

PHILOSOPHY OF LITERARY FORM

happy word, as all readers must feel, and one certainly worthy of a gloss inquiring into its synecdochic functioning, its implications, its rôle as a representative of more than it explicitly says.)

I have elsewhere called this approach to art "sociological," in that it can usefully employ coördinates bearing upon social acts in general. It is not sociological in the sense that one treats a book as a kind of unmethodical report on a given subject-matter, as Sinclair Lewis' novels might be sociologically treated as making the same kind of report about society (though in haphazard, intuitive ways) as the Lynds make in their systematic studies of Middletown. We are by no means confined to a stress upon "content" in this sense. At every point, the content is functional—hence, statements about a poem's "subject," as we conceive it, will be also statements about the poem's "form."²²

²² The same point of view would apply to the analysis of the structure in the strategies of theology or philosophy. A speculative thinker is not "frank" (when he is "frank") through some cult of "disinterested curiosity." He is frank in order that, by bringing himself to admit the real nature of obstacles and resistances, he may seek to construct a chart of meanings that will help himself and others adequately to encompass these obstacles and resistances. In the course of such work, he may often seem to wander far afield. This is due partly to the fact that each tactic of assertion may lead to a problem, the tactics of its solution may lead to a further problem, etc. And when these problems become traditional, men of lesser enterprise, forgetting that these various tactics originally arose out of the business of symbolic vengeance, or consolation, or encouragement, or protection (including the protection of special prerogatives) devote themselves mainly to the accumulated interstitialities of tactics, picking up a special philosophic jargon (with its corresponding set of issues local to the guild) simply as *insignia of membership in a lodge*. And this symbolic enrollment is sufficient to satisfy their sparse needs of "socialization," especially when it nets them emoluments, and so brings the necessary economic ingredient into their strategy as a social act.

Indeed, if there is a point whereat rationality degenerates into *hubris*, it must be the point whereat "pure" speculation becomes too great (a change in the proportions or quantity of ingredients that gives rise to a new quality). Curiosity properly makes its discoveries in the course of aiming at benefit (as logical devices are best discovered not by a cult of such, but in the course of making an assertion). Curiosity becomes malign when the kind of benefit sought, or the kind of assertion made, is too restricted from the standpoint of social necessities. Or it becomes malign when the incentive of *power* outweighs the incentive of *betterment* (this being another way of saying that knowledge is properly sought as a way to *cure*,

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RITUAL DRAMA AS "HUB"

The general perspective that is interwoven with our methodology of analysis might be summarily characterized as a *theory of drama*. We propose to take *ritual drama* as the Ur-form, the "hub," with all other aspects of *human* action treated as spokes radiating from this hub. That is, the social sphere is considered in terms of situations and acts, in contrast with the physical sphere, which is considered in mechanistic terms, idealized as a flat cause-and-effect or stimulus-and-response relationship. Ritual drama is considered as the culminating form, from this point of view, and any other form is to be considered as the "efficient" overstressing of one or another of the ingredients found in ritual drama. An essayistic treatise of scientific cast, for instance, would be viewed as a kind of Hamletic soliloquy, its rhythm slowed down to a snail's pace, or perhaps to an irregular jog, and the dramatic situation of which it is a part usually being left unmentioned.²³

The reference to Hamlet is especially appropriate, in view of the newer interpretation that has been placed upon Hamlet's quandaries. For more than a hundred years, we had been getting a German translation of Hamlet, a translation in terms of romantic idealism, a translation brought into English by Coleridge, who interpreted Hamlet as an Elizabethan Coleridge, the "man of inaction." The newer and juster interpretation, which Maurice Evans has done much to restore for us, largely by the simple expedient of

but becomes "proud" when the moralizing light of "cure" is hidden under the accumulated bushel of power).

²³ The Paget theory of "gesture speech" obviously makes a perfect fit with this perspective by correlating the origins of linguistic action with bodily action and posture.

