1955

Gamalier Bradford as literary critic, with particular reference to Elizabethan drama.

Capon, Reginald Lawrence
Boston University

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/11256
Boston University
Dissertation

CAMALIEL BRADFORD AS LITERARY CRITIC,
WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

by

Reginald Lawrence Capon
(B.S. in Ed., Boston University, 1933; A.M., Boston University, 1936)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
1955
Approved

by

First Reader . ....... [Signature]
Professor of English

Second Reader . ....... [Signature]
Professor of English
Camaliel Bradford as Literary Critic, with Particular Reference to Elizabethan Drama

I. The shaping of Bradford's critical mind
   A. The general formative background
      1. Concerning the economic, social, and literary phases
      2. Concerning the man
         a. Life to 1700
         b. Chief factors of heredity and home environment
         c. Bradford's character
   B. The literary formative background
      1. Reading and study
         a. Early encouragement from family and friends
         b. Range
         c. Methods
         d. Important critics in the early reading
      2. The literary life
         a. Associations and activities
         b. Non-critical writing
         c. Critical writing
      3. A note on influences

II. Bradford's theory of literary criticism
   A. Esthetic theory
      1. Early stimuli
         a. Literature
         b. Nature
         c. Music
         d. Sculpture and painting
      2. The nature of beauty
      3. The significance of beauty
         a. Beauty and religion
         b. Beauty and morality
         c. Beauty as vocation
         d. Beauty and education
         e. Beauty as release
B. Literary theory
   1. Literature in general
      a. The nature of literature
      b. The significance of literature
   2. Literary modes: from a humanistic base
      a. Classicism
      b. Romanticism
      c. Realism
   3. Literary types
      a. Poetry
      b. Fiction
      c. Drama
      d. Biography and psychography
   4. The creative mind
      a. Genius
      b. Talent
   5. Stylistics
      a. Language, words and phrases, translation
      b. Style

C. Critical theory
   1. General approach
   2. Criticism from a modal point of view: three French schools
   3. Criticism for the author
   4. Criticism for the reader

III. Bradford’s practice of criticism
   A. Elizabethan drama
      1. Elizabethan drama in general
         a. Chief qualities
         b. Defects
      2. Shakespeare the dramatist
         a. General approach
         b. Chief qualities of the plays
         c. Types and specific plays
      3. Elizabethan dramatists other than Shakespeare
         a. Kyd
         b. Chapman
         c. Marlowe
         d. Dekker
         e. Middleton
         f. Jonson
         g. Thomas Heywood
h. Marston
i. Webster
j. Beaumont and Fletcher
k. John Fletcher
l. Beaumont
m. Massinger
n. Ford
c. Shirley

B. Other literature
1. Elizabethan non-dramatic literature
   a. Prose in general
   b. Poetry in general
   c. Specific writers
      (1) Spenser
      (2) Donne
      (3) Dr. Diverent
      (4) Milton

2. Restoration literature: Papys
3. English Romantic literature
   a. Scott
   b. Lamb
   c. Byron
   d. Shelley
   e. Keats

4. Victorian literature
   a. Carlyle
   b. Macaulay
   c. Browning
   d. Trollope
   e. Arnold
   f. Pater

5. American literature
   a. General attitude
   b. Specific writers
      (1) Emerson
      (2) Hawthorne
      (3) Poe
      (4) Whitman
      (5) Emily Dickinson
      (6) Mark Twain
      (7) Henry James
      (8) Robinson
      (9) Frost

6. Classical and European literature

IV. An evaluation of Bradford as literary critic
INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of the late Professor Thomas R. Mather, the English faculty of the Boston University Graduate School began a policy of encouraging studies of the literary critical work of authors not known primarily as critics. In accordance with this policy, I have chosen for the subject of my dissertation the literary critical writings of Gamaliel Bradford, the Wellesley biographer.

My chief initial impulse was an afternoon with the distinguished critic Van Wyck Brooks, who had edited selections from Bradford's Journal and letters and who agreed that Bradford's critical work deserved consideration. Thereupon Mrs. Bradford graciously offered her help with interviews and permission to examine the Bradford material now in the Houghton Library of Harvard University. For critical source material, this collection has, apart from the thirty-odd biographical and psychographical volumes, all the available Journal and letters, the long and short versions of the unpublished Autobiography, and miscellaneous essays, editorials, and reviews.

Originally driven to the practice by a severe case of writer's cramp, Bradford, for the greater part of his active literary years, did most of his writing on the typewriter. Also in the researcher's favor were Bradford's decision in 1918 to keep carbon copies of all his letters (addressed to some five thousand correspondents), and to have them bound in groups of two hundred sheets and his resolve to
copy over on the typewriter and also have bound the parts of the
Journal which he had kept, with one fifteen-year gap and a few short-
er lapses, from the year 1879. The result was about eighty volumes
of largely unpublished material especially valuable for an appraisal
of Bradford the critic.

If the critical parts of Bradford’s writing are usually incident-
al, scattered, and fragmentary, their range—Bradford read in some
half dozen ancient and modern languages—and extent are still great
enough to pose a problem for their satisfactory treatment within a
reasonable space. A solution was suggested by the fact that, though
Bradford confessed to being neither a scholar nor a professional crit-
ic, he took an almost scholarly and professional interest in the Eliz-
abethan drama. His writing in this field thus seemed a natural focal
point for the thesis. The general objectives then became the presen-
tation, analysis, and evaluation of Bradford’s esthetic, literary, and
critical theory and of a representative portion of his critical prac-
tice.

Familiarity with Bradford’s applied criticism suggested limitat-
tions in two phases which would not impair the total picture of Brad-
ford the critic. Thus in the area of Bradford’s book reviews I have
confined myself to those in the papers at Harvard, particularly the
ones contained in the bound volumes called Editorials and Reviews.
Presumably, they are the specimens Bradford felt were most worth saving.

The second limitation in my treatment of Bradford's applied criticism concerns his comments on writers in foreign languages. First, I did not feel qualified to evaluate such criticism. Second, I found that beyond the essay on Leopardi and those on certain French critics Bradford's writing here is more descriptive and appreciative than truly critical. Thus I have included at the end of the sections on Bradford's applied criticism of English and American literature merely a brief summary of his critical interests in foreign literature. In both his theory and his applied criticism of writers in English, however, Bradford uses illuminating references to writers of other languages. Quite adequately representative of Bradford's critical practice, I believe, is the full treatment of the Elizabethan drama and the inclusion of the more important opinions of other English writers and periods and of certain American writers.

The rather full study in my thesis of the factors that went into the making of Bradford the critic is drawn chiefly from the exhaustive self-psychography that is found in the Autobiography and the Journal. Since much of the source material is not readily available for scholars and since I believe (in the Sainte-Beuvian manner) that, for a problem involving the subtleties of critical thought, more rather than less material should be offered, I have quoted freely from Bradford's
writings.

To the best of my knowledge, up to this time there has not been a single study, long or short, of Bradford as critic. Of the two Master's theses written about Bradford, one, Gemaliel Bradford: Psychograph, by Clara Frances Gadbery, puts its chief emphasis on Bradford's life rather than on a critical evaluation of his work, and the other, Gemaliel Bradford: A Literary Minstrel, by Samuel Fishlyn, is an attempt to trace Bradford's "impulse, concept, method, and growth in biography." Understandably, neither thesis gives attention to Bradford the critic. Miss Gadbery's study was helpful in corroborating my theory of Bradford's internal conflict; Fishlyn's analysis of Bradford's psychographical technique aided my presentation of Bradford's biographical theory.

For the rest, in other writers' comments I have found only a few passing remarks on Bradford's criticism, particularly those by Van Wyck Brooks and Herbert Gorman noted at the beginning of Part IV. In 1906 Will D. Howe, who conducted "The Reader's Study" department of The Reader magazine, introduced Bradford's article called "Mid-Nineteenth Century Realism" with the note that its author was a distinguished essayist, one of the best critics of the dramatic literature of the Elizabethan Age and well read in the fiction of the nineteenth century. The obituary notice in the New York Times for April 12, 1940.

1. p. ix.
2. P. iii.
3. VIII(Sept.), 450.
1932, called Bradford "a recognized scholar on Shakespearean subjects." John Chamberlain's review of *Biography and the Human Heart* is somewhat aware of Bradford the critic. Chamberlain notes that concerning Longfellow Bradford employs his well-known "open-mindedness" and "gentleness" with devastating effect when, without a "smart" remark or a "deprecatory phrase" in twenty-five pages, the Wellesley writer follows a picture of the poet's sweetness of character with the statement that Longfellow's poetry decidedly lacks quality. Again, Mr. Chamberlain observes that Whitman is the one genius in the book to receive a complete psychograph but that "Whitman's genius no more disturbs the serenity of Mr. Bradford's vision, nor the efficacy of the method, than does the near mediocrity of Longfellow." Noting that the rest of the people discussed in the book are mediocre, Chamberlain adds, "As for Jones Very, Mr. Bradford makes out a very minor case for a very minor poet."

Though Bradford felt that psychography should have nothing to do with literary criticism, he admitted that his own interest in psychography had developed as a by-product of his criticism, and his portraits, especially the ones written before he had perfected his psychographic technique, have passages of unmistakable criticism—which, of course, I have used freely. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that the reviews of his volumes of psychographs are so sparing in their refs. 1. "Samuel Bradford and the Art of Biography," *MIT Book Review*, Nov. 6, 1932, p. 5.
erences to this criticism. One can only suggest that the reviewers, as well as the public, could not dissociate Bradford from psychography.

The following pages will testify that, despite my admiration and affection for Bradford the man, I have not, as happens to so many in the process of concentrated study, become a blind admirer of Bradford the artist and the critic. It is evident to me that, even if the time were ripe for one of the "revivals" so characteristic of our day, such a movement could not be fairly hastened by the claim that Bradford is a great critic. I do believe, however, that his criticism will repay more attention, that it has certain qualities which have been slighted in recent critical writing—qualities which need the proper emphasis if American criticism is to experience healthy growth. As one of those who believe that criticism is a vital part of a nation's literature and have been watching with particular interest the development of our native criticism, I have the temerity to hope that such a study as this of Bradford's critical work may have a real if modest part in enlarging our understanding of the past and in enriching our vision for the future of American criticism.

1. The recent Achievement of American Criticism (1951), the first book to offer "representative selections of American literary criticism from its beginnings up to and including contemporary criticism," (p. v), makes no use of Bradford's critical writing. Clarence A. Brown, the editor of this volume, doubtless had his problems of selections; it seems to me, however, that a case could be made for the inclusion of Bradford's essay on Leopardi and of his essays on Donne and on Beaumont and Fletcher as representative of the cosmopolitan and Elizabethan interests of certain American critics around the turn of the century.
Concerning The Form of the Footnotes

An asterisk precedes the titles of the Bradford works, most of them unpublished, which I have used in manuscript form.

