (the 1800's) and the objective theory, representative of the period of New Criticism (1930-60). This scheme of theories, then, as adapted to the purposes of this study, whereby the mimetic theory serves as background for the other

three theories, identifies the major approaches taken by critics to the quiddity of literature during approximately three centuries and a half of English and American criticisms.

To reiterate, the historical process in this paper will formally begin with the literary thought that began in Neoclassic times. To be sure, English literature was well established by this time, having come up from antiquity, medievalism, and the Renaissance. But it was not until Neoclassic times that men began to question the nature and function of literature to the extent that a critical temper could emerge in any distinct sense. Thus, since a basic theme of this investigation is the conception of literature in a historical context, the selection of the specific time when the fundamentals of modern criticism were first established in English literature is of central concern. Moreover, the restriction of place--the bounds of seventeenth-century England--is necessary since American criticism, with which this history culminates, like American literature, has its roots in that of English theory.

The final consideration of this section is the hypotheses, the theories germane to the study. It is possible, from the major purpose of the investigation, to form hypotheses capable of disproof or verification:

(1) Literature--from the period of English Neoclassicism to the period of Anglo-American New Criticism--when put in a historical perspective will show advances in the way it has been conceived by literary critics that parallel advances in the cognitive development of the individual.

(2) Literature--from the period of English Neoclassicism to the period of Anglo-American New Criticism--when considered from a historicodevelopmental point of view will furnish implications for its instruction.

A. Data Collection

Historical research, unlike other types of scientific research, must "deal with data . . . already in existence."[16] For this reason the historian must use discretion in the evaluation and selection of his data. His first step in evaluation, then, is to recognize the differences between primary sources, which are "data provided by actual witnesses to the incident in question," and secondary sources, "sources in which a middleman has come between the original witness and the present consumer." Consequently, "reliable historians rely as much as possible on primary sources, using secondary sources only as hypotheses to bridge the gap between the various pieces of primary evidence."[17]

Still there is another view. Secondary sources are sometimes to be preferred. Because secondary sources can be compared with one another on a particular point, the historian by evaluating the various stances can come nearer the truth than he might be able to from examining one single primary source.

> For instance, we frequently listen to news commentators for an orientation message from the President, for commentators because of their backgrounds frequently are able to synthesize the significant factors in the situation and present a much clearer picture than can be obtained from a first-hand report.[18]

B. Data Interpretation

While collecting his data, the historian simultaneously carries on its evaluation. The process entails the following steps: (1) Taking

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[16] Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, Educational Research: An Introduction (New York: David McKay Co., 1971), p. 190.

[17] George J. Mouly, The Science of Educational Research (New York: American Book Co., 1963), p. 208.

[18] Ibid., p. 209.

notes--a procedure which implies the processes of selection, condensation, and paraphrase; (2) comparison of data; (3) reformulation of data; and (4) judgment of data. This mental process of comparison, combination, and selection is called "synthetic operations,"[19] and these operations, in turn, include the adoption of a tentative hypothesis, whereby the historian may select his material and shape his interpretations. But care must be taken at all times to guard against the Procrustean temptation to select and manipulate material that can be interpreted in light of the preliminary hypothesis.

The historical procedure which will be used in the data interpretation of this study's hypotheses is final synthesis, the four elements of which are interpretation--discovery of cause and effect relations to explain human events or assertion of value judgments on the part of the historian; emphasis--achieved by repetition and order; arrangement--"the grouping of evidence . . ."; and inference--"reasoning or informed invention. . . used to fill gaps in the record or to supply connections between bits or classes of evidence."[20]

Review of the Literature

"An essential aspect of a research project is the review of the related literature."[21] This investigation will examine and make use of numerous sources in its historical investigation of literature--its changes in conception since the period of English Neoclassicism. The principal data for the study are primary sources, most of which are deposited in the

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[19]R. J. Shafer, A Guide to the Historical Method (Homewood, Ill: Dorsey Press, 1969), p. 143.

[20]Ibid., pp. 160-63.

[21]Mouly, p. 111.

University of Oklahoma library and the Southeastern Oklahoma State University library. Two sources were obtained by loan: one from the Columbia University library, the other from the Oklahoma State University library. The sources consist of books of literary criticism by eminent critics and critic-teachers; annual reports of conferences on literature study; and articles from prestigious literary journals. A specific listing follows; but before noting titles, it is profitable to point out that sources of information for this type of research are legion. Therefore, for the purposes of this section, the list will be limited to those sources which will provide the bulk of information, although many sources other than the ones listed herewith will be used and will appear in the bibliography.

Books of literary criticism include: J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renascence and English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries; M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition; Ernest Bernbaum, A Guide Through the Romantic Movement; Cleanth Brooks, The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry; David Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature; Richard Foster, The New Romantics: A Reappraisal of the New Criticism; Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry; John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism; I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism; Allen Tate, On the Limits of Poetry; George Watson, The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism; René Wellek, Concepts of Criticism.

Literary journals that contain articles used in this research include College English, English Journal, and Sewanee Review.

Also used in this study is one unpublished report on literary study produced by the Curriculum Study Center in English, Florida State University, 1963.

A number of secondary sources are volumes that consist of specific essays on criticism collected and introduced and discussed by the editor or editors. Notable examples of these are W. J. Bate, Criticism: The Major Texts; Daniel G. Hoffman and Samuel Hynes, English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian; Walter Sutton and Richard Foster, Modern Criticism: Theory and Practice.

One final source that merits attention is Anthology of Children's Literature, edited by Edna Johnson, Evelyn R. Sickels, and Frances Clarke Sayers. This volume will be referred to extensively in terms of one implication this research has for the instruction of literature.

Definition of Terms

The title for the research study is "A Historicodevelopmental View of Literature: From Sidney to the New Critics." The concepts as they occur in the title are defined as follows:

(1) Historicodevelopmental View

This view employs Jean Piaget's method of examining a knowledge form. Piaget investigates the changes in the nature and conception of a knowledge form from its genesis to contemporary times. These historical changes he views as collective knowledge that has evolved through the centuries. Employing his psychological model of development, he then draws parallels between stages of collective thought in the history of the knowledge form and the stages of cognitive development in the individual. The term historicodevelopmental is the term that John Flavell, in his text The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget, applies to

Piaget's strategy and one which he substitutes for Piaget's term "historico-critique."[22]

(2) Literature

As a term in the title, literature refers to those works that are confined to imaginary treatment, such as drama, epic, poetry, and fiction, as opposed to the utilitarian type of literature, such as history or philosophy or biography. Another definition describes it as imaginative literature, or works in which the aesthetic function is dominant.

(3) From Sidney to the New Critics

(a) Sidney refers to Sir Philip Sidney, English Neoclassic critic-writer, whose An Apology for Poetry (1595) was one of the most significant pieces of criticism of the period, in that it was the first attempt in English literature to justify literature in face of medieval prejudice and the Puritan attack on drama as an immoral influence and provocateur of debauchery.

(b) New Critics is the term applied in the strict sense

> . . . to the criticism written by John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks, and it is derived from Ransom's book The New Criticism, published in 1941, which discussed the movement in America in the 1930's which paralleled movements in England led by critics like T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, and William Empson. Generally the term is applied, however, to the whole body of contemporary criticism which centers its attention in the work of art as an object in itself; finds in it a special kind of language opposed to--or at least different from--the languages of science or philosophy; and examines it through a process of close analysis. The New Critics constitute the school in contemporary criticism which most completely employs the objective theory of art.[23]

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[22]Jean Piaget, Introduction à l'épistémologie génétique, 3 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), Vol. 1: La pensée mathématique, pp. 15-16.

[23]William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, rev. ed., rev. and enl. by C. Hugh Holman (New York: Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 314.

Most of the terms used in the text will be self-explanatory, or explained as they occur. But there will be recurrent terms that it is advisable to now define:

(1) Poetry

Poetry is a general term that will be used synonymously with that of literature. It was used by the ancients in reference to the epic, tragedy, comedy and the lyric, and as a term goes back to the Greek word which signifies that which is imagined or created. It was used in this all-inclusive sense throughout the Renaissance, the periods of Neoclassicism and Romanticism, and even today carries this broad definition.

(2) Nature

As a term in literature nature has multiple meanings. For the purpose of this study, it will be used largely to denote the criteria by which literature is discussed--that is, its essence--imitation or expression or structure; its content and form; and its function and value. Occasionally, it will be used as a synonym of the word reason; and sometimes as a synonym of universe.

(3) Conception

As a term used in the statement of the problem and as one implicit in the hypotheses, conception refers to literary criticism and literary theory, since it represents the mode of discussion which critics through the centuries have used to express their ideas and theories concerning the literary form and its nature.

Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited in the following ways:

(1) Both research of the history of literary criticism and its

subsequent discussion will be limited as follows: They will focus on the period of Neoclassicism in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on the period of Romanticism in England in the nineteenth century, and on the period of New Criticism, which began in England in the first decade of the twentieth century and shifted to the United States in the thirties. However, in order to provide a background for understanding modern English and Anglo-American criticism, research and discussion will begin with the developments of criticism in antiquity; moreover, in order to bridge the gap between the close of Romanticism and the period of New Criticism, the critical activities that took place during that time will be summarized.

(2) The content will have the following restrictions:

(a) No writers and critics other than English and American will be emphasized.

(b) None but those most representative among the critics will be included.

(c) Literary genres and particular selections of literature will not receive emphasis; although they will be referred to as discussion and illustration demand.

(d) Biblical and medieval literary development will not be discussed, other than in passing, since they played but a minor role in modern literary development.

(3) The academic level to which this research addresses itself is that of high school and college.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation will be organized into the following six chapters, each of which bears its respective title:

Chapter

I. An Overview of the Study

II. The Evolution of Literature: From English Neoclassicism to the New Criticism

III. A Review of Jean Piaget's Theories on Cognitive Development

IV. A Comparison between the Cognitive Thought of the Individual and English and Anglo-American Literary Thought

V. Moving from Perception to Thinking in Literature: A Cognitive Approach to Literature through Piaget's INRC Matrix

VI. Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF LITERATURE: FROM ENGLISH NEOCLASSICISM TO THE NEW CRITICISM

Literature evolves in two ways: through those who write it and those who speculate on it, each significantly affecting the other. And more often than not the two activities are pursued by the same individual, so that historically there have been in each age poets who speculate on the nature and value of literature and critics who exercise their creative powers. But double-agent or no, the question "What is literature?" is of first importance in a literature's evolution and is primarily the business of the critic. It is he who probes deeply into the nature of literature and furnishes what he believes to be the answers for his time. Thus, it is through a knowledge of his concepts of literature and the concepts of those who either precede or follow him that the changes in literature's nature during a particular time span may be inferred. But to account for the changes presents a problem for the historian. M. H. Abrams considers his task a difficult one, difficult for two reasons: For one thing, the answers to the questions about literature do not agree; and, for another, the theories of many of these critics are so diverse that they can scarcely be compared; they are, in fact, incommensurable with one another, since they have no common denominator as a basis of discourse. But Abrams in his text The Mirror and the Lamp suggests a way of surmounting the problem:

> The more promising method [he states] is to adopt an analytic scheme which avoids imposing its own philosophy, by utilizing those key distinctions which are already common to the largest number of theories to be compared, and then to apply the scheme warily, in constant readiness to introduce such further distinctions as seem to be needed for the purpose in hand.

The "key distinctions" to which Abrams points are ones common to most literary theories--namely, "the work, the artistic product itself"; "the artist," the creator of the selection; "the universe," or the subject as it exists in reality ("people and actions, ideas and feelings, material things and events . . ."); and "the audience: the listeners, spectators, or readers to whom the work is addressed. . . ."[1]

Each distinction, he further suggests, is a part of most comprehensive theories and is taken into account by them. However, one distinction is usually emphasized more than another, and when the emphasis falls more on that particular element than it does on the other three, that distinction colors the theory--thereby orienting it.

> That is, a critic tends to derive from one of these terms his principal categories for defining, classifying, and analyzing a work of art, as well as the major criteria by which he judges its value. Application of this analytic scheme, therefore, will sort attempts to explain the nature and worth of a work of art into four broad classes. Three will explain the work of art principally by relating it to another thing: the universe, the audience, or the artist. The fourth will explain the work by considering it in isolation, as an autonomous whole, whose significance and value are determined without any reference beyond itself.[2]

And these orientations--universe, audience, artist, and work--allow for four broad types of literary theory which Abrams specifies as mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective.

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[1] M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 5-6.

[2] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

For the purpose of this study, that is, to view literature historically and observe how conceptions of its nature have changed from the Neoclassic period (the period in which English criticism has its inception) to the period of New Criticism, Abrams' scheme will be applied --"warily," as he admonishes--adapting it to the needs of this history. Accordingly, it will follow that one of the four literary theories with its essential attribute will serve as the center from which a discussion of the literary views of a particular time-period can proceed. Chronologically, the mimetic, as the most primitive theory, will come first in the evolution; positioned thus, it will serve as a necessary introduction to the history, necessary because as a theory oriented by the universe, it views literature as an imitation of the natural world (character, actions, events, etc.), the view held by such early Greeks as Plato and Aristotle, whose critical thinking has colored all literary speculation since their time.

Second in time is the pragmatic theory; it also sees literature as imitation, but now an imitation for a distinct purpose: for the instruction of the audience, the readers and listeners to whom it is addressed. Thus, literature's role becomes pragmatic and the pragmatic theory, "ordering the aim of the artist and the character of the work to the nature, the needs, and the springs of pleasure in the audience, characterizes by far the greatest part of criticism from the time of Horace through the eighteenth century."[3]

Next, the expressive theory, the predominant theory of the nineteenth century, has its seeds in the concepts of the Greek philosopher Longinus and puts the artist at the center of things, with literature seen

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[3]Ibid., pp. 20-21.

as the product of his creative force. But more than a product, it is a process which embodies his deepest felt thoughts and emotions.

And last is the objective theory, a theory which views literature as an entity within itself, an autonomous process independent of any externals, and which became the "reigning mode of literary criticism"[4] in twentieth-century America between the thirties and sixties.

These four theories, as one supplants the other, offer one way to view the changes in the conception of literature as these changes pertain to English literature and to American literature of the twentieth-century.

The Mimetic Theory

Any understanding of English literature--its history and evolution--and in turn American literature, presupposes an understanding of literature as conceived by antiquity. For with Plato (427-347 B.C.) and then Aristotle (384-322 B. C.) criticism had its real beginning. To them alone goes the acclaim for having pointed the way to later ages: first, to the Hellenistic rhetoricians (323-30 B. C.), with their emphasis on words and syntax, an emphasis which anticipated the intrinsic approach of twentieth-century writer-critics; next, to the Roman poet Horace (65-8 B. C.), who was the first pragmatist and was to be a distinct influence on the Neoclassicists of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England; and then, to Longinus some five hundred years later, the first to submit an affective theory of literature--that subscribed to by nineteenth-century expressionism, and, last, to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian Humanists, who were instrumental in passing on the classical tradition to Renaissance and Neoclassical England. But, more particularly, these early Greeks were the first to deal critically with the term mimesis,

[4]Ibid., p. 28.

defining it as an imitation and legislating it as the place to begin in dealing with the nature of literature. So great is their influence, in fact, that up until the nineteenth century, mimesis played a dominant role in literary theory, even though "through most of the eighteenth century, the tenet that art is an imitation seemed almost too obvious to need iteration or proof."[5] Thus for centuries the theory of the poetic process has been based on literature's tendency to imitate nature.

Plato's theory of the imitation of nature, however, was politically founded rather than aesthetically. He had no interest in literature or the poet per se; his concern, negatively preoccupied as it was, was not in literature as an art form but in literature and the poet as, first, a menace to his ideal republic, in that literature as an imitation of the concrete world is thrice removed from truth and as such can influence young leaders to pattern themselves after low and disreputable characters; and, second, as a threat to philosophy, the valid teacher for his state, since philosophy derives from and calls on reason, whereas literature, to its detriment, both originates from emotions and initiates them.

Like Plato, Aristotle also subscribed to the mimetic theory, in which the poet uses nature as his model to imitate. His theory aesthetically grounded, is "inductive and analytical," and rather than reducing literature to the one standard--the general idea of the "good, the beautiful, and the true,"[6] as did Plato, Aristotle considered not its moral nature but rather its physical. He regarded literature as he did any phenomenon and broke it down into its parts. Indeed, the poet imitates nature, but that in nature which he imitates is not man's character, as

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[5]Ibid., p. 11.

[6]Hoyt Trowbridge, "Aristotle and the 'New Criticism,'" Sewanee Review 52 (October-December, 1944): 537, 538.

with Plato, but man's actions. This stance gave him in his system of classification three things to consider: the object of imitation, the medium of imitation, and the manner. Although all types of literature with which in his time he was acquainted (tragedy, comedy, the epic, and the dithyramb [a lyric form most closely related to the ode and characterized by wild, excited, passionate language])came under his surveillance, tragedy was the form he emphasized and plot became the "soul of . . . tragedy."[7] He approbated to plot this primacy because it gives tragedy its form and is the element, he felt, that marks the poet as creator. Therefore, beginning with the question of literature's quiddity, he arrived at his generalization that literature is an imitation of nature that affords a peculiar pleasure; and, because it is a probable impossibility it more nearly speaks truth than an improbable possibility, thus giving it value as a knowledge form; moreover, because it shows great men reduced to adversity by the flaw common to all men's natures, it affords catharsis with a subsequent release of feelings. These two reasons—the truth that literature speaks and the emotional release that it furnishes—answered the dilemma initiated by Plato over 2,500 years ago, when he indicted literature as false, useless, and trivial, and which brought on apologies and defenses of poetry[8] for centuries to come.

Sir Philip Sidney's An Apology for Poetry (1595) is just such a defense, and with its emergence in the late Renaissance as the first classic of English criticism, this work shows poet-critics, with Sidney

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[7]Aristotle Poetics in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1952), p. 23.

[8]As pointed out in Chapter I, poetry is a general term, interchangeable in meaning with the term literature.

as a notable example, looking at literature in a new way. Of course,

> the concept that art is imitation . . . [still] played an important part in neoclassic aesthetics; but closer inspection shows that it did not in most theories play the dominant part. Art, it was commonly said, is an imitation--but an imitation which is only instrumental toward producing effects upon an audience.[9]

The focus, therefore, had shifted from the mimetic theory of literature with the universe as the point of emphasis to the pragmatic theory in which the literary product takes on significance in terms of the service it renders its readers. This theory was to predominate in English literature from early Neoclassic times through two centuries. But with the arrival on the literary scene of Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1790), the expressive theory of literature took over and the poet commanded the spotlight. In its preeminence, however, were the seeds of its dissolution, and by the first quarter of the twentieth century a new theory--the objective--had supplanted the expressive and had become firmly entrenched as the chief mode of Anglo-American criticism, mainly under the banner of the New Criticism, a criticism that saw the work as a heterocosm, as "an organism in action."[10]

And throughout this evolution of theories the critic-writers of each age, bound by the influence of their time and the respective theory that oriented them, attempted to define literature. Armed with the statement, or statements, of its defining qualities--that is what each believed the very essence of literature to be, whether an imitation or an expression, or a structure--they then delineated its nature and

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[9]Abrams, p. 14.

[10]John Crowe Ransom, Beating the Bushes (New York: New Directions, 1952). p. 175.

evaluated its worth in terms of two interrelated criteria: content and form and function and value. And it is these characteristics--the definition of literature, its content and form, and its function and value--which will serve as the framework for comparing the views these critics held concerning literature and for ascertaining the changes in conception as they occurred.

The Pragmatic Approach--Neoclassical Period

The Neoclassicists--Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586),[11] John Dryden (1631-1700), and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)--saw form and content as separate concepts. The poet, in their view, decides what he will say and then discovers a way to say it. Embracing the pragmatic position as they did, they believed that the audience is of first concern and the writer should bend his efforts toward reconstituting the reader in a moral fashion; hence the content should be drawn from such aspects of the world that will serve as a model of good and evil and the form should be of such delight and of such power that the reader will be moved by the lesson and govern his life accordingly. For each of them, then, the function of literature by necessity follows, as does its value. Within these general boundaries, of course, each critic approached the nature of literature in his own way, defining literature as he saw it, designating its content and form, and assigning it function and value as a corollary.

Sir Philip Sidney's definition of literature is set out in his An Apology for Poetry--an apology to answer Puritan hostility against any form

[11]Sidney, although he lived and wrote during the last half of the Renaissance, is included here with seventeenth-century Neoclassicists because his An Apology for Poetry (1595), the one work that establishes him as a critic, expresses views that are neoclassic in tradition at a time when the pragmatic approach was establishing itself as the predominating theory in English literature.

of art, based as it was on the Platonic indictment of poetry's false and dangerous nature. As worded it is typically classical in concept:

> Poesy [he says] . . . is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth--to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end to teach and delight.[12]

Although, out of context Sidney's view of poetry as imitation is like that of Aristotle, his view, as it emerges in the treatise, comes nearer to an ideal imitation than a representation of the concrete world. Whereas Aristotle viewed the poet's model of imitation as a world of "things as they were or are, or things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be,"[13] and believed that the poet arrives at the universal through the particular by "[taking] a philosophical view of things as they are." Sidney, on the other hand, concerned himself exclusively with "'things as they ought to be,'" disregarding "' things as they were or are'" or as they are reported, and saw poetry as a product of divine inspiration, giving "glimpses of an ideal and perfect world."[14] His world is indeed a "golden" world and moves men to seek after virtue and depart from evil. And this "golden" world, not "brazen"--as is the world of actuality--

> . . . can present ideal heroes so vividly that one will wish to imitate their virtues. [Or] it can present a world in which virtue always triumphs and vice is always punished.[15]

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[12] Sir Philip Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1952), p. 86.

[13] Aristotle, p. 36.

[14] J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renascence (London: Methuen and Co., 1947), p. 118.

[15] David Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 68.

Thus, the content of Sidney's universe is ideal and furnishes the materials with which the poet works to fashion a world so vividly that the reader is moved to imitate it. But no reader, so David Daiches comments, "is going to be 'moved' to imitate that world in his own behavior unless it be presented with such life and passion that he finds it irresistible." In other words, "the delight which the reader has in reading of this ideal world and in responding to its vitality depends not only on content but also on form and style,"[16] albeit the two are separated. And if this world, where goodness prevails and evil receives its just rewards, is one of poetic justice, then, poetry teaches by presenting it and is, as Horace told Roman readers more than a thousand years earlier in his Art of Poetry, both dulce et utile, dulce meaning, of course, that its sweetness derives from the inspiration that it gives man to realize his divine destiny. Most assuredly, therefore, with such views on content and form, Sidney subscribed to the function of poetry as being that of didactic instruction.

It would follow, then, that if poetry's function is to teach moral values, its inestimable value is that of the supreme knowledge form, exceeding history and even philosophy as knowledge. Aristotle had already made clear that poetry surpasses history by being more philosophical in that "not being tied down to actual specific happenings," as history is, it is able "to concentrate more on the general pattern and general meaning of things." But Sidney went a step further. He maintained that it exceeds the value that philosophy has as a teacher. "If [it] is 'more philosophical' than history, it is more effective than philosophy because it gives

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[16] Ibid., p. 66.

concrete body to the general truth it is disclosing."[17] Sidney writes:

> For in outward things, to a man that had never seen an elephant or a rhinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shapes, colour, bigness, and particular marks. . . might well make the hearer able to repeat by rote, all he had heard, yet should never satisfy his inward conceits with being witness to itself of a true lively knowledge.

But, Sidney explains, should that same man see the animal "illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of Poesy," he would not need a wordish description "to a judicial comprehending of it. . . ."[18] In short, memorizing exactly and then repeating by rote the description of an object can never give so clear an idea of it as a single picture. Poetry, then, by evoking the concrete experience within the general truth gives deeper insights and "insinuates knowledge more thoroughly into the heart." And this general truth that poetry presents gives imaginative writing a formative, educational value that no other discipline can match. And, according to Bate, in making this claim for poetry, Sidney

> . . . reverted to the basic classical conviction that the knowledge which is of the greatest value, the knowledge which is most truly known and possessed, is that which has entered into one so completely that it has really enlarged one's way of feeling and thinking.[19]

But perhaps the greatest value that poetry possesses is its unique ability to offer man a better world. Indeed, the world that the poet creates is superior to "the real one and is presented in such a way that the reader is stimulated to try and imitate it in his own practice."[20] For it gives him "ideal heroes . . . vividly portrayed" as a model for his own behavior. Like Aeneas, he too can "be found in excellency fruitful": in all circumstances--" in storms,. . . in sports, . . . in war, . . . in peace," in victory or in defeat; in actions to strangers, friends,

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[17] Walter Jackson Bate, ed., Criticism: The Major Texts (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1952), p. 80.

[18] Sidney, p. 89. [19] Bate, p. 80. [20] Daiches, p. 59.

enemies, family; and in his own inward and "outward government."[21] Thus by imitation, he can make of himself a more forthright person. Also by vicariously entering this ideal world, he is uplifted from the ugliness of the real world. He can, moreover, enjoy poetic justice, where the wicked are always punished and the virtuous, rewarded. Or he can see "a world in which evil, whether it triumphs or not, is made to appear so ugly that the reader will in future always wish to avoid it."[22]

In his Apology, then, Sidney vindicated the quality of the world created by poets against the charges of the Puritans by showing it as an "alternative to reality, one in every way superior." For Sidney, perhaps, this was literature's ultimate worth, one that surpassed all others. And it is worth noting that "while Sidney was replying to a Puritan attack on poetry, he . . . was a Puritan himself. He was also . . . a neo-Platonist, a humanist, and a poet. His defense of poetry [is] a noble attempt to combine all three positions."[23]

Like Horace, he was typically pragmatic. He saw poetry as dulce et utile, but the blend of sweetness and delight was a consequence of poetry's instructive value, that is, "the moral effect was the terminal aim."[24] Whereas,

> Aristotle's Poetics had been a declaration of independence for poetry as well as a justification of it; Sidney is content to achieve the latter at the expense of the former. And if--with some justice--we think Sidney's position naive, we might remember that from his day to ours the vast majority of readers of imaginative literature have taken substantially his view and generally applied it with less cunning and sensitivity.[25]

A later Neoclassicist who also subscribed to the pragmatic theory--viewing literature as a form of instruction--was John Dryden, traditionally

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[21]Sidney, p. 95. [22]Daiches, p. 69. [23]Ibid., pp. 58, 70.

[24]Abrams, p. 16. [25]Daiches, p. 72.

considered the father of English Criticism. Though he was a pragmatist, unlike Sidney, he was not preoccupied with vindicating literature's worth--an understandable attitude in view of the respectable standing that literature, with the exception of drama, had acquired for itself by this time. More practical than theoretical, Dryden tended rather to discuss specific matters, usually matters of technique and method.

This casual and personal method of writing criticism is most aptly illustrated in the one work considered his "only formal work of criticism,"[26] the Essay of Dramatic Poetry. As revealed in the Essay, Dryden begins his investigation with the nature of literature. And to apprehend its nature, he defines it as an imitation, the predominant aim of which is to delight and instruct. More specifically, however, the definition which appears in this work describes a play as

> a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind.[27]

With this definition, then, Dryden identifies his idea of the true nature of literature. It is an imitation of the concrete world. However, the world he sees as the object of imitation is not the "golden" world of Sidney, where its ideal heroes--portrayed so vividly that they move the audience to imitate their virtues--people a world in which good always triumphs and evil is put down. Rather, he sees literature's model of imitation as human nature, every aspect of its emotional and mental state, its ups and downs, its "changes of fortune." And this definition, with its model of imitation, wherein human nature is seen as reacting to the experiences of life, describes essentially the nature of poetry.

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[26]George Watson, The Literary Critics: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 37.

[27]John Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poetry, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 132.

But this definition does more than sustain the Aristotelian theory of mimesis. It incorporates Horace's dictum that poetry is sweet and also instructive, and with this double purpose, indicates the consciousness on Dryden's part of literature's content and form, even though he sees them as separate entities. The content, of course--being the concrete world--is composed of Aristotle's "things as they were or are." But more particularly, literature's subject matter is that of the world where human nature is shown in all its glory and ignominy, caught as it were in a web of circumstances that reveal the mutability of life and man's ability, or inability, to cope with its uncertainties, these being the ultimate test "that illuminates character." And characteristic of the undemocratic age in which Dryden lived, only that segment of human nature which could possibly qualify for imitation is the "'great'" natures, for only these represent an "external impressiveness," and only these--a Hamlet, an Alexander the Great, a Cleopatra--"whose fate involves more than their own domestic fortunes,"[28] are caught in situations acceptable for the literary imagination. This, then, making up the doctrinal content, is the concrete world, the subject matter of "things as they were or are," that part of Aristotle's theory generally accepted at the time.

But later Dryden is to extend his ideas to include the rest of Aristotle's theory, namely that the poet might also imitate "things as they are said or thought to be" and "things as they ought to be." Enlarging the scope of imitation, therefore, would free the writer to imitate native tales and legends.

> "Poets [he states] may be allowed the liberty for describing things which exist not, if they are founded on popular beliefs.

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[28]Daiches, pp. 74, 76-77.

> Of this nature are fairies, pigmies and the extraordinary effects of magic; for 'tis still an imitation, though of other men's fancies; and thus are Shakespeare's Tempest and his Midsummer Night's Dream. . . . to be defended."

With the inclusion in his criticism of this clause of Aristotle's theory, Dryden did two things for literature: he indicted those of Hobbesian persuasion who would confine the writer to the stricture of versimilitude and he "commended supra-natural themes, including 'the fairy ways of writing', to which coherent and convincing form had been given."[29] More than this, he became specific in his defense by speaking out for the practices of Skaespeare.

Also, the writer, by imitating "things as they ought to be," the remaining clause in Aristotle's theory, can portray an ideal imitation. In this view, however, Dryden, contrary to Sidney and his ideal representation, conceives of Nature as being "subject to change and decay," a process that she tries to correct and a process that the poet in turn imitates. In explanation, Atkins says:

> Yet Nature ever strives to correct these defects by aiming at perfection in all her creations; and art in like manner imitates the creative processes of Nature in also striving to represent things in that ideal form. Hence in poetry . . . an idealized form of life and humanity is depicted; we see therein 'the scattered beauties of Nature united by a happy chemistry, without its deformities or faults'.[30]

Thus, the universe that Dryden offers for imitation allows the poet a wide range of subject matter.

There is, however, also the matter of form. And the definition--including as it does a two-part aim--implies that human nature must be presented in a pleasing manner and the style must be "lively": it will

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[29]J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1950), p. 111. (Hereinafter referred to as Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries).

[30]Ibid., p. 112.

delight and in so doing will instruct. This directive, therefore, leads to certain inferences about form and style: Namely, it must be of such a nature that the content, or the psychological knowledge inherent in the content, is palatable--in other words, Dryden endorsed Sidney's doctrine of "food for the tenderest stomachs."[31] But to effect the transmission of this psychological realism, the poet who creates is one who "works under the control of a higher reason,"[32] while at the same time he is conscious of technique and methods. This view then brings up the question of Dryden's stand on the controversial issue of the times--that of models and their imitation. Briefly, he believed--and this is in accordance with Longinian doctrine[33] to which he was exposed through Boileau--that imitation, whether based on classical, French, or native models, is a "process of the spirit," both inspiring and illuminating. In his preface to Troilus and Cressida, he explains:

> "Those great men whom we propose to ourselves as patterns of our imitation, serve us as a torch . . . to enlighten our passage, and often elevate our thoughts as high as the conception we have of our author's genius."[34]

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[31] Sidney, p. 90.

[32] Atkins, Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, p. 15.

[33] This doctrine is expressed in a treatise entitled On the Sublime. According to Bate in Criticism: The Major Texts, pp. 59-62, it is believed to have been written by a certain Greek rhetorician Longinus sometime in the first century, A. D., "[stressing] the extent to which emotional intensity and imaginative power are innate and 'beyond the reach of art' and of rules." This is not to say, however, that "genius is degraded by rules" and art is a "mere self-expression, uninhibited and 'unballasted' with knowledge." This work was "virtually unknown until it was published during the Renaissance (1554)," after which it was translated into Latin and other languages. It was the translation of Boileau (1674), the famous French Neoclassicist, however, that influenced the thinking of Dryden.

[34] Atkins, Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, pp. 15, 113.

To explain his theory of form, Dryden sets up three general headings to direct the discussion: "inventio [invention], dispositio [arrangement], and elocutio [expression]." The invention of subject matter, he says, is a matter of genius; no rules are possible in this respect. As for arrangement, however, rules are not wanting. A poem or play should be a unit, "free from irrelevancies or trifling ornaments." And, in regard to a play, the protagonist, or main character, should be made prominent, that is, he should be "placed in the foreground with minor characters (or episodes) in support; the passion besides should be discreetly handled; while the use of contrast [is] also said to be effective . . ." Moreover, expression, or style, "an element in poetry which he frequently [compares] to the colouring in a picture . . . should be skillfully varied": in some passages of a work, it should be made colorful by metaphorical and musical language "and neat turns of thought"; whereas in other passages, the language should be free of ornaments and "couched in a quieter vein."[35]

But so much for rules. Dryden closes this discussion of poetic form by pointing out that these aspects should not be belabored, for too studied an application of technique in style will produce a form both uninspired and mechanical.

> "A work [writes Dryden] may be over-wrought as well as underwrought; too much labour often takes away the spirit by adding to the polishing, so that there remains nothing but a dull correctness, a piece without any considerable faults but with few beauties; for when the spirits are drawn off there is nothing left but a caput mortuum."[36]

Thus,

> ". . . since moral teaching, it is said, is the chief business of the poet, his first task [is] to decide on the moral to be conveyed. This

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[35]Ibid., p. 114.

[36]Ibid.

> [will] direct the whole action to one centre; after which a suitable theme [will] suggest itself, together with characters, thoughts and style in keeping with the theme."[37]

Here it is worth noting that contained in these words is an obtrusive example of Dryden's conception of content and form as separate elements, a primitive and mechanical view in terms of modern critical theory. For him, apparently, with his eye on instruction, the tune to be played is inventio, dispositio, and elocutio.

Such then are Dryden's theories concerning the nature and art of peotry in general; and just as his definition explained the essential nature of drama and implied the separation of content andform, so too did it indicate literature's function. The story must at the same time please and instruct. Literature thus is not a pleasure all its own. It must be justified as to function, that function being the transmission of information--the delineation for the audience of the depths of human nature, its virtues and vices, in a style both interesting and lively. According to Daiches,

> literature [then] would be a form of knowledge, and it would bear the same relation to psychology as it does in Sidney to ethics. That is, while for Sidney the poet makes vivid and impressive, by his imaginary examples, the ideas of the moral philosopher, so for Dryden the poet makes vivid and impressive, by imaginary examples, the knowledge of the psychologist.[38]

Still, in his definition Dryden put "delight" before "instruction," and from his time on "through the eighteenth century" most critics viewed pleasure as "the ultimate end, although poetry without profit was often thought to be trivial, . . ."[39]

But apart from his definition, Dryden also refers to poetry as pleasure in his essay "Parallel of Poetry and Painting" (1695). Abrams quotes him as saying:

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[37]Ibid., p. 118 [38]Daiches, p. 75. [39]Abrams, p. 16.

> "Having thus shewn that imitation pleases, and why it pleases in both these arts, it follows, that some rules of imitation are necessary to obtain the end; for without rules there can be no art, any more than there can be a house without a door to conduct you into it."

The word end here is equal to the pleasure that imitation affords. Hence, Dryden is saying that pleasure is the terminal aim. Apparently, with Daiches and Abrams there is a variance of opinion as to the function of poetry as revealed by Dryden's thought. And earlier Atkins quoted Dryden as stating that "the chief business of the poet" is that of "moral teaching." Here then are three theories concerning Dryden's view of the chief aim of literature: to instruct morally, to instruct psychologically, to give pleasure. Perhaps Dryden himself had no clear-cut opinion on the matter, a second-guessing matter which might be settled by compromise--namely, what the "optamist moralist" of neoclassic tradition believed: "that if poetry instructs, it only pleases the more effectually."[40]

But however it may be--delight or instruction--the function and value of literature are interrelated aspects. And for Dryden, literature's worth is tied up with the infinite scope of its subject matter; for as an imitation it ranges from human nature ("things as they were or are") to legends ("things as they are said to be") to ideal nature ("things as they ought to be"). Thus, it offers man many worlds in which to explore, to learn, and to take delight. The epic, the form for which Dryden had a predilection, offers the value to be derived from "perfect" heroes as models for one's actions; and, as opposed to tragedy, it is a form that lends itself to a leisurely and careful reading. In speaking of Virgil's Aeneid, he comments:

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[40]Ibid., p. 17.

> " . . . it insinuates itself in insensible degrees into the liking of the reader; the more he studies it the more it grows upon him; every time he takes it up he discovers some new graces in it . . . works such as this are like the diamond, the more they are polished the more lustre they receive."[41]

However, the value Dryden accorded literature is shown more by his actions than his words. He spent a lifetime at writing and his output was volumnious. He "wrote in so many different literary genres--didactic poetry, satire, the lyric, poetic drama, and critical prose--eighteenth-century England looked back on him as the first great model of English classicism." But he has another "first" to his credit. Because "he wrote so much more critical prose . . . than any other English man-of-letters before him, the eighteenth century looked back upon him as the virtual founder of serious English criticism."[42] In fact, Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth-century critic whose views will immediately follow, spoke out in this regard: "'Dryden . . . may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition.'"[43]

But if Dryden was considered the "father of English criticism" by the eighteenth century, Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), who paid him this tribute, was to enjoy an equally venerable position in the realm of criticism. In his work The Literary Criticism: A Study of English Descriptive Criticism (1962), George Watson speaks of him as " . . . our first great scholar-critic."[44] Johnson's approach to literature "is based on Nature, the watchword and controlling idea of eighteenth-century thought."[45]

> The conception of Nature had coloured contemporary speculation in the fields of religion, philosophy, politics and to some extent

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[41]Atkins, Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, p. 131.

[42]Bate, p. 123. [43]Abrams, pp. 16-17. [44]Watson, p. 93.

[45]Atkins, Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, p. 279.

> literature; since its laws, those of reason, were regarded as fixed and stable, the one sure foundation in an age of conflicting thought.