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giving us the play uncut, is that of Hamlet as the "scientist," a man anxious to weigh all the objective evidence prior to the act. Among other things, it has been pointed out, there was the "scientific" problem (as so conceived within the beliefs current in Shakespeare's day) of determining whether the ghost was *really* the voice of his father or a satanic deception. And Hamlet, as preparation for his act, employed the stolid Horatio and the ruse of the play-within-a-play as "controls," to make sure that his interpretation of the scene was not fallacious, or as we might say, "subjective."²⁴

The objection may be raised that "historically" the ritual

²⁴ An exceptionally good instance revealing the ways in which dramatic structure underlies essayistic material may be got by inspection of Max Lerner's article, "Constitution and Court as Symbols" (*The Yale Law Journal*, June, 1937). The essay is divided into four parts, or as we should say, four acts. (In modern play-writing, the four-act form has very often replaced the five-act form of earlier Western drama, the climax coming in the third act, with the aftermath of acts IV and V telescoped into one.)

Act I. "Symbols Possess Men." Here the dramatist acquaints us with the situation in which his tragedy is to be enacted. He describes the ways in which leaders prod people to desired forms of action by manipulating the symbols with which these people think. He then narrows the field to the "constitution as symbol," and places the Supreme Court as a personalized vessel of the Constitutional authority.

Act II. "Constitution into Fetich." The action is now under way. Reviewing American history, the dramatist develops in anecdotal arpeggio the proposition summed up by a timeless level of abstraction in Act I. The act ends on "evidence of the disintegration of the constitutional symbol," a theme that will be carried an important step farther in—

Act III. "Divine Right: American Plan." The Justices of the Supreme Court are here presented as our equivalent for kingship and godhead. And the act ends on the tragic crime, the symbolic slaying of the sacrificial king, as the author is attacking our "kings," (i. e., he advocates their deposition from authority). In a footnote, the symmetry is rounded out by a kind of "funeral oration" that gives the slain fathers their dues: "There seems to be something about the judicial robes that not only hypnotizes the beholder but transforms the wearer; Marshall and Taney are the principal, but not the only, instances of men whose capacities for greatness no one suspected until they faced the crucial tasks of the Court." Thus, in both their malign and benign functions, these offerings are "worthy" of sacrifice.

Act IV. "New Symbols for Old." The result of the slaying is indeed a surprise, if approached from other than the dramatic point of view. For a new vision emerges, a vision of the basic motives by which men are moved. And strangely enough, these "transcendent" motives are *hunger* and *fear*. They are *naturalistic* motives. The dramatist, released by the slaying of the fathers, has "gone primi-

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drama is *not* the Ur-form. If one does not conceive of ritual drama in a restricted sense (allowing for a "broad interpretation" whereby a Greek goat-song and a savage dance to tom-toms in behalf of fertility, rain, or victory could be put in the same bin), a good argument could be adduced, even on the historical, or genetic, interpretation of the Ur-form. However, from my point of view, even if it were proved beyond all question that the ritual drama is not by any means the poetic prototype from which all other forms of poetic and critical expression have successively broken off (as dissociated fragments each made "efficient" within its own rights), my proposal would be in no way impaired. Let ritual drama be proved, for instance, to be the *last* form historically developed; or let it be proved to have arisen anywhere along the line. There would be no embarrassment: we could contend, for instance, that the earlier forms were but groping towards it, as rough drafts, with the ritual drama as the perfection of these trends—while subsequent forms could be treated as "departures" from it, a kind of "aesthetic fall."

The reason for our lack of embarrassment is that we are not upholding this perspective on the basis of historical or genetic material. We are proposing it as a *calculus*—a vocabulary, or set of coördinates, that serves best for the integration of all phenomena studied by the *social sciences*. We propose it as the logical alternative to the treatment of human acts and relations in terms of the mechanistic

tive." The coördinates of the previous acts had been distinctly *social*; and, as anyone acquainted with Lerner's brilliant studies is aware, the coördinates customary to this author are *social*; but here, for the moment, the symbolic slaying surprises him into a new quality, a "Saturnalian" vision. The episode is, of course, essayistically refurbished elsewhere so that social coördinates are regained. I am here but discussing the form of this one article, taken as an independent integer.