The following abbreviations designate the longer Bradford works most commonly used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*ed.</td>
<td>Autobiography (longer version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>American Portraits, 1875-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Bare Souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH</td>
<td>Biography and the Human Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*EJ</td>
<td>Early Journal, 1879-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ER, (volume)</td>
<td>Editorials and Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW</td>
<td>Elizabethan Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*JJ</td>
<td>Italian Journal, 1896-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*J, (year)</td>
<td>Journal volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*L, (volume)</td>
<td>Letter volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A Naturalist of Souls (1926 ed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>Portraits of American Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Portraits and Personalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>Portraits of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Saints and Sinners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following abbreviations designate the magazines most commonly used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Atlantic Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLN</td>
<td>Modern Language Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAR</td>
<td>North American Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYT Book Rev</td>
<td>New York Times Book Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYT Mag.</td>
<td>New York Times Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-L</td>
<td>Poet-Lore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMLA</td>
<td>Publications of the Modern Language Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQ</td>
<td>South Atlantic Quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART I
THE SHAPING OF BRADFORD'S CRITICAL MIND

Chapter I

The General Formative Background

1. Concerning the Economic, Social, and Literary Phases

Howard Mumford Jones asserts that "the notion that the New England way of life has decayed is perhaps the liveliest tradition in the literary history of three centuries." This tradition, of course, was especially lively in the 1870's and 1890's, when Gamaliel Bradford was growing up. Of the various patterns historians have found in those chaotic years, Bradford's early writings show that he was most aware of the decay of the genteel tradition. My succeeding pages will reveal, I believe, that, despite the protective screen against the New England environment set up by his introspective nature, his precarious health, and his financial security, and despite his youthful revolt against the proper New Englanders, in many ways Bradford himself was one of them.

If Bradford's contacts with the business world were almost wholly indirect, his conflict with his father's practical interests and phil-

1. Ideas in America, p. 211.
2. See especially the early Journal, the early letters, and the Autobiography. (Since there have been only a few short articles on Bradford's life, my introductory pages lean heavily upon the longer of the two versions of the unpublished Autobiography.)
3. In his late teens Bradford spent two or three hours a morning as a sort of messenger boy in his father's office (ibid., p. 211).
 osophy and his general sense of a stifling Philistine atmosphere urged upon him the truth of the assumption that the "literary fellows" had lost their hold with the war and that the American scene had been taken over by the business men, who, in Boston, were led by converted Brahmins. The senior Bradford himself, finding little hope in the sea, the soil, or scholarship, had turned to the world of money manipulation. Thus for the son it was no accident that his father never had "the slightest interest in Emerson's writings or views or anything connected with him." Things, surely, were in the saddle.

Bradford the youth was a critic of the brash new business world; the fact did not mean, however, that Bradford the man was to incorporate into his literary criticism the kinds of social and economic emphases that flourished in the 1930's. This might have been foreseen, indeed, in the young Bradford's neglect of the most acute social criticism of the later nineteenth century; that, for instance, by Godkin and the Nation, the Radical Club, Brooks and Henry Adams, and Wendell Phillips. Never, I believe, do these names appear with such connotation in the early Bradford pages. In these matters, certainly, Bradford was always

1. See, for example, A. E., p. 64.
4. Bradford never wrote a Babbitt, but his novels The Private Tutor (1904) and Between Two Masters (1905), as well as his long poem, A Prophet of Joy (1920), all contain general if comparatively mild satire on the American business man.
essentially a conservative.

If the Brahmins still held the New England purse strings, they were also masters of the social scene. Though Bradford himself was not in the strict sense a Brahmin, his connections gave him access to Boston, Cambridge, and Concord circles. Perhaps partly because of his shyness and partly because he tended to link the social scene with contemporary economic, artistic, and religious decay, young Bradford took few advantages of such opportunities. But, while he was consciously resisting the genteel spirit, there is reason to suspect that it was playing its part in moulding the writer and the critic.

Bradford, for example, chafed at the New England "respectability," which he later described as "nothing but Puritanism with the spiritual starch washed out." But, as the next section will show, the pattern of his own life was well within the accepted limits of the term and to certain critics of the twentieth century Bradford was to seem respectable indeed with his unfailing good critical man-

1. The young man, it is true, had his own little touch of egalitarianism, but he seems to have let it die through a strong antidote of circumstance. (Pal. pp. 297-98.)
2. For example, in 1883 Bradford took to Matthew Arnold, then visiting in Cambridge, a letter of introduction from Dr. Holmes; a paternal aunt was the wife of a distinguished Harvard scholar; and the boy was linked with the Emersons not only by marriage but also by an uncle who had been intimate with the great Ralph Waldo.
ners and his avoidance of many raw spots in literature of the day. The early years seem to have implanted also a measure of the related genteel sense of caste, a sense which emerged later in the patronising tone of certain comments on Mark Twain and Whitman and in his lament for the old Boston, now "this pandemonium of Hebrew and Catholic Irish."

Less distinctly of the genteel tradition, but still in part an outcome of the regional background, was Bradford's attitude towards women. He grew up at a time when, particularly in New England, the Civil War and its aftermath had left thousands of "surplus" women and had begun the much-debated process of the feminization of society. Thus women were invading even the sacred domains of thought and literature. Bradford was not quite twenty when he observed that without feminine society he was never happy nor could he show his real self;

1. See, for example, the section on Bradford in Percy Boynton's Some Contemporary Americans (1924) and Granville Hicks' article "Insulated Litterateur" in the Nation (CXXVII (Sept. 27, 1933), 353-59.
2. Bradford was proud of his Plymouth ancestry (31, p. 11) and in awe of the Cabots and the Lowells (31, 1924-25, p. 75). One reason he preferred Wellesley to the Cambridge of his boyhood was that in Wellesley he felt himself the social leader. His father and aunt, he remembers, had inherited assurance as to their social position; he also recalls that he despised a Wellesley childhood friend because of the boy's lower social rank (31, pp. 155-56). Bradford's later journal includes a number of comments on the "vulgarity" of certain literary friends—in one such comment, for example, he criticises a well-known scholar (now dead) for being too "pushing" in his friendship. If Bradford's snobbishness was genuine, for the most part it had the gentle self-consciousness we find in the creator of the Snob Papers.
3. See, for instance, "Mark Twain" in AP, pp. 4-5, 16-17.
4. See, for instance, "Walt Whitman" in EHH, pp. 67-68.
7. J., ed. B., p. 34.
nevertheless, my reading of the whole Journal and all the letters convinces me that, despite his devotion to his wife, his considerate treatment of his women correspondents, and his natural courtesy towards the opposite sex, Bradford remained doubtful of woman's ability—even of her right—to take with men an equal part in society.

The literary effects of this trend in the society of his youth appear to have been paradoxical. Thus while it undoubtedly sharpened Bradford's psychological insight so that he was aided in his critical analysis and came to take a special pride in his psychographs of women, it seems also to have strengthened his traditional masculine prejudice against women as creative artists. An inhibition of taste is evident, for example, in the reserve of his criticism of Jane Austen, of Mrs.

1. In 1929 M. Dorothy Woodruff noted that Bradford in his psychographs seems a little surprised at the mental powers of some of his feminine subjects; she concluded that he had not quite lost his old New England prejudice concerning women (Camelot, Bradford: A Searcher for Souls, 74, XXVIII (Oct.), 27-28). Bradford reveals another reader with this suspicion when he writes to a well-known critic, "I am amused at your classing me as a woman-hater." (Le., ed. B., p. 349.) In the home environment, factors such as the aunt's indulgence in Bradford asceticism and the father's suggestion that marriage was a trap (La., p. 56) must have affected the young man's attitude. In early fits of despair over his struggle with Philistinism, Bradford felt the need for a male counselor (See, for example, ESL, pp. 79-80, 135). In 1920 Bradford wrote: "I can see no substantial advantage for men, women, or children, to be derived from the extension of suffrage to women..." (Le., ed. B., p. 42.) In the same vein came a late editorial called "Women and Politics," which ends thus: "From all women who talk politics—and are there any others?—Good Lord deliver us." (WE, V, 56.)

2. He wrote in 1931, "I have always felt that my portraits of women were my best work and rather prided myself on my intimate sympathy with the feminine world..." (Le., ed. B., p. 349.)

3. See, for example, NW, pp. 48, 66.
Browning, and even of Emily Dickinson, and in his suspicion that women writers lack the creative impulse and "the real comic spirit," and in his declaration that "Every woman is eternally busy with the one great end of her existence .... to get a husband." And, of course, the critic who does not fully appreciate the contributions of women to recent literature is obviously handicapped in his general estimates of the fiction and the poetry written since 1900.

Another phase of the New England scene which had its influence upon Bradford the writer was religion. As for his father, decaying Unitarianism was one of Bradford's pet phobias, and the Episcopalianism in which Bradford felt his aunt smothered herself, was little better. The significance here for Bradford the critic lies in the fact that the metaphysical wrestlings of the early years led directly to his breakdown of the 1890's, an experience which turned him against all philosophical systems and reasoning and thereby, as my later pages will show, greatly thinned his critical thinking.

When Bradford wrote in 1930 that for the preceding fifty years literature in Boston "with a few brilliant exceptions, is pitiable in

1. See, for example, *J.* ed. B., p. 51.
2. Bradford was willing to praise her highly in public (as in PAY) but to admit in private that he had stopped reading her (M., XIV, 45).
6. See, for example, *S.I.,* pp. 43-44, 151, and *A.,* pp. 166-69.
7. *A.,* pp. 43-44.
its deterioration from the period preceding," he was not expressing merely the "old-times-were-better" philosophy of age; he had felt much the same way in his earlier years. As far back as 1863 he had written of Hawthorne and Emerson as "the two men who, if any, will stand out to posterity above the hopeless and cumbersome ruin of American literature." Yet Hawthorne seems to have attracted chiefly because of real or imagined personal similarities, and young Bradford was soon not far from Lewisohn's estimate of Emerson and Thoreau: the Concord writers, being inaccessible to love and friendship and thus to "passion and creation," became addicted to "nature and metaphysics and morals"—in short, were lacking in humanity. Meanwhile, to Bradford, Longfellow was a nineteenth-century Eddie Guest; Lowell was even less important than Longfellow; and, significantly enough, Holmes, as we have seen, was useful mainly as a source of introduction to Arnold. It was hardly surprising, then, that Bradford, in common with other young literary folk, should look eagerly across the Atlantic.

This interest in the rich and varied European literature of the day, however, did not prove as fruitful as one would expect. For many it was a mere escapist technique, a step backward to the days before Emerson's declaration of literary independence. For others—and I believe that Bradford belongs to this group—it was, as Howard Mumford

1. *J.,* XLI, 122.
Jones suggests about a later period, perhaps a too easy acceptance of powerful European influences without the adjustment of these forces to the American tradition of literature's function in the republic as it had revealed itself, for example, in the work of the Connecticut Wits, Emerson, and Whitman.

In fairness one must remember that the genteel writers themselves felt decay in the air. Wrote Morton to Carlyle,

Longfellow was complaining the other day of the decline in the interest in literature and in the taste for it, nor was he mistaken—this generation is given over to the making and spending of money, and is losing the capacity of thought. But these head-shakers, unaware that a vital new school of writing had already begun with Whitman and Mark Twain, sought refuge in scholarly intimacy with Dante, Chaucer, Cervantes, and Shakespeare.

It may be that here began what Lewisohn calls

the crucial and strange tragedy of the creative artist in America—his almost if happily not quite universal inability to develop —his apparent petrifaction at a certain point.

It seems clear now that many a gifted youth of Bradford's generation felt his creative growth checked as he hunted feverishly in the stagnant waters of gentility or in the flood waters of commercialism, with their drifting masses of uprooted ideas and ideals, for the rich soil of vital faith.

1. Ideas in America, p. 177. For the modern period Jones is thinking especially of realism and naturalism. For the late nineteenth century there are pertinent implications in Jones' reminder that "European romanticism entered the country only through the gates of Protestant morality." (Ibid., p. 135)


4. Expression in America, p. 505.
But if the circumstances of Bradford's early life and the emphases of his first writing suggest that for young Bradford the only pattern of New England living was the decay of the genteel tradition in a crudely materialistic setting, Allen Nevins, from the vantage point of the 1920's, concluded that despite passing maladies, despite grave scandals, the life of Americans at this period [1865-78] was fundamentally wholesome, progressive and fruitful. Its chief qualities were less of quality than of tone, less of structure than of finish.  