Therefore, on this foundation, the foundation of the ancients, Johnson rests the framework of his literary doctrine, so that its main structure is determined by the principles of "order, proportion, fitness, perspicuity, and the like," principles inherent in Nature as well as in human nature and "embodying qualities satisfying to the mind of rational man." And it is this strong belief in Nature and reason that led Johnson to reject the strict creed of the neoclassical school, which "required an imitation of the ancients, the recognition of certain fixed 'kinds' originated in antiquity, as well as an observance of rules ostensibly derived from the ancients." Nowhere, however, did he "[expound] his theory in complete or systematic form . . ."[46] In fact, "the general cast of his mind is vigorously anti-theoretical"; this is not to say, though, that he had no critical theories. He was, as Watson observes, simply "averse to arguing them at length." Rather his speculations, when he formalized them, gave him freedom to range--"to praise what he [liked] and condemn what he [did] not like," and they "[led] him directly into descriptive criticism." The Preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1765) serves as a good example of his method of indirection, whereby one type of criticism sheltered another type. "The Preface is in essence a brilliant exercise in descriptive criticism [embodying] . . . a major essay in theoretical criticism . . ."[47] And it is this work and scattered comments and remarks from other works that reveal the significance of his judgments.

In like manner, Daiches refers to the inclusive quality of the Preface:

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[46]Ibid., pp. 275, 279.

[47]Watson, pp. 87, 99, 90.

> Though this is a discussion of Shakespeare and not a theoretical treatise on poetics, it is by implication also a statement of the nature and value of drama and of literary fiction generally.[48]

This statement anticipates an exploration of Johnson's views while at the same time it offers a place to start. The Preface, then, as the starting point, is fertile ground--one quotation in particular--from which certain inferences can be drawn concerning Johnson's thought on the nature of literature--its definition, its content and form, and its function and value. In praising Shakespeare's art, Johnson says:

> Nothing can please many and please long but just representation of general nature.[49]

Appearing early in the Preface, this pronouncement is heavy with implication. For one thing, it defines a play as an imitation of "general" nature and one that must be "just." Reminiscent of Dryden's requirement that a play give "a just and lively image of human nature," it prescribes rather that the nature to be imitated be that of a general quality. Daiches explains this "general quality" by saying that

> general nature is for Johnson what is found in most people in most ages--it is, one might almost say, a statistical rather than a philosophic concept. Its opposite is the idiosyncratic, the behavior of only a few people in a few times or places. Yet it would be unfair to say that this statistical concept is not at the same time philosophical, for, Dr. Johnson would maintain, what is most common is most typical and most revealing of human nature as it really is. Reality and generality are in a sense identified: what is most general is what is most real.[50]

From this view must follow the belief in the immutability of human nature, the implication being that literature is concerned with traits that are

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[48]Daiches, p. 81

[49]Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 208.

[50]Daiches, p. 81.

common to all men of all times and excluding particularities, presents reality. Shakespeare, Johnson says, holds up a "faithful mirrour of manners and life."[51] For Johnson, it would seem, poetic truth and "general" truth are synonymous.

But more can be gleaned from Johnson's statement than the view that literature is an imitation of general nature, and as such, is what literature tends "naturally" to be. It also, by implying literature's two-part aim of instruction and delight, reveals Johnson's awareness of content and form, and like Sidney and Dryden, he sees them as separate elements. To be sure, literature that teaches must have something to teach, a meaning to convey. Thus Johnson is concerned with what is taught, and the subject matter the writer selects must be of a general nature in order to effect the aim. In Rasselas he has Imlac point out what the writer must do. He must, Imlac asserts:

> " . . . examine not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind, and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."[52]

In other words, the heroes that are presented in a play should "act according to the general laws of human nature. They are not demigods or supermen, but men, whom we recognize as fellow human beings."[53] The poet decides what aspect of general nature he will imitate and then devises a technique; hence, matter and manner are conceived of separately.

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[51] Johnson, "Preface," p. 208.

[52] Samuel Johnson, "Rasselas," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 206.

[53] Daiches, p. 84.

However, a preoccupation with the general at the expense of the particular, and choosing the content first, does not mean that in painting with such a wide brush the method is a secondary concern. Johnson's statement--"Nothing can please many and please long but just representation of general nature"--makes this clear. For literature that gives pleasure implies concern for form and technique. And no one knew better than Johnson that realism cannot be achieved in literature by portraying card-board characters generalized by abstraction. "Johnson's praise of Shakespeare's psychological realism is by implication a recognition of the importance of the particular, through which the general must be presented."[54] In other words, Shakespeare through his art--his ability to create the psychological plausibility of characters as they speak and act --illuminates general human nature. His protagonists are men acting like men, with whom the audience can identify; men speaking like men: "men [in fact] who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion."[55]

So it is that

> style and plot contribute to the effect of reality, to the illusion that here are real people acting as they do in real life, while at the same time their behavior illuminates those general aspects of human nature which, Johnson insists, are the true concern of the poet.[56]

And it is the pleasing style that delivers the effects.

Thus far, Johnson's statement reveals his views on the essential nature of literature and his aesthetic awareness of content and form. Implicit in the statement also is his feeling about literature's aim. Like Sidney and Dryden, he too adopts the edict of dulce et utile and ascribes to literature and the writer a dual function: instruction and pleasure.

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[54]Daiches, p. 84. [55]Johnson, "Preface," p. 209 [56]Daiches, p. 83.

Literature, therefore, is a form of instruction on the grounds that the dramatist presents a "just and lively" imitation of human nature. But for Johnson it is a general human nature that is to be presented, so that "from this wide extension of design . . . much instruction [may be] derived."

> It is this [Johnson states] which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare, that from his works may be collected a system of civil oeconomical [sic] prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.[57]

But to further extend his function as a teacher, the writer must know more than the nature of man. He must know the conditions, the manners, the customs of Everyman. In Rasselas, Imlac, in speaking of the poet, says:

> "He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths which will always be the same . . . He must write as the interpreter of nature and legislator of mankind and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations, as a being superior to time and place."[58]

To his audience, then, the poet does offer instruction; he is the one who shows his reader "a faithful mirrour of manners and life,"[59] whereby he can profit by the deeds of good and virtuous men and avoid the heartbreak and disgrace of those who pursue evil ways. And to do all this, the poet must be a gifted "superior" creature, one who can transcend "time and place."

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[57]Johnson, "Preface," p. 209 [58]Johnson, "Rasselas," p. 207.

[59]Johnson, "Preface," p. 208.

But literature via the writer also has the aim of transmitting pleasure. It is a form of pleasure because it "can please many and please long." This part of Johnson's statement, then, attributes a delight in connection with literature's function. In other words, not only must the audience be shown the truth, it also must experience pleasure in this showing forth. It is incumbent on the poet, therefore, if he is to present a "lively image," to cultivate an effective style. His expression must be clear and simple, free from the ornaments of epithets, "needless inversions, and harsh and daring figures, all of which [militate] against natural utterance."[60] He must use nothing but general terms--only these can reveal truths general and transcendental.

And to test literature's function as pleasure, Johnson submits it to the laws of "'reason'" or "'nature'" or "'experience '"--all applied in such a way that the pleasure of the audience is sure to be evoked. And his predilection for reason leads him to decry a number of neoclassical rules, pointing to their futility, and to deplore dependence upon the "overrated classic models and the general failure of writers to distinguish between laws of nature and mere conventions."[61] Hence, the writer who can call forth pleasure in his readers will want, as Johnson writes in Rambler No. 156: ". . . to distinguish nature from custom; or that which is right only because it is established."[62]

As for the function of literature, Johnson does not leave his position about its aim undeclared. He specifically states in the Preface that

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[60] Atkins, Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, p. 280.

[61] William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 326.

[62] Bate, p. 202.

"the end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing." At a later point he adds, "the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature and instruct life." And worth noting is the fact that his definition of instruction is moral instruction, an attitude that becomes quite clear when he discusses Shakespeare's faults:

> His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than instruct, that he seems to write without moral purpose.[63]

Needless to say, this aberration—Shakespeare or no—would go against all of Johnson's principles as a literary critic. For, if any one thing, his criticism "rests on the classical conviction that the aim of art . . . is the mental and moral enlargement of man, and that art attains this end through a moving and imaginative presentation of truth."[64] Hence, Johnson's views about the nature of literature, that is what it imitates, are indeed bound up with what the abilities and duties of the poet should be and the function and value literature has as a conveyor of truth.

A final consideration in connection with Johnson's views on the nature of literature is the value he assigns literature. Like Dryden, he saw literature as a knowledge form, deriving its value from its ability to illustrate and illuminate human nature and deriving its pleasure from "seeing human nature thus illustrated and illuminated. . . and from the incidental beauties of expression which the poet employs."[65] All according to the laws of Nature and reason of course.

With Johnson the Neoclassical period came to rest. It was a long period, representing approximately two centuries of concentrated speculation that demonstrated a growing sophistication on the part of critical

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[63]Johnson, "Preface," p. 212. [64]Bate, p. 199. [65]Daiches, p. 84.

endeavors. Bate points out the direction that neoclassic criticism had taken:

> By the close of the seventeenth century neoclassic theory [had] attained its most complete form, with its trust in system and method, its emphasis on "correctness" in structure and style, its feeling of superiority to the ancients, and its belief that its rules are grounded on the "law of nature."

But, "almost in direct reaction to this extreme neoclassic rationalism" there was a growing "tendency toward an emotional conception of taste--a tendency to rest it upon feeling," so that it might be said that " . . . the eighteenth century began with the belief that man's distinctive nature is his reason, [but] it ended with a common belief that what is 'natural' in man is his feelings."[66] Thus the period which saw literature as an imitation of the universe, saw content and form as separate entities and function and value as instruction and pleasure, the period which oriented all critical tenets to a theory that held the poet accountable to the audience--this period anticipated before its close an affective theory in which the poet and his feelings occupied the center from which nineteenth-century thought would proceed.

The Expressive Approach--Romantic Period

With the advent of the Romantic Period (1798-1860), the second period in this evolution, there was in literature, philosophy, art, religion, and politics a marked reaction to and departure from the formal, orthodox rational spirit of Neoclassicism to one characterized by liberalism, freedom of expression, and emotion.

In English literature, the period of Romanticism begins with William Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798) and is the time that the

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[66] Bate, pp. 10, 270.

expressive theory in criticism predominated. This theory puts the poet at the "center of all life and all experience," hence

> . . . the center of art, making literature most valuable as an expression of his [the poet's] unique feelings and particular attitudes and valuing its accuracy in portraying his experiences, however fragmentary and incomplete, more than it values its adherence to completeness, unity, or the demands of genres. It places a high premium upon the creative function of the imagination, seeing art as a formulation of intuitive imaginative perceptions that tend to speak a nobler truth than that of fact, logic, or the here and now.[67]

The expressive theory finds its spirit most clearly defined with such nineteenth-century poet-critics as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. And just as with the Neoclassicists who were guided by Horace, the system of thought for the Romantics found its roots in that of the ancient Longinus, who believed that "the purpose of literature is to be moving, exciting, elevating, transporting and that the "author must possess certain qualities as a man as well as certain skills as a writer."[68] Wordsworth and Coleridge, too, attempted to define literature and to discover its nature by considering its content and form as well as its function and value.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the first great English Romantic, looked to the poet's feelings as the "center of critical reference and by so doing marked a turning point in English literary history,"[69] a time when the preponderance of critical activities shifted its focus from the audience as the central concern to the poet and his mental faculties. And Wordsworth, according to Daiches, was the first English poet of note "to

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[67]William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, rev. ed., rev. and enl. by C. Hugh Holman (New York: Odyssey Press, 1960), pp. 431-32.

[68]Daiches, p. 48.

[69]Abrams, p. 103.

explain, defend, and define poetry by asking how it is produced."[70] In attempting to come to terms with this question, he set forth in the Preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads (1800) his principal theories.

Unlike critics before him, he dismissed the idea of mimesis as the essence of poetry. For him, poetry through the imagination was both a product and a process of the poet's mind. Rather than its being an imitation or representation of the concrete world, it was a "concrete and sensuous illustration of both a fact and a relationship which provides pleasure and at the same time shows the universal importance of pleasure."[71] Moreover, he saw it as "[having] its inception in passionate utterance—rather than, as Aristotle had assumed [as had Sidney, Dryden, and Johnson], in an instinct for imitation."[72]

In exploring his beliefs, Wordsworth's method is defensive, but it is not a defense of poetry, not a concern for the dilemma posed by Plato. Rather the formulations of his theoretical assumptions are a self-defense, an attempt to explain his deep-felt insights. The one thing, however, on which he stands firm and to which he remains true is his concept of the word nature, and on this concept his critical principles rest. But his concept of nature is a more inclusive term than it was for Johnson. For Wordsworth,

> nature . . . means all those aspects of the physical world—the elements, the seasons, rural life—through which the truth of universal harmony and order is given beautiful and permanent form. Human nature instinctively responds to those forms; therefore, the best human condition is one in which man is most directly exposed to the beneficient powers of nature and freed of artificial, intellectual, and social barriers to natural feelings.[73]

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[70]Daiches, p. 90. [71]Daiches, p. 96 [72]Abrams, p. 101

[73]Daniel G. Hoffman and Samuel Hynes, eds., English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 11.

As would be expected, therefore, most of the remarks Wordsworth makes about the poetic process are bound up in the view he takes of man and nature together. Various definitions run throughout the Preface. One defines poetry as "the image of man and nature"; another, as "the breath and finest spirit of all knowledge; . . . the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science"; and still another defines poetry as "the first and last of all knowledge-- . . . as immortal as the heart of man."[74] Thus from these definitions which express the harmony of this relationship between man and nature evolve his theories of the nature of poetry.

Poetry, then, a process and product of the poet's mind (rather than an imitation) has as its fit subject the

> "humble and rustic life"; . . . for there "the essential passions of the heart" are less restrained, simpler, and more "durable"; they may therefore be "more accurately contemplated"; and also in this state "the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature."

This tendency toward "romantic naturalism" which Wordsworth shows in his preference for rural characters is closely related to his theory of poetry's proper language. The language of "urban life, the fashions of society, the technical character of specific occupations, all foster associations in us that are accidental and temporary rather than basic and permanent and these associations color our language." Whereas, the "lasting idiom" is that of the rustic whose "associations and emotions have been molded by 'the permanent forms of Nature,' who 'hourly communicates with the best objects, from which the best part of language is originally derived.'"[75]

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[74]William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), pp. 340, 341.

[75]Bate, p. 332.

Another attribute of poetry, although it cannot be separated from its content,[76] is its manner. Wordsworth felt that it must be geared to truth, the truth that only the humble life can validly illustrate. Like the true Romantic, Wordsworth did not believe that

> . . . genuine poetry or art will depict Nature in a false, idyllic, Arcadian manner, shedding upon it "the light that never was, on sea or land," but will paint it with fidelity and face with fortitude "the sea in anger, and the dismal shore . . ." It is not in fanciful Utopia that we are to live, "But in the very world, which is the world / Of all of us, --the place where, in the end, / We find our happiness, or not at all!"[77]

And as for the manner in which emotion is achieved in poetry, Wordsworth denies its accomplishment by means of stylistic devices. On the contrary, its form "arises from the nature of the poet's perception of his subject--the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'--and of the subject itself." From this view, perhaps, "one might imagine that for the true poet expression takes care of itself. If only the poet has the right kind of perception, what he has to say will be poetry,"[78] and will render man's feelings more consonant with nature. Broadly speaking, this is Wordsworth's belief. But more specifically, he believes that to order and control man's feelings in this way is the gift the poet has of imagination, an educated sensibility that "draws upon a principle of the doctrine called the 'association of ideas' . . . developed by David Hartley and other eighteenth-century English writers."[79] Accordingly, Wordsworth posits that first the object in the physical world must be accurately perceived; upon which perception, feelings of a profound nature are aroused. Then this emotion-

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[76]Content and form were not considered separate entities by those critics who espoused the expressive approach to literature, since the essence of literature for them was expression, an organic process.

[77]Ernest Bernbaum, A Guide Through the Romantic Movement, 2nd ed. (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 89.

[78]Daiches, p. 96.

[79]Bate, p. 334.

laden object--"recollected in tranquillity"--comes under the spell of the imagination which "broods over it, and discerns its essential nature and deepest significance."[80] its true beauty--its kinship, in other words, to the infinite and eternal. For the poet, therefore, the problem becomes one of tuning in to nature, so to speak, in order to make best use of the "visible, audible, tangible, and temporal actualities of the outer world . . . to express his inner life."[81]

But Wordsworth does not leave the subject here. He gives over a good part of his discussion in the Preface to the pros and cons of prose and verse, concluding that "the essential quality of the poet's utterance does not depend on its being in verse rather than prose . . .";[82] that meter "is merely a 'superadded' and 'adventitious' attraction."[83] Still, on the side of verse (since--and he admits this--"professing these opinions" he had written in verse), he has this to say:

> . . . a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose.

Earlier Wordsworth explained that all sympathy is "propagated by pleasure" and when we "sympathize with pain," such sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure."[84]

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[80] Wordsworth, p. 344.

[81] Bernbaum, p. 98.

[82] Daiches, p. 96.

[83] Watson, p. 116.

[84] Wordsworth, pp. 343, 341.

It is worth noting that at the same time Wordsworth is extricating himself from an earlier position in which he pronounced meter as merely a stylistic device to a later position in which he deems it as an affective agent, he is making a case for poetry--the lyric in particular, since it was considered by him and most Romantics as the poetic genre. In the Preface, he states: "the end of Poetry is to produce excitement," but this excitement must be "in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure."[85] Thus poetry's value and function are correlative. Indeed, his "view of the relation of man to the natural world . . . and the significance of the pleasure with which its recognition [is] accompanied" is his fundamental concept. Moreover, "he removes the instruction from the 'instruction and delight' formula of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century critics but saves himself from falling into a simple hedonistic theory by insisting on the moral dignity of pleasure and its universal significance in man and nature." In addition, he declares that the true poet is a teacher and "reveals the relationship of men both to each other and to the external world." Hence, he resolves the Platonic dilemma, Daiches believes, "in a quite new way"[86] (even though this would have been a far-removed concern for Wordsworth). In short, the true aim of poetry, in Wordsworth's view, is the communication of pleasure, pleasure that derives its value from uniting man and nature in such a way that man's feelings are morally dignified.

This concludes the theoretical assumptions behind Wordsworth's own poetic artistry. Undoubtedly, he did to some extent subscribe to the theory of imitation. But imitation for him was illustration and reflection of the poet's mind and soul: "the mirror held up to nature becomes

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[85] Ibid., p. 343.

[86] Daiches, pp. 95, 96.

transparent and yields the reader insights into the mind and heart of the poet himself."[87] The differences lies however in the fact that the poet oriented his views, whereas, the audience had oriented neoclassic thought. His firm belief that the poet is the wellspring from which all poetry flows does of necessity define it as an utterance proceeding from the relationship of harmony between man and nature--"a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings . . . [taking] its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity"[88] --not as an imitation of an imitation; nor of an action; nor that of a "golden" world, nor of human or general nature. "for [him] as for most Romantic theorists, the creative process is immediate and emotional . . .; [he] is typically Romantic in concentrating his critical attention on the artist, not on the reader."

> But Wordsworth is not a pure "self-expressionist"; he recognizes that the initial poetic emotion may be "recollected in tranquillity," thus allowing for the operation of judgment and meditation as well as spontaneity; and he maintains a strong moral bias. "Every poet," he wrote in a letter, "is a teacher"; he teaches by enlightening the understanding and purifying the affections of his readers. This is accomplished by bringing the reader as directly as possible into contact with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.[89]

In truth, Wordsworth's theory has its roots in primitivistic doctrine, and it was he "by doctrine and example, [who] brought into the literary province the store of materials which has since been richly exploited by writers from Thomas Hardy to William Faulkner,"[90] writers whose works not only gain their emotional density and mystic illumination from the elemental sources of nature, but from it take their direction. Nature, for Wordsworth, is the "cardinal standard of poetic value . . ."

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[87] Abrams, p. 23.

[88] Wordsworth, p. 344.

[89] Hoffman and Hynes, p. 12.

[90] Abrams, p. 113.

and ". . . in his usage, is given a triple and primitivistic connotation":

> Nature is the common denominator of human nature; it is most reliably exhibited among men living 'according to nature' (. . . in a culturally simple and especially a rural environment); and it consists primarily in an elemental simplicity of thought and feeling and a spontaneous and 'unartificial' mode of expressing feeling in words.[91]

And, as to feelings, Wordsworth was the first great Romantic poet-critic to make the poet the subject of reference.

For Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), another Romantic poet who "roots his theory in the constitution and activity of the creative mind"[92] and thus embraces the expressive theory, "right critical theory is a cause--the cause." In the one work published in his lifetime, the Biographia Literaria (1817), his critical principles come to light as he examines Wordsworth's theory of poetry and poetic diction; and not only does the Biographia "marshal objections against the Preface [to the second edition of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads] that had been growing up in his mind over the past fifteen years," but it also "[provides] criticism with a systematic basis of its own." In fact, Coleridge was the one considerable English spokesman to convert the eighteenth-century notion of the poet-nature dualism into a "puzzlingly circular process of endless counteraction," so that the

> . . . product of such a process, the poem itself, is of a bafflingly difficult logical status . . . being neither subject nor object but 'an interpenetration of the counteracting powers, partaking of both'; it is neither a thought nor a thing, but what Coleridge later called 'a middle quality' between the two.[93]

At the same time, paradoxically, "he retained a large part of the neoclassic critical tenets and terms which Wordsworth minimized or

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[91]Ibid., p. 105. [92]Ibid., p. 115. [93]Watson, p. 119.

rejected." This "double view" enabled him to produce a "more flexible and practicable" criticism: to "[dwell] on a poem as a poem, and on a poem as a process of mind"; to affirm the "concept of a poem as a quasi-natural organism without sacrificing the indispensable distinctions and analytic powers of the concept that writing a poem is basically a rational and acquired art of adapting parts to parts and of bending means to foreseen ends." It also allowed him to "[remain] free to maintain that the judging of poems . . . must proceed on the assumption that poetry has a "logic of its own, as severe as that of science; . . ."[94]

Coleridge's method of proceeding in this venture is dialectic; but, according to Abrams, "he repeatedly attacked as false the absolute opposition of deduction to induction."[95] For him any literary fact must proceed from first principles, and just as the relationship between nature and man had directed Wordsworth, first principles for Coleridge begin with the productive faculties of the human mind--the source and test of art. His critical principles flow naturally from his "dynamic philosophy" which views life as "an organic process of development toward higher levels of existence." True, life has its mysteries, its enigmas, but nature is to a great degree "knowable," beginning first through sense perception and understanding, and next moving from that to a higher level through the reason and imagination, then, finally through faith to the highest level. These different steps are patterns of development that support one another, each necessary to the attainment of the other, since the human mind "[can] not attain complete truth suddenly but [can] rise toward it only by constant effort and gradual stages."[96] Since literature should give a vision

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[94]Abrams, p. 124. [95]Ibid., p. 115. [96]Bernbaum, p. 64.

of life, and Coleridge felt that it should and that the view should be not as it appears to the understanding, but as it is revealed to the reason; and since the system of his literary thought can be understood only in terms of his postulations on imagination (which he considered a form of reason, or judgment) and the distinctions he drew between imagination and fancy (which he correlated with understanding), it would be profitable at this point to present his ideas on these two faculties of the mind.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century critics treated the terms imagination and fancy synonymously; and what Coleridge terms "fancy" up until his time had been "the total account of poetic invention."[97] But Coleridge considered them as distinct terms, signifying different faculties of the human mind, and he was determined "to cut off the term 'imagination' from its older meaning of an 'image-making' faculty that simply reproduces and combines images derived from sense impressions."[98] The imagination, he believed, is found in two degrees: the primary and the secondary. In the thirteenth chapter of the Biographia, he states:

> The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The secondary Imagination, I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.[99]

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[97]Abrams, p. 168.

[98]Bate, pp. 362-63.

[99]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 387.

Imagination, then, in its primary degree is an agent of the human mind which enables us to perceive order in chaos as the outer world enters our consciousness because we are unconsciously attuned--a basic faculty--to the infinite creator. The secondary imagination uses this power to recreate. It is a vital force which "projects and creates new harmonies of meaning." It "struggles" to discern the underlying idea and to unify. It is "more conscious and less elemental, but it does not differ in kind from the primary."[100]

Fancy, however, which corresponds to the human faculty understanding, is a quite mechanical act.

> Fancy . . . has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.[101]

The mere fancy, therefore, is "skillful only in collecting and combining particulars"; thus it is "inferior to the genuine imagination, which [is] an ally, or even a form, of the reason and [discerns] the general and permanent. True art and literature [partake] rather of the supernatural than of the natural."[102]

Genuine poetry, then, is a child of the imagination. And as art it is an imitation of the reality we call nature. But "the reality of nature is to be found in a process or activity in which the concrete and universal fulfill each other."

> The universal gives to the particular its form, thus permitting it to flower into existence and become what it is. In a similar way, the universal must have the particular in order to fulfill itself.

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[100] Daiches, p. 107.

[101] Coleridge, Biographia, p. 387.

[102] Bernbaum, p. 67.

More specifically poetry imitates this process in nature, acting "as the 'mediator' between nature and man,"[103] explaining and transmitting reality into terms of human feelings and reactions. In short, it

> imitates the essential process of nature, the reconciliation of the universal and the particular . . . by translating its insight into a given medium: . . .in a drama, into words, metaphors, verse-rhythms, and the interplay of characters and incidents, rounded and harmonized to an ordered end.[104]

But as an "abridgement of nature,"[105] by which truth is imitated and translated into terms that can be humanly apprehended, poetry is not imitation as Aristotle and the pragmatic critics saw it; rather it is an instinctual expression which imitates truth. Beginning as a seed in the mind of the poet, "a poem is not created," it evolves; "it grows like a tree as if with an inner life of its own." Thus imitation, for Coleridge, is a dynamic, living representation, which begins with diversity and ends with unity--not a passive copy that having begun with similitude, ends with diversity. Similarly, in all his definitions of art and literature, he speaks of them in terms of organic activity: All true art and literature are a fusion by the imagination of the knower with the knowable object, a fusion which is the highest psychological experience of man because through this experience he has his deepest insights into reality; by it he sees moral and spiritual principles in the universe and in nature its symbolisms. Again, the poem is neither a "thought nor a thing; it is 'a middle quality' between the two."[106]

Ostensibly, then, if Coleridge believes that art imitates the reality of nature, which is in essence the process of nature reconciling the

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[103]Bate, pp. 359, 361. [104]Bate, pp. 360-61.

[105]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 398.

[106]Watson, pp. 124, 119.

universal and the particular, and thereby counterbalancing diversity with unity, in no way could he agree with Wordsworth's poetic principles that the humble life is the best subject for poetry because the feelings of plain, simple people are sincere and natural or that the everyday language of humble people best conveys these feelings and is therefore best suited to poetry. To him this would be too simplistic and certainly not consistent with what Wordsworth practiced in his better poetry.[107] Nor did he agree with the sentimental writers of his day, whose work introduced supernatural beings or agencies which in no way suggested the real forces of the universe, and thus rendered itself "'incapable of exemplifying a moral truth.'"[108] In the Biographia he states:

> I adopt with full faith the principle of Aristotle, that poetry as poetry is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident; that its apparent individualities of rank, character, or occupation must be representative of a class; and that the persons of poetry must be clothed with generic attributes, with the common attributes of the class; not with such as one gifted individual might possibly possess, but such as from his situation it is most probably beforehand that he would possess.[109]

But Coleridge's argument for the ideal does not mean that the poet is to discard the "actual" and pursue the "idyllic."

> If he was a poet of genuine imagination, he would keep in contact with the actual, but would dissever from its representation any features which were accidental, temporary, contingent, and irregular, retaining only what disclosed its permanent nature and its essential relations to the universe.[110]

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[107] Bernbaum in A Guide Through the Romantic Movement, p. 67, explains Wordsworth's practice: "In Michael Wordsworth chose characters that had in a considerable degree a sound and religious education, and the diction he then employed was far above what might be called . . . 'low or rustic.' Those poems which actually kept to the primitive or vulgar were of little value." Coleridge points this out in the Biographia because for him "the best part of language, the most expressive of human nature, originated within the mind and was not natural to the uneducated."

[108] Bernbaum, p. 62.

[109] Coleridge, Biographia, pp. 381-82.

[110] Bernbaum, p. 67.

In his own poems--particularly the two considered his best, The Ancient Mariner and Christabel, and which are explicit examples of the "golden mean" that he endeavored to establish "between the kind of romance which is invented to point a moral, and the kind which is invented merely to entertain and which sheds no illumination upon life"--the content focuses on the primordial theme of Good and Evil; but Good throughout the actions holds steadfast, even though it gets pushed to one side in the wake of Evil's "veiled yet dreadful power, half-repellant, half-fascinating, seizing upon us when least expected, and visiting consequences upon us that are unforeseen." And, Bernbaum comments, "It is a vision of Evil perfectly true to life . . . a vision not an analysis of it, nor a sermon upon it." To achieve his objective in these poems, to find a middle ground between composition to instruct morally and that simply to entertain, Coleridge

> . . . [removes] the incidents, variations of the perpetual conflicts between good and evil, out of the commonplace conditions of ordinary life the trademark of the sentimental writer [into realms] where the forces of good and evil seem invested with supernatural qualities,

harmonizing the supernatural with universal laws to authenticate them and to "[suggest] the eternal mystery of the interpenetration throughout life of spirit and matter, of good and evil."[111] Thus he achieves "for these shadows of the imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."[112] And "what the Ancient Mariner feels in his circumstances, what Christabel [feels] in hers is unerringly in accord with our common human nature."[113]

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[111] Bernbaum, p. 62.

[112] Coleridge, Biographia, p. 376.

[113] Bernbaum, p. 62.

And just as the supernatural and unusual constitute the content of Coleridge's work, so too does the unusual dictate his form and style. He employs the unusual in diction and meter and makes it work toward a purpose--namely, to evoke an air of mystery, wonder, and pathos and to divorce his themes from hackneyed associations. In Christabel, rather than the usual practice of employing an equal number of syllables to a line, he makes use of an equal number of accents, thus gaining greater freedom to adapt the rhythm to any change in content or emotion. Similarly, "in The Ancient Mariner, he [uses] the ballad stanza," but with a difference. "He [avoids] those crudities and ineffective simplicities which [are] apt to appear in even the most beautiful ancient ballads and [introduces] new features into it." The diction gives him trouble, however, in the first version of the latter poem because "he introduced too many archaisms" in his determination to rise above realism; but "later he skillfully removed those that were unnecessary or disturbing."[114]

But where he is particularly brilliant in this latter poem is in his handling of structure, where form (the conduct of the action) and content (the supernatural) fuse into an aesthetic whole of supreme artistry. "In the plot there is nothing 'romantic' in the bad sense of the term, nothing meandering, digressive, episodic; all is balance and order . . ." And just as he achieves this symmetry of form, so too does he establish credibility for the supernatural; that is,

> . . . [he] makes the suspension of disbelief as easy as possible by introducing only such supernatural beings and incidents as had long been believed in by former generations and appealed for faith to a kind of hereditary memory.[115]

These observations, of course, have mainly to do with Coleridge's practices as a poet, but they do support his theory that "true" poetry is

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[114]Bernbaum, p. 63.

[115]Ibid., pp. 63-64.

ideal and imitates the reality of nature. In more general terms, however, his views on form and content, subsumed as they are under his concepts of imagination and organicism, come to light most explicitly in a passage from his Shakespearean criticism when he writes:

> The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a pre-determined 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 fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form.[116]

From this statement, then, form in genuine poetry is determined by the content and is not falsely superimposed upon it in a calculated manner. It cannot be separated from the content because it cannot fulfill its function as a shaping and guiding agent unless there is something to be formed. It cannot have an existence of its own; it depends upon content as content depends upon it for its individuality, for its moment of self-exposition whereby it achieves its individuality. And both elements, in turn, depend upon the poet whose imagination--having first discerned the "Natur-geist, or spirit of nature."[117] in that which is to be formed--in the process of fulfilling the form brings the universal to focus in the individual.

Again, as with content and form, imagination and organicism dictate Coleridge's views concerning the function and value of poetry. In this way he is a Platonist (Bate says that he is "always maintaining

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[116]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to His Genuis," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 392.

[117]Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art," p. 397.

that he is a Platonist, not an Aristotelian"[118]). But, in a sense, he is also an Aristotelian. The care Coleridge takes with distinctions in the Biographia is reminiscent of the method of Aristotle. And when in his "disquisition" here, he defines a poem as a means to an "object," "Purpose," or "end,"[119] he is quite in the tradition of neoclassic criticism, whether he intends to be or not. Thus, in his winding argument that leads from the distinction between prose and a poem, to the definition of a poem and poetry, respectively, he makes clear the purpose of each form. For prose its ultimate aim is the communication of truth; for the poem, "immediate pleausre," a pleasure engendered by its special kind of form that provides a double pleasure in that the delight that comes from the whole work is consonant with and even led up to by the pleasure taken in each part. This distinction, then, not only satisfies the poem's function, it justifies its being. But a poem's value "[derives] partly from its qualities as poetry (so that its value would be that it achieves and communicates that great imaginative synthesis which is both valuable in itself and is a special kind of awareness or insight)."[120] Indeed, Coleridge's constant and most emphatic iteration is that poetry brings "the whole soul of man activity."[121] And on the basis of this accomplishment, perhaps, the case for its value and justification should rest. Daiches remarks that "it is in the last analysis through [his] new definition of the imagination that Coleridge is able to escape completely from Plato's dilemma."[122] Nonetheless, Watson argues that "the question of

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[118]Bate, p. 360.

[119]Coleridge, Biographia, pp. 377-78.

[120]Daiches, p. 109.

[121]Coleridge, Biographia, p. 379.

[122]Daiches, p. 110.

values is scarcely an aspect of his criticism at all . . . that Coleridge hardly ever tells you whether he thinks a poem is good or bad." There were, he felt, too many "dabblers" around, "eager to know which were good books and which bad." Coleridge was more abstract than this. He was captivated by "all of man's creation" and "had a passionate curiosity to explore it."[123]

"So literary criticism is for Coleridge intimately bound up with, and finally perhaps subordinated to a quest for metaphysical knowledge." His questions are not those of Johnson, his great Neoclassicist predecessor, who asks "'Does this poem satisfy our commonsense for emotional and moral truth and validity?'"; nor those of his contemporary and friend Wordsworth, who "in his insistence on judging poetry directly by the standard of the emotional and moral integrity of its language" is closer to Johnson than to Coleridge. But of course neither Johnson nor Wordsworth is the theorist that Coleridge is--their concerns are addressed more to poetry's function and value and its effect on the reader than to metaphysics. "But Coleridge, initially certain only of the mysterious existence, in a continuum, of nature and the mind, asks the question, 'What is the structure of reality?'" He sees

> . . . works of art [therefore] as data of the mind's structure and organic operation, which reflect, in turn, nature's structure and operation.[124]

Thus, although he is an exponent of the expressive theory, which holds the poet central to all other elements, it is the action of the poet's mind that matters, the theory that explains the counteractive forces between the human mind and nature, between art and nature. Hence for Coleridge,

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[123] Watson, pp. 113, 114.

[124] Walter Sutton and Richard Foster, eds., Modern Criticism: Theory and Practice (New York: Odyssey Press, 1963), p. 28.

the ideal poet is defined by his qualities of genius.

> "To have genius [he writes] is to live in the universal, to know no self but that which is reflected not only from the faces of all around us, our fellow-creatures, but reflected from the flowers, the trees, the beasts, yea from the very surface of the waters and the sands of the desert. A man of genius finds a reflex of himself were it only in the mystery of being."[125]

Indeed, through the imagination, "he brings" his "whole soul into activity."[126] For him "only a theory of poetic creation matters; he analyzes, not so much poems as they exist, but the creative act that makes them what they are." This central concern appears to Watson as "an interest of revolutionary significance." A first in English criticism. He expresses it thusly:

> No English critic since Dryden had much concerned himself with the question of poetic process, and Dryden's interest had been no better than a passing one, based on his acquaintance with Hobbesian psychology. For eighteenth-century critics, a poem is simply there, and it is the variety of uniformity of human reactions to it that is worth discussing. With Coleridge, creation is centeral.[127]

And for Coleridge the creative act is an act of growing, of evolving, of becoming. There is no studied concern for the value principle of poetry or for the ideal reader. There is just the Imagination. His elaborate dialectic is designed in large measure to show just this.

Literary consensus places Coleridge above all other English critics today, partly because his criticism has a philosophical foundation. His theory of the imagination "was the first important channel for the flow of organicism into the hitherto, if perhaps not very deep, stream of English aesthetics . . ."[128] In fact, "his ideas, unfinished and even contradictory as they sometimes are, remain remarkably current and make

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[125] Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 394.

[126] Coleridge, Biographia, p. 379.

[127] Watson, p. 112.

[128] Abrams, p. 168.

him the patriarch of modern criticism." One has only to consider his theories of organic form and the imagination to recognize the "kinship" between the views of Coleridge and twentieth-century thought.

> The theory for form is based on the principle that the essence of existence is not matter, but process; the work of art is a record of such process and therefore has the same oganic relationships among its parts as has any other vital thing. Thus the work must be judged as a whole, and the parts cannot be arbitrarily separated for criticism. The vital force in the mind which creates a work of art Coleridge called Imagination; it corresponds in his theory to the creative process in nature ("the eternal act of creation") by which matter and form are fused and given life. In attributing power to the imagination, Coleridge rejected eighteenth-century mechanistic theories of the creative process, and laid the groundwork for modern "ontological" theories of poetry, and for the common view of the poem as an autonomous existence.[129]

Poetry, Coleridge defines "as the general activity of the imagination"; a poem, a "particular structure of words."[130] And it is this "particular structure" that gives it the autonomy that twentieth-century critics accord it.

The Objective Approach--Period of the New Criticism

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the twentieth, between Wordsworth and Coleridge, the two Romantics most central to the expressive theory, and the New Critics, who view poetry as a serious body of knowledge, as an autonomous source of revelation, and expound the objective approach to literature, there resides "a multiplicity of viewpoints and traditions of greater or lesser continuity," so great, in fact, that "in the present century literary criticism has become a major intellectual discipline." And going back to the first World War "with the growing interaction between American and English critics . . . modern criticism became internationalized,"[131] a fact aptly illustrated by the immigration

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[129] Hoffman and Hynes, p. 41. [130] Daiches, p. 110.