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metaphor (stimulus, response, and the conditioned reflex). And we propose it, along with the contention that mechanistic considerations need not be *excluded* from such a perspective, but take their part in it, as a statement about the predisposing structure of the *ground* or *scene* upon which the drama is enacted.²⁵

Are we in an "Augustine" period or a "Thomistic" one? "Faith" cannot act relevantly without "knowledge"—"knowledge" cannot act at all without "faith." But though each requires the other, there is a difference of emphasis possible. The great political confusion of the present, which

²⁵ In work on which I am now engaged, as a kind of "Prolegomena to any future imputation of motives," I have been applying coordinates that can, I think, carry a step further the ways of locating and distinguishing motivational elements. I now distinguish the three voices, active, passive, and middle (reflexive), as they show motivationally in theories stressing action, passion, and mediation. And instead of the situation-strategy pair, I now use five terms: act, scene, agent, agency, purpose.

These five terms, with a treatment of the purely internal or syntactic relationships prevailing among them, are I think particularly handy for extending the discussion of motivation so as to locate the strategies in metaphysical and theological systems, in accounts of the Creation, in theories of law and constitutionality, and in the shifts between logic and history, being and becoming, as these shifts occur in theories of motivation.

The use of this fuller terminology in the synopsis of fictional works would require no major emendations in the methods discussed. But I might, as a result of it, be able to state the basic rules of thumb in a more precise way, thus:

The critic is trying to *synthesize* the given work. He is trying to synopsise it, not in the degenerated sense which the word "synopsis" now usually has for us, as meaning a mere "skeleton or outline of the plot or argument," but in the sense of "conveying comprehensively," or "getting at the basis of." And one can work towards this basis, or essence, from without, by "scissor-work" as objective as the nature of the materials permits, in focussing all one's attention about the *motivation*, which is identical with *structure*.

Hence, one will watch, above all, every reference that bears upon expectancy and foreshadowing, in particular every overt reference to any kind of "calling" or "compulsion" (i. e., active or passive concept of motive). And one will note particularly the *situational* or *scenic* material (the "properties") in which such references are contexts; for in this way he will find the astrological relationships prevailing between the plot and the background, hence being able to treat scenic material as representative of psychic material (for instance, if he has distinguished between a motivation in the sign of day and a motivation in the sign of night, as explicitly derivable by citation from the book itself, and if he now sees night falling, he recognizes that the quality of motivation may be changing, with a new kind of act being announced by the change of scene).

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is matched in the poetic sphere by a profusion of rebirth rituals, with a great rise of adolescent characters as the bearers of "representative" rôles (adolescence being the transitional stage *par excellence*), gives reason to believe that we are in a kind of "neo-evangelical" era, struggling to announce a new conception of purpose. And we believe that such a state of affairs would require more of the "Augustine" stress upon the *agon*, the contest, with knowledge as the Hamletic preparation for the act required in this agon. Scientific pragmatism, as seen from this point of view, would be considered less as a philosophical assertion per se than as the lore of the "complicating factors" involved in any philosophic assertion. It would be a *necessary admonitory adjunct* to any philosophy, and thus could and should be engrafted as an essential corrective ingredient in any philosophy; its best service is in admonishing us *what to look out for* in any philosophic assertion.

The relation between the "drama" and the "dialectic" is obvious. Plato's dialectic was appropriately written in the mode of ritual drama. It is concerned with the maieutic, or midwifery, of philosophic assertion, the ways in which an idea is developed by the "coöperative competition" of the "parliamentary." Inimical assertions are invited to collaborate in the perfecting of the assertion. In fact, the greatest menace to dictatorships lies in the fact that, through their "efficiency" in silencing the enemy, they deprive themselves of competitive collaboration. Their assertion lacks the opportunity to mature through "agonistic" development. By putting the quietus upon their opponent, they bring themselves all the more rudely against the *unanswerable opponent*, the opponent who cannot be refuted, the nature of brute reality itself. In so far as their chart of meanings is inadequate

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as a description of the scene, it is not equipped to encompass the scene. And by silencing the opponent, it deprives itself of the full value to be got from the "collective revelation" to the maturing of which a vocal opposition radically contributes.