The era, he continues, which could produce Scribner's and The Nation, Life on the Mississippi and Old Creole Days, Edwin Booth in Hamlet and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was an epoch full of healthy and irrepressible growth in every cultural field.  

If Nevins is right—and I believe that recent scholarly study of the period has tended to confirm his findings—the very fact of Bradford's revolt, the high morality and the spiritual optimism of his early years, for example, were not as divorced from American life as he and other young dissenters liked to think.

Nevins was writing from a study of most if not all of the evidence which is available concerning the sixties and seventies. In contrast, the younger generation of any era is always short on contemporary evidence and, characteristically, especially in hectic periods like that which followed the Civil War, misinterprets the evidence.

2. Ibid., p. 263.
3. As shown, for example, in such late re-estimates as The Reinterpretation of Victorian Literature, ed. Joseph E. Baker (1950), and Clarence N. Decker, The Victorian Conscience (1952).
it has. One can understand why the putrid waters of gentility and the
ebolisterous tide of materialism hid from earnest young New England
seekers after truth and beauty what Nevins calls the "powerful and prom-
ing currents flowing beneath the surface of the life of the new
nation." At few times in history, indeed, have there been such con-
trasts between the surface and the depth lives of a people. Many older
and wiser heads found these contrasts deceptive.

2. Concerning Bradford the Man

In attempting to trace the general formative influences upon
Bradford the critic, some consideration must be given to Bradford the
man—after all, the critic is made from the man. The qualities of a
critic who has done criticism worthy of the name are also the qualities
of the man. Thus, after a summary of the basic facts in Bradford's
life up to 1900, I shall point out what seem to me the salient, non-
literary, shaping factors in Bradford's heredity and immediate environ-
ment and consider briefly the character they helped to form.

Life to 1900. Camaliel Bradford VI, a direct descendant of the old
Plymouth governor, was born on October 9, 1863, in an unpretentious
house at Bordoin and Allston Streets, in the Beacon Hill section of
Boston. Three years later the boy's mother, at the age of twenty-nine,
died of tuberculosis, and his Aunt Sarah Bradford came to take care of
1. The Emergence of Modern America, p. 263.
her brother and his two small sons. In the spring of 1867, on
what is now the Boston-Worcester Turnpike (Route 9), just west of the
overpass at Wellesley Hills (then called Grantville and a part of West
Needham), Bradford's father bought a small farmhouse which had been
advertised in the Transcript. The family spent the next few years in
Wellesley Hills, Boston, and to a lesser extent, Cambridge, with visits
to Lake Placid and various New England resorts and a few winters in
Washington, D. C.

Just before his eighth birthday, Bradford began the six or seven
years of public schooling which made up the greater part of his formal
education. In 1880 a bad cold and an alarming cough sent him to Europe
for two years. When the boy returned, his anxious father and aunt,
feeling that they should keep him out of the public schools, engaged as
his tutor, Marshall Perrin, later Superintendent of the Wellesley
Schools and Professor of German at Boston University. In the spring of
1882 Bradford passed his Harvard entrance examinations with an average
grade of 99%. But the sudden return to group schooling so unnerved him
that, with the help of Perrin, Bradford persuaded his father to let him

1. Bradford's mother bore three children in five years. The oldest, a
girl, died at birth; the youngest, a boy, died of tuberculosis at the
age of nine (ibid., p. 3). Bradford notes that of his mother's perhaps
eight brothers and sisters, all died before they were thirty, most of
them in childhood, and that only one did not die of tuberculosis.
One can understand why his father and his Aunt Sarah felt that he was
destined for an early grave (ibid., pp. 7-8).
2. Bradford's Early Days in Wellesley (1928) shows the primitive con-
ditions of the village in the 1860's.
3. Interview with Mrs. Bradford, August 1952.
give up college. Whereupon he settled into his version of the literary life with considerable time devoted to reading and writing.

After a courtship strewn with sickness and family hesitation, on October 30, 1886, Bradford married Helen Ford, who had been for some years a member of the Wellesley group of young people. Thereafter, Helen Bradford displayed the tact, patience, courage, and loyalty which the wife of a literary man so particularly needs.

The young couple spent four months of 1887 in Europe, and, after the birth of their first baby in the summer of 1888, moved from the Cambridge residence of his father to what was to be their permanent home—the house, now considerably enlarged, in Wellesley Hills. This much-debated step meant an end to what had once been a lovers' semi-socialistic dream of a small house for plain living and high thinking. It meant instead years of irritating dependence upon Genial Bradford for help in running the Wellesley house. Thereafter, when his health permitted, besides various literary activities which will be described later, Bradford engaged in such civic work as membership on the town's school committee and the founding and administration of the social group called The Naugus Club.

Bradford's third and last trip to Europe came in 1896 as a successful attempt to cure his wife of a nervous breakdown caused largely by an attack of scarlet fever. When they returned in 1897, however, Brad-

1. The Autobiography gives as the specific cause Bradford's embarrassment in geometry class at having to draw on the board before his fellow students (p. 240).
2. *A*, p. 298.
Floyd himself was tired out and settled into a round of civic and literary activities that, in turn, brought him in the late 1890's to a nervous breakdown from which he recovered slowly.

**Chief Factors of Heredity and Home Environment.** From the available information, at least, the chief non-literary factors in the heredity and the immediate environment which shaped Bradfor the man and thus the critic seem to me to have been his paternal heredity (especially the Bradford strain), his economic security, his poor health, and certain points of friction with his aunt and with his father—factors which are obviously interrelated.

In the *Autobiography* Bradford devotes many pages to the general characteristics of the forebears about whom he knew the most, the paternal lines of Plymouth Bradfords and Boston Blakes, and to the specific characteristics of the two Bradford and Blake representatives who brought him up, his father and Aunt Sarah. He describes the Bradfords as shy, bookish, over-conscientious, self-centered introverts. Eager to grapple with tough intellectual problems, they cannot be satisfied with others' solutions, or even with their own. The resulting mental torments, strengthening the habitual Bradford self-distrust and inde-

---

1. Important events in the remainder of Bradford's life included the tragic death in 1910 of one of his two children, Gamaliel Bradford VII, the death also in 1910 of Gamaliel Bradford V, the achievement of national literary fame with the publication of *Lee the American* in 1912, the increasing recognition which led to his unofficial status in the late 1920's as "dean of American biographers," and his death in 1932. Bradford's daughter, Sarah, is now Mrs. Carroll Ross.
2. Since even those professional investigators, the psychologists, are disagreed as to the interpretation of the influences of heredity and environment, this section can be merely suggestive.
cision, make life generally uncomfortable. Such a character pattern appears clearly in the Autobiography, the early Journal, the more intimate letters, and the poems. Among the causes for the strength of the Plymouth strain were doubtless Bradford's admiration and preference for it and the fact that circumstances allowed him to indulge freely his Bradford instincts, real and imagined.

The Blakes of Boston, in contrast, are presented in the Autobiography as ambitious, proud, self-confident, luxury-loving, witty, sociable, and somewhat superficial extroverts. Bradford observes that they are not learned and then perhaps reveals his own Blake strain by continuing,

... the longer I go on in life, the less I esteem learning. It is so cheaply to be had by those who care for it, and of so little profit for the enjoyment of life to anyone." From the Blakes also Bradford perhaps inherited the social gifts which at times submerged his deeper instinct towards seclusion, an appreciation of the comfortable things of life, a distrust of visionary schemes, and his passion for recognition. Late in life Bradford confesses his suspicion that he had inherited from the Blakes, and also the maternal

2. *ibid.*, p. 11.
5. Though young Bradford wrote that he wanted all money destroyed and that if a man were a real artist he should wish to live simply and his friends should feel it an honor to support him, the theorizer confessed to a scald, copper-counting nature(*ibid.*, p. 62). And, in fact, he never took the step tradition suggests for unhappy young artists—his flights from home were purely mental and emotional.
Kinsmans, what he calls a "naturalistic, Renaissance instinct," which urged him to pour himself out in poetry and drama, but which had probably been blighted by the Bradford Puritanism. Whatever the determining causes, indeed, Bradford's literary ambitions, some of his writing, and the life he showed to other people suggest a man not in the Bradford pattern.

Since Gamaliel Bradford V had built up a comfortable fortune before he was forty, his frail son never had to punch a time clock—a solid fact with consequences that no amount of argument or rationalization can deny. The sixth Gamaliel, for example, could thus afford to wait fifty years for literary recognition, and in those years of waiting live chiefly in the printed page and thus miss direct contact with vital areas of contemporary life. There is, of course, the obvious reflection that if lack of economic security might have added depth to Bradford's writing, it might also have shortened both his life and his writing career.

The effects of Bradford's poor health were many. In a letter of 1927 Bradford puts a finger on a few of the more significant—and unfortunate—ones.

I think the chief factor in my life has been ill or very delicate health, since this has always shut me up by myself and perhaps made my thought and my work more introspective, not to say morbid, than it would otherwise have been. I had very little regular education, because of this health nuisance, and in fact am mainly self-educated, with the advantages and disadvantages that go with that process.

Bradford may have been honestly convinced in 1883 that Harvard was "a perfect nursery of Philistines," but one cannot help feeling that the young man would have profited greatly from four years in that lively nursery. For a man of Bradford's nature, self-education was perhaps a costly procedure. At an early age Bradford came to realize that he had neither back nor stomach for travel, and that absence from home meant for him chiefly a spiritual wrenching—thus he retreated further into his books. Again, Bradford's physical condition, as he suggests above, was undoubtedly a factor in his early and rather morbid attachment to writers like Sénancour, Aniel, and Leopardi.

Sarah Bradford left a teaching career she hated to replace her sister-in-law in the motherless home. Bradford remembered that though his aunt took on occasion a Blakean pleasure in society, though she enjoyed working at botany and sensitive water-color sketches, and though she loved poetry and the great English authors and possessed a real literary sense, her Bradford conscience gradually asserted itself to dissolve all such interest in her moral and spiritual life. Sacrifice, he declared, was her "diversion and ... delight. Religion, a utilitarian religion that "teemed with sorrows," became the chief preoccupation.

2. The genial, but eccentric and pedantic Perrin, for example, could hardly give Bradford the intellectual discipline he later realized he so badly needed. (Bradford himself calls his tutor a pedant [*ibid.*, p. 230], and the evidence of many of "Daddy" Perrin's former students at Boston University supports the idea of his eccentricity.)
5. *ibid.*, p. 36.
7. *ibid.*, p. 43.
of her soul. To her, Christ was not a source of spiritual rapture but
a practical saviour from sin. I believe that this woman influenced her
nephew especially on two vital points: his attitudes towards religion
and towards women. She seemed to feel, for example, that she had taken
over from her dead sister-in-law "the terrible responsibility of the
boy's soul." On the dreary New England Sundays she made church-going a
rigid and boring habit. Her behaviour in this phase of Bradford's
childhood was assuredly a factor in his agnosticism with all the inhibi-
tions that it later involved. In this phase, too, in contrast with
her brother's sturdy independence, Sarah hardly presented her sex in a
favorable light to the boy—he was thus an early and perhaps a crucial
determinant in his kindly but nonetheless real condescension towards
women.

Samuel Bradford V, the son of the first superintendent of the
Massachusetts General Hospital, became a partner in a banking firm at
the age of twenty-six. Friction with other firm members brought about
his voluntary retirement ten years later, though not before he had ac-
quired a capital of $175,000. Thereafter he devoted himself to real
estate and brokerage ventures, the treasurership of the Ames Sword
Company, a few directorships, and political reform.