[130] Sutton and Foster, pp. 3, 5.

to London of such American poet-critics as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot and by the establishment in the United States at a later date of the British critic I. A. Richards. Perhaps Ezra Pound did more than any twentieth-century critic in the years before World War I to foster an international Imagist movement, a force which "inaugurated a poetic renaissance, but also developed a theory to support it." Indeed, Pound "[broke] the mold of old forms, [pioneered] new ones, and [advocated] a rigorous discipline for both the critic and the poet . . . ." About this same time T. S. Eliot came under the influence of Pound, and he and "other 'classicists' focused upon problems of technique and structure," concentrating their efforts formalistically and aesthetically on the nature of the work itself, rather than on the work in relation to its author, its audience, or the circumstances of its composition--that is, with the tradition of historicism or positivism, a tradition which had dominated criticism in the last years of the nineteenth century and which these twentieth-century critics were finding intolerable. Still, even though the aesthetic was emphasized, Eliot, and those of like persuasion, did demonstrate in their methods the influence science was having on criticism in their "preoccupation with impersonality, 'objectivity,' and precision of method." And it was Eliot, with his 'impersonal theory' of poetry and his definition of the 'objective correlative' and 'disassociation of sensibility'. . ...". who was to significantly influence the New Criticism. Eliot is also to be credited with "the postwar vogue of seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry and the poetic criteria of intellectuality, wit, and detachment."[132]

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[132]Ibid., p. 6.

Simultaneously, developments in history and the social sciences--anthropology, psychology, and sociology--were having their effect on criticism. In 1920 Sigmund Freud advanced his theory of psychoanalysis, which let loose a flurry of concerns with such nonliterary concepts as dream symbolism, the stream of consciousness, and psychobiography, all of which could be applied to literary theory and criticism.

However, these new developments in theory and practical criticism were to turn the critical scene in another direction, "inspiring a counter-revolution against the forces of science and modernism." This movement led by Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More under the banner of the New Humanism rejected romanticism and naturalism and "stressed the dualism of man and nature." Opposing determinism, "they asserted man's moral responsibility and his need of discipline by the 'inner check.'" They, like Matthew Arnold, the late nineteenth-century moralist critic, considered themselves an elite group "entrusted with the traditional moral and cultural values in an age of confusion." Their moralistic views, "their distrust of democracy, and their hostility to the literature of their time" engaged them as anti-modernists in "an extended controversy" with the modernists and "culminated in the publication, in 1930, of rival symposia defending and attacking the New Humanist position." But they always "tended to be more interested in moral and cultural questions than in critical theory . . . ."[133]

Following the New Humanists, "in the midst of the general deprivation of the 1930's, . . . "a growing concern for the social, economic, and political implications of literature," in both England and America, gave rise to Marxist criticism, a criticism which saw literature as "an

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[133]Ibid.

instrument of propaganda in the cause of revolution."[134] But by the mid-thirties Marxist critics and writers had become suspect; even though, they themselves, by this time had become opposed to the "rigidity and oversimplifications of proletarian theory" and were (although "in sympathy with the general objectives of the revolutionary movement,") looking for a way to "integrate Marxist theory" within a larger framework which would include a "larger progressive view" along "with psychology and other systems of thought."[135] Chief adherents to this group are such critics as Edmund Wilson and Kenneth Burke.

But by the second World War a general disillusionment among liberal critics had set in and was reflected in a "growing emphasis upon complexity in literature and upon the irresolvable ironies of the 'tragic vision.'" In reaction to this stress, "new (or renewed) theories of poetic language" emerged along with a growing interest in "the relation between literature and myth." I. A. Richards was an early exponent of these theories, "[helping] to give irony and complexity a new importance as criteria of literary value and [encouraging] further studies assuming the identify of poetry and myth."[136] And it was he as well as T. S. Eliot who gave impetus to the New Criticism, "which arose in England in the late twenties, spread to the United States in the years before the Second World War, and showed signs of dominating academic criticism, especially in America, after 1945." Two events led up to the establishment of this system as so characteristically American (so much so that Watson observes that "it is easy to forget its largely British origins"): first, the advent of Richards to the United States in 1939 and his [fixing] upon

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[134] Ibid. [135] Ibid., p. 7. [136] Ibid.

anti-historical criticism the . . . epithet of 'new'"[137]; and, second, the appearance of John Crowe Ransom's The New Criticism a year later. Thus the New Criticism followed hard on the heels of a myriad of critical views, views that spanned almost a century of controversial speculation between romantic expressionism and neocritical objectivism.

In the United States, the "nucleus of this movement, which was already well established when . . . Ransom's The New Criticism appeared in 1941," was a group of teacher-critics--"Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate, R. P. Warren, and others associated with Ransom at Vanderbilt University in the 1920's and early Thirties."

> [This group]. . . attracted many followers and achieved a position of strength, particularly in the universities, where a curricular revolution was replacing the older historical scholarship. Unlike the socially oriented criticism of the Thirties, the more formalistic New Criticism was devoted to problems of language and structure. The emphasis on wit and paradox and irony, already introduced by Eliot and Richards became programmatic in works like Cleanth Brooks' Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939) and The Well Wrought Urn . . . (1947). Taking their cue from I. A. Richards' distinction between the language of poetry and the language of science, most of the New Critics accepted and promoted Ransom's idea of an "ontological" critical theory that would give poetry status as a unique source of knowledge. They also attempted to maintain a distinction between formal or aesthetic criticism and criticism which is in some sense social or historical. This distinction was reinforced by René Wellek and Austin Warren's Theory of Literature (1949), which assumed a dichotomy between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" modes of literary study.[138]

And although there was a growing interest in the relation of literature and myth, and the theories of Coleridge and Richards implied this relationship, the study of myth had little interest for most of the leading New Critics; rather, the emphasis with them was on rhetorical and linguistic analysis.

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[137] Watson, p. 202. [138] Sutton and Foster, pp. 7-8.

Thus, "it is the New Critics who are usually meant when modern criticism is attacked,"[139] with the point of attack aimed at their tendency to stress words at the expense of ideas. To them, the paraphrase of a poem is of little concern. Rather the real meaning of a poem inheres in the interaction of the words. "They point to the kind of poem that takes two opposite stands at the same time, thus negating the possibility of meaning in a prose sense in order that it may mean in a poetic sense." In short, "what the New Critics are saying is that poetry is about a complex state of consciousness of which ideas are only one, very inadequate expression." That which a word states in the poem and which reduces to a paraphrasable prose meaning is far from the complete substance of a poem because "words have in their contexts--their contexts in individual and collective experience--an organic life like that of consciousness."

> Of this organic life, any specific meaning of the word is, like meaning in poetry, only one inadequate expression. Poetic discourse uses more of the organic life of the word than prose discourse does.[140]

Generally speaking, the New Critics take off from Coleridge and affirm that there is "a special 'logic' of the imagination." And again, like Coleridge, they show that there is a difference between the language of poetry and that of prose and that this special language of poetry--for its purposes--is "just as exact as the language of discursive prose." And when they speak of the "special language of poetry," the term poetry here is used in the larger sense, for these critics have done work also in fiction and drama ("less well, however, because fiction and drama do

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[139] Robert Langbaum, The Modern Spirit (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 10.

[140] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

not so easily lend themselves to microscopic analysis").[141] But their best work has been done with the lyric, and Langbaum believes that the New Critics

> . . . have done more than any critics since Coleridge to re-establish, after the challenge of science, the intellectual validity of poetry, to rescue poetry from the general modern sense of it as a kind of inexact prose decorated with metaphors and 'souped up' with emotion.[142]

Although the New Critics emphasize their method as an intrinsic approach, with all work completely within the poem, it is by going outside the poem, by making use of what Langbaum refers to as "nonliterary concepts" that they are able to build their case for the "exactness" of poetic language. The concepts they call upon are, in the main, those of psychology "and especially--as the movement developed from Richards to Empson to such American New Critics as Ransom, Tate, Brooks, Warren--Freudian concepts." Thus "the idea of subconscious processes leads to the idea of other dimensions of reality."

> Images or symbols are pre-conscious and pre-analytic modes of thinking. When used consciously in poetry, they are, far from being mere decoration, the most exact modes for thinking with both the conscious and unconscious mind about the whole of reality.

The terms and ideas used most consistently by the New Critics stem from the commerce they see between poetry and the subconscious. Since in poetry connotations of a word take precedence over denotations, they allow for "ambiguities of meaning and ambivalences of judgment," whereby "all possible meanings of a word operate at the same time. . . ." It is the same in dream or free association. As for ambivalence, an object in a dream can symbolize opposite things; and "subconsciously, we can love and

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[141] Ibid., pp. 11, 12, 14. [142] Ibid., p. 12.

hate the same person." Based on Freud, "such anomalies" are a part of reality and work by a "psychological 'logic'" which "is analogous to the 'logic' of art, to the orchestration of meanings by which certain art communicates."[143] Or, indeed, to the "logic" of the imagination.

The New Critics have worked best (and this work "is indeed necessary," Langbaum asserts) "with the literature that deals with the subconscious and with a multidimensional reality, but deals with them as psychological experience and not—like Dante or Spenser—as allegory." The poetry they have concentrated on and which has yielded most effective results is the witty, metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century, particularly that of John Donne, whose telescoped images are seen not simply as rhetorical devices but are a means of producing emotion, the kind of emotion, in other words, "which is, as Freud showed in his study of wit, rooted in subconscious processes."[144] And, in spite of their anti-romantic disposition, they have also analyzed romantic poems to good advantage, finding them excellent examples to illustrate their methods. (Cleanth Brooks in his book The Well Wrought Urn (1947) has analyzed the poetry of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Keats, three leading Romantics).

Langbaum offers an economic and humorous summation of the New Critics situation. In Speaking of their contribution, he says:

> If we start with the idea that there is a special 'logic' of the imagination and that poetry is a serious body of knowledge, even of revelation, then it behooves us to find out and to be able to talk about what the poem itself is saying. For what it is saying will be more complex than anything you could learn about it through a study of its sources, or of the period in which it was written, or of the author's life and ideas. The sort of procedures from which it has delivered us is that of the old-time English professor who, in teaching Marvell's "Coy Mistress," would talk about the English Civil War and about Marvell's life, his Puritanism, his reading, his friendship with Milton, and finally, just as the bell rang, would

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[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid., pp. 13, 14.

> say, "And as for the poem, gentlemen, beautiful, beautiful." The story explains why the New Critics had to adopt that particular strategy of combat.[145]

Thus far, the concern has been to bridge the critical scene in literature, with its complex of critical views, from English nineteenth-century Romanticism and the expressive theory to the twentieth-century objective theory as represented by the New Critics, beginning as it were with Richards in England in the 1920s and moving from there to America in the late 1930s with such teacher-critics as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Cleanth Brooks. It has also been thought profitable to offer at the same time an overview of the system of thought central to the New Critics before examining in profile certain New Critics important to the movement. Be that as it may, the New Critics which will direct this section of the chapter have been selected according to theextent that each has dominated the critical scene and to the degree the thinking of each has offered divergent views and terminology in regard to the nature of literature--its defining qualities and its content and form and function and value.

Whether or not I. A. Richards would be considered a New Critic is a moot question. But the fact that he was a pioneer of the movement is not. Watson states that his "claims to have pioneered Anglo-American New Criticism of the thirties and forties is unassailable," unassailable in that he furnished the theoretical groundwork "on which the technique of verbal analysis was built."[146] And even though his "analytical work . . . is overlaid by a theory of the psychic effect of poetry" so that the "only value of art is in the psychic organization it imposes on us. . . .," Richards, undoubtedly, was the one who " . . . [turned] attention to the

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[145]Ibid., p. 13.

[146]Watson, p. 196.

language of poetry,"[147] And even though this desired balanced pose, which Richards calls the theory of "synaesthesis" and which he later applied to his poetry of "inclusion" and "synthesis,"[148] demands that we order our impulses and "leads to a complete divorce between the poem as an objective structure and the reader's mind so that poetry is deliberately cut off from all knowledge and even reference to reality,"[149] his "interest in the meaning of meaning, in semantics," has offered a terminology to some of the New Critics, who, although they "[do] not share his philosophical assumptions," are indebted to him for such "key terms" as "attitudes, tensions, ambiguities, and irony."[150] (Italics mine.) In respect, then, to the theories fathered by him, theories which gave impetus to the New Criticism, Richards will be discussed.

Richards' theories reveal themselves, of course, in his writings and may be divided into his early writings and his later writings, as they respectively illuminate his views on the nature of literature. The early writings--Meaning of Meaning (1923), The Principles of Literary Criticism (1924), and Practical Criticism (1929)--indicate Richards' espousal of the organic theory of literature--hence, the integration of content and form; although, as Wellek puts it, he "hardly bothers about form"; rather "form is totally dispensed with, dissolved into attitudes and impulses."[151] As to function and value, these two, are relegated to the psychological realm, wherein literature becomes the mere agent for arousing impulses in the poet and reader alike.

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[147] René Wellek, Concepts of Criticism, with an Introduction and ed. by Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 352.

[148] Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 615.

[149] Wellek, p. 352.

[150] Ibid., p. 324.

[151] Ibid., p. 59.

The later writings--Coleridge on Imagination (1934) and Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936)--emphasize even more the organic nature of literature and the inseparable relationship of content and form. However, in these works literature becomes an object with autonomy, functioning as a structure of intuition and truth, and acquiring value in terms of its revelatory power. These publications, therefore, proved fruitful to the New Critics with their interest in the complexity of literature and in an instrument "that would give literature status as a unique source of knowledge."[152]

The Principles of Literary Criticism, Richards' first book of strictly literary aesthetics, identifies poetry as "the supreme form of emotive language,"[153] whose value lies in its use of language for the sake of its effects in emotion and attitude. Here Richards defines literature, specifying its character as an agent for arousing impulses in both poet and reader. He then introduces his principle of poetic tension along with the terms "inclusion" and "synthesis," which he applies to poetry and by them judges "bad poems" and "defective poems." And in his thinking, the great and valuable poetry calls forth impulses organized by "synthesis" and "inclusion," whereas a less valuable type of poetry, one deficient in a rich organization of impulses, operates by "exclusion" and "elimination." Based on impulses, therefore, Richards views the content and form of poetry as organically related and is concerned with "[distinguishing] a richer, deeper, and more tough-minded poetry from a more 'limited and exclusive' kind of poetry."[154] He maintains that

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[152]Sutton and Foster, p. 8.

[153]I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, 5th ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1934), p. 267.

[154]Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 619.

> a very great deal of poetry and art is content with the full, ordered development of comparatively special and limited experiences, with a definite emotion, for example, Sorrow, Joy, Pride, or a definite attitude, Love, Indignation, Admiration, Hope, or with a specific mood, Melancholy, Optimism, or Longing. And such art has its own value and its place in human affairs. . . .But it is not the greatest kind of art; . . . [155]

In fact, this limited kind of poetry is "unstable" compared to the peculiar stability of the poetry of synthesis which gains its effects through irony.

> The difference comes out clearly if we consider how comparatively unstable poems of the first kind [poetry of exclusion] are. They will not bear an ironical contemplation. . . .Irony in this sense consists in the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses; that is why poetry which is exposed to it is not of the highest order, and why irony itself is so constantly a characteristic of poetry which is.[156]

Thus, the poetry of exclusion limits itself to one experience, say, Love; the poem "excludes" any conflicting element that will diminish this particular emotion, such as an element suggestive of the ephemeral quality of erotic love or love's vulnerability to human caprice; therefore, it cannot sustain "ironical contemplation." In other words, by this exclusion, which has omitted antithetical elements within the context, irony is thereby eliminated. The poem, consequently, fosters a sentimental attitude, precluding any realistic connection with life. It cannot then be classified as "tough-minded" poetry, a poetry of intellectuality.

And just as poetic tension is a principal concern for Richards, so too is the meaning of words and the way they operate in poetry. His book the Meaning of Meaning (1923) had appeared a year before the Principles, and here "he created a new jargon in semantics and its 'emotive' use in poetry. . . ."[157] After this treatise came Practical Criticism

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[155]Richards, p. 267. [156]Ibid. [157]Watson, p. 197.

(1929), which is a practical application of the method he propounded in the Principles. During this period of publications, Richards is

> . . . primarily a psychologist and semanticist who is interested in the therapeutic effects of poetry, in the reader's response and the patterning of his impulses. [158]

Also with this period of publications—the earlier work, the Principles in particular--the New Critics' interest in the complexity of literature is revealed; but it is not until in his later writings that Richards seemingly turns his back on the psychic effect of poetry and centers his interest on literature as a source of knowledge, the other prime concern of the New Criticism.

Coleridge on Imagination (1934) and the Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936) are the two later works which show Richards' change-over in philosophy. Richard Foster speaks of this change-over as a "conversion." In his book The New Romantics (1962), he states:

> . . . most of the critics viewed the appearance of Coleridge on Imagination in 1935 as the document of a virtual conversion experience--an experience not unlike Coleridge's own "conversion" as Richards himself has spoken of it, from Hartley to Kant. . . .Ransom, however, had tentative reservations about the "conversion" being one to "idealist philosophy," but with the publication of The Philosophy of Rhetoric a year later he cheered the new Richards unreservedly for abandoning the "affective" approach and returning to "objective literature itself" complete with the "cognitions."[159]

With these works, then, Richards relinquishes his psychological view which put the poet and reader at the forefront, making the arousal of their impulses literature's chief function and value and joins forces with the objective approach wherein the work, itself, takes on autonomy

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[158]Wellek, p. 265.

[159]Richard Foster, The New Romantics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 53.

and literature's worth is measured by the service it renders as a knowledge form.

Foster includes a "sample text" "on the nature of language" from the Philosophy of Rhetoric to demonstrate Richards' "conversion" from positivism to idealism:

> "Words [Richard states] are the meeting points at which regions of experience which can never combine in sensation or intuition, come together. They are the occasion and means of that growth which is the mind's endless endeavor to order itself. That is why we have language. It is no mere signalling system. It is the instrument of all our distinctively human development, of everything in which we go beyond the other animals."

This sample, Foster believes, indicates "how far Richards has gone in the direction of abandoning his early reductionist motives and assumptions (man is not like the animals; language is more than a signalling system) and his "willingness now to regard intuition, or the nonrational, as an avenue of knowing."[160]

Although Foster (perhaps because of his purpose, a purpose which the title of his book suggests) speaks of Richards' conversion as an awakening and subsequent rejection of positivistic tendencies, and even parallels his movement toward idealism with that of Coleridge--Romanticism's foremost theorist--Wimsatt comments on Richards' change in a more restrained manner. He states:

> In his Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936), Richards seems to have quietly laid aside the distinction between the referential and the emotive aspects of language and to have devoted himself to an account of a new rhetoric founded upon semantic analysis.[161]

But these views notwithstanding, it is the Philosophy of Rhetoric which contains Richards' context theory, so that "words are now seen to

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[160]Foster, pp. 53, 55-56. [161]Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 641.

be endowed with a kind of life of their own."[162] And it is with this theory that he most concisely explains his views on the nature of literature and the criteria that serve to describe it. It would seem that ". . . what Richards calls broadly a 'context' theory of meaning" allows certain "consequences": "First, words interanimate one another,"[163] They are modified by the whole context in which they find themselves, just as they act as modifiers on this same context, each works bringing the power it has derived from "contexts in the past" to this new matrix; second, the theme or thesis of a poem or drama or piece of fiction is not the complete meaning of the work with everything else relegated "to the role of ornament or detailed illustration." True, it may summarize the meaning, but this is not enough. As the theme, it is "subject to all the pulls and attractions of the other elements of the work"; third, "the poet necessarily tailormakes his language as he explores his meaning. He does not and cannot build up the meaning of his sentences as a mosaic is put together ofdiscrete independent tesserae"; his words take on meaning "only through the interplay of the interpretive possibilities of the whole utterance"; fourth, "the reader, like the writer finds the meaning through a process of exploration" (this consequence suggests a cognitive value for literature and a reversal in Richards' former postulations when he had assigned this value to science alone); and fifth, "metaphor becomes the linchpin joining two contexts . . . quite far apart and, in conventional discourse at least, utterly unrelated." And images that exist merely for their vividness are not the concrete particulars in which Richards is interested. Concrete particulars, for him, gain their importance because they are heterogeneous, and heterogeneity means difference

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[162]Foster, p. 56.

[163]Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 643.

which "insures the sort of confrontation of unlike elements that is necessary to prevent discourse from collapsing into literal statement." But metaphor "fundamentally . . . is a borrowing between . . . a transaction between contexts." It is not "'a grace or ornament or added power of language'; it is 'its constitutive form.'"[164]

Moreover, this contextual theory of meaning that Richards posits in his Philosophy of Rhetoric distinguishes more efficiently between the poetry of "exclusion" and the poetry of "inclusion." The former fails because it does not take into account the larger relevant context of the poem; it excludes from its context contradictory elements of experience which would, through ambiguity, supply a necessary tension and thereby sustain the "ironical squint." The poetry of "inclusion," on the other hand, anticipates a wider range of context. "It has already made its peace with the recalcitrant and the contradictory." Thus, as Richards says, it is "'invulnerable" to "'ironic contemplation.'"[165]

Be that as it may, the form of all poetry for Richards and the criteria that separates good poetry from defective is conceived of as opposing impulses in a state of synaesthesis, or balanced tension, where contemplation becomes the touchstone. And if our impulses are ordered by synaesthesis, the poetry of "inclusion" can transmit experience therapeutically stable; and experience acquired emotionally as well as intellectually is knowledge both infinite and transcendant.

In Richards' own time his approach seemed "wholly novel" and came as a clean, fresh wind to the literary front--particularly did the thought presented in the Principles have its impact. Walter Jackson Bate sees Richards' impact on criticism as having had two major effects: one, it

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[164]Ibid., pp. 643-45. [165]Ibid., pp. 621, 646.

"[popularized] among critics a renewed interest in psychology"; and, two, it "[redirected] the interest of the critic to the text of the particular poem and to the problem of analyzing it in terms of language, imagery, and metaphor."[166] The second effect, however, is the one, according to Wellek, that not only succeeded but also dominated critical fashion in the forties and fifties. He writes:

> Richards' dissolution of poetry into an occasion for the ordering of our impulses, as a means toward mental hygiene seems to me a blind alley of literary theory. But Richards had the real merit of turning attention to the language of poetry. When his central psychological teaching was ignored, his method of analysis could be made to yield concrete results.[167]

In the United States, the New Criticism that takes its direction from Richards originates, as might be expected, at the college level with such teacher-critics as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Cleanth Brooks. As men-of-letters their preoccupation with criticism leads them to speak in different voices. The voice of Ransom and Tate is "'personal,'" "'impressionistic,'" "'speculative,'" that of the critic who may "begin with a text" but will "move away toward general considerations of the imagination, the modern world, the nature of poetry, even the nature of reality." He will disdain the habits of the "academician" and will militate "against 'scientism' and the anti-humane workshop of method," engaging his activities rather in general critical problems that are sometimes something other than criticism. By way of illustration, Foster observes:

> With the exception of a few brief analytical "notes" from Tate, . . . of an occasional illustrative passage from Richards and a few special items like Ransom's study of Shakespeare's language and Tate's detailed discussion of his own "Ode," we have mostly general or "speculative" essays from the critics . . .

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[166]Bate, p. 573. [167]Wellek, p. 352.

In fact, among the major New Critics, only the voice of Brooks, the New Critics with which this section will close, is "impersonal," "textual," and "technically analytical," that of the critic who "[engages] mainly in the detailed and selfless analysis of particular works of literature. . . ."[168] "(John Edward Hardy [in The Hopkins Review, VI (1953), 160-61] praises [his] 'plain, steady, utilitarian manner . . . as an antidote to the dangers of 'inspired' criticism.)"[169] Consequently, Brooks is long on analysis and short on theory; still his analyses serve as brilliant examples in support of theory.

In their "gestures toward theory," the work of Tate, Ransom, and Brooks has been more "casual and essayistic." But when they have theorized, it has been to examine and define the nature of poetry--good poetry, that is, and to defend its importance; and their work has produced "what Richards likes to call 'speculative instruments'--that is, metaphors or catchwords by which to conceive or 'see' or to inquire further into, the nature of poetry."[170] Their "speculative instruments," moreover, have concentrated on the poem as an object in which form and content are inseparable, "the materials . . . completely assimilated into the form" and the form "aesthetically organizing its 'matter'"; "what was 'world' has become language."[171] And collectively they have seen poetry's function and value as a special kind of knowledge.

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[168]Foster, pp. 195, 198, 196. [169]Ibid., p. 195.

[170]Ibid., p. 199.

[171]René Wellek and Austin Warren, The Theory of Literature (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), p. 252.

In his book The New Romantics, Foster has this to say about the New Criticism and about John Crowe Ransom in Particular:

> Of all the New and related critics who have gone in pursuit of theory, it seems to me that John Crowe Ransom [b. 1888] has had the largest and best success. In his whole critical life work he has devoted himself to only two or three major ideas, running them through and through his essays, refining them into, as I believe, the truest speculative instruments of this kind that we have had from any of the critics, including Richards or Coleridge via Richards.[172]

Ransom's speculative instrument is most explicitly set out in the last chapter ("Wanted: An Ontological Critic") of his book The New Criticism. Here he defines a poem as a "loose logical structure with an irrelevant local texture,"[173] and on the basis of this definition he speculates as to what poetry intends and builds the chief concepts of his views on the nature of poetry. In fact, this special view of poetry and the poetic process is Ransom's contribution to criticism. For him a poem is by nature an integrated structure with form and content, becoming, after considerable compromise, one in the Concrete Universal.[174] Murray Krieger describes Ransom's special view as a "struggle between

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[172] Foster, p. 199.

[173] John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, (1941), p. 280.

[174] "The criteria," according to Alex Preminger, Frank J. Harnke, and O. B. Hardison, Jr., in Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 149-50, "for determining whether or not an object is a [concrete universal] are diversity of parts, interrelatedness of parts, completeness, unity, independence, and self-maintenance. In terms of these criteria, the only true [concrete universal] is the 'Absolute' or 'Whole World'; but the phrase is also used in a secondary sense to denote microcosms within this macrocosm. A human being, a work of art, or an integrated society would be examples of such 'finite' concrete universals.

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W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., in his article 'The Structure of the "Concrete

the poet and the linguistic medium,"[175] "in which the argument [meaning, or "structure," as Ransom terms it] fights to displace the meter."[176]

> The poet [Krieger says] . . . begins with a "determinate meaning," the prose statement he wishes to make. He chooses to present this meaning in one of the possible formal patterns which have been impressed on the medium of his tradition. Thus, along with his "determinate meaning" he begins with a "determinate sound."

Universal" in Literature' (1947) formally proposed [concrete universal] as a key term for a holistic poetics which would be 'objective and absolute' . . . He classifies as a [concrete universal] any natural or artificial object which exhibits 'organized heterogeneity' of a complexity sufficiently great to make it seem 'in the highest degree individual' . . . In poetics he recommends that the term be used to denote not only the poem as a whole but also any of its distinguishable parts, such as characters or metaphors, which may be considered as small wholes within the larger whole. Perhaps the chief reason for Wimsatt's preference for "[concrete universal]" is that it provides him with a pair of polar terms which suggest the structure of the organic unity of the poem. He regards a work of literature as discourse which expresses a 'meaning,' 'value,' 'idea,' 'concept,' or 'abstraction' (the universal) by means of the specific details (the concrete) which constitute the matter of the poem. Thus the meaning is the form or unifying principle; and the poem is an organic unity if the characters, actions, metrical devices, words, and metaphors combine to body forth this universal. Furthermore, the concrete is the only possible means for expressing the universal, which (in a good poem) is so subtle and individual that ordinary language cannot provide a substantive class name for it.

[175]Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 82.

[176]Ransom, The New Criticism, p. 295.

Ransom's use of the term determinate means, then, that the poet begins with two factors which he believes to be "fixed and unyielding." His problem henceforth is to unite these two independent components into a poem. Obviously, when he attempts to reconcile these opposites, "one or the other or both of them will have to give."

> These compromises emerge in the form of either "indeterminate meaning" (when the thought is somehow altered so that the formal pattern may be maintained) or "indeterminate sound" (when the sense of the prose paraphrase is maintained at the expense of the strict formal pattern). Thus, so far as meaning is concerned, Ransom is led to his distinction between "structure" and "texture." For him structure is what he calls the strict "logical" paraphrase, the determinate meaning with which the poet began. The indeterminancies of meaning, into which the poet is forced by his devotion to the determinate sound constitute the poem's texture. Texture, then, consists of "logical irrelevancies."[177]

This explication of texture--as a body of "logical irrelevancies ". . . although Ransom hardly means it disparagingly"--has earned for Ransom the criticism that he "is operating in terms of a form-content or message-embellishment dichotomy not unlike the 'decoration theories' of the eighteenth century"; therefore, as the criticism goes, "he blocks himself from his objective of achieving an ontological criticism of the poem as an organic entity," a criticism that he asks for in the final chapter of his book The New Criticism. Indeed, it would seem that Ransom's texture in a poem serves only the purpose of decoration and has "no inevitable function with the poem's integrity,"[178] but in view of his distinctions between "'positive' indeterminancy," and that which is "'negative'" and "'corrupt,'" his theory essentially asks that in good poetry the "irrelevancies [be] made relevant." And if this happens poetry is "[transformed] . . . into a new kind of discourse which has dimensions far beyond those

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[177]Krieger, pp. 82-83. [178]Ibid., p. 83.

of mere logic." Moreover, "would-be compromises" become "triumphs," "mechanical form" becomes "organic form." "It is this positive indeterminancy [irrelevance or texture] which, for Ransom, gives poetry its unique ontological status, which 'induces the provision of icons among the symbols,'" which in short, "'launches poetry upon its career.'"[179]

And what more heroic career can there be for literature than a poetry "that stands up against the eviscerated world of ruthless efficiency which is the domain of nonpoetic discourse." For "poetry asserts its love for the individual object" (and in this sense Ransom claims "that the biological sanction for poetry is found in man's need for love . . .") "even at the cost of introducing matter that is irrelevant to logic, the unyielding overlord of other forms of discourse."[180] Poetry, then, is the "democratic state" that Ransom speaks of in his essay "Criticism as Pure Speculation,"[181] the "relaxed atmosphere," in which "there is time for play, time to pause musingly over the autonomous units which the democratic state of poetry allows."[182] It is the "pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself"[183] that Coleridge referred to in distinguishing poetry from prose.

Ransom later refines his structure-texture instrument into the idea of the Concrete Universal "by identifying the special nature of poetry

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[179]Ibid., pp. 86, 87. [180]Ibid., pp. 85, 84, 85.

[181]John Crowe Ransom, "Criticism as Pure Speculation" in The Intent of the Critic, with an Introduction and ed. by Donald A. Stauffer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 108.

[182]Krieger, p. 85 [183]Coleridge, Biographia, p. 378.

with the experienced concretions relation of abundant excess to the rational meaning. . . ." In other words, "the poem has more detail than the meaning requires. And because of this we care for the poem beyond its use as 'meaning.'"[184] Or in the words of perhaps Ransom's most useful trope:

> The walls of my room are obviously structural; the beams and board have a function; so does the plaster, which is the visible aspect of the final wall. The plaster might have remained naked, aspiring to no character, and purely functional. But actually it has been painted, receiving color; or it has been papered, receiving color and design, though these have no structural value; and perhaps it has been hung with tapestry, or with paintings, for "decoration." The paint, the paper, the tapestry are texture. It is logically unrelated to structure. But I indicate only a few of the textural possibilities in architecture. There are not fewer of them in poetry.
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> The intent of the good critic becomes therefore to examine and define the poem with respect to its structure and its texture. If he has nothing to say about its texture he has nothing to say about it specifically as a poem, but is treating it only insofar as it is prose.[185]

Thus, just as all the New Critics, Ransom looks at the poem as an entity, complete within itself. It has a "logical substance" that "[remains] there all the time and [is] in no way specially remarkable, while the particularity [comes] in by accretion, so that the poem [turns] out partly universal and partly particular, but with respect to different parts."[186] (Even though Ransom accepts the theory of the concrete universal, he accepts it only as a term designating the components in poetry and only in a nonholistic sense.[187] And despite the struggle that goes on in the

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[184] Foster, p. 199. [185] Ransom, "Criticism as Pure Speculation," p. 111.

[186] Ibid., p. 110.

[187] Preminger, Warnke, and Hardison in Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, p. 150, point out that the "holistic connotation of 'concrete universal,' which made Ransom view the term with suspicion, has made it an attractive term for other modern critics who argue that a work of literature should be regarded as an organic unity from which nothing can be subtracted and to which nothing can be added without detriment to the whole."

composition of a poem between the "argument" and the "meter," between the meaning and the sound, all elements of the poem--meter, diction, metaphor, and methods of organizing the poem, such as thejuxtaposition of unlike elements, the bringing together of homogeneous elements, the use of alliteration, of rhyme, the use of assonance to echo and stress a word rather than repeat it explicitly--contribute to its meaning and constitute its form. Essentially, then, for Ransom, there is no form-content dichotomy in his structure-texture instrument. He testifies to this when he says, "I suggest that the meter-meaning process is the organic act of poetry, and involves all of its important characters."[188]

As to the function and value that Ransom assigns poetry, he is explicit here also. He sees it as knowledge. For even though his critical career has largely been directed toward a "'speculative' inquiry into the nature of poetry" through his structure-texture instrument that was later to be "[restated] in the idea of the Concrete Universal,"[189] he has steadily moved toward the abstractionism that he earlier detested in those--"Plato, Aristotle, the Hegelians, and many others related and unrelated"[190] --who were unable to appreciate the particulars of the world, "of nature as an object to be beloved for itself, of poetry or art as the flesh of experience filling out to completion the otherwise merely skeletal knowledges of science and conceptualization." "He has," as Foster phrases it, "himself taken, in fact, a small pilgrimage toward Truth along with some of his

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[188]Ransom, The New Criticism, p. 195 [189]Foster, pp. 137-38.

[190]John Crowe Ransom, The World's Body (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1938), p. 200.

fellow critics." Indeed, Ransom defends poetry's right to call itself "knowledge," and he witnesses to this belief when in his later criticism he merges his texture-structure trope with the idea of the Concrete Universal by a shift of grammar: the "noun-noun duality" of texture-structure becomes the "adjective-noun unity" of the Concrete Universal.[191]

Specifically, Ransom explains his doctrine of poetry as knowledge in terms of scientific and poetic discourse, discourses distinguished by the fact that each has its own referential world. "[The] world or worlds, for there are many of them which we treat in our scientific discourses . . . are its reduced, emasculated, and docile versions." Poetic discourse, on the other hand, "[recovers] the denser and more refractory original world which we know loosely through our perceptions and memories." In this sense, then, "it is a kind of knowledge which is radically or ontologically distinct" from scientific knowledge because content of the "original" world usually defies logical contemplation. But the crucial feature of poetry as discourse that distinguishes it from scientific discourse is the fact that poetic discourse has "an order of content, rather than a kind of content, and this in turn, distinguishes texture from structure . . . poetry from prose," Therefore, for Ransom, "the differentia of poetry as discourse is an ontological one," because poetry "treats an order of existence, a grade of objectivity," an original or primordial world, "which cannot be treated in scientific discourse."[192]

Hence, if Ransom's view of poetry's special function should become the consensus, the ancient unresolved question of whether literature, compared to science, is knowledge would cease to be pertinent. For just as science is knowledge of a world that poetry has no answers for, so too is

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[191]Foster, pp. 138, 144. [192]Ransom, The New Criticism, p. 281.

poetry knowledge of a world that science cannot explain. Each, in fact, is knowledge. One, cognitive; one, affective.

> Ransom seemed to be trying to straddle this archetyptal split between feeling and intellect when he claimed in The New Criticism that for Coleridge images and feelings "are synonymous . . . in so far as they are one-to-one correspondents, one representing the cognitive side and the other the affective side of the same experience." This means that though an image may be said to be a cognition in that it "corresponds" to something in the real world and is in that sense "true," as Ransom put it elsewhere, it also engages our affections for itself on its own terms as a valuable object of sense experience over and above its service as a cognition. Most simply, then, an image or a poem may be both an object understood and an object loved.[193]

But "the real act of knowledge," Ransom believes, would come about when scientists "commit themselves to aesthetic as well as scientific discourse." And when (if ever) this should occur, the "scientific and aesthetic ways of knowledge," which are perhaps "alterantive knowledges," would "illuminate each other . . ."[194] Here Ransom reiterates what Wordsworth affirmed more than a century earlier in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads: "If the time should ever come when what is now called science . . . shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration . . ."[195] Thus the notion that a "poem is a self-inclosed world, which 'recovers for us the world of solid substance,'" that "poetry is one way of knowing the world,"[196] is Ransom's doctrine of poetry as knowledge. And since "the body supplied by poetry" came to be called "'texture,' and the conceptual skeleton which it clothed and animated" came to be designated "'structure,'" with structure meaning

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[193]Foster, pp. 139-40. [194]Ransom, The New Criticism, p. 294.

[195]Wordsworth, p. 342.

[196]Robert Wooster Stallman, Critiques and Essays in Criticism (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 499.

> its plot, its theme, its 'paraphrasable content'--along with its machineries of continuity and organization--and texture meaning all the engaging inclusions of the poem's art--its sound, its rhythm, its images--that interest us aesthetically after they have made whatever structural contribution they are capable of.[197]

the nature of poetry, its form and content, its function and value would all seem to ray out from Ransom's special instrument of speculation. Moreover, the key terms of his instrument epitomize his views on the nature of poetry and mark him as the one New Critic (along with Allen Tate) only incidentally concerned with the technical criticism of poetry, yet vitally committed to the philosophical principle "that the differentium of poetry is a metaphyiscal or ontological one" and that "poetry [in short] is ontology . . . 'for poetry strives . . . towards the roots of the knowledge of Being.'"[198]

The next New Critic, Allen Tate (b. 1899), who saw John Crowe Ransome as "'skepitcal and searching,'" is also seen as "'skepitcal and searching.'" According to Foster, "he is less a technical literary critic than an essayist using literature as a frame of the reference within which he criticizes the mind and life of his time in the light of his convictions about the proper ends of man."[199] Nonetheless, Tate subscribes to special tenets concerning the nature of poetry and its process of creation and examines the "patterns of coherent relationships between denotative and connotative meanings in poetry"[200] by making use of his analytic instrument which he calls "tension." Like Ransom, he opposes the view of Art for

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[197]Foster, p. 139

[198]Stallman, p. 499.

[199]Foster, p. 108.

[200]William Van O'Connor, An Age of Criticism: 1900-1950 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952), p. 170.