And there is a "collective revelation," a social structure of meanings by which the individual forms himself. Recent emphasis upon the great amount of superstition and error in the beliefs of savages has led us into a false emphasis here. We have tended to feel that a whole collectivity can be "wrong" in its chart of meanings. On the contrary, if a chart of meanings were ever "wrong," it would die in one generation. Even the most superstition-ridden tribe must have had many very accurate ways of sizing up real obstacles and opportunities in the world, for otherwise it could not have maintained itself. Charts of meaning are not "right" or "wrong"—they are relative *approximations* to the truth. And only in so far as they contain real ingredients of the truth can the men who hold them perpetuate their progeny. In fact, even in some of the most patently "wrong" charts, there are sometimes discoverable ingredients of "rightness" that have been lost in our perhaps "closer" approximations. A ritual dance for promoting the fertility of crops was absurd enough as "science" (though its absurdity was effectively and realistically corrected in so far as the savage, along with the mummery of the rite, planted the seed; and if you do not abstract the rite as the essence of the event, but instead consider the act of planting as also an important ingredient of the total recipe, you see that the chart of meanings contained a very important accuracy). It should also be noted that the rite, considered as "social science," had an accuracy lacking in much of our contemporary ac-

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tion, since it was highly *collective* in its attributes, a *group dance* in which *all* shared, hence an incantatory device that kept alive a much stronger sense of the group's consubstantiality than is stimulated today by the typical acts of private enterprise.

In equating "dramatic" with "dialectic," we automatically have also our perspective for the analysis of history, which is a "dramatic" process, involving dialectical oppositions. And if we keep this always in mind, we are reminded that every document bequeathed us by history must be treated as a *strategy for encompassing a situation*. Thus, when considering some document like the American Constitution, we shall be automatically warned not to consider it in isolation, but as the *answer* or *rejoinder* to assertions current in the situation in which it arose. We must take this into account when confronting now the problem of abiding by its "principles" in a situation that puts forth totally different questions than those prevailing at the time when the document was formed. We should thus claim as our allies, in embodying the "dramatic perspective," those modern critics who point out that our Constitution is to be considered as a rejoinder to the theories and practices of mercantilist paternalism current at the time of its establishment.²⁶

²⁶ In this connection, we might note a distinction between positive and dialectical terms—the former being terms that do not require an opposite to define them, the latter being terms that do require an opposite. "Apple," for instance, is a positive term, in that we do not require, to understand it, the concept of a "counter-apple." But a term like "freedom" is dialectical, in that we cannot locate its meaning without reference to some concept of enslavement, confinement, or restriction. And "capitalism" is not a positive term, but a dialectical one, to be defined by reference to the concepts of either "feudalism" or "socialism."

Our courts consider the Constitution in accordance with theories of positive law—yet actually the Constitution is a dialectical instrument; and one cannot properly interpret the course of judicial decisions unless he treats our "guaranties of Constitutional rights" not as positive terms but as dialectical ones.

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Where does the drama get its materials? From the "unending conversation" that is going on at the point in history when we are born. Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrass-

Our Bill of Rights, for instance, is composed of clauses that descended from two substantially different situations. First, as emerging in Magna Carta, they were enunciated by the feudal barons in their "reactionary" struggles against the "progressive" rise of central authority. Later, in the British Petition of Right and Bill of Rights, they were enunciated by the merchant class in their "progressive" struggles against the "reactionary" resistance of the Crown. It is in this second form that they came into our Constitution.

BUT:

Note this important distinction: in the British Bill of Rights, they were defined, or located, as a resistance of the *people* to the *Crown*. Thus they had, at this stage, a strongly collectivistic quality, as the people were united in a common cause against the Crown, and the rights were thus dialectically defined with relation to this opposition. The position of the Crown, in other words, was a necessary term in giving meaning to the people's counter-assertions.

In the United States document, however, the Crown had been abolished. Hence, the dialectical function of the Crown in giving meaning to the terms would have to be taken over by some other concept of sovereignty. And the only sovereign within the realm covered by the Constitution was the *government elected by the people*. Hence, since the opposite "coöperates" in the definition of a dialectical term, and since the sovereignty or authority against which the rights were proclaimed had changed from that of an antipopular Crown to that of a popularly representative government, it would follow that the quality of the "rights" themselves would have to change. And such change of quality did take place, in that the rights became interpreted as rights of the people as *individuals* or *minorities* against a government representing the will of the people as a *collectivity* or *majority*.