A passage from the Journal of 1926 is of interest both for its

1. ibid., p. 45.
2. ibid., p. 166
3. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
4. Ibid., p. 55.
5. The sixth Samuel felt that the most practical result of this
activity was The Lesson of Popular Government, in his opinion well
conceived and executed but overlong for modern readers (ibid., p. 59).
self-portraiture and its picture of Gamaliel Bradford V:

In connection with the relation between heredity and environment, I have often thought of my resemblance and difference from my father. These matters are so complicated, and the questionnaire I received not long ago, asking whether I was more like my father or my mother, afforded me a great deal of amusement. Certain elements of my father are in me, I know. Everyone says that I look like him, which is quite inexplicable. I have his voice, which means, I suppose, that I have the intonations I caught from him. I have also his positive way of expressing myself, merely as a matter of expressing, which, with him, was the natural outlet of his impulsive and ardent temperament, but is with me, I think, rather a matter of habit. For I am so far from having his positive nature, I am so timid, so uncertain, so self-mistrustful, where he was so energetic, decided, and self-confident. My view of such matters has always been that there was an alternation of generations, not any mysterious affair of heredity, but simply a reaction in each generation from the excesses of that which preceded... My father was arbitrary and self-dependent to excess, and I have always gone to the extreme of submission and dependence on others. But lately I have reflected on the difference in our circumstances, in that my father lost his father and I my mother. If it had been the other way, would he have been more controlled and disciplined, and should I have been more inclined to push forward and control?

The elder Bradford's esthetic tastes, in the Blake manner, were formed on whims and impulses. He scorned the opinions of beggarly professors. Though he went to concerts all his life, he never cared to examine the elementary principles of music. In the same vein he was a quick, keen, and persistent thinker only on matters that interested him. But deep, speculative thought was a closed book to his impatient mind.

Bradford found his father to be a strange compound morally. Always generous to his son, he was continually preaching thrift and in-

2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid., pp. 61-62.
dependence, without seeming to realize how dependent the younger man was. The ideal of Ganaliel Bradford V was "to be able to have anything he wanted and not to want anything." This characteristic formula explains the man's lifetime lack of color and passion.

From the nature of his father's character and from the fact that the younger man was financially dependent upon Ganaliel Bradford V until the latter's death in 1910, it is not hard to understand that there were conflicts between the two—for example, the general clash of realistic with idealistic temperament. Essentially a phase of this conflict and more to our purpose was the difference in attitudes towards writing. To the younger Bradford this difference meant the building up of feelings of inferiority and frustration through the long years he worked at writing with few tangible results, years when he was forced to turn for support to a father who had little more than contempt for literature as a profession. It is worth noting that in those same years, Bradford's

1. "I., p. 61. The underlining is Bradford's.
2. J., ed. B., p. 10. At the age of twenty, in a feverish, lonely moment "on the course sand of Philistinism," Bradford cried, "My heart burns when I think of what I might have been with Emerson or Arnold as a father to help me or guide me, to lead me onward." An accompanying footnote, however, apologises for this filial revolt. (J., p. 135.)
3. Bradford's love and respect for his father—they were similar in more ways than he himself at first suspected—seem to have restrained him from a frank expression of this situation. One wishes that the Journal for the critical years in the 1890's were available. But I am convinced of the reality of this conflict by such evidence as the character sketch of Ganaliel Bradford V in the Autobiography (pp. 45-67), the note that between 1890 and 1910 the younger Bradford always had money trouble and went to a father who was generous but sometimes blunt in his reactions (A., p. 299), and the emphasis the available Journal, the Autobiography, and such an article as "The Fight for Glory" place upon Bradford's thirst for literary recognition and the humiliation of its delay in coming. The nervous breakdown in the late 1890's, I am
most successful writing—from the standpoint of editorial acceptance, at least—was criticism. The fact that, despite the trying family circumstances, this criticism brought him almost no monetary return, did not endear the form to him.

Bradford's Character. As I have hinted above, the future biographer of Bradford will find two men in his source material. For one, the man known especially through his psychography, his more public correspondence, and his editorials, add to the afore-mentioned Blake qualities a delight in the out-of-doors, a cheerful interest in everyday matters, a tolerant sympathy for his fellow men, and the suggestion that God is in his New England heaven and that life is a rewarding adventure. For the other, the man even his family did not recognize in parts of the Journal, the Autobiography, the intimate letters, and the poems, have in mind the very pattern Bradford ascribed to his Plymouth ancestors.

Quite aware of the two contrasting selves, Bradford made his own choice clear. Thus, for example, a poem of 1919 has this stanza:

When edifying youth,
My soul wise saws disburses;
But if you want the truth,
Just set me writing verses.\(^1\)

In the same year he wrote to a friend: "I have kept a journal off and on for a great many years ... but it is one of the inner life purely, since that is all I have." One of the themes of the Autobiography and confident, was due in part to the vocational disagreement with his father. Also I do not believe that it was mere coincidence which brought Bradford literary fame only two years after the death of his father had given him financial independence.

the Journal, indeed, is that the monotony of his outer life contrasted with the furious pace of his inner life and that this inner life, his true self, is recorded in his poetry and his intimate prose.

At the climax of the Autobiography Bradford asserts that, despite the possession of apparently every advantage but good health, he has had an unhappy life. In the characteristic Bradford manner he lays the blame chiefly on himself, on his own "inward weakness and impotence," his utter lack of thought control, of happy and fortunate mastery over the inner and spiritual world which is more the key to happiness than any arrangement or concatenation of outward circumstances that the kindliest divinity could devise.²

Though the autobiographer does not here label this "inward weakness," it is obviously the indecisive, introspective Bradford habit of thought, intensified by years of undisciplined isolation.

In contrast, Bradford was fond of jesting in private about his more public self. Thus in 1924 he wrote to an old friend about his editorials in The Youth's Companion:

Mines are never the political ones ... but rather those that deal with general subjects, little engaging sermonettes, in short, highly edifying, but not in the least like me, yet you may think

1. See, for example, A., pp. 184-95, 211, and J., ed. B., pp. 124-25, 261-62.
3. Doubtless the Bradford nature made him magnify both the uniqueness and the proportions of this "inward weakness." The hallucinations described in the Autobiography (see, for example, pp. 216-27 concerning such minor obsessions as the inability to turn pages in his reading and his perpetual tie adjusting, and pp. 361-62 for the urges to throw himself under express trains, to kill his wife, and to shout in public places) are, I believe, more universal than he suspected—for most men, however, the pressure on normal life contacts dissipates them before they take on threatening dimensions.
they are like me, very much.¹

And a letter of the next year has this passage following a discussion of the character of Aaron Burr:

But indeed the line between sincerity and hypocrisy is fearfully hard to draw in this complicated world.... Alas, I greatly fear that your somewhat uncompromising sincerity would too often set me down as a damnable prig. If you could read the bi-weekly editorials that I write for The Youth's Companion, you would abandon my acquaintance, I suspect. Yet I never say one word that I do not mean and feel. Only I feel and mean a great many things that I do not say there. Some day I cherish the idea of publishing a volume of my little completely cynical verses alternately with my Youth's Companion editorials. It will rather perplex some honest people, not to say shock them. I relish so much and so constantly the brief phrase of the French comedy: "Moi, je suis sceptique: je crois à tout."²

Here Bradford was possibly closer to the truth than he realized. For the real Bradford, I believe, was a compound of the two men seen in his writings, with the lines of the patterns sometimes confusingly intertwined. I should agree that he was at the core a Bradford of the type he himself describes. But the man who, for example, loved beauty passionately, who, at all costs, must write personal literature, who sought fame avidly, and who could not bring himself to forgo the comforts of social and economic security, was certainly not all Bradford.

I find it profitable, indeed, to link Samuel Bradford VI with the Elizabethan Age he loved so greatly, to see in the complexity of his character both a mingling of and a conflict between the two elements he himself contrasted in one of his Elizabethan essays: on the one hand, the Puritan with his "intellectual dignity," his "moral grandeur," and his "stern energy"; on the other hand, the Renaissance man with his

² Ibid., p. 220.
restless search for life and beauty. In the Bradford of the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, the original Eliz-
abethan elements had been changed and diluted by American Victoriam as
well as by Bradford and Blake idiosyncrasies—the Bradford Puritan
was now a hothouse variety and the Blake man of the Renaissance con-
fined his prodigal energies to the printed page and the inner life.
And, as must have happened for many people in the time of the first
Elizabeth, the Puritan and the Renaissance instincts fought in the soul
of Nathaniel Bradford, a struggle which is revealed in my succeeding
pages and which, I believe, accounts in considerable measure for the
nature of his work. Thus, for example, the Puritan instinct was a key
factor in closing such historical areas as the Restoration period and
most of the eighteenth century to Bradford's critical thinking, and the
Renaissance instinct fostered his eager delight in the Elizabethan
drama for which his Puritan forebears must have had only contempt and
suspicion.

2. The Puritan and the Renaissance man, of course, were in themselves
complex characters. Here I have in mind what I believe is a useful
oversimplification in thinking of the Puritan as one whose nature is
to repress the instincts of self-expression and pleasure, and of the
Renaissance man as one whose nature is to free and expand those in-

1-3
Chapter II

The Literary Formative Background

1. Reading and Study

When all is said and done, the chief factor in Bradford's devotion to literature was doubtless the printed page. As we have already seen, partly because of the circumstances of his childhood and partly because of his Bradford nature, he never felt wholly at ease in personal contacts. But through the screen of the printed page he communed freely and intimately with writers living and dead.

Early Encouragement from Family and Friends. Bradford's uncertain health often made his anxious father and aunt prescribe a solitary indoor life for which a young and restless imagination compensated by orgies of reading. Consciously and unconsciously, the elders in the house had other ways of abetting such indulgence. The father who never quite understood his son was content to let the boy glut himself in the Athenaeum. The aunt who never quite comprehended her nephew's questioning of creeds drove him closer to doubters in the printed page.

In more positive vein the fifth Casaliel gave his son a start in Latin and read to him solid fare which the boy never forgot: Shakespeare, Milton, Scott, Byron, Goldsmith, most of Dickens, some of Thackeray, much Macaulay, some of the American historians, and, strangely enough, many contemporary comedies and farces.

1.*L., XXXIX, 137. The senior Bradford also allowed his son to see his first play at the age of twelve and encouraged his interest in a home puppet theatre(*A., pp. 93, 164).
Meanwhile, Sarah Bradford, before her almost complete surrender to conscience, lent the influence of her love and taste for poetry and the great English authors. There is delightful irony in the record of her presenting to the young Gamaliel his first copy of Shelley.

Perhaps the only other relative who exerted a direct reading stimulus was George P. Bradford, a great uncle. Young Bradford saw much of him in the eighties and early nineties when the old gentleman, a former resident of Concord and intimate of Emerson, was a retired teacher, a "rare and beautiful and delightful soul," whom the nephew later portrayed in his novel The Private Tutor. The two shared many family ways. The senior Bradford, who had turned from preparation for the ministry to teaching, was hampered by the hereditary self-distrust and abnormal sensitiveness. Though he chafed at the restraints of society, he could hardly endure the solitary life. His instinct for truth was constantly at war with his mystic leanings. Thus he was drawn to the Roman-Catholic Church but could accept no religious system. When the nephew knew him best, George Bradford was a staunch disciple of Emerson and Sainte-Beuve, a lover of poetry and nature, and "beautifully tolerant of the words and deeds of others." We can understand the biographer's affection for this kindred spirit. Though young Bradford, as my later pages will

1. *J.,* 1923-24, p. 120.
2. *S.,* p. 15.
show, soon shook off—or thought he had shaken off—the Emersonian spell his uncle had helped to weave, he never could throw off the webs of beauty and tolerance spun through many a long walk and talk. Meanwhile, Uncle George’s influence was probably a chief factor in the beginning of the nephew’s lifelong devotion to Sainte-Beuve.