Art's Sake.[201] Rather his view speaks of "art for life's sake,"[202] Thus, poetry is experience in itself, experience which Tate sees as an inherent part of life; it is absolute and is not as the Hegelians saw it "the concrete experience . . . dissolved into the absolute Absolute."[203] More specifically, as a quality of the imagination, it seizes "the inward meaning of experience" and creates the "vision of the whole of life . . ."[204] With this view, Foster says, "Tate does for the imagination what Coleridge was unable to do. He performs an act of recognition of the imagination as the unifying power not only of artistic creation, but also of man's total life as a spiritual and social being."[205] (Of course, Foster's statement is in variance with Ernest Bernbaum's comment concerning Coleridge's philosophy of life, which, according to Bernbaum, served as the wellspring of his critical principles[see supra p. 56, par. 1, ll. 7-16].)

Theoretically, Tate's basis of the formal structure of a poem, as organic with form and content inseparable, is bound up with his concept of "tension," which Wellek says "punningly combines 'extension' and 'intension,' with 'intension' meaning something very close to Ransom's 'texture.'"[206] With "tension," then, as a criterion, Tate--using "extension"

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[201]Preminger, Warnke, and Hardison, in Enclyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, pp. 646-47, explain that "the common ground of the various doctrines and there are many of them, beginning with the writers and philosophers of the German Romantic movement--Kant, Schelling, Goethe, and Schiller classified as 'Art for Art's Sake' is the concept that its claim to truth, its principles of order, and its values are bounded by the confines of the work of art itself; and that the end of a poem is not to teach, nor even to please, but simply to exist and be beautiful."

[202]Allen Tate, The Man of Letters in the Modern World (London: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 119-20.

[203]Foster, p. 120.

[204]Allen Tate, On the Limits of Poetry (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1948), p. 92

[205]Foster, p. 121.

[206]Wellek, p. 62.

or denotation, as a base "on which 'intension,' or connotation, can build poetically"[207]--fuses the intensive and extensive elements into a new and integral mode of discourse. From his essay "Tension in Poetry" (1938) Tate writes:

> What I am saying, of course, is that the meaning ofpoetry is its "tension," the full organized body of all the extension [denotation] and intension [connotation] that we can find in it. The remotest figurative significance that we can derive does not invalidate the extensions of the literal statement. Or we may begin with the literal statement and by stages develop the complications of metaphor: at every stage we may pause to state the meaning so far apprehended, and at every stage the meaning will be coherent.

To further explain, he continues:

> The meanings that we select at different points along the infinite line between extreme intension and extreme extension will vary with our personal "drives" or "interest" or "approach": the Platonist will tend to stay pretty close to the end of the line where extension, and simple abstraction of the object into a universal, is easiest, for he will be a fanatic in morals or some kind of works, and will insist upon the shortest way with what will ever appear to him the dissenting ambiguities at the intensive end of the scale. The Platonist [for example] might decide that Marvel's "To His Coy Mistress" recommends immoral behavior to the young men, in whose behalf he would try to suppress the poem. That,of course, would be one "true" meaning of "To His Coy Mistress," but it is a meaning that the full tension of the poem will not allow us to entertain exclusively. For we are compelled, since it is there, to give equal weight to an intensive meaning so rich that, without contradicting the literal statement of the lover-mistress convention, it lifts that convention into an insight into one phase ofthe human predicament--the conflict of sensuality and asceticism.[208]

Inferior poetry, however, does not have tension; that is, it suffers from what Tate refers to as a lack of "logical determinism" or coherence. For example, some poems are a "failure in denotation." The language they use "appeals to an existing affective state; [they have] no coherent meaning either literally or in terms of ambiguity or implication."[209]

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[207]Krieger, p. 143. [208]Tate, Limits of Poetry, p. 83.

[209]Ibid., pp. 79, 81, 78.

In short, the words in the context of the lines refer to no literal object; they are, in fact, denotatively fallible. Tate illustrates this "failure" by James Thomson's poem "The Vine," an eighteenth-century lyric "selected at random." The lines read:

> The wine of love is music
> And the feast of love is song:
> When love sits down to banquet,
> Love sits long:
>
> Sits long and rises drunken,
> But not with the feast and the wine;
> He reeleth with his own heart,
> That great rich Vine.

He points out that the words "'music'" and "'song'" in the first two lines cannot, in the context, be rendered in extension (denotation), for "there is no reference to objects that we may distinguish as 'music' and 'song'; the wine of love could have as well been song, its feast music." The reader brings to the reading of this poem an "existing affective state" and the language is "replaced by any of its several paraphrases already latent in [his mind]." Moreover, "the imagery adds nothing to the general idea it tries to sustain."[210]

To illustrate a poem that fails connotatively, Tate submits lines from Abraham Cowley's poem "Hymn" to light," another example of what Tate designates as "bad lyric verse no better than 'The Vine,' written in an age [the seventeenth century] that produced some of the greatest English poetry." "Here," he says, "is one of the interesting duties of light:"[211]

> Nor amidst all these Triumphs does thou scorn
> The humble glow-worm to adorn,
> And with those living spangles gild,
> (O Greatness without Pride!) the Bushes of the Field.

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[210] Ibid., pp. 81, 78.

[211] Ibid., p. 79.

The Violet, springs little Infant, stands
Girt in thy purple Swadling-bands:
On the fair Tulip thou dost dote;
Thou cloath'st it in a gay and party-colour'd Coat.

"This," he tells us, "doubtless is metaphysical poetry," and metaphysical poetry, according to John Crowe Ransom--and Tate quotes him--has the"impulse" of

> committing the feelings in the case . . . to their determination within the elected figure. That is to say, in metaphysical poetry the logical order is explicit; it must be coherent; the imagery by which it is sensuously embodied must have at least the appearance of logical determinism: perhaps the appearance only, because the varieties of ambiguity and contradiction possible beneath the logical surface are endless . . . Here it is enough to say that the development of imagery by extension, its logical determinants being an Ariadne's thread that the poet will not permit us to lose, is the leading feature of the poetry called metaphysical.[212]

Now "Hymn: to light" is "a simple analysis of the term God and gave Cowley . . . the propositions: God is light." To write his poem he developed the symbol of listing "some of the offices" that light "performs" in the universe. And he does this by "synthetic accretion," Tate explains, "by adding to light properties not inherent in its simple analysis. The lines he takes exception to and deals with explicitly are the first lines in the second stanza:

The Violet, springs little Infant, stands,
Girt in thy purple Swadling bands:

The image, here, "is an addition to the central figure of light, an assertion of a hitherto undetected relation among the objects, light, diapers, and violets . . ."[213] In short, it is a tacked on image, one that is not embodied in light as one of its properties. As a "failure in connotation," Tate says:

> . . . a reduction to their connotations of the terms violet, swadling bands, and light (the last being represented by the pronoun

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[212]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[213]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

> thou) yields a clutter of images that may be unified only if we forget the firm denotations of the terms. If we are going to receive as valid the infancy of the violet, we must ignore the metaphor that conveys it, for the metaphor renders the violet absurd; by ignoring the diaper, andthe two terms associated with it, we cease to read the passage, and begin for ourselves the building up of acceptable denotations for the terms of the metaphor.

Thus, according to Tate, Cowley's poem denies the feelings "'to their determination in the elected figure'"; whereas "good poetry" is coherent at every step along the way and "is a unity of all the meanings from the furthest extremes of intension and extension."[214] And, as earlier noted, in his view there is no matter of form and content as separate entities. He sees this unity as a "fusion of art and nature, of technique and subject," with "nature intractable to art, art unequal to nature."[215]

But even though art is unequal to nature, its product-process--poetry--gives complete knowledge, and this is its function and true value. Tate, like Ransom, opposes "the positivists' claim that valid knowledge is the sole preserve of science" and insists "that poetry is 'cognitive' and yields us a 'special, unique, and complete knowledge.'"[216] Science, on the other hand, gives "partial knowledge," gives us abstraction and "abstraction violates art." Still he feels that poetry to be good must "[proceed] from a union of intellect and feeling, or rather [and here he gets back to his special trope] from a 'tension' between abstraction and sensation."[217] In comparing the scientific spirit and the creative spirit, however, he sees the former as the "cheerful confidence in the limitless power of man to impose practical abstractions upon his experience." He calls this a "positive Platonism."[218] At the opposite end of the scale is

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[214]Ibid., pp. 81, 79, 82. [215]O'Connor, p. 168, n. 8.

[216]Preminger, Warnke, and Hardison, p. 647. [217]Wellek, p. 359.

[218]Tate, Limits of Poetry, p. 95.

"negative Platonism" or "romantic irony," whereby "the romantic tries to build up a set of fictitious 'explanations' by means of rhetoric for experience." But the creative spirit denies both forms of Platonism, being rather a middle ground between the two positions. And "its function is the quality of experience, the total revelation--not explanation for the purpose of external control by the will." It is, in fact, and this is its "true usefulness . . . a focus of repose for the will-driven intellect that constantly shakes the equilibrium of persons and societies with its unremitting imposition of partial formulas." More important,

> when the will and its formulas are put back into an implicit relation with the whole of our experience, we get the true knowledge which is poetry. It is the "kind of knowledge which is really essential to the world, the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and therefore is known with equal truth for all time.[219]

For Tate, then, literature "is a 'criticism of life,' which is more than a matter of the 'aesthetics of literature.'"[220] Indeed, "works of literature . . . are the recurrent discovery of the human communion as experience, in a definite place and at a definite time."[221] These observations, of course, return the focus to the function and value of literature, the concern with which Tate was preoccupied. Also they speak out on literature's nature and the oneness, the union of intellect and feeling, the "tension" between abstraction and sensation that, in Tate's view, serves as the touchstone of all good poetry.

Cleanth Brooks (b. 1906), perhaps (the last critic with which this history is concerned), subscribes to the organic theory of literature more than any one of the New Critics. Although his forte is technical criticism,

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[219]Ibid., pp. 95, 113-14.

[220]Foster, p. 123.

[221]Tate, Man of Letters, p. 18.

in which he has examined "a number of celebrated English poems . . . from the Elizabethan period to the present," he necessarily theorizes as to the nature of literature and its process as a structural matrix in which form and content are inextricably bound. But concerning the function and value of literature he has been less vocal than some of the other New Critics, preoccupying himself rather with what constitutes "good" poetry and separates it from poems that have less merit. Like Ransom and Tate, then, he too has been in search of a speculative instrument, one that can be applied to any and all kinds of poetry. In his book The Well Wrought Urn (1947), he states:

> . . . what must be sought is an instrument which will allow for some critical precision, and yet one which may be used in service, not of Romantic poetry, or of metaphysical poetry, but of poetry.[222]

Brooks's method of procedure would be to establish common structural principles that should inhere in "good" poems and use these as the criteria by which to judge any poem.

He views the poem as a symbolic structure and defines it as a "simulacrum of reality."[223] More specifically, it is a structure of opposites, tensions, paradoxes, ambiguities, and ironies. And for him, paradox and irony are the broad terms for certain elements that get structured into the poem and which serve as its hallmark. But "irony is not the opposite of an overt statement"[224] (the conventional meaning of irony), but "a general term . . . for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context."[225] Irony "indicates the re-

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[222] Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947), pp. 9, 200.

[223] Ibid., p. 194. [224] Wellek, p. 329. [225] Brooks, p. 191.

cognition of incongruities, the union of opposites which Brooks finds in all good, that is, complex 'inclusive' poetry. [For] poetry must be ironic in the sense of being able to withstand ironic contemplation."[226] Or, as many of the New Critics insist "a poem can make itself invulnerable to the reader's irony only by being itself ironic."[227] Brooks offers the poetry of Dante and Milton as examples of irony being built into the poem so that the attitude informs the poem. In reference to Dante, he states:

> . . . Dante was not content merely to set forth Catholic dogma . . . he wishes to dramatize it . . .[and] . . . to me it is significant that Dante, in dramatizing his faith, was willing to portray more than one pope in hell. Surely there is more than mere propagandizing for a dogma and an institution in a view which can envisage Christ's vicar among the damned. Indeed, I should say that Dante was quite willing to expose his preachment to something very like an "ironical contemplation."

Similarly, he cites Milton's presentation of Lucifer "with full dramatic sympathy . . ." as ironic in that "inadvertantly" he made "out a case for Lucifer rather than for God."

> A weaker poet[Brooks continues] --and a more forthright propagandist--would have risked no such ambiguity. He would have set up Lucifer as a straw man to be overthrown rather than as a powerful being who challenges the place of hero.[228]

But "the same principle that insures the presence of irony in so many of our great poems [such as the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost], Brooks believes, also accounts for the fact that so many of them seem to be built around paradoxes." Therefore, "it is not enough for the poet to analyze his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts."

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[226]Wellek, p. 329. [227]Krieger, p. 121.

[228]Brooks, pp. 204-5.

> His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of reality--in this sense, at least, it is an "imitation"--by being an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience.[229]

It is alive and vital, then, and complex--much more complex than what it has to say on a surface level. For example, in Keats's poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" "the urn must express a life which is above life and its vicissitudes, but it must also bear witness to the fact that its life is not life at all but is a kind of death." Similarly, in John Donne's poem "Canonization," where he "treats divine love as profane love," " his lovers must reject the world in order to possess the world."

> If the poet, then, must perforce dramatize the oneness of the experience, even though paying tribute to its diversity, then his use of paradox and ambiguity is seen as necessary. He is not simply trying to spice up, with a superficially exciting or mystifying rhetoric, the old stale stockpot . . . He is rather giving us an insight which preserves the unity of experience and which, at its higher and more serious levels, triumphs over the apparently contradictory and conflicting elements of experience by unifying them into a new pattern.

Thus, the "language of poetry is the language of paradox," and the poem gets its power "from the paradoxical situation out of which the poem arises."[230]

In "good" poetry then, as distinguished from "bad,"[231] the "words struggle" to import meaning, struggling to negate "their natural (that is,

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[229] Ibid., p. 194. [230] Ibid., pp. 194-95, 10, 195, 3, 5.

[231] Brooks qualifies his use of these terms by acknowledging that good and bad "are meaningless terms when used absolutely . . . We have come to believe less and less[he says] in any absolute criteria . . . But giving up our criteria of good and bad, we have, as a consequence, I believe, begun to give up our concept of poetry itself. Obviously, if we can make no judgments about a poem as a poem, the concept of poetry as distinct from other kinds of discourse which employ words becomes meaningless." (The Well Wrought Urn, p. 198.)

their [referential] nonpoetic) function" and "to block their direct pointing"[232] to a propositional statement. To be sure, a poem

> may contain statements among its elements; but they are not in its essence, have no primacy over other elements, but are organically related to them. Though they can be paraphrased, the paraphrase is not the real core of meaning which constitutes the essence of the poem; . . .

And it is worth noting at this point that "[a poem] has a dramatic, not a logical structure; . . . it is a structure of attitudes. . . It is not a statement, but . . . a symbolic action; and . . . its form is inseparable from its content."[233] Nevertheless, and Brooks emphasizes this point, this does not mean that "there is not the closest relationship between the intellectual materials which [the poem absorbs] into [its] structure and other elements in the structure . . . the relationship is not that of an idea 'wrapped in emotion' or a 'prose sense decorated by sensuous imagery.'" Or to put it another way:

> The dimension in which the poem moves is not one which excludes ideas, but one which includes attitudes. The dimension includes ideas, to be sure; we can always abstract an "idea" from a poem--even from the simplest poem . . . But the idea which we abstract . . . will always be abstracted.

And this will not do. "In terms of a principle analogous to that of dramatic propriety," an abstraction cannot remain in limbo, nor can it be justified "by virtue of its scientific or historical or philosophical truth."[234] Its only justification can be effected in terms of the poem.

> Thus, the proposition that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" is given its precise meaning and significance by its relation to the total context of the poem . . . We as readers can attempt

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[232] Krieger, p. 131.

[233] Preminger, Warnke, and Hardison, pp. 344-45.

[234] Brooks, pp. 187-88.

> to frame such a proposition in our effort to understand the poem; it may well help toward an understanding. Certainly the efforts to arrive at such propositions can do not harm if we do not mistake them for the inner core of the poem--if we do not mistake them for "what the poem really says." For, if we take one of them to represent the essential poem, we have to disregard the qualifications exerted by the total context as of no account, or else we have assumed that we can reproduce the effect of the total context in a condensed prose statement. But to deny that the coherence of a poem is reflected in a logical paraphrase of its "real meaning" is not, of course, to deny coherence to poetry; it is rather to assert that its coherence is to be sought elsewhere.[235]

And, finally, (Here, in a final summation on poetic unity, Brooks demonstrates his proposition that "the parts of a poem are related as are the parts of a growing plant.")[236]

> the characteristic unity of a poem . . . lies in the unification of attitudes into a hierarchy subordinated to a total and governing attitude. In the unified poem, the poet has "come to terms" with his experience. The poem does not merely eventuate in a logical conclusion. The conclusion of the poem is the working out of the various tensions--set up by whatever means--by propositions, metaphors, symbols. The unity is achieved by a dramatic process, not a logical; it represents an equilibrium of forces, not a formula. It is "proved" as a dramatic conclusion is proved: by its ability to resolve the conflicts which have been accpeted as the donnees of the drama.
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> Thus, it is easy to see why the relation of each item to the whole context is crucial, and why the effective and essential structure of the poem has to do with the complex of attitudes achieved. A scientific proposition can stand alone. If it is true, it is true. But the expression of an attitude, apart from the occasion which generates it and the situation which it encompasses, is meaningless. For example, the last two lines of . . . [Wordsworth's] "Intimations" ode,
>
> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,
>
> when taken into isolation--I do not mean quoted in isolation by one who is even vaguely acquainted with thecontext--makes a statement which is sentimental if taken in reference to the speaker, and one which is patent nonsense if taken with a general reference. The man in the street (of whom the average college freshman is a good enough replica) knows that the meanest flower that grows does not give him thoughts that lie too deep for tears; and,

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[235] Ibid., pp. 188-89.

[236] Abrams, p. 222.

> if he thinks about the matter at all, he is inclined to feel that the person who can make such an assertion is a very fuzzy sentimentalist.[237]

It would seem, then, that any statement detached from its context is in grave danger of becoming misconstrued.

Moreover, such a formula that implies "that the poem constitutes a 'statement' of some sort, the statement being true or false, and expressed more or less clearly or eloquently or beautifully" is what Brooks calls the "heresy of paraphrase," his trope and concept discussed in his book The Well Wrought Urn. Here, he points out that the heresy of paraphrase can lead to "most of [the] difficulties in criticism": It results in the distortion between the poem and its "'truth,'" in the dichotomy of its "'form'" and its "'content,'" bringing "the statement to be conveyed into an unreal competition with science or philosophy or theology."[238]

Thus, as Brooks would say, "the discussion of the poem is not to be substituted for the poem: it should return us to the poem." And since a poem "does not state ideas but rather tests ideas" and since the ideas being tested are those concerned with man,"a poem . . . is to be judged, 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." Based on this premise, then, Brooks suggests that on the basis of Richards' distinction between "a poetry of exclusion" and one of "inclusion" (see supra, pp. 78-79, 82) a scale might be developed for "determining the value of poetry."

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[237] Brooks, pp. 189-90.

[238] Ibid., pp. 179, 184.

> Low in the cale he explains one would find a rather simple poetry in which the associations of the various elements that go to make up the poem are similar in tone and therefore can be unified under one rather simple attitude--poems of simple affection, positive, "external" satires, etc. Higher in the scale, one would find poems in which the variety and clash among the elements to be comprehended under a total attitude are sharper. In tragedy, where the clash is at its sharpest--where the tension between attraction and repulsion is most powerful--one would probably find the highest point in the scale. So much for the positive side; but there is a negative side too, where one would place those poems which failed to secure unity at all--or achieved only a specious reconciliation of attitudes--the sentimental poem.[239]

Such a test, Brooks feels, although it does not "[eliminate] the subjective element in judgment," would provide a two-fold advantage: (1) "a hierarchy" could be established "in terms of the organization of the poems themselves--not by having to appeal to some outside scale of values"; and (2) "the recently accepted hierarchy of poems" could be corrected and improved "if this mode of evaluation rests upon what is really a more accurate account of the structure of poetry."[240]

Technical critic that he is, striving for a means by which to evaluate literature in terms of the selection itself, Brooks seldom commits himself in regard to the function and value literature may possess, as do his contemporaries Ransom and Tate. But he does speak of poetic truth and scientific truth in relation to the language of paradox, so that, obliquely, it would seem that he assigns a knowledge-value to poetry. Otherwise, however, he skirts the issue, preferring rather to report what others have to say in this regard and then taking issue. In the last chapter of The Well Wrought Urn--"The Problem of Belief and the Problem of Cognition" (pp. 226-38)--he discusses Wilbur Marshall Urban and his views on poetry's function as set out in his text Language and Reality. "Poetry [Urban says] is not merely emotive . . . but cognitive. It gives us truth,

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[239]Ibid., pp. 233, 229-30. [240]Ibid., p. 239.

and characteristically gives us truth through its metaphors . . ."[241] Such statement Brooks could hardly counter. But any commitment he might have to it is qualified by skepticism, in that he questions Urban's position as that perhaps of those theorists who "claim cognition for poetry only at the price of considering it ultimately as distorted and imperfect philosophy."[242] In this same chapter, he also makes reference to I. A. Richards, Allen Tate, and Suzanne Langer, discussing their views on poetry's use but always marshalling objections. However, in the chapter "The Heresy of Paraphrase" (The Well Wrought Urn, pp. 176-96), he openly disclaims any desire to assign a function to poetry. For example, after having discussed the positive function that such "irrelevancies" as "metrical pattern" and "metaphor" have in the poem, he makes the statement:

> If the last sentence seems to take a dangerous turn toward some special "use of poetry"--some therapeutic value for the sake of which poetry is to be cultivated--I can only say that I have in mind no special ills which poetry is to cure. Uses for poetry are always to be found, and doubtless will continue to be found. But my discussion of the structure of poetry is not being conditioned at this point by some new and special role which I expect poetry to assume in the future or some new function to which I would assign it.[243]

Nevertheless, since Brooks is an exponent of the objective theory of the New Criticism, he, along with the other New Critics, separates himself from impressionistic criticism and the theory of Art for Art's Sake by his instrument of irony and paradox, upon which he has built his aesthetic. Thus, he has, as Preminger and his associate editors put it, "rescued the poem as poem from the claim that its sole function is a beautiful inutility, by engaging it with our ordinary moral consciousness and experiences of life."[244]

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[241] Ibid., p. 232.

[242] Ibid., p. 233.

[243] Ibid., p. 191.

[244] Preminger, Warnke, and Hardison, p. 647.

Cleanth Brooks, more than any of the New Critics, has worked close to specific texts in order to show a poem as an organic unit of sensibility, one in which form and content are inseparable. He feels that such an attempt must be made

> . . . if poetry exists as poetry in any meaningful sense . . . Otherwise he maintains the poetry of the past becomes significant merely as cultural anthropology, and the poetry of the present, merely as a political, or religious, or moral instrument.[245]

Thus, with Cleanth Brooks and the New Criticism, a history of criticism that began in England almost four centuries ago comes to an end. Historically, the conception of literature has progressed from the pragmatic theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the expressive theory in the nineteenth century to the objective theory in the twentieth century. Each theory has had a different approach with a different element as the point of focus so that the movement in this respect has been from audience to poet to the work itself. Moreover, each theory has been dealt with as to the conceptions that the representative critics of each approach have taken toward literature's nature--its essence, whether imitation, expression, or structure, and the characteristics--content and form and function and value--that describe it. Perhaps the objective approach under the aegis of the New Critics created more of a "stir" than either the pragmatic or expressive approaches. But opinions vary as to the impact the New Criticism, with its emphasis on the work itself, has had on literary theory, since its inception in the early thirties. Robert W. Stallman in his text Critique and Essays in Criticism (1949) writes:

> Our age is indeed an age of criticism. The structure of critical ideas and the practical criticism that British critics--

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[245]Brooks, pp. 10-11.

> Leavis, Turnell, Empson, Read--and American critics--Ransom, Tate, Brooks, Warren, Blackmur, Winters--have contrived upon the foundations of Eliot and Richards constitute an achievement in literary criticism which has not been equaled in any previous period of our literary history.[246]

Some twelve years later, Richard Foster in his book The New Romantics (1962) gives the New Critics credit for having "[hounded] the age back to the text and the conscious analytical reading of it . . ." And in other passages, he adds his praise to Stallman's He writes:

> There certainly seem to be more than sufficient grounds on which to assert the importance for our age of the New Criticism.
> . . . . . .
> A viableness of sensibility, a readiness for "speculative fury," a susceptibility at bottom, even to moments of romantic frenzy, these are qualities that gave the New Critics their original impetus to move against the sterility of literary study in their time and to challenge the dehumanizing conditions of the world that bred it . . . The New Critics have created, willy-nilly, by the hard personal labor of their extemporizing a structure of value in the midst of chaos, a major testament of that modern necessity.[247]

On a less positive note a decade later, Robert Langbaum, The Modern Spirit (1970), speaks of the New Criticism as an incomplete criticism and the New Critics as technicians, who "must always in the end put [their] tools at the service of the man who knows what he wants to use them for. And understanding the text, if we may judge by the best criticism of the past, is where criticism begins, not where it ends." He maintains moreover that as a movement it is "dead--dead of its very success." Still, as he repudiates them, he manages to praise them:

> We are all New Critics nowadays, whether we like it or not, in that we cannot avoid discerning and appreciating wit in poetry . . . images, ironies and so on.[248]

René Wellek also sees the New Criticism as limited. In his text Concepts of Criticism (1963), he speaks of its having "reached a point of exhaustion,"

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[246]Stallman, p. 506.

[247]Foster, pp. 206, 209-10.

[248]Langbaum, pp. 14, 11.

not being "able to go beyond its initial restricted sphere," of its having in fact a number of specific weaknesses; these he proceeds to list:

> Its selection of European writers is oddly narrow . . . Literary history is neglected. The relations to modern linguistics are left unexplored with the result that the study of style, diction, and meter remains often dilettantish. The basic aesthetics seems often without a sure philosophical foundation.[249]

But his remarks are not all negative. Even though he feels that their approach to literature has lost its appeal, he points out many contributions that their work has made to criticism:

> It has immeasurably raised the level of awareness and sophistication in American criticism. It has developed ingenious methods for the analysis of imagery and symbol. It has defined a new taste averse to the romantic tradition. It has supplied an important apology for poetry in a world dominated by science.[250]

And with Wellek's mention of an "apology for poetry," it would seem that the evolution has come full cycle: The Neoclassicists--Sir Philip Sidney with his An Apology for Poetry (1595) specifically--defended poetry against the judge of their day--Religion. The Romantics and the New Critics, against Science, a judge less dour, less forbidding, less declamatory, but nonetheless hostile. Be that as it may, it was the New Critics who brought criticism back--from the audience and the poet--to the work itself, a point from which it digressed after Aristotle.

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[249]Wellek, p. 359. [250]Ibid., pp. 359-60.

CHAPTER III

A REVIEW OF JEAN PIAGET'S THEORIES ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Jean Piaget (b. 1896) is best known as a developmental psychologist. But "it is probably fair to say that Piaget views himself as a biologically oriented genetic epistemologist first, a psychologist second, and an educator not at all."[1] Nonetheless, his theories are pertinent to education in that at a time when traditional education is floundering, the ideas of Jean Piaget show ways in which it has failed and give direction not only for improvement in teacher practice but also for curriculum revision. Be that as it may, it is in the capacity of genetic epistemologist that Piaget carries on his present work as "director of his own research institute, the International Center of Genetic Epistemology, as well as co-director of the Institute of Educational Science." And it is here, to Geneva, "that students from all over the world come to study with him,"[2] to learn first-hand about his theories of intelligence.

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[1]David Elkind and John H. Flavell, Studies in Cognitive Development: Essays in Honor of Jean Piaget (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 18.

[2]Mary Ann Spencer Pulaski, Understanding Piaget: An Introduction to Children's Cognitive Development (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 4-5.

Piaget's general theory of intellectual development, "born in biology and . . . nurtured by logic,"[3] evolves from two theories central to his thinking: the "stage-independent theory" and the "stage-dependent theory."[4] The stage-independent theory "utilizes the scientific framework of biology," wherein the individual is constantly tending toward equilibrium, a state of balance derived from those things given to him through heredity: (1) "physical structures, [which] set broad limits on his intellectual functioning"; (2) "automatic behavioral reaction[s]" or "reflexes," which have their greatest influence on functioning in the first few days and which are rapidly transformed into primitive intellectual structures that incorporate the results of experience, structures that Piaget calls "scheme[s]": and (3) the general principles of functioning--"organization and adaptation."[5]

"In essence, Piaget looks at intelligence in terms of content, structure, and function." Content is what the environment furnishes the individual; it is "what [he] is thinking about, what interests him at the moment, or [is] the terms in which he contemplates a given problem." But content is only a minor goal for Piaget and for the psychology of intelligence. "The primary goal . . . is an understanding of the basic processes underlying and determining the content."[6] So for him it is the structures and functions of intelligence that count. Biologically, heredity passes

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[3] Elkind and Flavell, p. 10.

[4] John H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget, with a Foreword by Jean Piaget (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1963), pp. 262, 264.

[5] Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969) pp. 2, 17, 20.

[6] Ibid., p. 16.

on physical structures which govern intelligence (e.g., the difference between the structures of a worm and those of a horse) and automatic behavioral reactions or reflexes, such as sucking or crying, which in interacting with the environment lay the foundation for the primitive intellectual structures--the schemes of the infant. Gradually, these evolve into mature structures, that is, into the operations of the child and the more formal ones that emerge with adulthood. Heredity also passes on two basic tendencies or invariant functions: organization and adaptation, which are interrelated in the process of development. Organization "refers to the tendency for all species to organize their processes into coherent systems, whether physical or psychological." An example of the first is the structures "a fish possesses . . . for functioning in the water"--namely, "gills, a particular circulatory system, and temperature mechanisms," which are integrated "into a composite system (or higher-order structure)."[7] An infant also has the psychological tendency to organize his structures into a higher-order system. Initially, he looks (one scheme, or structure) and grasps (another scheme) separately. These are structures that he has available but has not as yet coordinated. Eventually, he will combine the structures into a higher-order structure of looking and grasping at the same time.

As mentioned earlier, the invariant function of organization is bound up with that of adaptation, which in turn is made up of the "complementary processes"[8] of assimilation and accommodation, and is a term that refers to the tendency for all species to cope with the environment, physically and psychologically. Accommodation corresponds to the notion of outer adaptation to the environment (i.e., modifying the internal structure

[7]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[8]Ibid., p. 18

so that it can adapt to outer reality), and assimilation corresponds to inner organization (i.e., using the structures available to incorporate elements of the external world). Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper offer an illuminating example of this concept in their book Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development (1969). They write:

> Suppose an infant of 4 months is presented with a rattle. He has never before had the opportunity to play with rattles or similar toys. The rattle, then, is a feature of the environment to which he needs to adapt. His subsequent behavior reveals the tendencies of assimilation and accommodation. The infant tries to grasp the rattle. In order to do this successfully he must accommodate in more ways than are immediately apparent. First, he must accommodate his visual activities to perceive the rattle correctly; then he must reach out and accommodate his movements to the distance between himself and the rattle; in grasping the rattle he must adjust his fingers to its shape; in lifting the rattle he must accommodate his muscular exertion to its weight. In sum, the grasping of the rattle involves a series of acts of accommodation, or modifications of the infant's behavioral structures to suit the demands of the environment.
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> Grasping the rattle also involves assimilation. In the past the infant has already grasped things; for him, grasping is a well-formed structure of behavior. When he sees the rattle for the first time he tries to deal with the novel object by incorporating it into a habitual pattern of behavior. In a sense he tries to transform the novel object into something that he is familiar with; namely, a thing to be grasped. We can say, therefore, that he assimilates the object into his framework.[9]

Thus, Piaget postulates that there are two general principles of function which affect intelligence--organization and adaptation (assimilation and accommodation). They are inherited, but they are tendencies, not structures. The different ways "an organism adapts and organizes its processes depend also on its environment and its learning history." But "the human being does not inherit particular intellectual reactions; rather, he does inherit a tendency to organize his intellectual processes, and to adapt to his environment in some way."[10] And it is "these tendencies" (to organize his behavior and thought to adapt to reality) which "result in

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[9]Ibid., p. 19

[10]Ibid., pp. 17-19, 20.

. . . psychological structures which take different forms at different ages." This idea of structure formation gets to another Piagetian concept--namely, that "the child progresses through a series of stages, each characterized by different psychological structures before he attains adult intelligence."[11]

These stages and the characteristics that delineate them come under Piaget's stage-dependent theory and "show the actual succession of genetic steps."[12] Described below are the stages that Piaget defines.

Sensori-Motor Stage

This stage occupies a period from birth to approximately eighteen months to two or two and one-half years. "During this . . . period the first signs that intellect is developed, and does not just occur, begin to emerge."[13] By performing overt actions on his environment, the child develops a practical knowledge in the sense that this knowledge is simple perceptual and motor adjustment to objects and events and constitutes substructures of later representational knowledge--that is, the permanent object and sensory-motor systems of space, time, and causality.

According to Hans Furth,

> One can distinguish six substages in the course of this first major stage of development; their continuity is assured by 'schemes' of action. The schemes are transposable or generalizable actions. The child establishes relations between similar objects or between objects which are increasingly dissimilar, including relations between those objects and his own body (for instance, the extension of the scheme of graspable objects to that of invisible objects). Thus a scheme can be defined as the structure common to all those acts which--from the subject's point of view--are equivalent.[14]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Flavell, p. 264

[13] John W. Renner, Robert F. Bibens, and Gene D. Shepherd, Guiding Learning in the Secondary Schools (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 87.

[14] Hans G. Furth, Piaget and Knowledge: Theoretical Foundations (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 29.

Pre-Operational Stage

This stage lasts for approximately five years, from the age of two to that of seven, and is marked by the beginning of language, of symbolic function, and therefore of thought or representation. The child's imitative processes become interiorized, allowing him to imitate absent models and through symbolic play to project imitative schemes onto new objects (e.g., the use of a stick to represent a sword when he plays "war"). At this second stage of development, the child is characterized by phenomenism--that is, he can understand only what is immediate and apparent; "like the sensory-motor infant in the field of direct action, the pre-operational child is confined to the surface features of the phenomena he tries to think about, assimilating only those superficial features which clamor loudest for his attention"; by egocentrism, which prevents him from taking any viewpoint other than his own or from thinking about his own thought, what Piaget refers to as his "prise de conscience"; and by "states and transformations,"[15] or "stability,"[16] whereby "the child is much more inclined to focus attention upon successive states of configurations of a display than upon the transformations by which one state is changed into another . . ." Similarly, the child at this level has difficulty in maintaining a stable equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation: "successive changes" in the "configuration" of a display tend to "pull him in different directions, this way and that" so that "any momentary assimilation-accommodation equilibrium he may have attained just previously" is destroyed by the new change. But for Piaget, perhaps the most predominant characteristc of pre-operational thought is "irreversibility."[17] To explain--thought "is reversible, as opposed to irreversible . . . if it can

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[15]Flavell, pp. 157, 256. [16]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 173.

[17]Flavell, pp. 157-59.

compose into a single organized system the various compensating changes which result from a transformation and, by seeing how each change is annulled by its inverse (the one which compensates for it), insure an underlying constancy or invariance for the whole system." But the pre-operational child's thought is irreversible. Bound by perception, it is not until in the latter phase of this period, at approximately the age of four or five, that his static, rigid structures "begin, in Piaget's phrasing to 'thaw out' and become more flexible, mobile, and above all decentered. . ."[18]

Concrete-Operational Stage

When the child reaches this stage--temporal duration of four years more or less, between the ages of seven to eleven--he has achieved a new level of thought. At this stage the first operations appear (operational thought "refers to the mental capacity to order and relate experience to an organized whole")--concrete operations, which "presuppose that mental experimentation still depends upon perception. The individual, in the 7- to 11-year age range, cannot perform mental operations unless he can concretely perceive their inner logicality."[19] These first operations, in other words, are limited to operating on concrete objects. These operations include classification, ordering, construction of idea of number and construction of spatial and temporal operations. The child at this level can internalize overt actions, but they always involve motor activity. Since his thought is reversible, he can conserve quantity, volume, and weight. Moreover, he has de-centered and can adopt points of view other than his own

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[18]Ibid., pp. 159, 163.

[19]Henry W. Maier, Three Theories of Child Development (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 136.

Formal-Operational Stage

At this stage--"eleven or twelve years,"[20] childhood is left behind and the adolescent emerges. And, according to Piaget, "formal thought reaches its fruition during adolescence and the adolescent, unlike the child, is an individual who thinks beyond the present and forms theories about everything . . ." This period is characterized by hypothetico-deductive operations. The youth can now reason on hypotheses; no longer does he need concrete objects to manipulate. He constructs operations of propositional logic and not simply operations of classes, relations, and numbers. Piaget explains:

> Now, reasoning formally and with mere propositions involves different operations from reasoning about action or reality. Reasoning that concerns reality consists of a first-degree grouping of operations, so to speak, i.e., internalized actions that have become capable of combination and reversal. Formal thought, on the other hand, consists in reflecting (in the true sense of the word) on these operations and therefore operating on operations or on their results and consequently effecting a second degree grouping of operations. No doubt the same operational content is involved; the problem is still a matter of

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[20]It is worth noting that 11 to 12 years as the entering age for formal operational thought has come under question and the lower limit on the thought of this period may come several years later for some people. Recent studies carried out at the University of Oklahoma illuminate the matter. Renner, Bibens, and Shepherd take important notice of this in their text Guiding Learning in the Secondary Schools, pp. 106-07, where they cite research to support the statement. One study done by Friot and Renner (1970) showed that "of 258 eighth and ninth graders studied, 253 exhibited concrete-operational thinking. The average of the students in this sample was approximately 14 years 6 months." Another study carried out on "entering freshmen" (Renner and McKinnon, 1970), found 72 in a sample of 143 Freshmen to be at the concrete operational level. "Based on these studies[they write] it seems safe to say most junior high school students think on a concrete-operational level." In speaking of the formal operational period they put it this way: ". . . [it] can begin at about 11 or 12 years of age." (Italics mine.) But, they add, "Piaget himself has pointed out that there is little consistency in the entering age level. 'Although the order of succession is constant, the chronological aages of children entering these stages varies a great deal.'"

> classing, serializing, enumerating, measuring, placing or displacing in space or in time, etc. But these classes, series and spatio-temporal relations themselves, as structurings of action and reality, are not what is grouped by formal operations, but the propositions that express or "reflect" these operations. Formal operations, therefore, consist essentially of "implications" (in the narrow sense of the word) and "contradictions" established between propositions which themselves express classifications, seriations, etc.