Eventually, this interpretation assisted the rise of the great super-corporations, linked by financial ties and interlocking directorates. And these super-corporations gradually come to be considered as a new seat of authority, placed outside the

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ment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

It is from this "unending conversation" (the vision at the basis of Mead's work) that the materials of your drama arise.²⁷ Nor is this verbal action all there is to it. For all these words are grounded in what Malinowski would call "contexts of situation." And very important among these "contexts of situation" are the kind of factors considered by Bentham, Marx, and Veblen, the material interests (of private or class structure) that you symbolically defend or

direct control of parliamentary election. And as this kind of business sovereignty becomes recognized as *bona fide* sovereignty, you begin to see a new change taking place in the "dialectical" concept of Constitutional rights. For theorists begin now to think of these rights as assertions against the encroachments of the super-corporations (the New Crown). That is: the tendency is to think once more of the rights as claimed by the people as a *majority* against the rule of the super-corporations as a sovereign minority.

However, the statement that a term is "dialectical," in that it derives its meaning from an opposite term, and that the opposite term may be different at different historical periods, does not at all imply that such terms are "meaningless." All we need to do is to decide what they are *against* at a given period (in brief, to recognize that the Constitution cannot be interpreted as a positive document, but must continually be treated as an *act in a scene outside it*, hence to recognize that we must always consider "the Constitution *beneath* the Constitution," or "the Constitution *above* the Constitution," or "The Constitution around the Constitution," which may as you prefer be higher law, divine law, the laws of biology, or of big business, or of little business, etc.). Much of the cruder linguistic analysis done by the debunko-semanticist school (worst offender: Stuart Chase) involves the simple fallacy of failing to note the distinction between positive and dialectical terms, whereby, in applying to *dialectical* terms the instruments of analysis proper to *positive* terms, they can persuade themselves that the terms are meaningless.

²⁷ Also, it is in this "unending conversation" that the assertions of any given philosopher are grounded. *Strategically*, he may present his work as departing from some "rock-bottom fact" (he starts, for instance: "I look at this table. I perceive it to have. . . ." etc.). Actually, the very selection of his "rock-bottom fact" derives its true grounding from the current state of the conversation, and assumes quite a different place in the "hierarchy of facts" when the locus of discussion has shifted.

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symbolically appropriate or symbolically align yourself with in the course of making your own assertions. These interests do not "cause" your discussion; its "cause" is in the genius of man himself as *homo loquax*. But they greatly affect the *idiom* in which you speak, and so the idiom by which you think. Or, if you would situate the genius of man in a *moral* aptitude, we could say that this moral aptitude is universally present in all men, to varying degrees, but that it must express itself through a medium, and this medium is in turn grounded in material structures. In different property structures, the moral aptitude has a correspondingly different idiom through which to speak.

By the incorporation of these social idioms we build ourselves, our "personalities," i. e., our *rôles* (which brings us again back into the matter of the drama). The movie version of Shaw's *Pygmalion* shows us the process in an almost terrifyingly simplified form, as we observe his heroine building herself a character synthetically, by mastering the insignia, the linguistic and manneristic labels of the class among whom she would, by this accomplishment, symbolically enroll herself (with the promise that this symbolic enrollment would culminate in objective, material fulfillment). In its simplicity, the play comes close to heresy, as might be revealed by matching it with a counter-heresy: Joyce's individualistic, absolutist, "dictatorial" establishment of a language from within. Shaw's heroine, in making herself over by artificially acquiring an etiquette of speech and manners, is "internalizing the external" (the term is Mead's). But Joyce is "externalizing the internal."