A striking contrast with the older Bradfords was the boy’s tutor, Marshall Perrin, who was strong, handsome, easygoing, and possessed of an enormous capacity for work, joy, and sociability. Bradford has almost nothing specific to say about Perrin’s influence; he does suggest, however, that the tutor became a sort of Winkelmamm to the boy’s Goethe. It was not that the pupil learned something, but that he became something. More to our purpose, Perrin evidently gave the youth a stimulating introduction to the classics and encouraged him to enter upon a literary career.

Close to the family circle in the eighties and early nineties was Captain Edward A. Silsbee, an old friend of Uncle George Bradford. Silsbee had sailed out of Salem round the Horn and reached middle age before he gave up his sea career to become a pilgrim on

1. The most obvious results of this early acquaintance with Emerson were the critical essay of 1839 and the Emersonian nature of much of Bradford’s early esthetic and moral theory.
2. A Journal entry recalling George Bradford’s delight in the beauties of March leads one to suspect that he may have been the direct source of his nephew’s best-liked editorial, "March Light," which appeared in the Boston Herald in March, 1928 (J., ed. B., p. 448).
3. ibid., p. 231.
land. Like his Bradford friends, he loved the beauty of this world, art, and historical associations; but, unlike the Bradfords, he possessed esthetic rather than moral scruples. A votary of Shelley, the captain had become acquainted in Italy with people of whom the poet had written, had almost acquired Shelley's heart, and had brought some of the original Shelley manuscripts to Harvard. With his passion for Shelley and his general enthusiasm for poetry supported by a fine reciting voice—not to mention the appeal of his colorful life—Silsbee must have been a factor in Gamaliel Bradford's early devotion to the English poet and his lifelong preference for poetry over prose.

Range. In a late autobiographical article Bradford wrote, "I educated myself by vast, vague, utterly erratic reading." Whatever the negative effects of such wide reading, he felt that it helped him to escape the dime-novel taste. Besides Scott, Cooper, and Bulwer, he notes in a letter of the late 1920's, he read in the early years a good deal of Alger, Oliver Optic, Mayne Reid, and Elijah Kellogg. He tells us, too, that as a child he read a great many novels of which he remembered little. Meanwhile his father was reading him the classics mentioned above.

We lack dates for much of the childhood reading, but a few passages give useful pegs. By the time he was eleven, Bradford had read Shakespeare "quite through, many of the plays over and over, and was keenly

1. ibid., p. 211.
2. ibid., p. 212.
4. ibid., xli, 150.
5. ibid., p. 249.
eager to see some of them acted." In this same period Bradford was reading such nineteenth-century poets as Tennyson and Longfellow continually and found interest in Alexander Smith's *A Life Tragedy*; soon after he steeped himself in Byron. A letter written many years later recalls without assigning a date that the first school reading which had really gripped the boy was Goldsmith's "Traveler" and "Deserted Village." Another letter refers to zealous study of Hart's *Composition and Rhetoric*.

In his middle teens a temporary indifference to fiction urged Bradford to pursue further the interest which had already led him to Proude's *History of England* and several of that author's minor works. At sixteen the boy prophetically amused himself by going over Chambers' *Cyclopedia of Biography* to make lists of characters about whom he wanted to write. His non-fiction list included Darwin, in whom Bradford was to hold a permanent influence, Helmholtz for his work on acoustics, and Ruskin with his *Modern Painters*. Though Bradford does not explain the process, he declares that Ruskin, as well as the talks and readings with Captain Silsbee, helped lead him to poetry. Shortly after, Shelley and Keats became and remained for years "little less than gods" to him. At this time Emerson and particularly Arnold seem to have been the most vivid prose influences. About 1880 Aunt Sarah gave her neph-

ew a cheap American reprint of the Essays in Criticism, which Bradford slowly absorbed in Cambridge during the winter of 1861-62. Years later he wrote that he felt he owed more to that book "than to almost any other book" he owned. Arnold, of course, reinforced Uncle George Bradford's introduction to Sainte-Beuve.

Perhaps the simplest way to show the range of Bradford's reading as he entered his twenties is to list the writers he discusses in Journal passages extending from October, 1863, to June, 1864: Homer, the Greek dramatists, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Catullus, Chaucer, Tasso, Spenser, Lyly, Bacon, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Marston, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Massinger, Herbert, Milton, "Hudibras" Butler, Pope, Thomson, Rousseau, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Goethe, Chatterton, Burns, Senancour, Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Carlyle, Heine, Leopardi, George Sand, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Tennyson, the Brownings, Jones Very, George Eliot, Arnold and Mark Twain. For all its length, the list is obviously incomplete with its omission of such names as Keats, Emerson, and Darwin.

It seems evident that in those early years Bradford found nearly all the writers who influenced him most in one way or another. From the above list we may name Homer and the Greek dramatists, Virgil, Shakespeare and the lesser Elizabethan dramatists, Milton, Goethe, Sénancour, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Heine, Leopardi, Emerson, and Arnold. At the same time we are reasonably sure that Bradford was reading or about to read such continental writers as Boissier, France, Lemaitre, Aniel, and L. *A.,* p. 251.
Scheler, and such Englishmen as Pepys, Copper, Lamb, and Trollope.

Favorites who seem to have appeared later include Voltaire, Fenelon, and Fitzgerald.

Methods. In the above-quoted reference from "Fight for Glory" to his "utterly erratic reading," Bradford seems to forget at what an early age he settled into a formidable reading schedule which became an integral part of what he called his chronophobia practice. The Journal entry for September 11, 1916, gives a detailed description:

In the morning ... I write until half-past ten or thereabouts. After that, I begin my morning reading with fifteen minutes of poetry, this according to a system which I have followed for years by successive months, first two days of Dante or Milton, then a Greek or Latin play or Homer, then a French or Spanish play, then from the twentieth to the twenty-fifth of the month either English or Latin poetry, then French poetry in alternate months and in the others German, Italian, and Spanish. The remainder of the morning I spend on the American work which prepares for my portraits. In the afternoon, after playing on the piano and doing ... accounts ... if I am at home I read Latin if I have any time before going to work out-of-doors, then, after working and going down for the paper, I read Greek till supper. In the evening I begin first with a few pages of Shakespeare or some Elizabethan play; these all according to a system; then some pages of what I call the gossip of history—letters and diaries—all according to an elaborately arranged system, which has become part of my life; then a few pages of the great critics, according to a system again. Then some reading in different languages for different portions of the month, then a half-hour of novel or play reading.

Bradford explains that he finds the value of this amazingly complex system in its saving him from the need to decide what to read. Such a program and its effects on the average reader would seem a fertile project for the literary psychologist.

2. Ibid.
Into this schedule Bradford usually fitted a period for reading aloud. Forty years of reading not more than a half hour a day to his wife took him through an amazing amount of material:

the whole of Shakespeare, the whole of Cowper's letters, the vast Diary of Fanny Burney, the Letters of Keats, of Lamb, of Fitzgerald, the whole of *Tristram, Don Quixote* twice, besides a large portion of the Walpole letters, the whole of Boswell twice, and the six volumes of the Moore Diary twice, not to mention immemorable plays and poems of all sorts, often read over and over.¹

Bradford's reading method, as one would expect, was adaptable to the material involved. The careful analytical type is shown, for example, in the notations which remain in his copy of *Leaves of Grass*, probably as evidence of his preparation for the Whitman psychograph. Thus the cover page has about a dozen items listed, such as "style," "defects of style and tone effects," "man," "observation—insight," "pathos," "humor," "America," and "general view," with corresponding numbers against passages throughout the volume. In contrast was the reading technique he used during years of reporting on two fiction books a week for the Boston Public Library. A mere ten minutes of scanning the novel might determine his verdict. The same swift, intuitive procedure helped Bradford in the many book reviews of his later years. He records one instance of having read a book and written a five-hundred-word review in two and a half hours. Another habitual tour de force was the reading of several dramatists at the same time, which will seem unpalatable to most reasonable persons.

2. Ibid., p. 356.
But I find that I can carry the five different groups of
characters in all their ramifications side by side without
the slightest trouble and the comparison of their methods
and results most fascinating.

Thus one occasion found Bradford reading simultaneously Aeschylus,
Lope de Vega, Beaumont and Fletcher, Labiche, and the Austrian
Schnitzler.

A discussion of Bradford's reading methods would hardly be com-
plete without reference to his approach to the foreign languages
which took up so much of his time and interest. In a letter coun-
selling the reading of Sainte-Beuve, Bradford exclaims:

Fling all your grammars into the fire, and read, just
read...... Never allow yourself to translate a single sen-
tence. Read it a dozen times in the French, and then if it
doesn't yield, let it alone. But never try to dig out with
dictionary and grammar. At least that has been the result
of my fifty years' experience with all sorts of language,
even with Greek, which is certainly the toughest propositi-
ton of the lot. I have read the whole Greek drama through
now I think at least five times, and I do not believe I
have looked up fifty words in the process. There are many
times fifty words that I do not know, but I will not hamper
myself and lose the spirit by any such process...... (After
such reading) you will have a command of the languages that
twice the same time spent on grammars would not give you.2

The books Bradford owned quite naturally reflected the stages
of his literary tastes and the fields of his literary work. Van
Wyck Brooks observes that the youth who admired Emerson and Arnold
and came to read Greek and Latin and modern Italian, French, Span-
ish, and German was dominated in the early years by Goethe's great

A "world-view, a state reflected in Bradford's library by the presence of works in all those languages. Volumes of the lesser Elizabethans disclosed the one phase of English literature in which Bradford felt himself something of a scholar. His later more concentrated interests appeared in the thousand-volume section of French books and the ample stock of great diaries and letter collections. A wealth of biographies and histories further substantiated Bradford's work in psychography—the character studies which ranged from Xenophon to Mussolini. Nearly six hundred presentation copies from modern writers testified to the mutual interest of Bradford and his professional comrades.

But the four thousand volumes which taxed the facilities of Bradford's house by no means set the bounds of his reading. One of his keenest delights was to browse and study in the Boston Athenaeum, a habit begun in his early boyhood and continued as long as his strength would permit. In no place outside of his beloved Wellesley, indeed, did Bradford spend more time than in the Beacon Hill library. There he first read Arnold, Sainte-Beuve, Scherer, the French realists, and Heine. There, too, he made his first studies of the Elizabethan dramatists, prepared the lectures he gave for some years, and read in preparation for his American portraits. In later years he was deeply moved by his appointment as a Trustee and as the Chairman of the Library Committee. Scarcely hyperbolic were his words: "I should like to be

buried in the Athenaeum."

Few writers in this restless modern world have had the time, the energy, and the compulsion to carry out so thorough and comprehensive a reading plan. Few Writers, either, in this age of direct living, have had such a passion for books. The book habit, Bradford exclaimed, does really get to be almost a mania, like a drug habit. I grudge more and more the time given to other things. I think it is not that I like people less, but that I like books more, and that in the most charming human society I am always thinking of the far more charming book that might absorb my soul.2

Important Critics in the Early Reading. As quoted above, Bradford says that his reading program included pages of "the great critics"; yet he reports almost no writers known for their criticism beyond Matthew Arnold and certain nineteenth-century Frenchmen. In this connection it is worth noting that Bradford's personal library was exceedingly weak in critical texts. His acquaintance with direct critical writing thus seems to have been limited in scope if not in effect.