At this level, therefore, the adolescent is filled with his ability to structure any number of possible combinations of events as they might occur. He can now deal with the possible as well as the actual; no longer is he content to reckon with empirical events alone. As Piaget puts it, he " [delights] especially in considerations of that which is not."[21]

Before leaving the operational stages of thought, it would be well at this point to call attention to two terms that Piaget uses in dealing with intellectual structures at the operational levels. In describing concrete-operational thought, he speaks of groupings or logic of classes and relations; in describing formal-operational thought, of groups and lattices. Mary Ann Spencer Pulaski in her work Understanding Piaget (1971), gives a lucid account of Piaget's strategy. Beginning with the concrete-operational stage first and the grouping, she explains:

> In order to describe the intellectual structures which develop in the school-age child, Piaget turned to the language of logic and mathematics. In mathematics, a group is a set of elements whose relations with each other have the properties of combinativity, associativity, identity, and reversibility.[22]

But "at the stage of concrete operations, Piaget observed, most structures of thought do not satisfy these requirements for a mathematical

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[21] Jean Piaget, Psychology of Intelligence, trans. Malcolm Piercy and D. E. Berlyne (Totowa, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1966; ILP Series, 1966), pp. 148-49.

[23] Pulaski, p. 54.

group," except those found in arithmetic--namely, addition and multiplication.

> However, he did note a number of organized structures of thought which, though they do not possess mathematical properties, are reversible and logically organized in the sense that every element is related to every other one. Piaget called these structures logical groupings. They include the logic of classes [classes may be added or multiplied to form a larger class] and the logic of relations [serial ordering operations by which things are arranged in increasing or decreasing order]."[23]

Thus by experimenting with the concept of the grouping, Piaget found that "from about seven years on, a child is capable of many kinds of classification and seriation. He has the ability to understand the relationships that he sees around him in actuality."[24] That is, by first-degree operations on the raw externae, he can "[speed] up his thinking process immeasureably and give it much greater mobility and freedom," "What he still does not have [however] is the ability to think of all possibile kinds of relationships, whether actual or hypothetical." It is these relationships rather that Piaget finds in the adolescent, in "the development of adult inferential thinking."[25]

"To describe the integrated structures of formal operations [the "structure d'ensemble"[26]], Piaget turned to the logic of groups and lattices." From the Bourbaki school of mathematicians, he "borrowed" a group called the "'four-group' . . . to express the flexibility of adolescent thought. This was a group of four transformations, known as the INRC group," the letters of which "stand for Identity, Negation (or inverse), Reciprocal, and Correlative transformations."[27] But the structure d'ensemble of formal thought also includes the lattice structure, which enables

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[24]Ibid., p. 65.

[25]Ibid., pp. 54, 65.

[26]Flavell, p. 212.

[27]Pulaski, p. 67.

adolescent thought to deal with all possible combinations in a proposition; this concept Piaget describes under the system of the 16 binary operations.

In connection with Piaget's concepts of intellecutal structures and the models he uses to describe them, it is worth turning to Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper to note some of the observations they offer regarding the interpretation of the models:

> First, [they caution] like the Groupings . . . discussed in connection with concrete operational thought, the 16 binary operations and the INRC group are not intended to imply that the adolescent understands logic in any explicit way . . . Piaget does not use logic to describe the adolescent's explicit knowledge, but to depict the structure of his thought.
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> Second, the logical models are qualitative, not quantitative. The adolescent comes to conclusions like . . . "thinness causes bending in rods." His conclusions are statements which do not involve numbers; therefore, the model of the statements must also be non-muerical. Neither the binary operations nor the INRC group involve numbers . . .
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> Third, the logical models are intended to describe the structure of adolescent activities. It is not the case that the models exactly duplicate the adolescent's performance in full detail. The models are not simply protocols which list everything that the adolescent does; instead, they are abstractions which are intended to capture the essence of his thought . . .
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> . . . . . .
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> Fourth, like the Groupings, both the system of binary operations and the INRC group are integrated systems. According to Piaget, none of the 16 binary operations nor the INRC group exists in isolation from the others. An operation like implication, for example, does not stand alone; it is part of a larger system which makes implication and other operations possible.
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> Fifth, like the Groupings, the formal operations describe the adolescent's competence. Both the 16 binary operations and the INRC group describe the capacities of the adolescent and not necessarily what he does on any one occasion at any one time . . .
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> Sixth, the models may be said to explain and predict behavior. There is an explanation in the sense that the models describe basic processes underlying the adolescent's approach to problems. We can say that the adolescent solved a particular problem because his thought can utilize the logical operations of implications or negation, and so forth. Such a structural description is one kind of explanation; another kind is prediction in the sense that the models are general. That is, having knowledge of the basic structure of his intellectual activity, we can predict what his performance will be like in general terms in other, similar tasks . . .[28]

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[28]Ginsburg and Opper, pp. 200-1.

And these operational structures that Piaget describes by the terms grouping for concrete operations and group and lattice for formal operations presuppose, of course, the substructures built at the earlier pre-operational and sensory-motor stages. Thus, central to the fact that these stages--sensory-motor through formal operations--follow in a sequence is Piaget's conviction that one stage lays the groundwork of substructures upon which the next stage will build. He asks the reader "to picture the mechanism of this process of construction and not merely its progressive extension . . . [noting] that each level is characterized by a new co-ordination of the elements provided--already existing in the form of wholes, though of a lower order--by the processes of the previous level."[29] Structures are built, therefore, in each stage as the individual matures; as he encounters experience, both physical experience, wherein knowledge is abstracted from the object, and logico-mathematical experience, wherein knowledge derives from actions the cognizer performs upon the object; as he receives knowledge linguistically as well as socially; and, finally, as he tends toward equilibrium, a self-regulatory process of organization and adaptation that implies a system in active balance with its environment. "Out of this interaction [then] develop the structures of thought, each one richer, more complex, more inclusive than the one before."[30]

The three major characteristics of this equilibrium are field of application, mobility, and stability. The first term refers to "objects or properties of objects" which the individual meets in his environment and acts upon in the knower-known relationship. Ginsburg describes this characteristic, as he does mobility and stability, in terms of the distinction

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[29]Piaget, Psychology of Intelligence, p. 151. [30]Pulaski, p. 13.

between perception and classification, perception having application for the pre-operational child and classification for the operational cognizer.

> . . . in visual perception [he explains] the field of application is the visual field, that is, the objects which a person can apprehend visually at a glance. In the case of classification, the field of equilibrium is considerably wider. It involves the extension (the list of members) of the particular class under consideration. This list may, of course, contain a variety of objects. The greater the field of application, the more powerful is the equilibrium.[31]

The next characteristic of equilibrium is mobility, which has reference to the distances both spatially and temporally that "separate the person and the elements of the above mentioned field."[32] The child of pre-operations, a slave to his perceptions, lacks the mental operations to apprehend objects beyond his visual field. Classification, however, "involves representation of objects which are not present. The spatial and temporal distances between the elements are unlimited." For example, the operational thinker can classify; therefore, he can think "of the class of elephants." Thus, "the equilibrium involved in the operation of the classification structure is . . . more mobile than that of the perceptual system."[33]

Stability, the third characteristic, allows the individual to maintain equilibrium of thought processes in spite of changes in the elements. Again Ginsburg illuminates this characteristic in terms of perception and classification:

> Once again in perception equilibrium is partial and limited. If new elements are introduced into the visual field, perception is changed. This can be seen most clearly in the case of visual illusions. Parallel lines are not seen as parallel if

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[31]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 173. [32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

> they are placed close to curved lines. In classification, however, the introduction of new elements does not destroy the system. The structure easily incorporates the new elements and does not change. For example, if we classify animals into elephants and non-elephants, and if we discover that zebras exist, they can easily be classified under non-elephants. Thus the classification system can take into account additional elements without distortion, whereas the perceptual system is affected, even distorted, by the addition of new elements. The former, therefore, presents a greater degree of equilibrium than the latter.[34]

In coming to terms with equilibrium, Piaget thinks two questions should be asked: (1) the synchronic question, which inquires into the general and basic nature of the human cognizer, and (2) the diachronic question, which challenges the principles by which the cognizer alters his nature in the course of its development. To answer these questions is to reiterate concepts that have been previously discussed under the stage-independent theory. But, briefly--to consider the synchronic question first--the "human cognizer" is a "device" that is given by nature the equipment he needs--the functional invariants of organization and adaptation--to maintain his balance in a constantly changing environment. Presumably, he is an "ever organized entity which accommodates its schemas . . . to external reality as it assimilates the reality to the schemas." From infancy to adulthood as he follows these basic tendencies, he moves sequentially from one stage to the next, "each structure [integrating] its predecessor to form a new and higher form of equilibrium," so that within this continuous operation "a succession of discontinuous cognitive structures" emerge, discontinuous in that the cognizer "typically equilibrates his actions on one plane before another, and, on the same plane, for one content before another . . ." And to these concepts Piaget ascribes the terms "vertical and horizontal <u>decalage</u>, respectively."[35]

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Flavell, pp. 262-64.

Piaget's theories of cognitive development have brought him to the problem of knowledge and the respective roles of the subject and the object in the act of knowing. He neither discounts the rationalist who "accentuates the role of the knower at the expense of the object known" in the knower-known relationship, nor that of the empiricist who "stresses the role of experience"[36] in the same relationship. He attempts rather

> . . . to provide a synthesis of the two opposing points of view by proposing what he calls an interaction theory. This theory stresses the interrelationship between the knower and the known in the act of discovering reality with each element making a more or less equal contribution. Piaget consequently acknowledges the importance of the environment which undoubtedly determines the development of thought to a certain extent. Obviously, the type of experience he acquires and the situation to which he is exposed will channel the child's mental performance. But they will not determine development entirely because the child in no instance comes to a situation a tabula rasa. He comes with a mental structure, or accumulation of past experience in the form of schemes, and these will influence his apprehension of reality. This means that for the child reality is not an objective phenomenon which has its own independent existence. Reality is determined by the type of structure with which it is apprehended. The reality of a 4-year-old child is not the same as that of a 7-year-old, nor the same as that of a 14-year-old. Yet the different "realities" are equally legitimate, since the things that a 4-year-old sees and believes are as real to him as the things a 14-year-old sees and believes . . . So Piaget feels that the role of the knower and the development of his mental or cognitive structures is very important in the dual relationship between knower and known. As the one changes, so does the other. With development the child acquires a less superficial view of reality. Knowledge proceeds from the preiphery to the center of reality, but at each level there is a constant interaction between the knower and the external world.[37]

Armed, then, with the gifts of heredity--physical structures, reflexes, and the general principles of functioning (organization and adaptation)--"l'homme piagetian," as Flavell would say, plays a significant role "in the formation of his own cognitive world."[38]

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[36] Ginsburg and Opper, p. 216.

[37] Ibid., p. 217.

[38] Flavell, p. 263.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE COGNITIVE THOUGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND ENGLISH AND ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERARY THOUGHT

As a genetic epistemologist, Piaget's method is to use information concerning the cognitive development of the child and the historical development of a culture as a foundation for theories that will offer an understanding of "the nature of both individual and social knowledge."[1] He has examined a number of knowledge forms in this way in order to show, first, that parallels exist between the development of thought in the individual and the development of thought in the collective mind as it concerns itself through the ages with a particular knowledge form; and, second, that these parallels indicate that just as the child's cognitive structures change and show a movement from egocentric thought to operational thought, so too does social knowledge change in the way it is conceived from one age to the next so that egocentric conceptions concerning that knowledge form in one age are restructured in the next to a more sophisticated, higher-order conception. In view of this study's first hypothesis--that literature from the English Neoclassic period to the period of New Criticism when put in a historical perspective will show advances in the ways it has been conceived by literary critics of this particular time span that parallel advances in the cognitive development of

[1] Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 210.

the individual--a comparison will be made between the two and will proceed from two theories[2] central to Piaget's general theory of intellectual development--namely, the "stage-independent theory" and the "stage-dependent theory."[3]

Stage-Independent Theory

This theory concerns the nature of the human subject and the nature of his development and asks two basic questions: the "synchronic" and the "diachronic." The synchronic question is "'What sort of device' is the human cognizer, not at any particular stage, but basically and generally?" And the diachronic question asks "What are the general principles by which the subject--granted a conception of the sort of device he is--changes his state in the course of development?"[4]

To the first question, the synchronic, Piaget's answer is bound up essentially with his ideas of function; that is,

> the basic equipment of any knower at any stage consists of the biologically given functional invariants of organization and adaptation (assimilation and accommodation). The subject is construed to be an ever-organized entity which accommodates its schemas (the basic units of this organization) to external reality as it assimilates the reality to the schemas. This basic state (the fact of organization) and this basic process (the fact of assimilation and accommodation) are really the only apriorities which Piaget feels it necessary to assume. All other cognitive possessions, including knowledge forms which many might regard as the very axioms of cognition, are the products of the operation of these invariants over time. Thus, the organization of space objects, and other fundaments of human experience are not given

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[2]These theories and the concepts that characterize them--touched upon briefly in Chapter 3--will receive here, in some instances, a more complete treatment in order to illuminate certain aspects of the comparison.

[3]John H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget, with a Foreword by Jean Piaget (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1963), pp. 262, 264.

[4]Ibid., p. 262.

> at the outset but are constructed in the course of complex and interesting evolutions. . . .[5]

In answer to the diachronic question, Piaget posits that

> across a childhood of continuous operation of the functional invariants, arises a succession of discontinuous cognitive structures. This is the heart and essence of cognitive development. The question then is, what are the principal attributes of this development?

In summary, they are,

> first, cognitive behavior is at all levels a matter of subject actions performed on reality; and one characteristic of the developmental process is that these actions become progressively internalized and covert. Second, assimilation and accommodation, while remaining invariant as existents, show an increasing differentiation and complementation as development proceeds. And both of these attributes are part of a more general one, i.e., the progressive equilibration of cognitive actions.

"In this interpretation," therefore, "the sequence of cognitive structures becomes . . . a sequence of equilibrium state 'moments' with an ongoing continuous process of equilibration."

> Each structure integrates its predecessor to form a new and higher form of equilibrium, "higher" in terms of the equilibrial properties of field extension [field of application], mobility, permanence, and stability. . . .

"And, finally, the fact that"

> the subject typically equilibrates his actions on one plane before another and, on the same plane, for one content before another, gets expressed in the concepts of vertical and horizontal <u>decalage</u>, respectively.[6]

Such then are Piaget's postulations on the nature of the human cognizer and the nature of his development--the synchronic and diachronic aspects of his stage-dependent theory. But can his postulations as they concern the individual be theoretically applied to literature as a form of social knowledge? To pose both synchronic and diachronic questions is to first ask "what sort of device" literature is, "generally and

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[5] Ibid., pp. 262-63.

[6] Ibid., pp. 263-64.

basically," and then by what "general principles" does it transform " its state in the course of development?"[7]

"Generally and basically," literature as social knowledge is an "ever-organized entity which accommodates its schemas to external reality as it assimilates the reality to its schemas."[8] Granted the validity of this hypothesis, this means, according to the first part of the statement, that literature's basic state is that of organization, the "tendency for all species to systematize or organize" their structures "into a higher-order structure."[9] Analogically, literature certainly qualifies on the basis of organization because as far back as the Sumerians, some five thousand years ago, it emerged as a "species" from the ballad dance; and as an integrated structure of content and form, organized by a verbal medium, it was--even then--a coherent reflection of certain aspects of the concrete world.

In turn, the second part of the statement posits that literature's basic process is that of adaptation (accommodation and assimilation). Again, using the example of the ballad dance, the primitive form in which literature had its inception and "up to which all forms of literature ultimately may be traced,"[10] it can be asserted that literature came into being naturally and necessarily in early civilization as part of a ritual dance. This, indeed, was adaptation. Man fraught with questions about himself and his world was looking for answers; he found these answers in literature, and it became for him his science, his entertainment, and his religion. In short, literature modified its schema of imitation and

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[7]Ibid., p. 262. [8]Ibid., p. 263 [9]Ginsburg and Opper, pp. 17-18.

[10]Richard Green Moulton, The Modern Study of Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 12.

accommodated it to external reality. With the ballad dance as its genesis, literature advanced in three broad and inclusive ways: it was first a communal activity; it next became the product of the anonymous bard; and, finally, that of the individual author. Thus, literature, as seen through the collective mind, does have the "basic equipment of the knower at any stage,"[11] the functional invariants of organization and adaptation which have ordered its development as a social knowledge.

The general principles by which literature changes from one conception to another in the course of its development--the diachronic question--is of course tied to its process of adaptation. To be sure, it has had a long history of assimilation and accommodation in its "subject actions performed on reality,"[12] explained in a quite general way just previously, as having begun as the ballad dance--what Richard Green Moulton calls "literary protoplasm[13]--and advanced to the time when it became an original artifact created by an individual author. Subsequently, it found its way into every nation and culture and has become an integral segment of that society's institutions and beliefs.

But can the diachronic question be applied to English literature and to the Anglo-American literature of the New Criticism--the literature with which this research is concerned? Ostensibly it is only in terms of the evolution of these two literatures that an answer to this question can be forthcoming. Therefore, the place to begin is England, the time, the period of Neoclassicism, beginning with the seventeenth century. For this was the time when criticism in the modern sense was putting down its first roots; it was also the time when the pragmatic theory oriented most critical

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[11]Flavell, p. 262. [12]Ibid., p. 263. [13]Moulton, p. 12.

views. Now, adaptation at this time was primarily a matter of imitation: Neoclassic thought, after two centuries of egocentric perception, tended to remain "unstable and discontinuous," with "no system-in-equilibrium, with which to order, relate, and make coherent a world" in which Middle-Age traditions, native traditions, and those of the ancients overlapped in their views as to the nature of literature; in fact, any equilibrium attained in regard to literary assumptions was a moment-to-moment affair, for "successive changes" pulled critical thought "this way and that, drawing it "into flagrant contradictions with earlier"[14] premises. And to the critics of this period, who believed that all powers of poetic invention came through sense perceptions, with emphasis on the work and its attributes as it was leveled at the audience, imitation was the way to frame reality and thus deal with it. Hence emphasis was on imitation: imitation as fancy (sense impressions selected and arranged) and imitation of classic writers as models. These narrow, restricted views, which pervaded Neoclassic thought, were focused therefore on the result rather than on the means to the result, on the product rather than the process.

By the nineteenth century, however, the Romantics had disequilibrated the quasi-equilibrated state that Neoclassic conception had attained, and the poet, not the audience, was now the center of literary concerns. For the writer-critics of this period had extended their field of application, their views on literature, even though they still retained in their speculations the attributes of literature--imitation, content and form, function and value--to which the Neoclassicists had subscribed. But the focus now was on transformations rather than states: literature was seen as a dynamic process of the imagination--Coleridge's "middle

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[14] Flavell, p. 158.

quality" between a "thought" and a "thing";[15] emotion superseded neoclassical nature and reason, making the poet and his mental faculties the cornerstone of all literary speculations; and, poetic invention resided in the mind and feelings of the poet. The poem now was more than a mere product; it was an organism in action. Moreover, the lyric in the eighteenth century, which had taken precedence over the epic and tragedy of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought, remained in the nineteenth century the principal genre; but rather than the eighteenth-century notion of the poet-nature dualism, it was conceived of as an organism--all parts related to one another and each part related to the whole--emerging as it were from the creative imagination.

And, finally, building upon the structure of organic form in literature--the lyric in particular, and Samual Taylor Coleridge specifically, with his conception of the poem as a union and balance of opposing elements, the New Criticism of the late twenties in England and that of the thirties and forties, on up to almost the sixties, in the United States was to supplant the nineteenth-century stance, wherein the poet was the element emphasized, and divert it to the objective theory of thought, with the work itself as the element which ordered all precepts.

Thus the thought of the New Critics as well as that of the Romantics is a system-in-equilibrium, a"structure d'ensemble."[16] Their conceptions "[decentered]"[17] and moved toward construction and reflection. Both schools held the poem to be a structure of interrelated elements. Hence, the emphasis is on process as opposed to a passive state of imitation. But they differ in respect to the elements of the structure and

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[15]George Watson, The Literary Critics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 119.

[16]Flavell, p. 212.

[17]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 151.

their operation. For the Romantics believed that the elements--sense perceptions, fancy (sense perceptions arranged in a pattern), will, and imagination work together in the poet's mind to produce the poem. The operations have to do with a concrete object--the poet, who manipulates these elements for an effect. He is a part of the operation and his part is outside the poem itself. In this respect their stance takes an extrinsic approach to literature. The New Critics, on the other hand, take an intrinsic approach: the elements, for them, are such abstract entities as words, figures of speech, rhythm, rhyme, plot, point of view, etc. These work together independently, inside the poem, opposing and neutralizing one another in an attempt to become reconciled. The work itself is the operator and operation in one. But it is worth emphasizing that both the Romantics and the New Critics saw the poem as a matrix which remains constant in that it can incorporate the various compensating changes which result from a transformation and which transmit such intangibles as attitude and tone to the reader by the inverse relationship that exists between them.

It might be said, then, for English and Anglo-American criticism, equilibration by adaptation has been a process of critical development, "whereby states of disequilibrium are succeeded by states of greater equilibrium."[18] Moreover, in the critic's changing conceptions of literature's nature "there has been a progressive reorientation of perspectives, rethinking of fundaments, and continuous search for new and broader frames of reference from Aristotle"[19] through Johnson, through Coleridge to the New Critics, and to the present-day, ongoing attempts to come to grips with literary problems. In every age, as literature has been scrutinized, there have been subject actions performed on reality. Adaptation not only has been

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[18] Ginsburg and Opper, p. 175.

[19] Flavell, p. 256.

essential, it has been inevitable in the progression of literary concepts: from the pragmatic to the expressive to the objective theories of literature, and each theory, like the "chambered nautilus," laid down structures upon which the next theory could build its chamber of thought.

Stage-Dependent Theory

Where the synchronic and diachronic question of the stage-independent theory leave off, the stage-dependent theory begins. This theory

> . . . divides the ontogentic span into three major epochs, called periods, with various subperiods, stages, and substages within these. It should be recalled that the sequence of these developmental steps is thought to be invariant while the chronological age at which each occurs is definitely not.[20]

In his book The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget (1963), John H. Flavell specifies the age limits of these major epochs and entitles them as follows: "Period of Sensory-Motor Intelligence (0-2 years). . . . Period of Preparation for and Organization of Concrete Operations (2-11 years). . . . [and] Period of Formal Operations (11-15 years)."[21] Piaget, however, in his strategy of examining a knowledge form, bypasses the first epoch (the sensory-motor period) as a period for comparison and proceeds directly to the second major epoch, dividing it into what he refers to as pre-operational and concrete operational, and from there to the third epoch,

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[20] Ibid., p. 264.

[21] The age limits noted here are, of course, according to Flavell, pp. 264-65. Piaget in Psychology of Intelligence (Totowa, N. J. : Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1966), p. 123, lists the "four principal periods, following that characterized by the formation of sensori-motor intelligence," and for these periods states what he believes the age-span of each to be. By and large, the age limits he sets for the individual periods agree with those of Flavell; however, his concept of the limits lack the definitive quality of Flavell's (a finality which note 20 of the text [see supra] perhaps anticipates). For example, in speaking of formal operations, Piaget says: " . . . from 11 to 12 years and during adolescence, formal thought is perfected. . . ." (Here, it might be well to again point out, that consensus does not exist among authorities regarding the age limits of formal thought).

the formal operational period.

This study, therefore, using Piaget's historicodevelopmental model, will consider the pre-operational, the concrete operational, and the formal operational periods according to the broad constructs of phenomenism and egocentrism, the former as it "gives way to a progressive construction" and the latter as it is "replaced by reflection,"[22] matching each stage of individual thought with a period in literary critical thought.

Comparison between Pre-Operational Thought and Neoclassical Literary Thought

Beginning with the pre-operational period of cognitive development in the individual, the period which is marked by the beginnings of language, or symbolic function, and representation or thought, the child's thought is characterized by three principal behaviors: phenomenism, egocentrism, and stability. Using as points of comparison these behaviors, which show an early phenomensim moving toward but not quite reaching construction and an egocentrism marked by a number of ancillary behaviors, which in turn affect stability, parallels will be drawn betwen pre-operational thought in the child and literary thought in the Neoclassical period of English literature.

Phenomenism is a characteristic of the pre-operational child which allows him to understand only what is immediate and apparent; he "is confined to the surface of the phenomena he tries to think about, assimilating only those superficial features which clamor loudest for his attention."[23] Analogous to this limited, restricted kind of thinking are the concepts held by Neoclassic literary critics--namely, that all critical distinctions and statements concerning literature should be grounded in

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[22] Flavell, p. 256.

[23] Ibid., p. 157.

the needs of the audience, needs being interpreted of course as moral instruction and pleasure. In these terms, then, literature was a product to supply these needs; and if there were those who maligned it, then literature should be defended.

For several reasons they felt called upon to justify its worth. One reason, and perhaps the most compelling, was the need to disqualify the Puritan indictment of literature's nature. The Puritans, who had revived the earlier distrust of art, and of the drama in particular, now condemned poetry. Taking the position Plato had assumed two thousand years earlier when he banished the poet from his ideal republic, they reiterated his charges: literature was trivial, useless, and false; hence, like Plato, they could accord it no place in the culture of sixteenth-century England. It could do nothing, they charged, but harm: it catered to idle ways and trivial occupations, and worst of all, provoked sin and debauchery.

A second reason for vindicating literature was to rectify the vague and confused conceptions which still survived from medieval traditions, fortified in turn by post-classical and patristic doctrines; for

> . . . poetry, according to that teaching, was but the handmaid of theology or philosophy, it was a branch of logic, it was versified rhetoric, it was no real art but merely vain and trifling. . . .[24]

Apart from these reasons, however, there was another reason of a more positive kind, one that Sir Philip Sidney felt obliged to defend. J. W. H. Atkins in his book English Literary Criticism: The Renascence (1947) discusses this reason. He writes:

> Men were led, because of the new courtly ideals . . . which now animated society, to inquire into the meaning and significance of poetry and to claim for it a worthier place in the intellectual

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[24] J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Renascence (London: Metheun & Co., 1947), p. 103 (Hereinafter referred to as the Renascence.)

> life . . . there had come a livelier snese of the value of the poetic art, even though as yet that sense was inarticulate.[25]

These reasons, then, called forth a number of apologies to justify poetry and proclaim its value. Among the most noteworthy were "Richard Willis' De re poetica disputatio (1573), the earliest Elizabethan apology; Thomas Lodge's Defence of Poetry (1579); and Sir Philip Sidney's An Apology for Poetry (1595)," the "first piece of literary criticism in English that is literature . . . " These were definite attempts "to respond to a very real and widely-felt contemporary need; . . ."[26]

Thus, more interested in getting results, in establishing literature's worth, than in understanding the process of its operation, these men of letters, like the pre-operational child, who can think about only surface features, centered on what was immediately pressing, what, in other words, " clamored loudest for [their] attention."[27] They were, in fact, hemmed in by a phenomenal field which bore a causal relationship to such stricturing characteristics as egocentrism and stability.

Egocentrism, then, deriving from phenomenism, is another property of the child between two and seven and includes a number of behaviors characteristic of pre-operational thought. This characteristic prevents him from taking any viewpoint other than his own, or from thinking about his own thought--what Piaget refers to as his "prise de conscience." For example, "he is unable to reconstruct a chain of reasonings which he has just passed through; he thinks but he cannot think about his own thinking."[28] He cannot think about what another is saying or adopt the other's point of view because his limited field of application, of mobility, and

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[25] Ibid., p. 102.

[26] Ibid., pp. 138, 103.

[27] Flavell, p. 157.

[28] Ibid., pp. 256, 156.

of stability allow him only to center on his own talk and his own viewpoint. Thus he is a victim of centration--the tendency to attend " a single striking feature of the object of his reasoning to the neglect of other important aspects, and by so doing to distort the reasoning. The child is unable to decenter, i.e., to take into account features which could balance and compensate for the distorting, biasing effects of the single centration" and is subject to a kind of reasoning that Piaget terms transductive, a reasoning that "proceeds from particular to particular."

> Centering on one salient element of an event, the child proceeds irreversibly to draw as a conclusion from it some other perceptually compelling happening.[29]

Transductive reasoning, in turn, has the specific characteristics of what Piaget calls juxtaposition and syncretism, the former being a state of reasoning which "fails to see any relation among the parts of a whole, and the result is that they are seen as discrete and unrelated to each other"; and the latter, a state of reasoning which "perceives a whole or the common relationships, but fails to recognize the differences within the whole."

> In other words, since the child cannot focus simultaneously both on the differences among things and on their common relationships, he is apt to see either a succession of unrelated events (juxtaposition) or a conglomerated whole (syncretism). Both types of distortion result from the same deficiency of thought.[30]

Numerous instances of egocentric thought are present in the views some Neoclassicists held concerning literature. An outstanding example, characteristic of this age, was the way literary theorists concieved of content and form. For them content--the meaning, or message, and the

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[29] Flavell, pp. 157, 160.

[30] Ginsburg and Opper, p. 112.

subject matter was one thing; whereas, form, the organizing principle which for them included technique and style, was another. Like the child who is unable to think simultaneously about several aspects of a situation and see their relationship, the critic-writers of this early period in English criticism juxtaposed form and content; that is, "you decide what you want to say, and then, profiting by the example of your greatest predecessors, decide on how to say it." This is a mechanical view of literature's structure and leads to the kind of criticism that speaks of "'a bad book, but so well written. . . .'"[31]

A more specific illustration involves syncretic thought. Sir Philip Sidney in his An Apology for Poetry sets up a classification of poetic genres in an attempt "to show what is valuable in its various 'kinds.'" Atkins calls the reader's attention to "his illogical classification and to the limitation of his test . . . to moral instruction." Here pastoral poetry is "the lowliest of the 'kinds'" because it "treats of the evils of tyranny or the beauty of the simple life." Obviously, for Sidney a form that presents these two aspects in an either-or capacity rated low as a source of moral instruction. Between the pastoral and epic poetry, which is the highest form because in it "heroic and moral goodness are most effectively portrayed,"[32] the forms of elegy, iambic, satire, comedy, and tragedy are similarly positioned with the one criterion--the effectiveness of the "kind," whatever it may be, to reach the reader and effect his moral condition. Thus, mainly because of the Puritan complaint against the licentious nature of poetry, Sidney apparently "pressed" to find a

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[31]David Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 67.

[32]Atkins, The Renascence, pp. 121, 122.

value (a reason) for each poetic "kind" and ordered them in such a way that the reader with a tarnished virtue would have a ready-made scale by which he could be selective and read for edification.

Flavell, in speaking of the nature of pre-operational thought, comments on syncretism:

> . . . the child's reasoning is syncretic; a multitude of diverse things are inchoately but intimatedly co-related with a global, all-encompassing schema. . . . Since almost anything can be "causally" related (by juxtaposition, of course, rather than true causality) to almost anything else within the syncretic whole, the child tends, when pressed to do so, to find a reason for anything.[33]

Considering Flavell's statement, this particular illustration of Sidney's classification qualifies as a case of syncretic thought.

Another characteristic of pre-operational thought for which parallels can be found in Neoclassical thought is that of "states and transformations,"[34] or "stability." Concerning this characteristic, Ginsburg writes:

> Throughout development the child moves from states of a lesser to those of a greater degree of equilibrium. . . . Piaget describes this progression in terms of strategies and the probability of adoption of a particular strategy.[35]

The "water-level problem."[36] as Flavell speaks of it, is an illustration of how the child applies these strategies. First (strategy 1), the child "[focusses] on a single dimension, say the heights of the columns of liquid." This strategy, being the most simple and the most striking is "based on static states of the environment and not on transformations between the states."[37] This satisfies him until the "liquid is poured into an extremely

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[33]Flavell, pp. 160-61.

[34]Ibid., p. 157.

[35]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 173.

[36]Flavell, p. 158.

[37]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 174.

short and wide beaker." Now, with the "salience of the stimulus" in this second event, which "forces itself on the child's attention," and the fact that "he feels 'a lack of satisfaction about always using the same solution when it is not accompanied by certainty,'" "[he] adapts strategy 2, focussing on widths."[38] But this is not a satisfactory solution--there is still the matter of the heights of the liquid. Thus strategy 3 becomes

> . . . an oscillation between the two dimensions. At one time the child centers on heights, at another on widths. He still focusses, however, only on states, and the result is inconsistency in his responses. If he focusses on heights, he is led to assert that one beaker has more to drink; if he focusses on widths, he concludes that the other beaker has more to drink. But . . . when the child oscillates between heights and widths, he begins to see that one does not change without an inverse change in the other. In other words, the contradictions which the child experiences in strategy 3 lead to a fourth solution. The child becomes aware of the transformations, that is the pouring from one beaker to the other. Now his strategy is to coordinate the two dimensions, to relate them to the transformation, and this leads to successful conservation. With the attainment of conservation he has acquired a high degree of equilibrium.[39]

Although conservation is not an attribute of the pre-operational child, Ginsburg's explanation illuminates this process of "sequential probability" by which the child moves from one stage to the next, experiencing conflicts which result in disequilibrium but which eventually lead to a state of greater equilibrium and"periods of incomplete understanding of reality are followed by periods of greater understanding."[40]

Similarly, inconsistencies in ideas and responses to certain literary matters are present in the major Neoclassicists who followed Sidney. Samuel Johnson serves as a good example of inconsistency in that he puts himself in the ambivalent position of attempting to coordinate his theories of imitation and literature's function as didactic instruction. In his book Critical Approaches to Literature, David Daiches speaks of

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[38]Ibid., p. 174. [39]Ibid., pp. 174-75. [40]Ibid., p. 175.

this stance as "Dr. Johnson's dilemma," and says:

> . . . critics who maintained that the function of art was to imitate human nature and who at the same time demanded that art be morally instructive were caught up in another kind of dilemma if they were honest enough to admit that human nature as we know it in real life is far from edifying. If poetic justice does not prevail in life as it is and men in their actual lives are far from models of moral perfection, how can one at the same time imitate nature (which to the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century, meant human nature) and lead your readers to the paths of virtue: Dr. Johnson, who had no illusions about life as it is and men as they are, at the same time praised Shakespeare for knowing and imitating human nature and blamed him for not having sufficient poetic justice in his plays.[41]

Dryden, too, may be accused of wanting it both ways, since he embraced both theories.

Another position on which neither Dryden nor Johnson made himself clear was on the issue that Daiches refers to as "instruction and recognition." Daiches questions whether recognition is really instruction or merely illustration. In speaking of Dryden, and his definition of a play as a "'just and lively image . . . for the delight and instruction of the reader'," he says,

> . . . if Dryden meant that the function of drama was to delight and instruct by providing lively images of human nature in action under testing circumstances, to delight cannot have supposed to come from recognizing what we already know about human nature if at the same time the play is to instruct us in human nature, which is to say, to tell us what we did not know before.[42]

Dryden evidently viewed literature as a form of knowledge. But is knowledge attained through illustration to be construed as new knowledge? With Johnson there is the same problem. He too considered literature as knowledge, a means of instruction, and that achieved by illumination and illustration. But "Johnson is clearer," Daiches says, "than Dryden on the

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[41]Daiches, p. 68.

[42]Ibid., pp. 74, 75.

question of whether what we learn about human nature is new knowledge or simply a lively illustration of what we already know."

> It is in essence [he states] what observant and thoughtful people already know, though often conveyed through examples of a kind hitherto unknown to the reader. Imlac insists that the poet must study all kinds of men of different ages and countries; the poet, that is, must have a greater store of particulars through which to illustrate the known generalities. . . . Recognition, even through unfamiliar examples, is not, however, instruction, and it would be difficult to obtain from Johnson's criticism any notion that the didactic effect of literature lies in its teaching us new things about human nature. [Shakespeare's] plays would give instruction to a hermit, because he has lived removed from the world and is therefore ignorant of it; to the reasonably observant man who has lived in the world Shakespeare would provide, through lively and pleasing fictions, illustrations and confirmations of what he knows human nature to be like.[43]

Thus, for both Johnson and Dryden the poet illustrates by an imitation of general and human nature. Still, "Johnson criticized Pope's view that wit in poetry consists in presenting 'what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed,' arguing that it ought to be newly thought." Indeed, Johnson does vacillate. On the one hand he insists that "great poets are known by the way in which they reveal and illustrate recognizable human nature"; on the other hand, he feels that "they also in some way instruct us in aspects of human nature we had not known before."

> The fact is, neither Dryden . . . nor Johnson is very explicit on this issue, and both of them seem sometimes to talk as though the poet provides new exploration of the human situation and at other times as though he simply illustrated [sic] effectively and convincingly what we know to be true.[44]

Seemingly, Dryden and Johnson want it both ways: they see literature as imitation of human nature and at the same time as moral instruction. They recommend an imitation of life when life is not a model of edification and offers more often than not little moral illumination or instruction; for the "spectacle of men behaving as they do is not conducive

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[43]Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[44]Ibid., p. 87.

to moral uplift."[45] They focus on two states, first on imitation, then on instruction, never coordinating the two theories. Their strategy is strategy 3 of the pre-operational child when he oscillates between the heights and widths of the water-level problem.

But they, like the child of pre-operations, are operating on reality with a limited amount of experience, maturity, and social transmission, or guidance, as they pertain to literature . . . and with only moment-to-moment equilibrations. These limitations are to be expected, however. For English criticism at this time was young and up to this time had been mainly of a kind called legislative (a criticism that prescribes the rules for writing) rather than theoretical or descriptive. These major critics, then, were the first in English criticism to ponder the questions of literature and attempt to produce answers, and this with no guidance other than the neoclassic tradition which legislated imitation and instruction as cardinal precepts, inconsistency and contradiction notwithstanding. Indeed, the seeming ambivalence of Johnson and Dryden becomes understandable in view of the times in which they lived. Richard Moulton comments on this fact: " . . . it is injustice he says to such as Johnson . . . to measure [him] by [his] views of literature--which are in part the product of [his] times-- . . . "[46]

Nevertheless, their theories, opposed as they are, are incommensurate and preclude transformation, unless, as Daiches suggests, "one holds the optimistic view that the world as it is provides an edifying and improving exhibition."[47] Johnson, he states, did not have this kind of optimism.

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[45]Ibid., p. 87. [46]Moulton, p. 326. [47]Daiches, p. 87.