I call both of these "heresies" because I do not take a heresy to be a flat opposition to an orthodoxy (except as so made to appear under the "dialectical pressure" arising from

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the fact that the two philosophies may become insignia of opposed material forces); I take a heresy rather to be the isolation of one strand in an orthodoxy, and its following-through-with-rational-efficiency to the point where "logical conclusion" cannot be distinguished from "*reductio ad absurdum*." An "orthodox" statement here would require us to consider complementary movements: both an internalizing of the external and an externalizing of the internal. Heresies tend to present themselves as arguments rather than as dictionaries. An argument must ideally be consistent, and tactically must at least have the *appearance* of consistency. But a dictionary need not aim at consistency: it can quite comfortably locate a mean by terms signaling contradictory extremes.²⁸

²⁸ An ideal philosophy, from this point of view, would seek to satisfy the requirements of a perfect dictionary. It would be a calculus (matured by constant reference to the "collective revelation" that is got by a social *body* of thought) for charting the nature of events and for clarifying all important relationships. As it works out in practice, however, a philosophy is developed partially in *opposition to other philosophies*, so that tactics of refutation are involved, thus tending to give the philosopher's calculus the stylistic form of a lawyer's plea.

The connection between philosophy and law (moral and political) likewise contributes to the "lawyer's brief" strategy of presentation. The philosopher thus is often led to attempt "proving" his philosophy by proving its "justice" in the abstract, whereas the only "proof" of a philosophy, considered as a calculus, resides in showing, by concrete application, the scope, complexity, and accuracy of its coordinates for charting the nature of events. Thus, the name for "house" would not be primarily tested for "consistency" with the names for "tree" or "money." One would reveal the value of the names by revealing their correspondence with some important thing, function, or relationship. This is what we mean by saying that a philosophy, as a "chart," is quite at home in contradictions.

I recall a man, for instance, of "heretical" cast, who came to me with a sorrow of this sort: "How can you ever have a belief in human rationality," he complained, "when you see things like this?" And he showed me a news clipping about a truck driver who had received a prize for driving his truck the maximum distance without an accident. When asked how he did it, the truck driver answered: "I had two rules: Give as much of the road as you can, and take as much as you can." I saw in this no grounds to despair of human reason; on the contrary, I thought that the prize winner had been a very moral truck driver, and I was glad to read that, for once at least, such great virtue had been rewarded. This was true Aristotelian truck driving, if I ever saw it; and whatever else one may say against Aristotle, I never heard him called "irrational."

What, in fact, is "rationality" but the desire for an *accurate chart for naming*

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The broad outlines of our position might be codified thus:

(1) We have the drama and the scene of the drama. The drama is enacted against a background.

(2) The description of the scene is the rôle of the physical sciences; the description of the drama is the rôle of the social sciences.

(3) The physical sciences are a calculus of events; the social sciences are a calculus of acts. And human affairs being dramatic, the discussion of human affairs becomes dramatic criticism, with more to be learned from a study of tropes than from a study of tropisms.

(4) Criticism, in accordance with its methodological ideal, should attempt to develop rules of thumb that can be adopted and adapted (thereby giving it the maximum possibility of development via the "collective revelation," a development from first approximation to closer approximation, as against the tendency, particularly in impressionistic criticism and its many scientific variants that do not go by this name, to be forever "starting from scratch").

(5) The error of the social sciences has usually resided in the attempt to appropriate the scenic calculus for a charting of the act.

(6) However, there is an interaction between scene and

what is going on? Isn't this what Spinoza had in mind, when calling for a philosophy whose structure would parallel the structure of reality? We thus need not despair of human rationality, even in eruptive days like ours. I am sure that even the most arbitrary of Nazis can be shown to possess it; for no matter how inadequate his chart of meaning may be, as developed under the deprivations of the quietus and oversimplifying dialectical pressure, he at least *wants* it to tell him accurately *what is going on* in his world and in the world at large.

Spinoza perfected an especially inventive strategy, by this stress upon the "adequate idea" as the ideal of a chart, for uniting free will and determinism, with rationality as the bridge. For if one's meanings are correct, he will choose the wiser of courses; in this he will be "rational"; as a rational man, he will "want" to choose this wiser course; and as a rational man he will "*have to want*" to choose this wiser course.

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rôle. Hence, dramatic criticism takes us into areas that involve the act as "response" to the scene. Also, although there may theoretically be a common scenic background for all men when considered as a collectivity, the acts of other persons become part of the scenic background for any individual person's act.