In 1925, after a discussion of Gaston Boissier in a letter to a friend, Bradford continued:

2. Ibid., p. 208.
3. At his death in 1932 Bradford's library file contained, for example, no entry under Aristotle and no historical anthology of criticism. During the last twenty years, certainly, Bradford could afford to and generally did buy the books in which he was really interested.
I hope you are also familiar with the other great French critics, who, more than any one else have been an inspiration for my work, and whom I have imitated, at least their methods, as far as I have imitated anyone. The Impressions de Théâtre of Jules Lemaitre is perhaps the richest of them all in human suggestion and depth and delicacy of psychological sympathy. But Sainte-Beuve is of course the archetypal, and no one who is not familiar with the best portions of his vast work has any conception of what biographical insight is.1

It is characteristic of Bradford’s relationship to literary criticism that he should consider Sainte-Beuve, the writer who was perhaps the chief influence upon his critical as well as his biographical writing, to be essentially not a critic. Thus he declared:

It was a complete mistake for him [Sainte-Beuve] to regard himself as a literary critic.... His admirable characterization of himself as "a naturalist of souls" has nothing whatever to do with literary criticism.2

A study of the full influence of Sainte-Beuve upon Bradford would take on thesis proportions. There is space here to suggest only a part of the Frenchman’s impact upon Bradford the critic. Sainte-Beuve was certainly a factor—and often a major one—in, for example, Bradford’s general scepticism; his broad tolerance; his far-ranging curiosity; his general sense of the multiplicity of thought; his suspicion of “pedestals”; his impressionistic approach to criticism, an approach which (as Giese describes that of Sainte-Beuve) differs from the pure relativism of Anatole France

2. Ibid., p. 33.
in that it does not impose the author's own subjective tendencies upon what it treats; his recognition of the importance to criticism of psychology and historical background and the scientific attitude in general; and his love of French prose. More specific examples in which Bradford's agreement with Sainte-Beuve was, I believe, no mere coincidence include a distaste for the "mystery" of the Middle Ages as compared with "the pure sunlight and warm earthiness of the great classical ages," the idea that man's larger character traits are fixed from birth, and a delight in such writers as Senancour and Cowper. In a negative sense Bradford profited by a recognition of such Sainte-Beuvian faults as "personal bitterness, malignity, and spite" and the prejudice of the Frenchman's essays on contemporaries.

Of the other nineteenth-century French critics Bradford seems to have taken Jules Lemaître particularly as a model. The American's sympathy for the Frenchman is shown in a comparison he makes between Lemaître and Anatole France. The latter, says Bradford, is a spiritual Epicurean, perfectly content to be nothing further. All phases of religious emotion are to him a delightful study.

1. William Frederick Giese, Sainte-Beuve: A Literary Portrait, p. 211.
3. Ibid., p. 429.
4. Ibid., p. 432.
5. Ibid., p. 320.
Like the phases of other emotions, especially amorous. Thus France analyses, feels, loves, and goes on his way. In contrast, Lemaître, though he has been spiritual delight, is no Epicurean. "The pity of the world, its agony will not let him rest." Too honest for unsatisfying answers, Lemaître combines human insight with a "constant restless sense of the deeper things of life." In describing Lemaître, Bradford here gives, I believe, a suggestive self-portrait of himself as a critic.

The early impression that Matthew Arnold made on Bradford has already been noted. A Journal passage for April, 1921, well summarizes their relations:

Re-reading ... Matthew Arnold's essays On Translating Homer.... It is a rather curious experience. I am not aware that I have read the essays for nearly forty years. At that time they formed, with the other Arnold essays, an epoch in my life.... I can well understand why they affected me so much. They opened a world of high and passionate emotion, for which my passionate, solitary soul of twenty years was more than ready. I feel today as I felt then the delicate appreciation of Arnold's temper, his quick sensibility to beauty of all sorts, his high and fine moral purpose and dignity. These things then touched me and carried me away, because I had at the time so little access to anything of the sort. And in my enthusiasm for them I overlooked the defects, which are so contrary to my own that I think even then I must have felt them, in fact I am sure I did. Arnold is so deplorably English ... in all the very things that he himself so much deplores, the substitution of prejudice for reason, the narrow and harsh dogmatism, the utter lack of tolerance and wide allowance for the views and feelings of others, the bitter arrogance of expression, so different from the tender and sympathetic grace of my dear France and Lemaître and even from Sainte-Beuve. All this I knew even then. Yet the essays on the Guérins and

on Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment and on Marcus Aurelius gave me something my spirit thirsted for....

Only I cannot recur to it now, and in this re-reading I appreciate how wise I have been not to re-read before.¹

Looking back in his Autobiography, Bradford tried again to analyze Arnold’s early hold on him.

What moved me ... was, I think, the mingling of intense, passionate moral earnestness, which, after all, is the root of my own being, with an exquisite fineness of sensibility, and to crown all, a delicate and varied, if not a boisterous sense of humor.²

Perhaps the most obvious service Arnold performed for Bradford was strongly to second Uncle George Bradford’s introduction to Sainte-Beuve and to extend that introduction to other French literature.³ The Englishman was also certainly an important factor in the Wellesley reader’s essentially humanistic approach to literature. The prejudice, the dogmatism, and the arrogance of expression which the older Bradford found in Arnold were doubtless some of the qualities which the American found so distasteful in most Victorian and American literature.

Emerson, of course, does not take rank as a literary critic with Arnold and the Frenchmen, but, as I have suggested above, my later pages will show that he was of some importance to Bradford’s

2. P. 252.
3. Bradford, for example, wrote in his Journal concerning George Sand’s Valvedre: “I found it recommended in one of Matthew Arnold’s essays, and therefore read it...." (J., ed. B., p. 53.)
critical writing as a contributor to the Wellesley man's moral and esthetic theory and as a subject for one of Bradford's earliest critical essays. Emerson might be called the focal point for the early contact of Bradford with Romanticism; after Bradford's first intoxication, largely through the process of revising his estimate of the Concord writer, the young critic began to get his true bearings in relation to Romanticism.

2. The Literary Life

**Associations and Activities.** Before the nation-wide recognition of Lee in 1912, Bradford's literary interests had not been confined to reading and writing. With Charles H. Hooker, a neighbor, Bradford founded in 1893 a reading club which specialized at first in Elizabethan plays. Helping amateur friends enjoy the old drama became a favorite diversion of the biographer. Upon the death of his uncle, George Bradford, the nephew was in 1893 accepted as the youngest member of Boston's august Examiner Club, which Emerson had formerly attended. Bradford particularly enjoyed the chance to meet men from a variety of occupations and the discussions which followed the often tedious papers. Two years later Bradford joined the Playgoer's Club and served first on its membership committee and then as vice-president and finally as temporary president, from which office he resigned when he failed to interest George Baker in the club's program of drama reform. Bradford remembered that the Sunday afternoon meetings assem-

bled a motley crew of actors, literary and newspaper workers, vol-
uble reforming clergymen, aspiring playwrights, and military men.
Bradford's other literary associations included the Authors' Club,
the New England Poetry Society, the Massachusetts Historical Soci-
ety, the famous Saturday Club, and finally the American Academy of
Arts and Letters. Essentially, however, Bradford was never a whole-
hearted club goer. Meetings as such, with their formal addresses
and generally dull concerted action, rarely interested him as much
as the individual beside him. Thus the few gatherings of the Satur-
day Club that he was able to attend were particularly rewarding with
their "continuous and inspiring social excitement."

Bradford's occasional public lecturing on literary subjects end-
ed with his breakdown at the turn of the century, but, from 1907 to
1912 he found strength to conduct classes in his home. His friend-
ship with Katharine Lee Bates meant not only collaboration in Eliza-
bethan courses at Wellesley College but also the use of the Bradford
home as a stopping place for the college's many distinguished liter-
ary guests. Meanwhile, visitors in their own right to the white house
on the hill included such New England figures as Bliss Perry, "the

2. *ibid.,* ed. B., p. 507. Brooks points out that,despite his "highly con-
centrated literary life," Bradford was "alertly interested in baseball,
moving pictures, .... symphony concerts, in gardening and boating on the
Concord River, especially natural history .... " (*Ibid.,* p. xii.)
biggest man," Bradford felt, with whom he ever had direct contact, Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, M. A. DeWolfe Howe, and Judge Robert Grant. Always the Bradford guests, like his fellow townsmen, were charmed by the modesty and the genuine interest in themselves displayed by the tall man with the dignified stoop and the kindly, discerning eyes.

Non-critical Writing. Since his early teens, when he had written his first tragedy, Bradford had nursed a passion for creative writing. At nineteen he cried in his Journal in words, as he describes them, "crude, immature, and cheerfully, or tragically, sophomoric, but stamped with genuine feeling":

I have staked my life upon one desire, one effort, one passion. It is no fleeting whim, born of the hour, no butterfly fancy, or ambitious dream, such as every youth of intellect and taste must know. It is a matter of life and death with me. It has become a passion round which all else must revolve, and with which my heart beats or breaks. It seems as if such intense, overpowering desire, such constant labor as mine could not fail to achieve their object. I do not know, but this I do know, that if I cannot be a great poet, I shall commit suicide, or die in a madhouse.

In the long years before success, Bradford wrote some two thousand poems, several novels, and over a dozen plays. A number of the poems reached the printed page; three of the novels were published and ignored; and only one play left its manuscript form—at the au-

3. Ibid., p. 9.
 meanwhile a few articles won publication in such magazines as the Atlantic Monthly and the North American Review but apparently did little else for his purse and fame.

The contact with the Atlantic, however, dating from at least the early 'nineties, was to be decisive. Souder, the editor, first welcomed and then tired of Bradford's work. Bliss Perry, the editor from 1899 to 1908, offered more substantial encouragement. But when his successor, Ellery Sedgwick, demurred at Bradford's suggestion of a remote, scholarly subject, the Wellesley writer was convinced that he must change his tactics.

The success of Parkman and Fiske suggested American history. Bradford finally chose the Confederacy as a subject of epic scope with the need for a keen eye and a sympathetic heart. After gathering some material for a history of the movement, he concluded that the best introduction for such a work would be a series of monographs upon the prominent figures.

The biographical aspect was not new to Bradford. We have seen his analytical interest in this direction at work during his boyhood. As early as 1864 the study of Arnold and Sainte-Beuve had spurred Bradford to write an article on the poet Jones Very, published in the Unitarian Review for February, 1887. It was Bradford's first attempt at "psychography," although he had only vague ideas on the subject and had never heard of the word. There are also psychographic suggestions

in the tiny volume called *Types of American Character* and published by Macmillan in 1895. Despite good English and American notices the collection failed. Bradford tells us that one of the results of the mental crisis he went through about 1900 was to emphasize "the inexhaustible delight of observing other men's lives."

In his *Autobiography* Bradford says that he wandered into psychography as "a by-path of criticism." In an interview with Robert B. MacDougall of the Boston Evening Transcript in 1925, Bradford explained that his interest in the form began in the early 1900's when what were originally lectures of literary criticism and comment given at his home to a group of friends developed almost unconsciously into studies of the personalities of literary men, into attempts at "uncovering their hearts and their springs of conduct." As *A Naturalist of Souls* reveals, Bradford's early critical studies such as those on Pater, Donne, and Trollope have also a definite psychographical element.

Inevitably, the first character Bradford chose for his Confederate monographs was Lee. Sedgwick liked the idea of a fair-minded treatment of the great general by a Northerner and in 1912 published in the *Atlantic* what were to be later seven chapters of *Lee the American*. A genuine success, the articles helped Sedgwick's effort to make his magazine

1. *A*, p. 333.
2. Ibid., p. 356.
3. Ibid., p. 379.
5. In 1918 Sedgwick found that Bradford had led in space all *Atlantic* contributors from 1909 (*A*, 1918-19, p. 93).
more popular, especially in the South. For Bradford they meant scores of letters, a degree from Washington and Lee University, and a membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters—in short, a delicious taste of the fruits of recognition. At last, nearly fifty years of age, the Wellesley writer had found something he could do which would draw the American public and represent a "distinct and in a sense original—literary departure" with an unlimited future.