Similarly, Dryden and Johnson vacillate as to the position they take on "instruction and recognition." "Both poetry as exploration and poetry as providing recognition, as cognitive and as illustrative, seem to be included in their views." The former forces itself on their attention while they are attending the latter. Recognition of old knowledge cannot be new knowledge, however; the terms are also incommensurate and cannot be reconciled. But the contradictions which Dryden and Johnson experience in their vacillation-oscillation activity do not become related to the transformation process and an ultimate conservation until in the next period when the focus shifts to the poet and his expression. John Keats (1795-1821), Romantic poet of the nineteenth century, exemplifies the strategy that follows strategy 3 in the water-level problem when conservation is attained. He "[writes] in one of his letters" that "'poetry . . . should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a Remembrance.'" This statement is to bring recognition and instruction together so that a reciprocity exists and one compensates for the other. Daiches explains:

> Keats' phrase "amost a Remembrance" is suggestive because it indicates that there is a middle ground between recognition and new knowledge and it is on that middle ground that imaginative literature operates. If, therefore, "a just and lively imitation of human nature" delights and instructs us, the delight is not simply a matter of recognizing examples of what we already knew to be true, nor, on the other hand, are we "instructed" in what we had never known before: there is a kind of recognition at work, but it is only apparently recognition--it is new knowledge, operating through an impression of the familiar.[48]

Although "a claim for poetry as conveying a special kind of awareness which, while new, comes with the force of recognition, is never explicitly made"[49] by Neoclassic pragmatists, still Johnson, in his life of Gray, does indicate--despite his emphasis on the illustrative aspect of

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[48]Ibid., pp. 75, 87, 76. [49]Ibid., p. 88.

Gray's style--that some such notion has crossed his mind. He writes:

> "The Church-yard abounds with images which find a mirrour in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning Yet even these bones, are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here, persuades himself that he has always felt them . . ."

Here, there is a new note; the emphasis moves away from recognition in the first sentence to the "'almost a Remebrance'" of Keats in the second. "We can recognize what we had not previously known. When we see new knowledge rendered in the special way the poet employs we see it both as new and as familiar, and our reaction combines recognition with insight."[50] Like the pre-operational child who finally notices the pouring from one beaker to the other, who now focuses attention on the operation rather than on the two states, Johnson has come close to relating his two constructs to the transformation and is approaching the stage of conservation.[51]

These parallels argue for the limited thinking of the Neoclassicists as well as the similitude that exists between their illogical, ambivalent views and the unstable, phenomenistic thought of the pre-operational child. Flavell says of the child at this level,

> . . . he has no stable, enduring, and internally consistent cognitive organization, no system-in-equilibrium, with which to order, relate, and make coherent the world around him.

But through maturation, experience, social transmission, and "equilibrium--state-'monents'"[52] along the way, he comes closer and closer to a state of

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[50] Daiches, p. 88.

[51] Dryden, too, in his view of nature being subject to change and decay, as a process which the poet imitates (see supra, Chapter 2, p. 34), came close to the organic view of the nineteenth century, wherein nature was seen as fluid and changing. In this respect, therefore, he, like Johnson, was approaching conservation.

[52] Flavell, pp. 158, 263.

true equilibrium. This statement can also be made of the critical thought during this period; for the critic-writers were concerned with literature as a product and the results it could effect--concerned with its absolutes, with literature as an object of existencies and attributes, with questions concerning its nature, its function, and its value, all as they affected the audience and elicited the proper response. Their focus was on states, not transformations. And like the child who is feeling his way toward logical thinking but is constantly deceived by the perceptual appearance of things, their answers wavered between "imitation and instruction," between "recognition and instruction," wanting in each case, to have it both ways, unable to find a middle ground between the two theories. But again, like the child who established structures that become the foundation upon which later structures build, the Neoclassicists bequeathed concepts they themselves had inherited. For just as the Piagetian view that "no structure [in individual development] is radically new, but each one is limited to generalizing this or that form of action abstracted from the preceding one,"[53] so too does this general conception of continuity hold true for the evolution of literary criticism. The Neoclassic pragmatists drew on the ancients and the theory of imitation so that

> through most of the eighteenth century, the poet's invention and imagination were made thoroughly dependent for their materials--their ideas and 'images'--on the external universe and the literary models the poet had to imitate; while the persistent stress laid on his need for judgment and art . . . held the poet strictly responsible to the audience for whose pleasure he exerted his creative ability. Gradually, however, the stress was shifted more and more to the poet's natural genius, creative imagination, and emotional spontaneity, at the expense of the opposing attributes of judgment, learning, and artful restraints.[54]

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[53] Ibid., p. 240.

[54] M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 21.

And with this shift to the poet as the center of all critical considerations, certain concepts which oriented this earlier literary period were abstracted and integrated into the new totality which defines the next and more conceptually sophisticated period.

Comparison between Concrete Operational Thought and Romantic Literary Thought

Just as the Neoclassic critics were influenced by the ancients and their theory of mimesis, so too were the critics of the nineteenth century affected by ancient thought. However, the influence which caused their thinking to be radically different from their predecessors came from a different source in antiquity, a source much later than Plato or Aristotle or even Horace. Captivated by Longinus, the first-century Greek and his theory of the sublime,[55] they rejected the "attributes of judgment, learning, and artful restraint,"[56] all as they pertained to the audience, and gave their complete allegiance to the poet--a natural genius, creatively imaginitive and spontaneous. Thus, the final cause of literature for them was not the external universe, nor was it the audience--it was the poet and his feelings. In these terms, then, their attention was on the "psychology of creation," not on the eighteenth-century "psychology of communication."[57] This shift in focus from audience as the final cause of literature to the poet as the wellspring of all creative invention suggests perhaps that the critics of this period were attempting to discover a more logical explanation for the origin of the literary phenomenon.

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[55]For Longinus and his theory of the sublime see supra, Chapter 2, p. 35, n. 33.

[56]Abrams, p. 21.

[57]Daniel G. Hoffman and Samuel Hynes, eds., English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 12.

Like the concrete operational child at this stage who is "free from the pull of immediate perception," who can "range forward and backward in space and time on the mental level," and thus has greater mobility, whose thinking processes, permanent and stable, demonstrate reversibility, these nineteenth-century theorists of the Romantic period had attained a greater equilibrium. Still the attainment of this higher equilibrial state did not cause them to discard all literary principles of the past; in fact, many they assimilated and many they accommodated to the changes in the environment, an environment being increasingly dominated by science and its demands that all aspects of knowledge be subjected to the dictates of empiricism and positivism. And in this process of adaptation, like the child of concrete operations whose new freedom is won only in the presence of "concrete existing objects and people,"[58] the critics of this new age could operate cognitively in but one way--in terms of the external and concrete; and for them the raison d'etre of literature was in the mind and the sensibilities of the poet, an element external to the work itself.

To show, then, that in this period of concrete operations that individual as well as nineteenth-century collective cognition has moved from phenomenism to construction and that egocentrism has yielded to reflection when concrete objects are present, the parallels explored will be on the basis of those characteristics which describe equilibrium: "field of application," "mobility," and "stability,"[59]

Ginsburg explains these major characteristics by contrasting perception, the directing force of pre-operational thought, with classification, a thought process attained at the operational level. "First he says

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[58]Mary Ann Spencer Pulaski, Understanding Piaget: An Introduction to Children's Cognitive Development (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 53-54.

[59]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 173.

there is the field of application of the equilibrium. This relates to the objects or properties of objects which the person acts upon." Perceptually, it is the field of objects that the child can "apprehend visually at a glance." But with classification this field of equilibrium becomes immeasurably extended. "It involves the extension (the list of members) of the particular class under consideration. This list may . . . contain a variety of objects. [Thus] the greater the field of application, the more powerful is the equilibrium."[60]

Now, compared to the Romantics, who espoused the expressive theory, the Neoclassicists, like the child who is bound by his perceptions and can see only states, were limited in their field of application. For them, literature must be an imitation of nature that will instruct and delight, and content and form were chosen accordingly, the former for its instructive value, the latter for its correlative delight. The Romantics, on the other hand, for whom the poet and his mental faculties were first principles, classified these faculties into understanding and reasoning (or fancy and imagination, respectively, as Coleridge spoke of them; they, therefore, were able through classification to extend their field of application, an extension which resulted in a theory that removed literature from a static and sterile state--as simply a product (the Neoclassical view)--to one dynamic and active, a highly integrated product of the poet's mind in creative operation--a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[61] Or as Coleridge would say, "neither a thought nor a thing, but . . . 'a middle quality' between the two."[62] Indeed, Coleridge, like the child of concrete

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[60] Ibid.

[61] William Worsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 337.

[62] Watson, p. 119.

operations, looked at both sides of the equation. He maintained in his view of literature a double view: he was able to view a poem both as a poem and as a process of the mind, an organism with all parts working in conjunction with an integrated whole. No longer were form and content juxtaposed; technique was spontaneous, emerging simultaneously with insight. And this broadened view of literature as an expression of the poet, constructed on the Neoclassical concepts of a poem as a product for the benefit of the audience, allowed the Romantics to formulate a more inclusive, more dynamic, more logical system of thought.

The second characteristic of equilibrium is mobility,

> which is defined in terms of the spatial and temporal distances that separate the person and the elements of the above mentioned field. The greater these distances, the more mobile the equilibrium, or the more flexible the mental operations necessary to cover these distances.

Now, perceptual mobility, characteristic of the pre-operational child, "is restricted; the spatial and temporal distances between the elements of the immediate visual field are small and call for a relatively limited number of mental activities."[63] In like manner, the mobility of the Neoclassicists was restricted. The poem for them was simply there, was merely a static reflection of nature--good or evil, foolish or wise--to delight man because it could furnish so much instruction. With the Romantics, however, perceptual mobility became mature classification in that they believed that a representation of objects not present was possible through the imagination, which "co-existing with the conscious will" emancipates memory "from the order of time and space" and "dissolves,

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[63]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 173.

diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate."[64] Or, as Wordsworth affirmed, through "emotion recollected in tranquillity."[65] And, interestingly enough in the last stanza of his poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" Wordsworth demonstrates this mobility, this transcendance of time and space, by remembrance of a past experience now recalled in a different place. The lines read,

> For oft, when on my couch, I lie
> In vacant or in pensive mood
> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude;
> And then my heart with pleasure fills
> And dances with the daffodils.[66]

Finally, stability, the third characteristic of equilibrium, is defined "by the person's capacity to compensate by actions or mental operations for changes in the elements without disturbing the whole previous structure." Perceptual stability, which characterizes the pre-operational child, is "partial and limited," so much so that "if new elements are introduced into the visual field, perception is changed." It will be recalled that Neoclassic thought focused on the attributes of literature--imitation, instruction, recognition--and like the child and the "water-level problem" was restricted by its perception, so that it experienced the process of "sequential probability," suffering "conflicts along the way"[67] and never advancing beyond strategy 3--the vacillation-oscillation activity as it pertained to "instruction and imitation," on the one hand, and "instruction

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[64] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 387.

[65] Wordsworth, p. 344.

[66] Arthur M. Eastman et al,,eds., The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), p. 585.

[67] Ginsburg and Opper, pp. 173, 174.

and recognition" on the other. Thus conservation was not reached and the conflicts of this ambivalence were never reconciled. Its reasoning remained transductive, resulting in distorted and inconsistent views.

But mature classification is another matter.

> In classification . . . the introduction of new elements does not destroy the system. The structure easily incorporates the new elements and does not change.[68]

Now just as the ability to classify characterizes the thinking processes of the concrete-operational child, so too does it characterize the theoretical thought of the critics of this second period. They, and Coleridge in particular, saw the ideal poet as one who

> . . . brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that binds and (as it were) fuses each to each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which has been exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power first put in action by the will and understanding [fancy], and retained under their unremissive, though gentle and unnoticed controul . . . reveals itself in the balance of reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities; of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; . . .[69]

With this view the poetic process is a hierarchical structure of the poet's mental faculties--the will and fancy subordinate to the imagination. And through the work of the imagination, the structure easily incorporates "discordant qualities" and remains intact. Moreover, the imagination compensates by its "synthetic and magical power," binding and fusing the opposing elements into the original structure.

Thus, through classification, the phenomenism of the pre-operational child which limited him to surface features as he perceived them has given way at the concrete-operational level to a concrete construction.

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[68] Ibid., p. 173.

[69] Coleridge, Biographia, p. 379.

And the egocentrism of his earlier years, which prevented him from adopting another's point of view and exercising a "prise de conscience,"[70] has at the concrete level of operations yielded to reflection--but a reflection that takes place only in the presence of concrete reality. Thus at the concrete-operational level, classification enables the child to widen his field of application, his mobility, and his stability, characteristics of equilibrium which transfer him beyond the boundaries of perception. Similarly, through classification, the egocentric and phenomenistic thought of the Neoclassicists yielded to construction and reflection with the Romantics. The imagination, having first been put into action by the will and understanding, or fancy, "brings," so Coleridge believed, "the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity."[71] And like the concrete-operational child, who can think and reflect on his past cognitions so that they lose their distortions and what was apprehended as states now becomes "knowing" through transformations, the imagination "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate"[72] and representation of objects not present becomes possible. But just as this attainment of construction and reflection is possible only in the presence of concrete, existing objects for the individual at this level, so too is construction and reflection in Romantic thought dependent on externals--in this case, the poet and his faculties. For this thought is still representative thought, not hypothetico-deductive, which emerging at the formal operational stage allows the individual to be independent of externals and thus autonomous in his cognition--just as in the twentieth century the work of literature is

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[70] Flavell, p. 256, n. 15.

[71] Coleridge, Biographia, p. 379.

[72] Ibid., p. 387.

seen by the New Critics as autotelic, as a structure of unity, self-ordered by its context of words.

Comparison between Formal Operational Thought and Literary Thought of the New Criticism

In this period of individual cognition, there is a distinct shift in thought from the realm of what is real, what is here and now to what is possible; from what has been concrete-representational thought to propositional thought, or as Piaget puts it "hypothetico-deductive" thought. Inhelder and Piaget state that the "most prominent feature of [this kind of] thought is that it no longer deals with objects directly but with verbal elements."[73] Flavell, more specifically, explains this change. He says that both the second major epoch of development, the Preparation for and Organization of Concrete Operations, and the third major epoch--Formal Operations--culminate in an "equilibration of internal, symbolic-representational operations." They differ, however, in "the kind of internal operations which get equilibrated." The internal operations for the second period are

> . . . first degree operations whose content is concrete reality itself; these operations consist of classifying this reality, serially ordering it, denumerating it, and so on. For the third [period], on the other hand, it is second-degree operations whose content is not the raw externae, but the aforementioned first degree operations themselves. By operating upon these, treating them not as realities but as conditionals which are grist for free conceptual manipulation, representational thought has taken a new and important turn; it has become hypothetic-deductive, oriented towards possibility as the supraordinate term and towards reality as the subordinate term. The structures which serve this new orientation are no longer groupings but lattices and groups, in particular the group of four transformations [Piaget's INRC model] and the lattice of all-possible combinations [Piaget's 16-Binary Operations model].[74]

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[73] Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget, The Growth of Logical Thinking: From Childhood to Adolescence, trans. Anne Parsons and Stanley Milgram (New York: Basic Books, 1958), p. 252.

[74] Flavell, pp. 265-66.

Similarly, in English, and now American, literary thought there has been a transfer of orientation. The poet and his faculties, as the defining emphasis for the expressive theory of Romantic criticism, has been supplanted by the poem itself as the touchstone for orienting all speculative assumptions under the objective theory, the theory expounded by the New Critics. For them, the poet and his feelings are outside the work itself (they are analogous to the concrete reality, "the raw externae," that Flavell describes as the content for the first-degree operations of the individual at the concrete level of operations); whereas, the poem, as an organization of experience, is a structural unity, which functions as an integrated whole, each part related to every other part and all parts related to the whole. It, like the adolescent who no longer requires concrete objects for the operations he performs, has autonomy, is independent of all externals. And this autonomous whole which these twentieth-century critics see as having structures, along with the instruments they have devised to study literature's syntactic and semantic nature, bear an analogical relationship to Piaget's matrix of four transformations--the INRC group. In view of this relationship, then, parallels will be drawn between the operations of this INRC group and the operations of a literary form (the lyric poem in particular), as conceived by the American New Critics, who evolved their instruments of speculation from the Anglo-American critic I. A. Richards via Coleridge.

According to Piaget's INRC group, there are "four rules by which the adolescent manipulates or transforms functions."[75] These transformations are identity (I) negation (N), reciprocity (R), and correla-

[75]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 196.

tion (C). Three of these transformations--identity, negation, and reciprocity--are within the ken of the child at the concrete-operational level (but the reciprocal relation is called a half-lattice, since at this stage of thought there is no transformation to cancel R as N cancels I). They are elements of the grouping structure which allows him to classify and order serially. The transformation known as correlation, however, is unique to the adolescent and makes up the fourth element of the model that depicts his structural cognition (this additional transformation extends the half-lattice R to a complete lattice and cancels R as N cancels I). Now the elements of both the grouping (concrete operations) and the group (formal operations) pertain to the individual's ability to reverse operations. But his reversibility at the concrete-operational level differs from reversibility at the formal-operational level, and the difference rests on the word function. Reversibility "in the case of the [concrete-operational period] means that operations on concrete objects may be reversed; in the case of the [formal-operational period], operations on hypothetical propositions (functions) may be reversed."[76] (Italics mine.)

"The INRC group constitutes a good description of at least one important component of [the adolescent's] cognitive organization." Within this group

> . . . the four transformations I, N, R, and C, form the elements of a group under the operation of multiplication or combination. First of all (the composition requirements), the multiplication of any two or more of these four transformations is equivalent to . . . the solitary application of some one of them.

Thus, NRC = I is equivalent to, or yields the same results as, "NR = C, IN = N, NC = R, IRC = N, NRCN = N, and so on."

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[76] Ibid., p. 199.

> No matter what sequence of transformations are performed, the final result is always equivalent to the action of some single one of them. The other group properties also hold: N (RC) = (NR) C (associativity); the identity element is I (thus IN = N, IR = R, etc.); and each element is its own inverse (thus NN = I, RR = I, etc.).[77]

Flavell gives the example of a snail on a board and the four ways in which the snail can be moved, whether it does the moving itself or the board is moved. The snail can move in a left-to-right movement to a certain point on the board; it can then cancel or annul this action or operation by a right-to-left movement back to his original position. Or, the movement can be executed in another way by the snail remaining immobile on the board and the board being moved left-to-right and then right-to-left, returning the board to its original position and thus inversing the action performed on the board. The snail, therefore, is moved physically in four ways, whether it performs the operation or the board being moved implements the operation reciprocally.[78] The INRC group, then, is a model Piaget deploys to support his concept of reversible operations, a system which entails the double reversibility of negation (the literal undoing or canceling of an operation) and reciprocity (the restoring of equilibrium in a compensatory manner without undoing the original operation). Ginsburg sees the INRC group as "an attempt to specify the rules which the adolescent uses in manipulating or transforming functions."[79]

The implementation of the INRC group as a model of rules that the adolescent uses in the manipulation or transformation of functions, then, will serve the purpose of this section, which is to establish parallels between the operations of the INRC group and the operations of a literary form. It will serve the purpose in that the application of Piaget's

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[77]Flavell, pp. 219, 216.

[78]Ibid., p. 217.

[79]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 196.

theory of the manner in which this group functions to the creative action of a poem as this action is conceived by the American New Critics will allow the writer to describe its functions syntactically, semantically, and metrically.[80] Accordingly, it may be stated that the transformations of syntactic, semantic, and metrical functions that take place in the context of a poem as it attempts to emerge as a "unit of sensibility"[81] is analogous to the transformations of cognitive functions that the INRC group describes.

For example, Ransom's and Tate's speculative instruments as well as that of Brooks strikingly parallel the INRC group of transformations in the sense that each instrument considered individually presents a matrix in which reversible operations are at work. Ransom, in getting at his structure-theory describes what he calls the organic act of poetry--the "meter-meaning" process. Here, at the outset, two entities are at work, each, in its own right, endeavoring to stay intact as the operation moves forward. One is the "determinate meaning," or "D M"; the other is the "determinate sound," or "D S." "D M," in order to maintain its original state, attempts to "un-determine" "D S"; and, by the same token, "D S," as unyielding as "D M," tries to "un-determine" "D M." Obviously, each has to give if it is to sustain as much of its original state as possible, with the result that one becomes "indeterminate meaning," or "I M," and the other "indeterminate sound," or "I S."[82] Consequently, in this give-

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[80]John Crowe Ransom, however is the only critic in this group whose speculative instrument takes meter into account.

[81]Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 47.

[82]John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941), pp. 297-304.

and-take process, both poetic factors diminish each other (negation), while at the same time each holds a substantial part of its effect constant (reciprocity), calling into play, therefore, a double reversibility. And this double action, wherein meaning surrenders part of its logic to the rules of meter and meter varies its rules somewhat for meaning; not only produces "I M" and "I S" but also leads to "irrelevancies"--that is, all the particulars that the poet comes upon as he manipulates the language.

But at the same time that this "struggle"[84] is taking place, with meaning being altered to meter and vice-versa, when one is being undone by the other and the essence of each is being neutralized, so that irrelevancies are being produced, there is something happening at a new level of compensation, negating the effects of reciprocity or neutraliziation on the determinates of meaning and sound. "Texture,"[85] born of the irrelevancies with which "the imagination . . . has become engaged" correlatively transforms the structure (the meaning), giving body to its skeletal frame-

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[83] Ransom in The New Criticism, p. 303, explains: "A given word will probably have synonyms. The order of words in a phrase may be varied. A transitive predication may be changed to a passive; a relative clause to a participial phrase. . . .Epithetical adjectes and adverbs may be interpolated, if they will qualify their nouns [sic], and very obviously." Similarly, the poet considers what liberties he can take with the phonetic effect--the juggling of rhyme, of meter, of choosing this word over that for the sake of its sound--all decisions being made, of course, as they congrue with meaning.

[84] Krieger, p. 82.

[85] The term texture, according to Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke, and O. B. Hardison, Jr. in Encyclopdeia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 853, "is the valuable element of poetry, since the structure exists for its sake rather than the reverse. It includes all the logical, heterogeneous detail which differentiates the poem from a prose statement. The detail is characterized by its concreteness and particularity. Furthermore, it is essentially irrelevant ot the structure [the meaning, message, or paraphrase]."

work. Ransom explains this last transformation of correlation, this last step of "indeterminacy":

> But the important stage of indeterminacy comes [he says], in the experiment of composition, when the imagination of the poet, and not only his verbal mechanics, is engaged. An "irrelevance" may feel forced at first, and its overplus of meaning unwanted because it means the importation of a little foreign or extraneous content into what should be determinate, and limited; but soon the poet comes upon a kind of irrelevance that seems desirable, and he begins to indulge it voluntarily, as a new and positive asset to the meaning. And this is the principle: the importations which the imagination introduces into discourse have the value of developing the "particularity" which lurks in the "body," and under the surface of apparently determinate situations.

To summarize, Ransom's palpable description of the poetic process details a succession of transformations as the poem works to come into fruition.

> The development of metrical content [he states] parallels that of meaning. As the meter un-determines the meaning and introduces I M, so the meaning un-determines the meter and introduces "variations," or I S. . . . so that the two structures advance simultaneously if not by the same steps, and every moment or so two steps finish together, and two new steps start together . . .

And at this point Ransom explains how the poem arrives at its consummation:

> But with the phonetic effect considered for itself alone we find the poet developing for his meter, which is the regular phonetic structure, its own texture, which consists in the metical variations. He is driven into this course by considerations exactly the same, except in reverse, as those we have seen compelling him to develop within the meaning a texture of meaning. The latter was forced upon him by the necessity of adapting his meaning to the meter; and this is forced upon him by the necessity of adapting his meter to the meaning. When he cannot further reduce his meaning to language more accurately metrical, he accepts a "last version" and allows the variations to stand. These variations of course present the contingency and unpredictability, or in one word the "actuality" of the world of sound. Many phonetic effects are possible really; and here a foot or a phrase holds stubbornly to its alien character and is not assimilated to the poet's purpose. In our habit of reading much into the poem, it seems to be fatal not to read the ontological consideration.

And in a concluding remark, he comes back to meaning and comments on the eventuation of this transforming process:

> But probably we all have greater actual interest in the meaning than in the sound. Therefore it is convenient to say that the phonetic effect serves as a sort of texture to the meaning. This is to assign to the meaning an ontological addition.[86]

Ransom, thus, sees the poetic process as organic--a transforming of the "D M" ("determinate meaning") and the "D S" ("determinate sound") into a unique creation by reversible operations, with "possibility as the supraordinate term and reality, the subordinate term."[87] Analogically, the poetic matrix is to the INRC group what the aesthetic process is to the hypothetico-deductive.

Allen Tate's instrument of "tension" compares favorably to Ransom's, "with 'intension' meaning something very close to Ransom's 'texture.'"[88] Although in his technical criticism of certain poems Tate touches on the effects of meter in the working out of a poem, meter is not one of the factors in his theory as it is for Ransom. "Tension," as Tate defines it, "is the full organized body of all the extension [denotation] and intension [connotation] that we can find in it." With his theory of tension, Tate believes there are two problems: the first is to keep extension intact; the meaning coherent, never sullied by vague referents, as in James Thomson's poem "The Vine" (explained in Chapter 2, pp. 94-95); the second problem is to apply intension without invalidating extension--that is, the connotative value comes in but not at the expense of having to "forget the firm denotations of the terms [explained in Chapter 2, pp. 95-97]."[89]

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[86] Ransom, The New Criticism, pp. 314, 316-17, 318.

[87] Flavell, p. 265.

[88] René Wellek, Concepts of Criticism, with an Introduction and ed. by Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 62.

[89] Allen Tate, On the Limits of Poetry (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1948), pp. 83, 81.

Thus, figurative language (intension) does not annul extension, but neutralizes it, adding extra dimensions to the language--something that direct language (extension) cannot do, since it has one meaning and one meaning only. More explicitly, extension is the literal statement on which intension by "the complications of metaphor" builds. But the intension that builds never "invalidates" the meaning; no matter how heavy, how rich the overlay of intension, the extension, or denotative meaning, "will be coherent." And always, "the dissenting ambiguities at the intensive end of the scale" must be taken into account because of the insight they provide over and beyond the literal statement. A transforming process takes place, therefore, in which the extension remains, yet becomes qualified or neutralized as the poem accumulates more intension. And as a result of this overlay of intension, the poem becomes increasingly denser, richer, and more refractory of the particular world. In fact, a good poem, as Tate defines it, is coherent at every step along the way and "is a unity of all the meanings from the furthest extremes of intension and extension."[90]

Finally, the bipolar elements of extension and intension are fused in the matrix. And although there is no double reversibility, since intension never dimishes nor negates extension (a poem in which this happens is a failure in connotation), there is the reversible operation of reciprocity wherein intension neutralizes extension, thereby holding its effect constant; yet, at the same time, it lifts extension beyond literality to a new fullness of conceptualization. As Tate remarks, Andrew Marvell's poem "To a Coy Mistress" is more than the surface argument of carpe diem. It is this too, of course--the meaning at the extensive end

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[90]Ibid., pp. 83, 82.

of the scale--but it is more than this: it is "the conflict of sensuality and asceticism"[91] and the choice that the dualism imposes.

For Tate, then, "tension means the integral unity of a poem, a unity which results from the successful resolution in the work of the conflicts of abstraction and concreteness, of general and particular, of connotation and denotation."[92] And this matrix of relationships brought into harmony by the reciprocal action of intension upon extension gives the poem an autonomy much like that of the adolescent whose thought processes have reached the formal level of operations (for which the INRC group is a model) and are freed from dependence on concrete reality. Hence, it too is independent of externals and functions under its own power, its power of words working together in a context.

Cleanth Brooks, the last critic to come under consideration, like Ransom and Tate, also espouses the organic theory of literature and has devised an instrument that parallels Piaget's INRC group. But according to René Wellek, he more than Ransom and Tate "has grasped more clearly . . . . the organic point of view"[93] and comes more expressly from the direction of Coleridge. In fact, he claims Coleridge's theory of counteraction as support for his aesthetic. Krieger states that Brooks bases "his concept of irony" on "the following passage from Coleridge":

> " . . . the imagination reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order. . . ."[94]

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[91] Ibid., p. 83.

[92] William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, eds., A Handbook to Literature, rev. ed., rev. and enl. by C. Hugh Holman (New York: Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 484.

[93] Wellek, p. 62.

[94] Krieger, p. 47.

But Coleridge notwithstanding, Brooks has his own ideas of the poetic process. In one of his writings, John Crowe Ransom fancifully describes it:

> For Brooks the poem exists in its metaphors. The rest of it is negligible. He goes straight to the metaphors, thinking it is they which work the miracle that is poetry; and naturally he elects for special notice the most unlikely ones. Hence paradox and irony, of which he is so fond. Now if you count little ones with big ones the two figures must be about as ubiquitous as any we have; they are easy to find once you are searching for them. It is a paradox when you find something which in its bearing looks both ways, pro and con, good and bad; irony when you have something you thought was firmly established in the favorable sense, as good, and pro, but discover presently that it has gone bad for you, and is contra; the one is a pregnant ambiguity, the other is disappointment where you had least reason to expect it.[95]

Now Ransom's explanation is lightly put, but it serves as a way to understand how a poem works (at least how Ransom thinks Brooks conceives of the process) and how its structure, as seen from the organic point of view compares with the INRC group.

If a poem has its inception and existence in metaphors (Brooks maintains that "the essence of poetry is metaphor. . . .") and if a poem, as defined by Brooks, is "a simulacrum of reality," dramatic, not logical (and Brooks insists on this), and is furthermore a symbolic action and a structure of attitudes--if it is all of these, and if the metaphor that Brooks finds most intriguing is paradox, then the place to begin is with paradox and a situation transformed by paradox, because this is the stuff of reality, is "[toughminded]"[96] and worth commenting on. To begin then with paradox and a situation, a paradoxical situation would introduce into the context ambiguity and a complex of incongruities. Thus, the context,

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[95]John Crowe Ransom, Beating the Bushes (New York: New Directions, 1952), p. 160.

[96]Cleanth Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947), pp. 223, 194, 229.

which began with idea (situation) and paradox, has by this time grown complex as it has taken in ambiguity and its attendant incongruities. And if, as Ransom says, "you count little ones with big ones," the poem has become a matrix of language relationships, telescoping from paradox and enriching the whole.

More explicitly, however, paradox, as the crucial metaphor, has created a context of two ideas: one idea will be conveyed in a logical sense, whereas the other, by contradiction, will deliver the shock; these two ideas, discordant, yet inextricably bound, will remain in the context as vital forces--one "pro" and one "con"--and because they are incongruous elements, enigmatic and irresolvable, they will lead to the third element ambiguity. Now, this has become a complicated affair both semantically and structurally: three interrelated elements (paradox, situation, ambiguity) bearing one upon the other and, at the same time, upon the context--a palpable whole which receives from each element some part of its character, thereby becoming activated and textured. But there is more to the process than this. There is the final action on the part of the context, by which the fourth element irony is introduced: For just as the elements--situation, paradox, ambiguity--enrich the context by their character, so too does the context reciprocate, reflecting, as it were, on each element, giving back to it some part of its new and heterogeneous character. And so irony ("the general term . . . for the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context receive from the context,"[97] as the incongruities and union of opposites are recognized) comes into

[97] Ibid., p. 191.

being and gets structured into the poem as the poem's supreme attitude. The poem thus becomes ironic itself and invulnerable to ironic contemplation.

Now to take this process into account is to see relationships and transformations as they function within the emerging poem. But in terms of the purpose herewith it is also to see a comparison--that is, to see parallels between the operations of poetic creation as Brooks conceives of them and those of formal-operational thought as Piaget conceives of them. As for relationships, "Piaget distinguishes between two kind of relations between events -- causal and implicative."[98] But these two relations may also apply to the poetic process described herein and be distinguished, so that what may seem to be causal may rather be implicative. For example, in the paradox-ambiguity matrix there are what may be called elements (ideas and paradox) and attitudes (ambiguity and irony). Now the elements in the matrix may seem to cause the attitudes; that is, paradox may seem to lead to the final effect of irony (the supreme attitude) if it is first seen as leading to the attitude expressed as ambiguity, and ambiguity can be seen as leading to irony. But this is a roundabout path and an understanding of these intricacies depends on an understanding of paradox and how it works.

Paradox is tricky; it works by indirection. It is defined as "a form of tension found in a statement [or a situation] which on one level is logically absurd yet on another level implies a reasonable assertion." But, as Stephen Minot phrases it, " . . . the tension is created by upsetting only one type of assumption: logic."[99] Furthermore, what it is

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[98] Flavell, p. 259.

[99] Stephen Minot, Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction, and Drama, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 389, 221.

as a literary device is a paradox in itself; for it takes a literal statement or situation and manipulates it so that there is no truth in it; yet there is some truth in it. And as a literary tool it gives a multi-dimensional level of meaning emphatically, concisely, and affectively to an idea that cannot get this same treatment at a literal level. For example consider the paradoxical lines from Richard Lovelace's poem "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars": "I could not love thee, Dear, so much / Loved I not honor more."[100] On a literal level the content of this line is concerned with a man's love for a woman. Logic is defied in this statement in that much love for woman cannot be reconciled with more love for honor. The truth (and truth is what provides insight and what gives depth and resonance to a literary work) that resides in the lines is revealed by bringing two contradictory ideas together and attempting to resolve their differences. But before this operation can be implemented and the opposing ideas brought into harmony, ambiguity, which introduces uncertainty and perplexity arises (how can a love that "loves honor more" be a love that loves a woman "so much"), calling for the union of these discordant ideas. Irony (the term for the qualification the context gives to its elements) obliges. It recognizes the incongruities in the situation, sees that despite the conflict, there is truth in the statement or situation--a truth more profound than that on a literal level; namely, true love implies honor and vice-versa, for only a man who is true to his principles and ideals can know true and lasting love. Moreover, because the persona in the poem feels a love for and a responsibility to his country and puts his country before personal desires and because he puts honor

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[100] Laurence Perrine, Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p. 650.

before personal desires, he is capable of a true, a pure love--one that is worthy, one that would put the loved one before personal desires. Thus, through the insight that irony provides, opposites are reconciled and truth is revealed subtly and indirectly. And since it is the diverse elements provided by paradox that irony recognizes in the context, it would seem that paradox does cause irony.

But the relationship is more subtle than this. It is implicative.

> Piaget asserts that the relations between mental states . . . are implicative rather than causal and just as in logic one would say that (A = B)+ (B = C) implies rather than causes (A = C)[101]

one might in this case say (paradox = ambiguity) + (ambiguity = irony) implies rather than causes (paradox = irony). Hence, paradox implies ambiguity and ambiguity implies irony, thus paradox implies irony. If, then, the relations between mental states in an individual and the relations between the elements-attitudes in a poetic matrix are compared, a parallel exists between the functions these elements-attitudes perform in their manipulation of the context and the functions the INRC group perform in their manipulation of propositional thought, seeing that relationships imply transformations and vice-versa.

Paradox, then, in its implicative relationship to ambiguity and irony has a transforming power that directs the action in a poem. As it manipulates the literal statement or situation, it introduces heterogeneous and conflicting ideas into the context--that is, logical absurdity and reasonable assertion unamicably yoked: what was literal is now figurative; what was transparent and lifeless is now opaque, dense, and vital; what was simple is now rich in its complexity. Thus the figurative has annulled

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[101] Flavell, p. 259.

the literal, density and vitality have annulled the thin and sterile, and richness has annulled that which was bland. The original state of the context--identity, or I--has been negated by paradox--negation, or N --hence, IN = N. But at the same time that paradox N has been undoing the original state I, its negating action has also been working reciprocally. It has--by the tension its diverse elements have introduced--increased the semantic quality of the context, layered it with nuance and innuendo, thus compensating for the clarity and directness it has removed--hence, NR = R. Beginning with paradox, then, the two transformations N and R have so far been introduced, with the subsequent qualification of the context and the subsequent implication of ambiguity.

Next, ambiguity appears. As an attitude, it increases the tension even more. This time, however, the tension stems from the aura of perplexity and uncertainty that enshrouds the context. Thus, with the appearance of ambiguity, the context is transformed again, negating the reciprocal operation of paradox by correlation--hence, RC = C. For even though the poem, as experience has--through the efforts of paradox--grown increasingly sensuous and therefore more affective, it has not as yet reached consummation. Ambiguity C has worked as a solitary operation on paradox R and its reciprocal power, and the contradictions that paradox N introduced into the matrix have yet to be reconciled; in other words, the context has yet to qualify its various elements by recognizing their incongruities and objectively accepting them. This job remains for irony.

Irony, however, neither transforms the context by tension nor by multiple levels of meaning nor by a solitary application of some one of the four transformations, as has been the case up to now. Rather, irony,

structured into the context by this time as the supraordinate attitude, looks back on the tension introduced by paradox and ambiguity and resolves it--first, by objectively recognizing its existence in the poem, and, second, by accepting it with control and detachment. And thus a truth is apprehended. Furthermore, the operation that irony performs combines all the transformations: it brings negation and reciprocity together into a whole--hence, NRC = I. NRC = I because the poem has emerged and the original state of the context has changed, just as the original thought of the adolescent changes upon perceiving all the possibilities inherent in an operation. The poem has transcended its original state and has been brought into equilibrium. Irony, having come into the context, has become the qualification the context gives to its various elements (Brooks's definition of irony). As the objective, detached agent of the context, it looks back, it takes in all the parts, recognizing each incongruity as it presents itself. And since it has stood off and contemplated, it can recognize the diversity in the experience, can apprehend the truth of the experience, and can accept the essence of truth that paradox guarantees--namely, that life is this way--complex and enigmatic. Hence, irony unifies the poem as experience, bringing it to terms with reality. This is why it brings negation and reciprocity into a whole. Irony, in this sense, may be understood as the unifying principle of the four transformations NRC = I. Here, I stands for the "real" identity of the poem, the culmination of the four transformations into a "poem of inclusion," Brooks's idea of a "good" poem.

Thus, the creative action of a poem--as Brooks describes it--does possess the operations of double reversibility that Piaget recognizes in

adolescent thought, albeit its process of reversibility, as in all literary process, does not have the kind of relational patterning wherein its hypotheses can be proved or disproved. Nor does it require it. For verifiability is not possible in a literary transformation; and verification is not what counts. What is important is the soundness of the relational pattern that the hypothesis of possible meaning is founded on.

This comparison between the INRC group of formal operations and the literary thought of the New Critics brings to a close this general analysis modeled after Piaget's historicodevelopmental theory, wherein parallels were sought between individual cognition in the periods of pre-operational and operational thought and the collective literary cognition of English and Anglo-American critics from the sixteenth century through the twentieth. But a brief review of the complete analysis might at this time be profitable: The first part of the analysis, using the Piagetian constructs of phenomenism and egocentrism, attempted to show that Neoclassical critics, oriented by the pragmatic theory of literature, were limited in their thinking and conceived of literature as a product rather than a process. Therefore, like the pre-operational child, who is perception-bound and comes to terms with reality through representation and imitation and focuses on states rather than on transformations, thus never "giving way to construction and . . . reflection,"[102] the Neoclassicists also focused on literature's static attributes and existences and failed to perceive the process underlying the nature of literature.