(7) Dramatic criticism, in the idiom of theology, considered the individual's act with relation to God as a personal background. Pantheism proclaimed the impersonality of this divine rôle. I. e., whereas theology treated the scenic function of Nature as a "representative" of God, pantheism made the natural background identical with God. It narrowed the circumference of the context in which the act would be located. Naturalism pure and simple sought to eliminate the rôle of divine participation completely, though often with theological vestiges, as with the "God-function" implicit in the idea of "progressive evolution," where God now took on a "historicist" rôle. History, however, deals with "events," hence the increasing tendency in the social sciences to turn from a calculus of the act to a "pure" calculus of the event. Hence, in the end, the ideal of stimulus-response psychology.

(8) Whatever may be the character of existence in the physical realm, this realm functions but as scenic background when considered from the standpoint of the human realm. I. e., it functions as "lifeless," as mere "property" for the drama. And an ideal calculus for charting this physical realm must treat it as lifeless (in the idiom of mechanistic determinism). But to adopt such a calculus for the charting of life is to chart by a "planned incongruity" (i. e., a treatment of something in terms of what it is *not*).

(9) The ideal calculus of dramatic criticism would re-

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quire, not an incongruity, but an inconsistency. I. e., it would be required to employ the coördinates of *both* determinism *and* free will.

(10) Being, like biology, in an indeterminate realm between vital assertions and lifeless properties, the realm of the dramatic (hence of dramatic criticism) is neither physicalist nor anti-physicalist, but physicalist-plus.

Narrowing our discussion from consideration of the social drama in general to matters of poetry in particular, we may note that the distinction between the "internalizing of the external" and the "externalizing of the internal" involves two different functions of imagery: imagery as confessional and imagery as incantatory, the two elements that John Crowe Ransom has isolated from Aristotle's *Poetics* in his chapters on "The Cathartic Principle" and "The Mimetic Principle." Imagery, as confessional, contains in itself a kind of "personal irresponsibility," as we may even relieve ourselves of private burdens by befouling the public medium. If our unburdening attains an audience, it has been "socialized" by the act of reception. In its public reception, even the most "excremental" of poetry becomes "exonerated" (hence the extreme anguish of a poet who, writing "with maximum efficiency" under such an aesthetic, does not attain absolution by the suffrage of customers).

But we must consider also the "incantatory" factor in imagery: its function as a device for inviting us to "make ourselves over in the image of the imagery." Seen from this point of view, a thoroughly "confessional" art may enact a kind of "individual salvation at the expense of the group." Quite as the development of the "enlightenment" in the economic sphere was from a collective to an individual emphasis (with "private enterprise" as the benign phase of

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an attitude which has its malign counterpart in the philosophy of "*sauve qui peut*—and the devil take the hindmost"; so have mass rituals tended to be replaced by individualist revisions, with many discriminations that adjust them with special accuracy to the particular needs of their inventor and "signer"; while this mode in turn attains its logical conclusion or reduction to absurdity in poetry having the maximum degree of confessional efficiency, a kind of literary metabolistic process that may satisfy the vital needs of the poet well enough, but through poetic passages that leave offal in their train. Such puns seem to have been consciously exploited by Joyce when he is discussing his *ars poetica* in *Finnegans Wake*, hence should be considered by any reader looking for the work's motivations (i. e., the center about which its structure revolves, or the law of its development). Freud's "cloacal theory" would offer the simplest explanation as to the ways in which the sexually private and the excrementally private may become psychologically merged, so that this theme could be treated as substantial with the theme of incest previously mentioned.

For if we test the efficient confessional (as perhaps best revealed in a writer like Faulkner) from the standpoint of the incantatory (from the standpoint of its exhortation to "come on" and make ourselves over in the image of its imagery), we quickly realize its sinister function, from the standpoint of over-all social necessities. By the "incantatory" test, a sadistic poetry, when reinforced by the imaginative resources of genius, seems to be a perfect match, in the aesthetic sphere, to the "incantatory" nature of our mounting armament in the practical or political sphere, or the efficiency of newspaper headlines (got by the formation and training of worldwide organizations devoted to the culling of calamities,