With the triumph of Lee, Bradford increased the tempo of his literary life. In the twenty years left to him from 1912, he published some fifteen volumes of psychographs, two volumes of poems, one play, and much miscellaneous writing, which included critical articles, book reviews for magazines and newspapers and the American Book League, newspaper editorials, letters, and stray bits of verse. To his constant dismay, Bradford's books never became genuine best-sellers. Damaged Souls, his most popular later work, selling only about ten thousand copies. Always, too, there was the haunting sense of failure in the work he loved best—the poems, the plays, and the novels. He was constantly perplexed by his own critical judgments which kept assuring him that he could do this creative writing as well as the psychography—yet the world would have none of it. At length he came to feel that his failures in the more creative forms were due to his lack of vivid contacts with life, contacts which he believed were inhibited by his

health and temperament. His biographical successes, he reasoned, sprang largely from the sympathy for his fellow men which his own handicaps and frustrations had stimulated. He believed that any one life is the epitome of all lives, and that in one's own soul one can find and study and reproduce the essence of humanity as it affects and constitutes all the men and women who ever lived. This sense of human affinity and kinship is rich in suggestion and possibility. It has been the basis of all that is of any enduring value or significance in my work.1

Critical Writing.

Bradford's half century of critical writing, extending from the early 1880's to the early 1930's, may be profitably divided, I believe, into three periods: the first and shortest ending about 1895, the second in 1912, and the final one with Bradford's death in 1932. In the earliest period Bradford, the young idealist, in spiritual and intellectual revolt against what he felt to be the sterile Victorianism and the decadent romanticism around him, was getting his literary bearings as he sought the fresher air of English and Continental writing. Our preceding pages have shown something of the personal problems Bradford faced in those years and the inspiration, courage, and delight he found in the Greeks, the Elizabethans, the English Romantic poets, Arnold, Emerson, and the French prose writers. In less literary vein, Bradford was drawn by the reflection of his own sufferings, real and fancied, which he sensed in the pages of Senancour, of Amiel, and of Leopardi. All the while

1. Quoted in Warren, op. cit., p. 11.
Bradford was trying his creative pen, generally in high hopes, but at times, as he confessed in later years, with a frustrating sense that the creative urge he thought he had inherited from the Blakes and from his mother's family was being constantly inhibited by the opposing heritage of Bradford Puritanism. At any rate, the young writer then had confidence in his intellectual powers. Later he looked back with the conviction that at eighteen he had been "at the highest pitch of maturity," adding, "and in some respects, I still think I was."  

Bradford's criticism of this period reflects much of the above. It contains, particularly in its aesthetic theory, the idealism of certain favorite writers and in its applied criticism an independent spirit which refuses to accept the work in question until it has proved its value. The criticism also reflects the intellectual maturity of its young maker, especially in the *Journal* pages and the essays on Emerson, Pater, and Donne. The spirit of revolt shows both in Bradford's refusal to be swept away in the tide of contemporary naturalism and in his refusal to worship the gods of Victorianism in either England or America, i.e., writers like Thackeray, Tennyson, and Longfellow.  

Despite Bradford's casual intentions, in this first period he

2. *Jid.*
made a rather sound start towards a career in criticism. The *Early Journal, 1879-83* and the *Journal, 1883-86* have more critical material in proportion to their length than any of the surviving later Journal sections. Bradford was reading widely in fine literature which represented his major fields of interest, getting his comments down on paper, and not trying to rush into print. With the help first of Emerson and the English Romantics, later of the nineteenth-century French critics, he was laying the foundations for an edifice of critical theory.

The first fruits of applied criticism in these early years began just after Bradford's marriage with the completion of at least nine of his better critical essays, which display an interesting subject range: those on Jones Very, Emerson, Pater, Arnold, Schéfer, Donne, Leopardi, Giles Fletcher, and the nature aspect in Elizabethan poetry. All of these essays, most of them from the pen of a man in his twenties, deserve respect; particularly impressive are the discerning study of Leopardi, the prophetic appreciation of Donne, and the criticism which prompted Walter Pater to make many changes in *Marius the Epicurean*.

The beginning of the second period of Bradford's criticism saw a deepening of the mental clouds which soon brought to him the dark period of the late 1890's of which we know relatively little. With L. L., ed. B., p. vii.
key letters and journal entries for most of the 'nineties missing, we are thrown back upon the autobiography, written some twenty years later, which emphasizes the crisis as a philosophical one—crisis enough, perhaps, for a Bradford! I have suggested above, however, my belief that two of the causes were concerned with literature: first, the fact that Bradford and his family were being supported largely by a father who was affectionate, even indulgent, but who could not help implying that his son was wasting his time in literature; and, second, the fact that, as the years went by with only meager recognition, the young writer was haunted by the suspicion that, after all, he did lack genius and was indeed wasting his time.

The first considerable essay of this period is an unpublished one called "A Gospel of Joy"—the implications are obvious—which discusses, among other subjects, comedy, poetry, and criticism. Bradford's first period has almost no essays devoted solely or chiefly to literary critical theory. "A Gospel of Joy" affords a sort of transition to the essays on theory which reveal the greater critical emphasis of the second period. This middle period, indeed, has Bradford's most extensive and professional critical writing. Denied success in what he considered the more truly creative branches of literature—poetry, drama, and the novel—Bradford was finding at least a certain recognition and glimmer of success in the critical articles through which he was entering the pages of some leading magazines, especially the Atlantic, the North American Review, and the South Atlantic Quarterly. By 1906 his reputation had enough substance to prompt Will D. Howe, who conducted...
"The Reader's Study" in the Reader magazine, to introduce Bradford as
a distinguished essayist, one of the best critics of the dram-
atic literature of the Elizabethan Age and well read in the
fiction of the nineteenth century.

Besides the essays already noted for the first period, Bradford had
qualified for this editorial praise by such articles as "The Serpent
of Old Nile" (concerning English dramatic versions of the story of
Cleopatra), published in Poet-Lore for Autumn, 1898, "Elizabethan
Women," which appeared in the same magazine for Autumn, 1900, and
studies in the Atlantic Monthly on Burton (April, 1904), Trollope
(March, 1902), and Boissier (December, 1905), as well as various
letters and reviews in magazines. In the next half dozen years Bradford
was to write on Horace Walpole, Beaumont and Fletcher, the lost
Elizabethan play The History of Cardenio, Dumas père, Davenant, Xen-
phon, Browning, Macaulay, Sainte-Beuve, Lomàître, numerous magazine
reviews and letters, and—so far as we can tell—do his study of
Shirley's versification and his editing of two Shirley plays, work
which, unfortunately, is now lost.

Meanwhile, the idealistic influences of Bradford's first period
had receded, and the French critics, headed by Sainte-Beuve, were
exerciting a dominant influence. They appeared especially in the hu-
1. Bradford notes that for years after the mental crisis of the late
1890's "certain words like truth, doubt, space, duration, harmless,
simple words in themselves were touched with horror to me, and the
mere sight of them, when I was tired or nervous, was enough to start
me, with irresistible fury, on the old, tedious, hateful chain of
analyses." (ibid., p. 354.) Other results included an almost total dis-
trust of his own reason and a shyness even of scepticism; later, how-
ever he noted scepticism's blessing—freedom to hope (ibid., pp. 354-
57).
manicstic base of the American's critical theory and practice, a base on which the lover of classical, Italian, French, Spanish, and English literatures reared a cosmopolitan if scanty critical philosophy. While this pervading humanism was responsible for much of the sanity and appeal of Bradford's criticism, it was also, ironically enough, gradually edging the critic towards the psychography which was in many ways to arrest his critical writing.

Under different circumstances, Bradford might well have gone on to a definite career in criticism. His sympathetic approach, his broad background with some useful fields of emphasis, his analytical ability, and his gift for language, for example, could have played their part in adding a name to the roster of American critics of the early twentieth century. But the publication of the Lee articles in the Atlantic and the nation-wide acceptance of Lee the American in 1912 were to forestall that possibility.

Thereafter, Bradford's writing course was to be largely in the field of biography, though he would try on a few occasions to alter that course with a volume of poetry or a play. As we have seen, the final twenty years were busy ones with the many volumes of psychographs and the incredible numbers of articles, editorials, reviews, and letters.

1. In these later years Bradford lost all count of his contributions to magazines and newspapers.
The essays in critical theory for this last period are confirmed almost entirely to the theory of biography and psychography; a few of the editorials discuss literary subjects but in a popular vein; the reviews are generally sketchy and, as Professor Wagenknecht has well observed, never condemnatory; and the criticism in the portraits is largely incidental. A more satisfactory medium of this period in the correspondence—Brooks even suggests that here we have Bradford’s best critical writing. 1 If, as Sainte-Beuve says, “we always model ourselves in a certain degree on the person to whom we write,” Bradford’s distinguished correspondents, scholarly men like M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Judge Robert Grant, and Professors Bliss Perry, E. K. Rand, and Edward Wagenknecht, and writers like Robinson, Frost, Mencken, Limisay, Sandburg, and Leonard Bacon must have been indeed a stimulus to the critical instinct of the sympathetic man in Wellesley.

The letters, it is true, hold interesting and vital criticism, but even good letters and perhaps especially letters addressed to intelligent and learned men are not the perfect critical medium. In the first place, naturally enough, Bradford felt no obligation in these pages to rewrite or expand or modify the

1. In the 1920’s Bradford wrote editorials first for the Youth’s Companion and then for the Boston Herald.
2. Conversation, July 6, 1953.
3. II., ed. B., P. viii.
4. Quoted in Giese, op. cit., p. 216.
critical theory of his earlier periods. Again, particularly with his abler correspondents, in the modesty of his conviction that he was a homespun, self-taught, and rather isolated writer, he cautiously restricted himself to subject matter on which he felt most sure—especially the field of psychography, which he covered so amply elsewhere in the period. Thus one misses in the letters the range, the speculative daring, the frankness of certain Journal pages. Again, one must consider the shades of differences in the statements of letters addressed to friends of his childhood days, to lay admirers of the famous psychographer, to young people seeking professional guidance, and to his literary peers—such contrasts as well as those between the Journal and the letters give the Sainte-Beuve quotation above an added meaning. In Bradford's letter-writing, his innate courtesy, his unwillingness to hurt other people's feelings, sometimes results in omissions and mutations of emphasis which do not help to clarify a total picture of his critical ideas that can never be balanced or full.

The Journal of this period, which begins in 1916, is often rewarding, but it has in proportion less pure criticism than the earlier sections. As in the letters, the Giant Psychography locum, and in these later years also the Journal keeper seems much concerned with matters of health and everyday living.

The best criticism of the final years is nevertheless in the
letters and the Journal, sources which, besides the weaknesses already noted, have two common limitations: the short sections and the general lack of continuity between those sections. The compensating virtues of this criticism include a total range that is still considerable, a remarkable human sympathy, and a quick, well-stocked Bradford mind, which, freed from certain of its old inhibitions by literary success and contacts with other active literary minds, occasionally gives off brilliant and suggestive flashes.

This last period, which more or less halted Bradford's critical career in mid-course, emphasizes the general difficulties found in isolating and evaluating his criticism. Much of it lies embedded in perhaps two and a half million words, which break down into several types: the Journal, the letters, and the several kinds of published material—each type having its subdivisions and special implications.