Next, the second part of the analysis presented the cognitive thought of the individual at the concrete-operational stage and that of

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[102] Ibid., p. 256.

the nineteenth-century Romantics, who espoused the expressive approach to literature. The constructs used to compare these two periods were those concepts Piaget uses to describe equilibrium--namely, field of application, mobility, and stability. With these constructs, then, as points of comparison, the discussion pointed out parallels on the basis of classification (as opposed to perception), positing that just as classification enables the child at the concrete level of operations to expand his field of application as it applies to thought, to increase his mobility as far as space and time concepts are concerned, and to gain stability of thought processes by focusing on transformations rather than on states, so too does it apply to the Romantics. For they, too, by classification, extended their field of application; that is, they incorporated the static concepts that the Neoclassicists held about literature as a product with their theory of literature as both a product and a process of the poet's mind and feelings--in short, the theory of imagination. This theory increased mobility of thought, in that the poet could by classification move forward and backward in time and space, in that a representation of objects not present was possible through the work of the imagination. And, again, the theory increased stability, since at this time the poem was seen as an organism; a whole in which, by means of the imagination, conflicting qualities could be reconciled and the structure remain intact.

And, finally, for the third stage of both periods--the period of formal operations for the individual and the period of New Criticism in the present century--Piaget's theory of the INRC group was applied. This theory described the formal thought of the adolescent, whereby he thinks in terms of possibility first and reality second and uses the functions

of thought that the INRC group specifies. The concept emphasized in this comparison was Piaget's "double reversibility"[103] concept of formal-operational thought. This model, which is a matrix of transformations, correlates with the speculative instruments of certain New Critics--Ransom's "texture-structure," Tate's "Tension," and Brooks's "paradox-irony" theories, all of which treat literature as unites of semantical and syntactical relationships. In fact, these instruments, which see literature as an organism, an entity within itself, exhibit the characteristics of the INRC group.

The preceding remarks all apply to Piaget's stage-dependent theory. This theory, however, was preceded by his stage-independent theory, which served as a model for making a more general comparison between the human cognizer and literature. As a theory it asks two questions: the synchronic and the diachronic. The synchronic question asks "'What sort of device' is the human cognizer, not at any particular stage, but basically and generally?" The diachronic question, on the other hand, asks "What are the general principles by which the subject . . . changes his state in the course of human development?" These questions were asked of literature, and it was found that literature as social knowledge, like the human cognizer, is an "ever-organized entity"[104] which assimilates reality to its schemas and when this is not possible accommodates its schemas to external reality; and that, again like the human cognizer, it has the general principles by which it changes from one conception to another in the course of its development, as these changes, of course, are tied to the process of adaptation. It was thought appropriate in view of the chapter's purpose to present this line of thought first. But both

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[103] Ibid., p. 218.

[104] Ibid., pp. 262-63.

theories illuminate literature and provide insight into the problems that critics have encountered since Plato first labeled poetry false, trivial, and useless, and Aristotle asked "What is it?" and proceeded to take it apart. Flavell in speaking of the contributions of the stage-dependent theory states:

> . . . Piaget's detailed picture of cognitive development in childhood provides us with a historical frame and perspective within which to view the adult. This is an important but seldom discussed proper function of any developmental theory. Just as there is a sense in which one cannot understand contemporary America without knowledge of its history, there is a sense in which one cannot catch hold of adult human behavior without knowing from what and through what this behavior evolved.[105]

By the same token, we cannot grasp contemporary literary criticism and theory without knowing from what and through what it evolved. Thus to know how literature has been conceived through the ages helps in its appreciation and understanding today.

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[105]Ibid., pp. 411-12.

CHAPTER V

MOVING FROM PERCEPTION TO THINKING IN LITERATURE

A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO LITERATURE

THROUGH PIAGET'S INRC MATRIX

John Keats writes that "we come into the world as pure potentiality or 'Intelligence' and we acquire a 'Soul' or 'sense of identity' through 'Circumstances.'" Thus the human cognizer with his God-given potential "evolves a soul or identity through experience." William Wordsworth, a Romantic like Keats, through his poetry tried "to show the spiritual significance of the world."[1] The combination of these two attitudes is essentially what literature is all about. Its value is not to learn about it, but through it, to evolve a soul and educate the heart; and in the process become more fully human. To know literature, therefore, is to know life and to acquire an autonomy equal to the challenges that life metes out both now and in the future. One avenue to an understanding of literature by which life can be experienced vicariously is a cognitive approach offered by the Curriculum Study Center in English, Florida State University. Using this guide as a model, this chapter will present an approach to literature which, like that of the guide " . . . is an

[1]Robert Langbaum, The Modern Spirit (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 18.

attempt to postulate an approach to literature study embodying the spirit of Piaget's theories. . . ."[2]

According to Piaget, perception and thought are not the one and the same. The individual may learn by perception alone or he may transform his perceptions into conceptual structures which enable him to think. And thinking depends on reversibility. Therefore, for learning to take place the learning context must be reversible, and it "is reversible when it can be restructured within the mind without losing its essential equilibrium. In other words, learning takes place when the learner is able to (1) perceive, (2) restructure his perceptions into a relational pattern or multiple relational patterns."[3]

The transformational processes which make up actual thought processes are, according to Piaget, a matrix of four structuring processes: identity, inversion, reciprocity, and correlation. Piaget uses the formula "NRC (the symbol including all the processes except identity) = I (Identity)."[4]

But these processes which make up the matrix are expressed in terms of mathematics and logic. Thus, it is necessary to translate these terms into literary terms, or to find their equivalents or near equivalents in terms of literary jargon. This was attempted in the aforementioned Florida study. This chapter, building on the concepts presented in the Curriculum guide, will pursue them in more detail. However, before exploring the equivalency of terms some comparisons between mathematics and literature should first be drawn: Reversibility in mathematics is based

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[2]Curriculum Study Center in English, Florida State University, "Curriculum III: Cognitive Processes," An Approach to Literature Through Cognitive Processes, Tallahassee, Fla., 1963, p. 9. (Typewritten)

[3]Ibid., p. 7.

[4]Ibid., p. 9.

on its "built-in capability of proving or disproving most of the hypotheses which are a product of mathematical thought."[5] Mathematical thought, in other words, is verifiable. Its principles are reversible, are flexible. For example, 5 + 5 = 5 + 5, or 4 + 6 = 5 + 5 or 10 = 5 + 5 or 25 = 5 because of the inverse operation of $5^2 = 25$. But literature's reversibility is not based on relational patterns that can be verified--that is, the act of organizing the details of a poem into a relational pattern that will yield a "hypothesis of possible meaning" (e.g., a decision about the tone of a poem, or the theme) is not a verifiable hypothesis. But "the degree to which the hypothesis is valuable is not relative to its verifiability. Rather its worth rests on the soundness of the relational pattern which is perceived to underlie the hypothesis."[6] In other words, to the extent that an idea is based on the data of the selection--namely, facts clearly implied by the poem, those within the confines of the poem, "not an assumptions supplied from [one's] own experience"[7]--this would be verificiation. And this "structuring of relational patterns, whether in mathematics or literature, is still born in Piaget's thought matrix."[8]

Now, for the equivalents in literary terminology that are comparable to the language of mathematics and logic.

Identity, the first transformational process of the Piagetian matrix, is signified in logic by the = sign. For example, "a = b means that

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[5]Ibid., p. 7.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Laurence Perrine, Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p. 108. (Hereinafter referred to as Literature)

[8]Curriculum Study Center in English, "Curriculum III: Cognitive Processes," p. 7.

a 'is identical' with b."[9] In literature, then, since identity is the material with which all transformations begin and end, it may apply to the literal facts or images of the selection--poem, short story, whatever. As an example, consider the following poem by William Blake entitled "London":

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.[10]

Here, the instructor might ask a student, "How would you describe the tone of this poem?" The student might answer, "It sounds bitter, cynical, pessimistic." Now to return this question-answer to the terminology of logic, it could be said that a stands for the teacher's question and b, for the student's answer. Thus the relationship between the two is expressed as the identity a = b, or in the example here tone = bitter, etc. But this identity at the first level could be transformed into other relational patterns for a fuller interpretation of the question. The question-answer session might continue as follows:

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[9] Ibid., p. 8.

[10] Stanley A. Clayes and David G. Spencer, eds., Contexts for Composition, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), pp. 214-15.

Teacher: If the tone is bitter, cynical, pessimistic, how did you arrive at this conclusion? Is it just the way the poem makes you feel, or can you support your answer?

Student: The poet talks about "weakness," "woe," different cries and the "Soldier's sigh"; then he uses such words as "curse," "blasts," "blight," and "plagues," words that make everything sound hopeless.

Teacher: So you are saying that you think everything sounds hopeless?

Student: Yes, and I think Blake thought everything was pretty bad.

Teacher: Oh, so you're talking about Blake's attitude?

Student: Yes, that's the way he feels, and the way he tells it makes us know how he feels.

Teacher: When you say "the way he tells it," then, you are talking about the words he uses to describe it?

Student: Yes, he doesn't like what he sees, so he's bitter and cynical, and that's the tone of voice he would probably have.

Teacher: Fine. Then we could say that tone shows a writer's feelings or attitude about something just as tone of voice shows whether you are happy or sad or angry. But no one can hear his voice, so he has to choose words that show how he feels.

Student: (nods his head) . . . But we choose the words that show how we feel, too, don't we? When my Dad gets mad, his words sure show how he feels!

This discussion, then, would be an extension of the structural relationship already established by the first identity. The thinking process would have moved from one identity to another: tone = bitter, etc. = bitter, etc. = images that suggest bitter actions born out of bitter attitures ("curse," "blasts," "blights") and images that connote dismal, unfavorable conditions ("cry," "sigh," "woe"). The process has produced two identities, and the hypothesis inherent in the discussion has been supported by returning to the facts of the poem. In fact, it has moved from the process of identity into other structural relationships that

will be touched upon later. In some cases, however, the procedure would not go beyond the first identity; since at times, a deeper analysis is not necessary. For example, the identification of Blake as a pre-Romantic poet might suffice without pursuing the structure to a deeper level.

Inversion, the second process, implies negation. It is a structural relationship that invokes meaning through the juxtaposition of opposing elements. In arithmetic, it is the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction, between multiplication and division. Likewise, in literature an inversion is the relationship between incompatible elements, and when this is perceived by the reader, he feels the sharp contrast. Quite often, particularly in the poem, these strongly opposed notions are set side by side in a grammatical construction, resulting in an emotional effect (an effect, incidentally, neither experienced in mathematical transformations nor aimed for, as it is in literature).

In this poem, which is a bitter satire on such institutions as the church, the state, and marriage, Blake indicts the society of his time in two ways: First, through irony of situation, by describing the conditions, harsh and unmindful, imposed on a society that submits to the laws and mores of its institutions ("mind forg'd manacles"); this description sets up the opposing elements of what is as against what should be. Thus the irony; thus the inversion. His second literary device, by which he culminates the indictment, is the use of the oxymoron ("a compact paradox in which two successive words seemingly contradict each other."[11]). In line 16, the two words "marriage" and "hearse," syntactically combined, form an oxymoron that details a society in which not only marriage but

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[11] Perrine, Literature, p. 743.

the source of life itself is contaminated ("Blasts the new born Infant's tear") by the social evils that produce a harlot. Thus through the striking image of the marriage conveyance as a "hearse"--in which two words with contradictory associations ("marriage" = beginning of a fruitful union and "hearse"=finality, death) are placed side by side--he finalizes the irony that has up to this point pervaded the poem. The structured relationship produced by the oxymoron has the effect of jolting the reader when he conceives its design, thereby underscoring the truth of the poet's prediction.

But how is a student led to transform such a detail into meaning? Or, in literary language, how is he brought to understand this image as the transcendental irony?

Assuming that the discussion has moved from the poem's tone, previously identified, to Blake's attitude concerning the discrepancy between life in London and what it should be (irony of situation), and now a comment has been made about the oxymoron, the teacher might ask the following questions:

Teacher: What would a "marriage hearse" be?

Student: A hearse takes the casket or coffin to the cemetery.

Teacher: But what about the word "marriage" that describes it?

Student: Blake probably was talking about the carriage the married couple got in after they came out of the church.

Teacher: But these words are side by side. Why did he have the word "Marriage" describe a "hearse"? Isn't that an odd way to speak of the carriage that a wedded couple is riding in? Why do you suppose he put them together and what--combined this way--do they suggest?

Student: Well he must have been saying that the harlot cursed the wedded couple with plagues, so the marriage was already dead and was riding in a hearse. Putting it at the end, after all the bad things he's talked about, seems to show how terrible everything is. And it stands out with two words so different in meaning together like that.

And so, assuming such a discussion could have transpired, the student would have conceived the pattern of details and would have transferred it into an inverse or ironic relationship.

Any number of literary devices would be examples of inversion. Paradox, for one, gets its effects through the positioning of elements that, at first thought, are opposed to each other logically. It startles the reader--this inverted way of thinking or speaking--and by its absurdity emphasizes the truth. Emily Dickinson says in one of her poems, "My life closed twice before its close,"[12] and the reader's first reaction is "How can this be? You can't die twice before you die!" Intrigued by this ambiguity, he continues and finds that the poet is speaking of having twice experienced either the death of a loved one or the separation from a loved one, which to her was the same as having died herself. The opposing ideas linked together syntactically form a pattern that the reader recognizes as an incongruous, or in other words, an inverse or paradoxical relationship.

Another type of inversion is satire. It implies ridicule and, like sarcasm, employs irony as a tool. It applies to written literature rather than speech and has as its aim the righting of some wrong or the improvement of human nature. Tension is established in satire "by playing an exaggerated view of characters, places, or institutions against

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[12]Laurence Perrine, Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969), p. 110.

the reasonable view." Thus there is the differentiation that inversion projects. For example, the following lines illustrate the use of satire as an inversion:

> Look at him there in his stovepipe hat,
> His high-top shoes, and his handsome collar;
> Only my Daddy could look like that,
> And I love my Daddy like he loves his Dollar.

In these lines of fairly light verse, William Jay Smith creates tension "in the contrast between the apparent tone of sentimental tribute and the actual tone of cutting protest."[13]

Two other examples of inversion and types of irony are overstatement and understatement. Both of these tilt the balance in a relationship. One by overstating, as the name implies, and the other by understating. Overstatement, or hyperbole, is simply exaggeration to achieve effect. In his poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," Wordsworth gives an exaggerated report of a visual perception when he describes the daffodils as stretching ". . . in never-ending line / Along the margin of the bay."[14] This exaggeration was his way of emphasizing their great numbers, a scene so vivid that as the poem concludes, he relives the experience in retrospect. Understatement, on the other hand, is the asymmetrical relationship of elements which is established by saying less than is intended. When Jonathan Swift says, "Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse," he is stating what is literally true, but by deliberately underplaying it, he gives it a force it would otherwise

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[13] Stephen Minot, Three Genres: The Writing of Poetry, Fiction and Drama, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 91, 92.

[14] Arthur M. Eastman et al., eds., The Norton Anthology of Poetry, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), p. 585.

lack. Laurence Perrine, in commenting on these devices says: "It is paradoxical that one can emphasize a truth either by overstating it or by understating it,"[15] or, as might be added, by saying the opposite of what is intended, as in verbal irony. Thus, the student of literature who is conceptive, who can structure his thinking in terms of inverse relationships establishes a special understanding between himself and the writer and, more than that, discovers an extra dimension in his reading.

A final type of literary inversion is contrast. It is used to make one element stand out against another for the purposes of clarity, emphasis, and emotional impression. It is always a necessary part of irony, but irony is not always a part of contrast; that is, contrast plays an important part in character delineation by making one character stand out from another; it also functions effectively in establishing mood or tone in a selection. Writers of fiction have employed it profitably in both ways. Nathaniel Hawthorne, in particular, comes to mind. For him contrast was an important architectural device that began with imagery and swelled into a kind of cosmic symbol. Since much of his writing was preoccupied with the theme of man's sinful nature, such images as shawdows and light played through much of his work, coming to stand for the qualities of good and evil. In terms of poetry Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, "The Eagle" displays two fine examples of the formal use of contrast.

> He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
> Close to the sun in lonely lands,
> Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
>
> The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
> He watches from his mountain walls,
> And like a thunderbolt he falls.[16]

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[15] Perrine, Literature, pp. 658, 651. [16] Ibid., p. 555,

The first example of contrast in this poem is concerned with the formal arrangement of images. For instance, the first stanza ends with the image "he stands," as opposed to the image "he falls," ending the second stanza. And so, the first image is canceled out by the second. Also, related to these images are other images peculiar to each stanza. Those in the first stanza are static images--"clasps," "close," "stands"--which show the eagle in a realm of silent splendor. Those in the second stanza are more dynamic: The sea "crawls," the eagle "watches," the thunderbolt "falls"--an image whose force can almost be felt. Thus stationary images in the first stanza are set against moving images in the second. In a sense, the first scene is annulled by the second. Certainly a pattern of details cast in an inverse frame.

The second example of contrast has to do with the poem's point of view. The first stanza presents what is seen with the eagle as the point of focus, that seen from the narrator's point of view; the second stanza is from the eagle's point of view, what he sees beneath him. Thus the formal pattern of this poem enables the conceptive reader to move vicariously into the eagle's experience as well as that of the spokesman.

The third transformational process--reciprocity--in contrast to inversion, implies the balance of similar elements; it "expresses symmetry." In literature this explanation would bring to mind the broad term metaphor with its subsets personification, simile, and allegory. Since formal thought seeks to establish equilibrium, the recognition of figurative structures and an understanding of how they operate could contribute significantly in moving the learner toward this goal. Because the student who perceives patterns in the details of language, who is aware of recurrences

and similarities, has freed himself from functional rigidity, has freed his creativity--in short, his mind is able to take sudden leaps from one plane of experience to another. Indeed, imagination, the first general property of formal thought, perhaps, is the faculty of mind that is capable of picturing or "imaging" absent objects as if they were present (Piaget's "subordination of reality to possibility")[17]--a faculty which is a prime requisite in handling the metaphor.

But to explain the reciprocal structure of the metaphor: a metaphor is created when item A--that which is being discussed on a literal level--is compared with item B--that from a level of experience beyond literal concern. Items A and B need be similar in only one small way. The more they differ, the more removed they are from each other--except for the one small difference--the more they startle. Thus, they have two parts: (1) the literal, which is called the tenor, and (2) the figurative, which comes from a different, removed level of experience, called the vehicle. In the ordinary metaphor, both tenor (the basic sense, the subject matter under consideration) and vehicle are expressed, and the tenor takes a temporary ride in the vehicle of another idea, object, image, or emotion. To illustrate: "He was a lion in battle." This statement creates a metaphor in which the tenor is He (the subject under consideration) and the vehicle is lion. Thus, He takes a temporary ride in the image lion. And when the literal He is compared to something from a removed level of experience, such as lion, the reader "images" the man, He, fighting fiercely, rapaciously, courageously, as a lion would fight.

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[17]Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget, The Growth of Logical Thinking: From Childhood to Adolescence, trans. Anne Parsons and Stanley Milgram (New York: Basic Books, 1958), pp. 134, 254.

As an example of how a student might transform by metaphor the details of a poem as he perceives them into a structure of symmetrical relationships, consider the poem "Dr. Sigmund Freud Discovers the Sea Shell," by Archibald MacLeish. This poem employs an extended personification (subset of metaphor) to compare the abstract concept science to a saint.

> Science, that simple saint, cannot be bothered
> Figuring what anything is for;
> Enough for her devotions that things are
> And can be contemplated soon as gathered.
>
> She knows how every living things was fathered,
> She calculates the climate of each star,
> She counts the fish at sea, but cannot care
> Why anyone of them exists, fish, fire or feathered.
>
> Why should she? Her religion is to tell
> By rote her rosary of perfect answers.
> Metaphysics she can leave to man:
> She never wakes at night in heaven or hell
>
> Staring at darkness. In her holy cell
> There is no darkness ever: the pure candle
> Burns, the beads drop briskly from her hand.
>
> Who dares to offer Her the curled sea shell!
> She will not touch it!--knows the world she sees
> Is all the world there is! Her faith is perfect!
>
> And still he offers the sea shell . . .
>
> What surf
> Of what far sea upon what unknown ground
> Troubles forever with that asking sound?
> What surge is this whose questions never ceases?[18]

The teacher might start the discussion by saying, "We know that a comparison is being made here: MacLeish says that science is a saint. Now, if science is a saint, and science is what he is talking about--his subject--how many ways is the comparison highlighted? To answer, the student might respond by listing the details in the poem which are associated with a saint, such as "devotions," "rosary," "holy cell," "beads drop briskly,"

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[18] Perrine, Literature, pp. 613-14.

"faith is perfect." Thus, in understanding how these images reinforce the metaphor and allow the two planes of experience--the scientific and the metaphysical--to merge, he would be transforming by reciprocity: Science = saint = the metaphor. The image saint (vehicle) and those properties ordinarily associated with a saint and her world are in the poem acting as the many vehicles which carry science (tenor), the literal concept, on a temporary ride. During the ride, meanwhile, the reader imaginatively recognizes similarities between the properties of the saint that the poem mentions and those that he must call to mind independently as characteristics expressive of a scientist. He might hypothesize and deduce as follows: If science is a saint, then science or a scientist should have properties similar to those of a saint, and the properties they have in common should reveal qualities common to both. Furthermore, he might set up a table such as the following:

Properties of a Scientist	=	Properties of a Saint
Scientific inquiry	=	Religion
Zealous application	=	Devotions
Equipped laboratory	=	Holy cell, pure candle, beads
Experimental problem	=	Rosary of " . . . answers"
Hypotheses to be tested	=	" . . . heaven or hell"
Supported hypotheses	=	Faith
Dedication and validity	=	Dedication and purity

Reasoning thus, the student is organizing the details of the poem into relational patterns that are structurally sound in terms of his hypothesis. And when he submits to MacLeish's personification of science, he recognizes the power of the metaphor to give body and form to an otherwise abstract concept, and he is operating by reciprocity.

The final transformational process in Piaget's matrix is correlation. In a sense, correlation, like identity, is a necessary part of inversion and reciprocity. The identification of the details are first perceived, then this perception moves into a pattern which may be inverse or may be reciprocal. When the identity is structured into one of these relationships, it necessarily becomes a correlation. "For the purposes of literature study, correlation can be considered, "as the structuring of relationships between separate contexts."[19] It is a kind of thinking that goes beyond the separate relationships and overrides or encompasses them all, much like the term metaphor or analogy or irony is a term that is broad and at the same time narrow. But back to correlation--it is a transformational process which can be viewed in several distinct ways:

First, correlation can be the relationship between separate contexts of the same whole. It can be, for instance, the relationship between the title of a selection and some image or detail in the selection. Take MacLeish's poem, the title refers to the conch shell with its many convolutions as being symbolic of the chambers of man's mind (Freud's id, ego, and superego). The image, the "curled sea shell," and the title, then, form the structural relationship of correlation and work together as a symbol. Or, the correlation could be conceived hypothetically as implying a fusion between Freud's model of the mind (certainly an abstract entity), a non-living image, and the image of the living sea shell. Hence, a cosmic metaphor.

Second, correlation can be outside the selection. For one thing, it can be more than the connections between separate contexts (title and

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[19] Curriculum Study Center in English, "Curriculum III: Cognitive Processes," p. 13.

image) and the selection as a whole. MacLeish's poem is pitched at the quarrel that has existed for centuries between the humanities and science, between those disciplines that deal with metaphysics and those that demand verification. The poet sees science as caring not the least "why any one of them exists, fish, fire, or feathered" and contemptuous of any world but "the world she sees," valuing only what can be "gathered" and counted. In this sense, he sees science as a saint, glorifying her purity and holiness to the point of smug complacency; yet, blind to the fact that the concerns of man--his questions--are those that neither science nor any other form of knowledge can resolve. When the student conceives these relationships and is struck by the inadequacy of science--the all-powerful--to deal with the intricacies of human nature; when he, as a human being, appreciates his individual inscrutability, and is touched; then, he is engaged in the transformational process of formal thought called correlation. Moreover, this vicarious participation, this "imaginative entry"[20] into possibility is an example of structuring correlations so that the personal, at-the moment experience can move from the question "'What do I feel?'" to "'What can be felt? What are the feelings of all mankind, all living life?'" In this kind of learning-feeling situation, the learner "moves from egocentricity to agape, from the narrowness of his own perceptions to the breadth of everyone's"[21] Or, to quote Inhelder, he experiences a "decentering which makes possible the true beginnings of adult work."[22]

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Richard Willis and Iren Willis, "The Fine Arts Program," in Teacher's Manual for Adventures for Readers: Book One, classic ed., edited by Elizabeth C. O'Daly and Egbert W. Nieman (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 306.

[22] Inhelder and Piaget, p. 343.

Finally, correlation can be the structuring of relationships between or among seemingly diverse, yet related, forms. It can be the common thread as it is conceived in say, three poems: For example, the subject of death as it is presented in Walt Whitman's "Joy, Shipmate, Joy," William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis," and Emily Dickinson's "I Could Not Stop for Death." Or it can be the correlation a student might find between two paintings. Andrea del Castagne's The Youthful David and Andrea Montegna's Judith and Holofernes might be worthy of consideration, since each subject in the paintings has decapitated his adversary to save his people. This exercise can even be extended to include the Biblical account of David and Goliath and the apocryphal Book of Judith in order to compare the subjects as depicted by the two artists with those of literature. An art form from music, from art, from literature can also be a combined consideration. Opportunities for this type of correlation are infinite. From varied perceptions of discrete forms, a student "may be able to structure correlative relationships which enable him to express himself more intelligently on one of these contexts because of the conceptualization which the others within the relational pattern have provided."[23]

Formal thought is characterized by two general properties: (1) it constitutes a combinatorial system, and (2) it subordinates reality to possibility. The novelist, the writer of short fiction, the dramatist, the poet--each tries all the combinations, each relinquishes reality to possibility in the attempt to create. Thus, to bring students to an appreciation of the "greats" in literature and their creations, the teacher should help students transform their perceptions of the surface quality

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[23] Curriculum Study Center in English, "Curriculum III: Cognitive Processes," p. 14.

of literature into deeper meanings by offering them opportunities for practice in applying the problem-solving approach to their learning, whereby they can learn to question and hypothesize. And if they are afforded the opportunity to operate, as Piaget would say, on a "hypothetico-deductive"[24] level, they will, no doubt, become quite comfortable in Piaget's matrix of four transformations.

A cognitive approach to the study of literature is a correlation itself. It structures relationships between separate contexts--logic, mathematics, and literature--and in the operation transforms figurative language, which is considered by many a technical, abstruse aspect of literature study, from a static, abstract concept to one concrete and palpable.

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[24]Jean Piaget, Structuralism, trans. and ed. Chaninah Maschler (New York: Basic Books, 1970; Harper Torch Books, 1971), p. 136.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The problem, the major purpose, and the related purpose of this research have resulted in the following: (1) an introduction to the study, (2) a history of English and Anglo-American literary criticism from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, based on four approaches to literature--the mimetic, the pragmatic, the expressive, and the objective, (3) a general review of Jean Piaget's concepts as a genetic epistemologist, (4) a comparison whereby parallels were established between the collective thought of literary theorists as it changed in its conceptions of literature's nature from one period to the next and the cognitive thought of the individual as it changes from one developmental period to the next, and (5) a cognitive approach to literary study based on Piaget's INRC model of higher-thought processes.

The fourth item--the comparison--is the part of the research that pertains to the first hypothesis, which postulated that literature when put in a historical frame will show advances in the way it has been conceived by literary critics that parallel advances in the cognitive development of the individual. Based, then, on Piaget's stage-dependent theory and the evolution of critical thought as set out in the history, it has been shown that there has been a steady progression in the collective thought of literary criticism from phenomenism and egocentrism to construction and reflection, a movement that is analogous to the progression in thought of the individual founded on the same constructs. Piaget, according to

Gisnburg and Opper, in examining a knowledge form looks for these parallels, and even though "he does not always find a perfect fit between the two," between ontogenesis and sociogenesis, "he does nevertheless find a number of similarities in the mechanisms of development."[1]

Therefore, in respect to what Piaget has accomplished in using this strategy and the hypothesis formulated, it would be well at this point to briefly review what the historicodevelopmental method applied to literature has revealed, what "similarities in the mechanisms of development" have come to light.

With the first period of critical thought--the "Neoclassical--and the first stage of ontogenetic development--the pre-operational--the most obvious mechanism central to both is their "intense egocentrism, characterized by phenomenalistic thought which concentrates on the superficial, or peripheral aspects of reality. . . ."[2] Preoccupied with surface features, they both are unaware of the processes which underlie the object of their concentration. The child can handle objects, knows their properties, and can discover some of the attributes of objects and figures. He can establish the spatial relationships of objects, can find his way in familiar surroundings, and can perform certain actions or transformations on his environment. Nevertheless, he focuses on states, rather than on transformations, and he is interested in results and not the process that effects the results. In the same way, the Neoclassicists dealt with literature. They put it in a frame by defining it as an imitation of the concrete world. Having labeled it thus, as an object merely there, they could discuss its attributes and existences: its content was Aristotle's world

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[1] Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 212.

[2] Ibid., p. 215.

of "things as they were or are, or things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be."[3] Its aim was to instruct and to please; instruction came with the content and pleasure came with the form, both static concepts, juxtaposed in their relationship. And since the Neoclassicists centered on the audience as the element that oriented all literary principles, they saw literature as performing actions on the environment, of transforming it. In fact, the raison d'etre of all literature was to edify the reader by the instruction it offered. Thus, they, like the child, were interested in results--the effect on the reader. They were unaware of the process of literature and saw it as a product. Hemmed in by their phenomenal field--the belief that the audience was the touchstone of all considerations--their conceptions of literature could never rise above a sterile, restricted view.

With the Romantics and the concrete-operational stage, however, the mechanism that relates them is the progress they both achieve in moving from phenomenism to a concrete construction, from egocentrism to reflection, but reflection only in the presence of concrete, existing objects, wherein the process, or the operation, receives the focus. The concrete-operational child can classify things, order them, or perform a series of mental operations on them; he has also at this point become aware of the transformations he can perform on objects, albeit this awareness is not fully complete. His thought is reversible, and by classification he has extended his field of application, has accelerated his mobility, and has acquired stability. The same equilibrial properties can also be attributed to the Romantics, who were directed in all literary concerns and distinctions

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[3]Aristotle Poetics in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 36.

by the poet and the process of his creation. Their concept of imagination and the organic theory of literature enabled them to extend their field of application, become more mobile as a system in equilibrium. They believed that the poet's mind could be divided into understanding, or fancy, and reason, or the imagination, with the latter uniting the particular of understanding with the universal of reason. This classification allows them to incorporate all the characteristics the Neoclassicists ascribed to literature--the product of fancy--and add to them the imagination, the synthesizing agent that "brings the whole soul of man into activity."[4] Thus, their ensemble of objects was expanded to include not only the product of poetic fancy but also the process of imagination.

Another property of equilibirum possessed by the Romantics was mobility. With their idea of the imagination, the perceptual mobility of the Neoclassicists became mature classification. Through the imagination, they believed that the poet could transcend time and space, representing objects not present; that is, by its "co-existence with the conscious will," the imagination could " emancipate " memory from the order of time and space" and by "[dissolving], [diffusing], [dissipating]" the sense impressions of memory could "recreate."[5]

The third property of equilibrium characteristic of the Romantics was that of stability, the property that allows the introduction of new elements without destroying the whole. Again, it was the imagination and its unifying power that kept the structure intact. By its powers to bind and fuse, it synthesized all discordant elements within the creation so that the structure remained whole: organically related, form arose out

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[4]Samuel Taylor Coleride, Biographia Literaria, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 379.

[5]Ibid., p. 387.

of the properties of content. And the pleasure taken in the whole was equal to and led up to by the pleasure taken in each of its parts.

Thus poetry for the Romantics was the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,"[6] a process or operation of literature, which imitated the true reality--the process of nature--dictating its function and justifying its value. They probed "more deeply and more extensively into the object of their cognition"--the process and the product, the creative act and the creation--and "phenomenism gave way to a progressive construction," as they restructured the Neoclassical concept of imitation and saw its inception as an utterance, a reflection of the poet's mind as he programmed sense impressions and fancy through the imagination; and the egocentrism of the Neoclassicists was supplanted "by reflection"[7] as they searched their own thinking and more nearly approached the true nature of literature.

And, finally, with the period of the New Criticism and the stage of formal operations, the mechanism that correlates them is the relinquishment of reality to possibility, the orientation of thought from concrete elements to verbal elements, and the INRC group that serves this new orientation. For the adolescent the INRC group describes the rules by which he transforms functions, I standing for identity, N, for negation, R, for reciprocity, and C, for correlation. These transformations allow him to think in terms of possibility--that is, propositionally--so that he can reverse operations either by negating or destroying the operation or by keeping the operation intact by compensation. In manipulating his think-

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[6] William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads," in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1952), p. 344.

[7] John H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget, with a Foreword by Jean Piaget (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1936), p. 256.

ing he operates within a whole, both beginning and ending with identity. He works with conditionals, and verbal elements are his medium of thought.

Similarly, the New Critics see literature, the work itself, as an autonomous whole, as a unit of relationships requiring no externals, no concrete reality for its consummation. Words work together semantically and syntactically; they oppose and complement one another, creating a matrix both opaque and complex, sensuous and rich, in which dramatically structured attitudes test ideas and harmonize their conflicting elements. The poem is, like the INRC group, a matrix of transformations manipulated by opposites which in the poem are reconciled: the "structure-texture" trope in which "determinate meaning" (structure) opposes "determinate meter," ending in a structure of "logical irrelevancies," or "texture"; the "tension" trope in which "extension" (denotation) and "intension" (connotation) are reconciled in a poem of "tension" and the "poem of inclusion," directed by paradox and unified by irony. Thus, for the New Critics, the poem, like adolescent thought, is a structure of relationships, subordinating reality to possibility. Beginning with identity (I) and ending with it, verbal elements are also its medium, its conditionals, its strategy, no less. The concrete construction of the Romantics becomes formal construction for these twentieth-century critics: poetry has its soucre in a structure of words, words that interact dramatically and dynamically into an organized experience that is "both an object understood and an object loved"[8]; concrete reflection on the true nature of literature yields to formal reflection, and they find their answer in the poem itself.

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[8] Richard Foster, The New Romantics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 139-40.

The mechanisms of development between the cognition of the individual as he moves from the period of pre-operations to concrete operations to formal operations parallel those of collective critical conception as it has evolved from the Neoclassical period to the Romantic period to the period of New Criticism. The phenomenalistic and egocentric thought with which both the individual and the collective mind of criticism began has yielded to first a concrete construction and reflection and finally to reflection and construction of a formal nature. Thus literature for the periods specified has changed progressively since it began in Neoclassic times, and the advances it shows parallels those of the individual in his on-going struggle to equilibrate. Piaget's strategy of comparing social knowledge and individual knowledge to a number of subject-matter areas bears out this phenomenon of progression. In like manner, applying Piaget's historicodevelopmental strategy to literature has shown the same progression.

The final part of the investigation relevant to this chapter--the conclusions and implications that this research has for literary instruction--pertains to the second hypothesis: namely, that literature considered from a historicodevelopmental view will furnish implications for its instructions.

One conclusion that emerges from this study that has implications for literary instruction in high school and college may be stated as follows: It is the theories of critics concerning the nature of literature and its creative process which have accumulated over the centuries that make up the structure of literature as knowledge, not literature, the art form. Moreover, this structure of knowledge, which contradicts the experience of literature--as an aggregate of theoretical postulations--is in essence theoretical criticism, or literary aesthetics, and as an organized

system of thought, offers a means of study by which literature can be analyzed on the basis of the elements which constitute its nature, that is, its essence (imitation, expression, structure), its form and content, and its function and value. It is what Northrop Frye speaks of in his Anatomy of Criticism (1957) as an "intermediate form of criticism,"

> the development of . . . which would fulfill the systematic and progressive element in research by assimilating its work into a unified structure of knowledge, as other sciences do. It would at the same time establish an authority within criticism for the public critic and the man of taste.

But the implication of an "intermediate criticism," Frye pointed out is

> . . . that at no point is there any direct learning of literature itself. Physics is an organized body of knowledge about nature, and a student of it says that he is learning physics, not nature, Art, like nature, has to be distinguished from the systematic study of it, which is criticism. It is therefore impossible to "learn literature"; one learns about it in a certain way, but what one learns, transitively, is the criticism of literature. Similarly, the difficulty often felt in "teaching literature" arises from the fact that it cannot be done: the criticism of literature is all that can be directly taught. Literature is not a subject of study, but an object of study . . .
> . . . . . .
> Criticism, rather, is to art what history is to action and philosophy to wisdom: a verbal imitation of a human productive power which in itself does not speak.[9]

Frye argues his point well, and his remarks along with the aforestated conclusion have implications for the instruction of literature--namely, that criticism should be at least one subject of study in the literature program rather than limiting the study of literature solely to its bibliography, which "sees literature as a huge aggregate or miscellaneous pile of discrete 'works.' Clearly, if literature is nothing more than this, any systematic mental training based on it becomes impossible."[10] And what

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[9] Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 11-12.

[10] Ibid., p. 16.

happens is that the "discrete" selection is viewed extrinsically as the handmaiden to history or psychology or some other discipline. Now, this extrinsic approach to literature, which turns "to the conceptual framework of the historian for events and to that of the philosopher for ideas,"[11] has been the one emphasized in high-school English literature programs, according to Dr. James R. Squire, Executive Secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English, and is one that he would like to see superseded by an approach which takes a close look at the text, an approach that would sustain a view of criticism as the knowledge form and make it a subject of study.[12]

This broad implication, of course, subsumes other implications, ones that would necessitate change and impose obligations on the teacher of literature and those who direct its implementation. First, the teacher, as the most concerned, would need to reexamine his objectives in terms of literature's purpose in the English curriculum by asking himself the following question: "Is the study of literature an end in itself or should it 'fire students to read widely and well?'"[13] And if literature study is to foster "'literary taste,'" and develop the "lifetime habit of reading that supposedly is the business of the English teacher,"[14]--an answer

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[11] Ibid., p. 12.

[12] In Chapter One of this research, a need for more effective instruction in literature was expressed by a national study (Project English NCTE), which in the sixties investigated English programs in 168 of the "better" high schools across the nation, and it specified that an intrinsic approach be taken to literature, wherein emphasis would be on, as Dr. Squire puts it, "the close reading of texts," rather than on "superficial coverage and talking about texts." (See supra, pp. 1-2.)

[13] James R. Squire, "National Study of High School English Programs: A School for All Seasons," English Journal 55 (March 1966): 288.

[14] Robert Karlin, Teaching Reading in High School (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Co., 1964), p. 172.

that any teacher would be hard put to deny--then the teacher who subscribes to this philosophy is faced with the responsibility of helping students develop an appreciation for literature. Robert Karlin believes that it is up to the teacher to "foster in his students . . . a 'set of awareness' before any reading begins." In his text Teaching Reading in High School (1964), he writes:

> If students are to derive the maximum appreciation from the reading of literature, they must be alert to the author's purpose and to the author's style and be ready to muster their analytical skills.[15]

In other words, students must become critics in their own right--a not impossible task if the teacher possesses the necessary skills to guide them.

This conditional, therefore, leads to the final obligation of the teacher: A teacher of literature--and Dr. Squire maintains this view--should become informed about modern textual criticism and "translate his knowledge of critical approaches to the classroom."[16]

These obligations are a challenge to the dedicated teacher, particularly in these times when reading in the classics and the best of modern writing is an assignment imposed rather than an experience chosen. However, were criticism the subject of study and literature the object, undoubtedly, quality literature--the literature that can bear scrutiny--would be appreciated for the art form it is, and students--enlightened and aesthetically fulfilled--would read. To know literature, then, is to know power; power to judge and power to enjoy. "For Literature is an edifice as many-towered and as spirit-lifting as any cathedral man has sent skyward. ('We see the

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[15]Ibid., p. 171.

[16]Squire, p. 288.

shape from start to finish,' writes Virginia Woolf. 'It (the book) is a barn; a pig-sty, or a cathedral.')"[17]

Another conclusion which speaks to the instruction of literature is closely related to the first hypothesis. It proposes that just as literature shows advances in the way it has been conceived by literary critics that parallel advances in the cognitive development of the individual so too does the individual show advances in the way he conceives literature that parallel advances in his cognitive development. In other words, literary concepts in the individual progress from phenomenistic and egocentric concepts to ones marked by construction and reflection, and in this progression conceptual structures of literature are laid down at each developmental stage. In Piagetian terms this proposition addresses the conclusion to the diachronic question: "What are the general principles by which the subject . . . changes his state in the course of development?"[18] To answer this question in respect to literature the following statement is posited: Across a childhood of continuous experiences with literature, the child by the process of adaptation builds discontinuous concepts about literature so that he realizes a progressive equilibration of these concepts as he moves from one stage of development to the next.

But just as this progression is sequential in the cognitive development of the individual with the various stages (pre-operational, concrete-operational, formal operational) preceding one another and laying down structures on which the next stage builds, so too is this the case in the

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[17] Edna Johnson, Evelyn R. Sickels, and Frances Clarke Sayers, Anthology of Children's Literature, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 31.

[18] Flavell, p. 262.

individual's development of concepts in literature. His first experiences in literature, therefore, must be based on a simplistic type of literature, wherein the fundamental elements are free of complexity (action and conflict are swift and direct, characters are one dimensional--good or evil, setting is limited in description for the purpose of orientation, and theme is clear-cut), as are the aspects of style (form, language, emotion, and tone). These experiences in literature must come first--before he encounters a sophisticated literature that is based on the same fundaments, albeit more complexly treated, with a more complex style.

Thus, in order to understand how the building of conceptual structures in literature takes place it is necessary to (1) examine what types of literature the child is exposed to at the pre-operational period of development and (2) to observe how the specific fundaments of literature along with its style, embodied in these early types, in their simple state, produce conceptual structures of literature which become incorporated in successive concepts at the operational level to build new and higher forms of equilibrium--"'higher'" in terms of the "equilibrial properties of field extension [field of application], mobility . . . and stability . . ."[19]

The field of extension, or application, for the pre-operational child is limited to the early forms of literature such as Mother Goose, nonsense verse, fable, and folk or fairy tale.[20] (And with these forms his mobility and stability are similarly limited). These have the universal elements of literature--"What happened [action and conflict], and to

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[19] Ibid., p. 263.

[20] Realistic fiction for the child at this level is not included here because in the literature that does not originate from the oral tradition the universal elements of theme, setting, character, action are not so clearly and concisely outlined--a sharpness crucial to the understanding of these elements at a more sophisticated level.

whom [characterization], and where [setting]?"[21], plus such concepts as revelation (theme), humor, rhyme, melody, and the multiple dimensions of language. With Mother Goose, then, the child at this level begins. This earliest "delight" of childhood

> is the dawn of humor, nonsense, and imagination; the quick awareness of the multiple wonders of the world; and a first appreciation of the bite and beauty of words. To all these kingdoms Mother Goose is the key.[22]

Indeed, Mother Goose includes all the fundaments of literature and style. "What drama is packed in this brief abrupt verse: Miss Muffet and the spider"; "Tom, Tom, the piper's son, / Stole a pig and away he run"; "what mirth and merrymaking: Hey, diddle, diddle, / The cat and the fiddle . . .//"; "what kindness and cruelty: If I had a donkey that wouldn't go / Would I beat him? Oh no, no . . . // . . . I met a man with bandy legs; / . . . I tripped up his heels and he fell on his nose. / /" "What a parade" of people and animals: the dairy maid, the doctor, the barber, the king; dogs, cats, ponies, hens, mice. "What a world in miniature that touches upon even the greatest themes: romantic love, and the inevitability of fate and character: Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea / . . . He'll come back and marry me, / . . .." "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, / Humpty Dumpty had a great fall: / . . . ." And, finally, "the very essence of poetry is here: the recurring miracle of phrase that evokes such images of pure delight as to reverberate through the mind, echo upon echo. As fair as a lily, as white as a swan // The boughs do shake and the bells do ring . . . ."[23]

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[21]Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, p. 1141.

[22]Ibid., p. 4.

[23]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Much of Mother Goose, however, is more than this. It is nonsense for the child's entertainment. What could be more incongruous than a cow--of all barnyard animals--jumping over the moon? "It is the juxtaposition of deed with disposition that produces the nonsense."[24] And nonsense appreciated and loved with Mother Goose carries over into a particular genre that the child of pre-operations encounters which is specifically labeled "nonsense verse." Edward Lear started the tradition in England with his Book of Nonsense (1846). Mother Goose was his source: his ear had caught the melody and manipulation of words and sounds; his inner eye had glimpsed the absurdities in character and deed that rollick across its pages. "He took to this form like a duck to water, making it his own and producing hundreds of limericks, each with its drama of triumph or frustration, as abrupt, sharp, and hilarious as Mother Goose herself."

> There was a Yong Lady whose nose
> Was so long that it reached to her toes;
> So she hired an Old Lady, whose conduct was steady,
> To carry that wonderful nose.

So sings Edward Lear. Inventive language, melody and rhyme, incongruous elements--all elements of nonsense are here, and "in this world of nonsense, young children find themselves happily at home. It is a world they understand because it mirrors the shifting boundaries between the real and the impossible which exist in their own minds."[25]

Piaget, in commenting on the meaning of reality for the child, says:

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[24] Ibid., p. 45.

[25] Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, pp. 44, 63, 46.

> . . . reality for the child is both more arbitrary and better regulated than for us. It is more arbitrary, because nothing is impossible, and nothing obeys causal laws. But whatever may happen, it can always be accounted for, for behind the most fantastic events which he believes in, the child will always discover motives which are sufficient to justify them; just as the world of the primitive races is peopled with a wealth of arbitrary intentions, but is devoid of chance.[26]

And subsumed under this particular brand of reality described by Piaget are also the fable and the fairy tale. But the fable for children is suspect:

> Some educators question the suitability of fables for children, forgetting perhaps that while children shun moralizing they are drawn to morality. The drama of the fable, the animal characters, and the quick flash of its single illustration of a truth--these hold the attention of children. Fables are like small, bright pebbles picked up from the shore, stored in the pocket as reminders of past experience, and held in the mind when needed.

What better way could the adult instill attitudes of respect and recognition for the youngest child in the neighborhood or the smallest child in the class than through Aesop's fable "A Lion and a Mouse." In this story a lion who lets a mouse go (amused all the while at the suggestion the mouse makes in pleading for his life that some day he may be able to help the powerful lion) is later saved by the mouse when he gnaws the ropes of the hunter's net in which the lion is caught, thus helping the lion to escape. Then the lion "acknowledges that little friends [may] prove great friends." Is this not a "bright pebble" of experience that could be "held in the mind until needed"?[27] And is this not an introduction to the element theme, the discovery of which often produces difficulties for the adult in a more mature literature?

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[26]Jean Piaget, The Language and Thought of the Child, trans. Marjorie Gabain, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932), p. 212.

[27]Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, pp. 99-100.

Now, the same attitude of protecting the child from certain forms of literature, of delaying their introduction until the child "[has] come to a knowledge of [his] own reality in the world" also carries over to the folk, or fairy, tale. Lewis Mumford discusses this matter in his book Green Memories, "an account of the childhood of his own son who was killed in the war"; a childhood that had been exposed to only that which was immediate and visible, "that is, to grownups"; a childhood in which the "factual and pragmatic was expressed in . . . education," but this stress on reality as the adult perceives it "did not banish some inner world of terror, the existence of which the boy confessed, when he was grown."[28] Mumford writes:

> "Surely, the minds of children are full of memories and forebodings that anticipate and reinforce the more tangible threats of inhumanity: the wildest folk tale, the most brutal fairy story, do fuller justice to their reality than a factual account of a walk to school; and we fooled ourselves when we thought that any antiseptic efforts of ours to keep the germs of fantasy from incubating could banish the child's sense of the mysterious, the inscrutable, the terrible, the overwhelming. In repressing this life of fantasy and subordinating it to our own practical interests, we perhaps made it take more devious forms, or at least gave the demonic a free hand without conjuring up any angelic powers to fight on the other side. We did not get rid of the dragon: we only banished St. George."[29]

Thus Mumford acknowledges the mistake of withholding the fairy tale from children, particularly children who live in a century that has suffered "two world wars, such degradation of human dignity as man had never before known, and the mushroom-shaped cloud shadowing the universe." Their world is a world of violence that they will come to know inevitably--if not by first-hand experience--through films and television. In

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[28] Ibid., p. 123. [29] Ibid.

their text Anthology of Children's Literature (1970) the editors point out that

> it is well to remember that what is read for oneself, without experience of horror, is never as vivid as that which has been given the unconscious emotion of the spoken voice. If the storyteller cannot describe the fate of the first two little pigs without crunching bones, the tale is not for her. To read horror may even fulfill some need, to know symbolically what the threat may be. To hear it brings it closer to reality; but to see it, in pictures, is to define it too clearly and to shut off the protection of only half knowing.[30]

Knowledge of evil is a necessary knowledge and vicarously acquired lessens one's vulnerability to its demonic forces. The fairy tale, then, which deals with an order of the world, an "original world" which is known "loosely through one's perceptions and memories,"[31] one that science cannot explain, can serve as a buffer, as "food for the tenderest stomachs."[32]

And children get exquisitely lost in the order of the fairy-tale world. They read and listen to folk tales, "never tiring of the elemental themes and the images of magic."

> Sometimes the insatiable hunger endures through years of childhood, until at last the child emerges into a new maturity, free of the golden spell, laden with pollen, like an inebriate bee. From his reading of the folk tale, the child gains a yea-saying faith in the ultimate goodness of life, a recognition of the threat of evil in the world and even in himself, with magic weapons to conquer it. He gains the habit of wonder; a robust sense of humor; the ability to find enchantment in the most common day, and the power to thrust his imagination beyond himself and the limits of ignorance.[33]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941), pp. 280-81.

[32] Sir Philip Sideny, An Apology for Poetry in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. by Walter Jackson Bate (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., (1952), p. 90.

[33] Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, p. 122.

Thus, the fairy tale, like the fable, nonsense verse, and nursery rhymes, has the universal elements of literature, seeds planted in the first years of a child's literary experiences.

To be sure, these first types of literature to which the child is exposed are static in concept, with their stereotyped characters, themes, and actions, especially as they are seen in the fairy tale, where

> everything is clear . . . One knows exactly where to place one's sympathy. The issues are soon stated, with no unnecessary subtleties of emotion, no bewildering wavering between cause and effect. Everyone acts according to his nature, and the stories move in strong, direct action to the always expected end, where the good comes to glory and joy, and evil is punished as befits it, with primitive symbols of suffering.[34]

Yet, these stereotyped concepts match the cognitive development of the pre-operational child, who at this stage focuses on states and thinks transductively and whose field of application, mobility, and stability are partial and limited. However, at the operational level--concrete and formal--the learner has increased his field of application, accelerated his mobility, and attained stability. He has moved from phenomenism and egocentrism to construction and reflection, so that now he apprehends the elements of more adult literature. He incorporates the stereotyped concepts of fairy tale, fable, nonsense, and nursery rhyme, ones he was comfortable with at the pre-operational level, into the more obscure conceptual structures of myth, epic, fantasy, fiction, drama, and poetry at the operational level. This process can be demonstrated by touching upon such elements of literature as plot, characterization, setting, theme, nonsense, and language and showing how experiences with these elements, met in Mother Goose, nonsense verse, fable, and fairy tale, at the pre-operational level

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[34]Ibid., pp. 122-23.

prepare the reader for the same--but more complex--elements met in literature at the operational level.

Plot development of fiction and drama at the operational stage has been nourished on the fast-moving action of nursery rhyme, fable, and folk tale, an action which is dramatically carried forward with a minimum of episode and an economy of detail. However, unlike the action of these earlier forms, whose events follow a time order, the action in plot is built upon cause and effect and an arrangement of scenes, which may or may not observe a chronological sequence. An understanding of plot, therefore, requires reversible thought processes. Thus, having been exposed to the less sophisticated forms at the pre-operational stage, the learner, who has followed the swift unfolding of their episodes, is ready at the operational stage to apprehend the development of plot whether it has a linear, a flashback, or a frame-story (a story within a story) arrangement of scenes, where in the case of the flashbacks and frame-story the arrangement requires the reader to move forward and backward in time and space. He has this ability because at the concrete level he senses the logic of classes and relations--elements of the grouping--and at the formal level, the group of four transformations, systems of thought highly mobile.

As for characterization, these early forms, the fable and fairy tale in particular, also prepare the operational cognizer for the complex characters he meets in sophisticated literature. Characterization is implicative of a few characters in the short story, as it is in the tale, but numerous characters in the novel, characters which depart from the "impersonal"--as-- "X"[35] characters of the fable, whose function is to exemplify a virtue

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[35] May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1947), p. 257.

or folly, or from the typed characters of the tale, who are completely good or completely bad. For example the consumate cruelty exemplified by the giant of the English fairy tale "Mollie Whuppie" is the consummate cruelty of Captain John Silver in Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island--but with a difference; for this pirate, although clever, cruel, and treacherous, "is redeemed from being completely despicable by his courage and his ebullient spirits." "As fascinating a villain as ever dominated a tale," he is "real," flesh and blood, "who, having in him the element of greatness, is nevertheless a traitorous brigand."[36] He is a complex character with more than one facet to his personality, whereas the giant in the tale "Mollie Whuppie" has but one dimension to his character--cruelty. Naturally, as a personality, he stirs no ambivalent feelings. Nor should he; for only one side of him is revealed. The giant is a character from a simplistic kind of fiction; whereas, John Silver is a character from sophisticated fiction. With him the reader can identify, since at the operational level his thought is reversible, allowing him to conserve. He, unlike the child of pre-operations whose thought lacks stability, can glimpse the whole personality of Silver, a personality which is consistently evil, a character trait that is not destroyed despite the introduction of such admirable character traits as courage and exuberance. In fact, it is the working together of the opposing traits within the matrix of Silver's personality that makes him the most unforgettable pirate of all literature.

As in characterization, nursery rhyme, fable, and folk tale also build conceptual structures for the scenes and settings the operational

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[36]Ibid., p. 390.

reader encounters in fiction, drama, and poetry. Whereas settings and scenes are simply touched upon in the nursery rhyme ("Little Jack Horner, / Sat in the corner") and dealt with economically in the fable and fairy tale (a bridge, a castle, a forest, with interior scenes seldom elaborated), they are developed in great detail in adult forms of literature and serve as devices of symbolism, contrast, and irony, emotion-arousing devices which reinforce theme or characterization, or both. In other words, scenes and setting can do more than simply orient the reader (their primary function). They help to establish the mood or tone of a selection so that the emotional aura, enshrouding the work, orders the reader's expectations and attitudes. A good example of this function is the structure of scenes in Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery." The first scene is almost pastoral. It bespeaks of the good fellowship and innocent pleasure of a quiet village in contemporary New England. The last scene, however, becomes one of savagery and violence, when a woman is stoned to death to satisfy an ancient fertility rite. Each scene--the first and the last--calls forth feelings in the reader, but ones antithetical to each other; the fact that they are structurally opposed is what gives the story its effect of horror and revulsion, thus reinforcing the story's theme of man's innate violence and his need for a scapegoat. The operational reader, whose thought processes are reversible, thereby increasing the equilibrial properties of field extension, mobility, and stability, can appreciate Jackson's technique: her use of contrast to highlight the barbaric nature of a "civilized" society. A literary inversion such as this is a relational pattern that is within his power to grasp. In short, because at the pre-operational level he was exposed to setting and its primary

function in nursery rhymes, fables, fairy tales of orienting the reader to listener, he is capable when he meets this element in more adult selections to incorporate its primary purpose with a secondary, more aesthetic purpose.

Theme, which can give the operational thinker difficulty in some stories, is also a literary concept, whose roots go back to the fable and fairy tale. The fable, with its economic illustration of a single truth, stated directly, familiarizes the child of pre-operations with the revelatory, ethical aspects of literature, with the intellectual as well as the emotional. At the operational level, then, when he can deal with many possibilities, having already become accustomed to the moral quality of literature, in which one truth is illuminated, he is prepared to participate in the many truths that often ray out from the central theme of a quality story or poem.

And just as theme is strong in the fable, so too is it a forceful element in the folk, or fairy, tale. Its themes ". . . have to do with winning security, earning . . . a place in the world, accomplishing impossible tasks, escaping from powerful enemies, outwitting wicked schemes and schemers, and succeeding with nonchalance."[37] Jack in his story of the beanstalk outwits the giant, just as Mollie Whuppie gets the better of her giant in the tale by the same name. And Cinderella--the fairy godmother notwithstanding--earns her place in the world. The themes of fairy tale and fable are the themes of life; they are the same themes that pervade literature at the operational level. But in the simplistic forms the themes are clear and robust; whereas in fiction, poetry, and drama they become subtle and less blatant, operating on the basis of suggestion and requiring much of the operational reader--that is, he must understand the overtones of multi-

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[37] Arbuthnot, p. 226.

dimensional language (imagery, figures of speech, connotation and denotation) and must search for clues in order to generalize or form hypotheses of possible meaning. Because his thought is reversible, however, he is equipped to perform these operations: he can perceive form, meaning, and relational patterns, types of thinking for which the child of pre-operations has no structures.

For example, in a revelation-type story, such as James Joyce's "Clay," the operational thinker perceives the pitiful plight of Maria, an old maid about whom no one really cares, when she spends Hallow Eve with her brother Joe and his family; he perceives her fate--to remain unloved, an object of pity--through the innuendo-packed dialogue and the reactions of the other characters to her; moreover, he, not Maria, has the revelation, because she sees herself as attractive and well-liked by everyone. Short on action and long on theme, a story such as this will have meaning only for a reader of formal operations, one who can work with the possibilities inherent in a story such as "Clay."

And, finally, the nonsense of Mother Goose and nonsense verse, like the other early forms that the pre-operational child enjoys, prepare the reader at the operational level for fantasy in fction, a genre that allows the writer "to suspend a law of nature or to create a marvelous being or machine or place, "that grants him "his impossibility," his "'Let's suppose,'" but " demands probability in his treatment of it."[38] Thus, it is a genre that sets out the rules of its logic at the beginning of the story--rules that the pre-operational child never questions because of the "reality" he has ordered into his world by symbolic representation. Therefore, when the reader of concrete or formal operations meets Lewis Carroll's

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[38]Laurence Perrine, Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p. 325.

Alice and her world of rabbit holes and looking glasses, he is able to cope with the concept of logical illogicality; he recognizes it for what it is and is amused. For he has met it at an earlier age in riddles and rhymes: "Little Nancy Etticoat, / With a white petticoat, / . . . The longer she stands / The shorter she grows";[39] And in the verse of Edward Lear and countless others, as meaning is juxtaposed with sound in a logical disorder of confusion.

Nonsense also prepares the reader of operational thought for such abstract notions as irony, a term which always implies some sort of discrepancy or incongruity, and paradox, wherein logic is defied on the literal level but reinstated on the figurative level. These concepts provide tension and pervade the quality literature of the adult. In fact, all "good" poetry as well as imaginative prose has the tension that irony and paradox insure. The operational thinker can handle language that operates on two levels, such as irony and paradox, for the same reasons that he is able to understand other literary concepts that require operational thought processes; that is, his sense of inversion allows him to grasp the relational patterns implicative in irony and paradox just as his sense of compensation yields to the recriprocal relationship that exists between metaphor and the literal statement.

The literature that the child first meets--nursery rhyme, nonsense verse, fable, and folk tale--and in which he so enthusiastically indulges, embodies the universal elements of literature that answer the questions: What happened? To whom? When? Where? Now, these elements like the literary concerns of theme and language are simplistically conceived. But in their simple directness they afford the child experiences with literary

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[39]Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, p. 28.

concepts that serve him later when he encounters the more complex forms of the novel, short story, fantasy, drama, and poetry, plus the complexities of a multidimensional language. In other words, the early forms of literature build conceptual structures which he incorporates in subsequent concepts to build new and higher forms of equilibrium. These structures progres from phenomenism and egocentrism to construction and reflection, paralleling the progression that is shown in cognitive development. Growth in the understanding of literature, then, like cognitive growth in the individual, is a gradual, a developmental, a sequential process.

The implication this discussion has for the instruction of literature at the secondary level is clear. No approach to literature at the secondary level, especially the objective approach which takes a close look at the text, can hope to succeed if the learner has not experienced the early forms of literature. For if the imagination has not been nourished, if the ear has not caught the sounds and rhythms of the language, if a consciousness of good and evil has not been awakened at a time when there are weapons to fight the dark powers; then the student of literature has not felt literature, and he has little background for understanding its sophisticated forms and appreciating them. Alfred Whitehead says in his book Aims of Education (1921):

> Mere literary knowledge is of slight importance. The only thing that matters is, how it is known. The facts related are nothing. Literature only exists to express and develop that imaginary world which is our life, the kingdom which is within us. The literary side of a technical education should consist in an effort to make the pupils enjoy literature. It does not matter what they know but the enjoyment is vital.[40]

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[40]Alfred Whitehead, Aims of Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921), pp. 88-89.

"How it is known" implies how literature as a creative act takes place. For this kind of knowledge a child's imagination, emotions, and intellect must be piqued and developed. This can only come about through experiences in literature, whereby concepts at one stage of the child's development incorporate those of the preceding stage, so that higher states of equilibrium are formed as he increases his field of application, his mobility, and his stability. Therefore, it is incumbent on the English curriculum to provide story telling and reading in the early grades, not only for the child's pleasure and benefit at that age but also for his pleasure and benefit at a later age when literary concepts in mature literature submerge, becoming subtle, and abstract, and more difficult to apprehend.

> In this day of pictorial emphasis when the visual is used increasingly as a method of communication, it would seem that the scope of language is lessened. As far as the written language is concerned, the tendency is to simplify its structure, limit its vocabulary, and narrow its subtleties of feeling and color reducing it to the basic norm of everyday speech.[41]

The imagination is in the same way being robbed of its power. Films and television leave children passively inactive, with their moving characters, painted backdrops, sound accompaniments, and mood music. Piaget finds the use of audio-visual methods objectionable. He writes that "too many educators have sung their praises, whereas in fact they may lead to a kind of verbalization of images, if they only foster associations without giving rise to genuine activities."[42] "Thus the use of audio-visual materials such

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[41] Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, p. 1142.

[42] Jean Piaget, To Understand Is to Invent: The Future of Education, trans. George-Anne Roberts (New York: Grossman, 1973; Viking Compass Book, 1974), pp. 7-8.

as films and television is seen as producing 'figurative processes' rather than true operational processes."[43]

Story telling, on the other hand, fires the child's imagination. When he hears stories told, he comes to "build the scene and setting with [his] inner eye," depending "only on the modulation of the voice and the words, an occasional involuntary gesture, a change of pace, a pause -- he [has] only these to tell him how to define the threat, the conflict, and the resolution." Thus, "the imagination is given the bone and sinew of reality."[44] When he comes, then, to read for himself, he will read. And, because he has had a plenitude of literary experiences, he will, as he reads,"co-create"[45] with the writer.

The conclusions pertinent to this research have borne implications for the instruction of literature at the secondary level. The first conclusion posited that criticism, or the aesthetics of literature, is the knowledge form rather than the bibliography of literature and, as an organized system of thought, offers a means of study, a means by which literature can be analyzed. The implication to which this conclusion spoke recommended that criticism become a subject of study in order that students may become knowledgeable about the "how" of literature--the process—and thus acquire a greater understanding and appreciation of the art form. This implication also included implications for the teacher, ones that imposed certain responsibilities upon him as the student's guide.

The second conclusion posited that the individual develops conceptual structures about literature in the same manner that he develops cognitive structures and that the two parallel each other in a sequential

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[43]Mary Ann Spencer Pulaski, Understanding Piaget: An Introduction to Children's Cognitive Development (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 202.

[44]Johnson, Sickels, and Sayers, p. 1142. [45]Karlin, p. 172.

development, moving from phenomenism and egocentrism to construction and reflection, and that at each stage he builds structures which become incorporated in successive structures. Following this conclusion, the implication addressed itself to the English curriculum. It pointed out the curriculum's obligation to students in the early grades--namely, that it should provide students with an abundant experience in the early forms of literature--nursery rhyme, nonsense verse, fable, fairy tale--so that an acquaintance with these precursors of adult literature may expose them to the universal elements of action, characters, setting, and theme as well as the language; then, perhaps, if they become cognizant of these elements as they appear simplistically, they will when they reach the secondary level adapt readily to sophisticated literature, where these elements take on complexity, and appreciate the experiences it has to offer.

Both of these conclusions and the implications they carried were in answer to the second hypothesis--that literature put in a historical perspective will offer implications for its instruction. Preceding the conclusions and implications was the discussion in which the first hypothesis--that a historicodevelopmental view of literature will show the existence of parallels between the collective thought of critics from the period of English Neoclassicism to the period of Anglo-American New Criticism and the cognitive thought of the individual from the pre-operational level to the formal operational level--was shown to be valid. The purpose of this chapter has been to summarize the research, to validate the hypotheses, and to deal with conclusions and implications that evolved from the study. However, the study has opened more doors than have been noted: In showing the strong "ontogenesis-recapitulates-history strain in Piaget's thinking . . ."[46] it has made pertinent

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[46]Flavell, pp. 252-53.

> . . . Piaget's basic assertion about the relations among the major sciences . . . that they form, not one or another kind of linear hierarchy, but a circular structure: a relationship line whose origin is logic-mathematics which will extend to physics-chemistry, then to biology, then to psychology-sociology, and from there will close the cirlce by returning to logic-mathematics again.[47]

For example, in this research (although Piaget does not include any discipline connected with the "knowledge of singular fact,"[48] such as literature, other than perhaps psychology), many knoweldge forms have participated: logic-mathematics, biology, psychology-sociology, and literature. It would seem that no matter what the endeavor, all disciplines find some point of reference. Even Aesop's well-known fable "The Grasshopper and the Ants" as a subject of study need not confine itself to literature alone. There are implications here for physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, and logic. Analogically, any one of these disciplines could be served by this simple story. This homespun example also has implications for education. A quotation from Piaget will best demonstrate this point. In his concern for the actual problems that education is facing today--the need for interdisciplinary studies--he says, "Everyone talks of interdisciplinary needs," but "the inertia of established systems--i.e., those that are outdated but not yet

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[47] Ibid., p. 260.

[48] According to Philip H. Phenix in his paper "The Architectonics of Knowledge" (Fifth Annual Phi Delta Kappa Symposium on Educational Research), Education and the Structure of Knowledge, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., (1964), p. 55, "the most elemental kind of knowing" is the "knowledge of singular fact." It is "the immediate awareness of another being (or of the self) in its concrete uniqueness." "The disciplines that are concerned with the knowledge of singular fact are . . . designed to portray unique personal encounters." The disciplines that Phenix lists are existential philosophy, existential theology, existential psychology, and "those elements in the literary enterprise (particularly in poetry, drama and the novel). . . ."

eliminated--simply tend to create a multidisciplinary situation." In respect to this problem, he believes that

> what is needed at both the university and secondary level are teachers who indeed know their subject but who approach it from a constantly interdisciplinary point of view--i.e., knowing how to give general significance to the structures they use and to reintegrate them into overall systems embracing the other disciplines. In other words, instructors should be sufficiently penetrated with the spirit of epistemology to be able to make their students constantly aware of the relations between their special province and the sciences as a whole.

Then to demonstrate what he believes is the weakness in the educational viewpoint concerning interdisciplinary studies, he states:

> . . . the first lesson to be drawn from current interdisciplinary trends is the need to look closely at the future relations between the human and the natural sciences and the resulting necessity of finding a remedy for the disastrous consequences of dividing university instruction into "schools" and secondary schools into "departments," both of them separated by airtight compartments. From the theoretical point of view, psychology, considered a science of man, is connected without a break to biology and animal psychology or zoological ethology, whereas mathematics, classed among the natural sciences, is one of the most direct products of the human brain. The theory of information which came from the human sciences is just as useful to thermodynamics as the latter is to data processing and linguistics.[49]

Piaget was postulating these theories in 1948. Today in 1977--almost thirty years later--universities are, for the most part, still compartmentalized with their "schools," as are secondary schools with their "departments." Change comes slowly, but perhaps change comes most slowly with the teacher, who is essentially the key to the up-grading of education. Concerning the teacher and change, Piaget makes this observation:

> But it would also be necessary for the minds of the instructors themselves to become less and less compartmentalized, something that is often harder to obtain from them than from their students.[50]

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[49]Piaget, To Understand Is to Invent, pp. 29-31. [50]Ibid., p. 31.

Another door which this study has opened is the view of knowledge as a constantly changing entity. "Perpetual evolution" is the phrase that Piaget uses to describe this state of flux, and in speaking of scientific knowledge, he says:

> . . . it finds itself changed from one day to the next. As a result, we cannot say that on the one hand there is the history of knowledge, and on the other its current state today, as if its current state were somehow definitive or even stable. The current state of knowledge is a moment in history, changing just as rapidly as the state of knowledge in the past has ever changed and, in many instances, more rapidly. Scientific thought, then, is not momentary; it is not a static instance; it is a process. More specifically, it is a process of continual construction and reorganization.[51]

Or as Dr. John Renner, Professor of Science Education at the University of Oklahoma so cogently expresses it, using terms from Piaget's stage-dependent theory to highlight his point, "What we think is a formal operational category of today may be a pre-operational category of five hundred years from now."[52]

These words also speak to literary thought, past and present. The more current it becomes the more rapidly it, too, seems to change. And it, too, "is a process of continual construction and reorganization." One has only to review the different approaches to literature which this study described to see how rapidly change came in the way literature was conceived once the change was made from the pragmatic approach (one that enjoyed a relative stability for approximately two centuries) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the expressive approach of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the expressive view held by the Romantics was to last but a century before it was supplanted by the objective approach of the New

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[51]Jean Piaget, Genetic Epistemology, trans. Eleanor Duckworth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971; Norton Library, 1971), p. 2.

[52]John W. Renner, interview, Norman, Oklahoma, July 1976.

Critics. And the New Criticism, which made its appearance in the late twenties of the present century, enjoyed less than thirty years of preeminence on the critical scene. Now this was an exceedingly short time in comparison to the approaches which preceded it, and was particularly short in view of the stir it created, mainly in the forties, and the myriad activities both pro and con that hailed its arrival. It had its inception in the universities with teacher-critics both in England and the United States, and it has done more to change the face of criticism than any theory up to its time. But its revolutionary effect, notwithstanding, it is now passé and literary criticism has continued its search. Nonetheless, the search has brought critics back by the way of myth criticism and existentialism to an approach that is essentially objective in that the work itself is still the principal concern.

Literary structuralism, which made its appearance in the sixties, is just such an approach. It emphasizes the intrinsic method over the extrinsic; however, some structuralists incorporate the two. Jerry L. Walker, Professor of English Education, University of Illinois, says in his article "The Structure of Literature" (English Journal, March 1966):

> Rarely in the history of English teaching has a concept been so widely accepted, so eloquently discussed, and so variously interpreted as the structure of literature.

Since Jerome Bruner's pronouncement in The Process of Education (1962) that "'to learn structure is to learn how things are related,'" there has been an emphasis on structuralism in all knowledge forms, so that in teaching literature today this is by far the most recommended approach. But Walker points out that although "there is unanimous agreement 'among teachers, critics, and students of literature' . . . . there is consider-

able disagreement concerning the 'things' that are involved."[53] Nevertheless, among those who subscribe to literary structuralism, there are three distinct groups:

> One group, representative of the New Criticism, contends that only those relationships that exist among the elements within the work of literature itself are significant structural concerns. Another group considers that the relationships which exist between the work and some external factors, such as the writer's purpose, his history, and his socio-cultural background are also important structural concerns. A third group, abandoning the search for structure within the work itself, attempts to identify the elements and their relationships in a literary experience. All three groups propose to study structure through careful analysis; they differ in what they choose to analyze.[54]

And in the seventies structuralism is still in vogue, oriented now, however, toward linguistics and stylistics. In the Foreword to Approaches to Poetics (1973), a collection of selected papers from the English Institute sessions in linguistics and literary study, Seymour Chatman explicates the different directions in which structuralism in literature is moving today. Within the group of papers submitted, there are those critics who support literary works as structures and those who do not.

Those who are structuralists pursue such concepts as "the distinction between closed and pluralistic texts" (texts which resolve in a definite interpretation of the meaning the work produces and those which have an infinite number of interpretations and do not crystallize into a locus of meaning) in literature and "'affective stylistics' (a theory which relates a writer's devices in style with his personality)--to bring the

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[53] Jerry L. Walker, "The Structure of Literature," English Journal 55 (March 1966): 305.

[54] Ibid.

reader into the theoretical picture in a more genuine way"[55]; whereas the anti-structuralists, who are "not satisfied with taking literary works to be structures, objects, artifacts," demonstrate that "a text is not the simple sum of its words and syntax" but is a 'speech act' in terms of . . . "('the writer who puts out imitation speech acts as if they were being performed by someone') and in terms of a reader (who decodes by 'build ing on his tacit knowledge of the conventions--past and present, actual and possible--for illocutionary acts'[56])."[57] The last paper, "Structuralism and Literature," which Chatman describes as "the most general and most programmitc of the group" is by M. Tzvetan Todorov.

> M. Todorov [Chatman says] dares to ask for a science of literature, but even as he waves the red cape, it is clear that "science" is not being used in a sense that any good Aristotelian could seriously object to. In terms not unlike those of René Wellek and Austin Warren, he asks that literature be approached internally rather than externally, and literary theory be separated from literary criticism (the description and interpretation of specific texts). Noting that poetics is a millenia-old discipline, M. Todorov asks for a typology of discourses, so that what is peculiar to literary discourse may emerge in clearer contrast. As a possible path into this effort, he reechoes the Russian Formalist idea that global literary structures are in some sense expansions of local devices--that a plot, for instance, may be essentially an "unfolded" metaphor. Hence, he feels, the idea of literary endogenesis is not unfeasible.[58]

It would seem, then, from the critical activities since the New Criticism that literary thought neither stands still nor stays in balance. There has been, and no doubt always will be, a "perpetual evolution," generated by the urgency among literary scholars to find a truer conception

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[55] English Institute, Approaches to Poetics with a Foreword and ed. by Seymour Chatman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 9, 10.

[56] Richard Ohman in his paper "Literature as Act," in Approaches to Poetics, p. 82, defines an "illocutionary act" as one "performed in saying the sentence," one "that may be that of demanding, requesting, imploring, praying; its exact force [remaining] uncertain without more context."

[57] English Institute, Approaches to Poetics, pp. 81, 9.

[58] Ibid., p. 10.

of literature's nature. Their strainings toward truth are analogous to the child at the concrete operational level for whom

> . . . perfect equilibrium is never fully achieved. Each period of development represents only a successively closer approximation to equilibrium, and even adolescent thought does not attain perfect equilibrium in all areas at all times.[59]

The New Critics, with their close attention to the text so that words almost have a life of their own, reached a sophisticated level in their critical conceptions; but in this new-found equilibrium were contained the seeds of disequilibrium. Perhaps the New Criticism can be compared to the adult at the formal level of operations who lives in "a state of equilibrated disequilibration." For example, since the decline of the New Criticism there have been a multiplicity of trends in criticism, most of which, in the latter years, have reinstated the intrinsic approach. This fact suggests that once the high equilibrated state of the objective approach was reached in the forties and became a system in equilibrium, criticism has existed and will exist in "a state of equilibrated disequilibration"[60]; it will continually expand its field of application to include many literary theories and combinations of theories based on the intrinsic method, will extend its mobility to move from one theory to another, and will maintain its stability to incorporate the new theories without destroying the system.

Indeed, the theoretical system of literature, which sees literature as organic, has managed to remain relatively stable since its thought became reversible with the Romantics and the expressive approach, and this

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[59]Ginsburg and Opper, p. 178.

[60]Renner, interview, Norman, Oklahoma, July 1976.

despite myriad and divergent views that characterized the late 1800's and early 1900's before the inception of the objective approach with the New Critics. And the concept of imitation that oriented the Ancients, of the audience that oriented the Neoclassicists, of the poet that oriented the Romantics--all of these and each--have remained an important consideration in all intrinsic approaches since their time, albeit they have not dominated any theory since their time.

The aforesaid after-thoughts, conclusions, and implications conclude the investigation pertinent to the problem of this study: to treat literature historicodevelopmentally in order to ascertain what information such treatment might yield. Essentially this last chapter bears the fruits of the research--namely, the conclusions, the implications, and the after-thoughts, for the conclusions and implications make recommendations for the improvement of literary study and instruction, and the after-thoughts offer points of possible extension for research.

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