1. Unique in this period is a long, unpublished essay, dated 1913, and called "Literature and Life"—Bradford made use of its ideas in an article called "Literature and Art" for the Evening Post's Literary Review of Aug. 2, 1921. Revealing, among other things, the influences of Sainte-Beuve and Taine, it discusses literature as expressing life, the nation, the age, and the individual (in that order).
2. Bradford rigorously kept his daily Journal entry to a typed page; in his letters he was always conscious of an obligation not to monopolize his reader's time.
3. Bradford himself estimated the Journal at 1,400,000 words (J., ed. B., p. xi); the fifty-five volumes of Letterbooks which cover only the years from 1913 to 1932, with the thirty-odd biographical and psycho- graphical volumes, the articles, and the reviews, would seem to make the total of two and a half million words a conservative figure.
4. Even the poetry and the novels have some criticism.
This study hopes to show, however, that some of Bradford's criticism has certain values which, particularly for our day, make it worth the digging out.

3. A Note on Influences

Since the material for an analysis of literary influences upon Bradford the critic is far from satisfactory—Bradford himself nowhere attempted such an analysis—and since the space for such a purpose is limited, my suggestions will be both tentative and brief. I shall confine my attention to the possible factors in two of Bradford's major critical attitudes: his enduring preference for the Elizabethan drama and his later settled distaste for Victorian literature.

The following sonnet appeared in a little volume of Bradford poems published in 1904 and called A Pageant of Life.

The Elizabethan Drama

Land of my first love, garden of my heart!
Let other nations keep their simpler fare;
Let Spain exult in Calderon's sweet air;
And Athens triumph in her tragic art.
For throb of human life, for rushing dart
Of passion, like the storm in speed and glare,
What other nation can with you compare,
Land of my first love, garden of my heart?

Laughter and tears in like profusion come,
Blesson of rose, blessing of bitter rue,
Words which assuage the anguish they impart.

1. Studies of literary influences are seldom either adequate or convincing. The writer-subject himself—let alone the critic-observer, who is always at two or more removes from his subject—can hardly be complete or accurate concerning the diverse shaping forces that are called "influences." Hence dogmatism in such studies is particularly offensive.
A tongue supreme, to me the tongue of home—
Sweet fate, to walk through life alone in you,
Land of my first love, garden of my heart.  

Besides a dash of comparative criticism, Bradford here records the
appeals of early and constant association, of vivid humanity, of
compassionate tragedy, of full-blooded comedy, and of one's native
language at its best.

The early and continued association, it appears, was hardly acci-
dental. Van Wyck Brooks asserts that in Boston

as nowhere else in America, the Elizabethans had come to life.
The Elizabethan poets and playwrights had long been a central
interest in Cambridge, where their plays were constantly re-
vived; and most of the New England poets of the present and
immediate future were full of Elizabethan conceptions and rhythms. Everyone was talking of Webster, Middleton, Beaumont
and Fletcher, for whom Gamaliel Bradford had a passion....

If Brooks' statement is somewhat exaggerated, I believe that it is
largely justified. After the Romantic critics had rediscovered
Shakespeare and his contemporaries, the nineteenth century entered
upon a busy program of Elizabethan scholarship and publishing—the
English activity was certainly reflected in America, particularly,
in Boston. A glance at English and American bibliographies for
the period will quickly bear this statement out.

1. P. 30. Shortly before his death, Bradford looked back at this
sonnet and declared that every word of it still held true(#J,
2. New England: Indian Summer, p. 509. When Brooks wrote this in
1949, he had not forgotten the pages of the Bradford Journal, and
the letters he had edited a few years before.
3. Among the many editions and scholarly studies of Beaumont and
Fletcher, for example, of special interest is A Bibliography of
Beaumont and Fletcher (Cambridge, 1890) by Bradford's friend,
neighbor, and associate in the Elizabethan Club, Alfred S. Potter.
Esther Dunn points out that the "history of American editions of
Shakespeare ... in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, is
the history of reading editions for the intelligent layman." The
reading of Shakespeare was then part of the "gentleman's tradition" in
both Britain and America—a Bradford of Boston would hardly overlook
such a tradition. Meanwhile, Miss Dunn tells us, though the lower
schools were more receptive, the study of Shakespeare as literature
did not take hold in American colleges until after the Civil War.
Bradford's own home introduction to Shakespeare was natural enough
for the period.

By the time Bradford was twenty, we remember, he had long been a
reader of Shakespeare and was already studying other Elizabethan drama-
tists at the Athenaeum. He was, of course, also meeting the Elizabe-
thians in his other reading. Miss Dunn makes a good deal of the impor-
tance to America of Emerson's devotion to Shakespeare. Bradford sol-
dom links the two in his Journal, but the Concord man's enthusiasm per-
haps reinforced the younger man's ardor. In the early years, too, Brad-
ford was reading considerably in the pages of those arch Shakespearian,

2. Ibid., p. 239.
3. Ibid., p. 243. Harvard, for example, did not have its first lecture
until 1863 (the year of Bradford's birth), when Lowell made Shakespeare
the subject of a University lecture, which, incidentally, was attended
chiefly by club women (Ibid., pp. 245-46).
4. Ibid., pp. 249-60. It is worth noting that, as my later pages will
show, Bradford shared few of Emerson's Puritan scruples about certain
lines and scenes in the great Elizabethan's plays.
those apostles of Elizabethan literature, the Romanticists.

As we have seen, however, for Bradford the printed page was not the only means of association with the Elizabethans. In those days Boston was well supplied with stage versions of Shakespeare; from a comparatively early age Bradford saw at least his share of this type of Elizabethan entertainment. The fact that Bradford and his friend Charles H. Hooker in 1893 could start a club in their Wellesley neighborhood which for years met regularly chiefly to read aloud Elizabethan plays is further proof of the congenial Elizabethan climate around Boston near 1900. Bradford does not tell us what kind of drama reforms the Playgoer's Club had in mind when he tried to interest George Baker in its program, but we do know that Baker had Elizabethan interests in these days or shortly thereafter.

If for Bradford Elizabethan drama had availability and a sort of contagion in the air on its side, it also uniquely satisfied his literary tastes. Drama and poetry were his earliest favorites among literary types, and the diligent young reader soon discovered their matchless union in the Elizabethans. Elizabethan drama certainly strengthened if it was not the source for Bradford's conviction that literature, especially the drama, is life. The psychographer-to-be found, nat-

1. Shakespearian actors then, as Miss Dunn reminds us, had a certain "social position and importance" (op. cit., p. 303), and thus attendance at a Shakespearean play lacked the usual stigma of play-going.
2. These interests led to such studies as The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist (1907) and Dramatic Technique in Marlowe (1910).
3. The lack of journal and letter material for most of the years from 1883 to 1916 accentuates the problem as to how much Elizabethan drama shaped as well as satisfied Bradford's literary tastes.
4. See "Literature and Life."
really enough, that the most fascinating quality in Elizabethan drama was a human instinct so intense that Elizabethan writers could not keep it out of the most artificial subjects and that in Greece or Italy or the far islands of the sea they at once, unconsciously, depicted the manners and the passions and the vices of London. It was this human instinct which fostered the characterization which so fascinated Bradford. Another Elizabethan quality, especially compelling to a man of Bradford's health and temperament, was the boundless vitality. "The whole nation," he wrote, "like the Greeks in their best days, seems like a troop of children overflowing with buoyant, superabundant energy.... It bubbles up in all they write.... From it came that astonishing originality, that creative prodigality Bradford so longed for in himself, and which he felt, allowed not even the feeblest Elizabethan to be flat or common.

Bradford had an Elizabethan love of words and, increasingly as the years went on, almost a preoccupation with style. The Elizabethans satisfied him on both counts—here again the evidence is not adequate for determining just how much the Elizabethans helped to form those tastes.

1. J., ed. B., p. 188.
2. Bradford wrote to a friend that the Elizabethan dramatists, with whom he had lived intimately for years, had, "like a hundred other sources," helped to give him "a certain insight into the human heart, my own and others, which is the foundation of anything I have been able to do in psychography." (L., ed. B., p. 346.)
3. At times, one can hardly disentangle the literary from the psychological factors.
4. This, p. 9.
At any rate, he was convinced that these old English dramatists were "the most magical masters of them [Fords] who ever lived" and that, with the Greeks, they were supreme in style.

Up to this point I have shown various influences drawing Bradford toward an almost unqualified appreciation of the Elizabethans. One stop to wonder why their often undisciplined, boisterous, and fast plays held the descendant of Puritanism who lived such a tidy, ordered life in a quiet New England town. Actually, as his applied criticism shows, Bradford was aware of many Elizabethan faults—the constant reader of Greek drama could hardly fail to notice them. Despite the fact that in later years he came to care more and more for simplicity, restraint, and structure, Bradford did not desert his Elizabethans. They maintained their hold on him largely, perhaps, because of the old associations and his conviction that their virtues, especially their gift for poetry, overbalanced their faults. Or perhaps it is not too much to speculate that if the early study of the Elizabethan plays expanded his tastes and sharpened his critical faculties, his later enjoyment of them confirmed those tastes and satisfied a more mature and flexible judgment. Somewhere between 1890 and 1910 Bradford made this statement which, I believe, he never retracted:

Taken as a whole, I do not think that for originality of thought and for power and beauty of expression it (Elizabethan literature) has its equal in more than one literature in

2. Ibid., pp. 140-41.
3. See, for example, Bradford's balanced criticism of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Shirley in the pages ahead.
in the world.
The other literature, of course, was the ancient Greek. For Bradford these two literatures, different as he realized they were, held the supreme heights together—in a sense they reflected the dual Bradford we have already postulated.

It seems fair to assume, then, at least on the basis of the evidence available, that Bradford's love for Elizabethan drama was the product of opportunities in a favorable Boston "climate," of accumulated sentiment, of race pride and loyalty, of literary tastes gratified, and, finally, of reasoned critical conviction.

The Autobiography contains this passage:

Then (1882-83) as ever since—and now, I had little but antipathy for the English Victorians but Pater and Arnold, an antipathy I have striven long and hard to conquer and now realize that I never shall. Browning, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Thackeray, Dickens—l recognize many great qualities in them, of course. It is not usually my way to condemn a whole generation en bloc.

Bradford goes on to say that though he has read the Victorians thoroughly many times he has never enjoyed them. Carlyle seems to have become the most distasteful to him. Carlyle with his "sense of attitudinizing, affectation, pretence, the perpetual effort to make one's self conspicuous" by almost any means.

1. Elizabethan Women, p. 15. For Bradford, obviously, Elizabethan literature was chiefly Elizabethan drama.
2. And also, as I have suggested before, of a group of psychological factors which are often compounded with the above.
Sane five years later Bradford confessed to a
lamentable deficiency in my mental constitution which makes
it impossible to me to get pleasure from re-reading any of
the Victorians except two who are singularly contrasted,
Trollope and Matthew Arnold...

The older I grow, the more I prize lucidity and sincer-
ity, and the turgid obscurity of Browning, Carlyle and Mer-
dith always suggests to me the stirring up of a muddy surface
to conceal the lack of depth, while I feel that the whole
Victorian group, from the old lady herself down, were incura-
ably artificial in their outlook upon life. I know it is the
fashion at present to abuse the Victorians, and it makes me
rather ashamed of my prejudice. But the truth is, I was
anti-Victorian and anti-German forty years ago, so I comfort
myself with the idea that the rest of the world is coming to
my point of view. It is indeed a little hard to have Mr.
Percy Boynton, in his Contemporary Americans, declare that I
myself am a Victorian and have not an ideal rather than the
middle of the nineteenth century. Perhaps I dislike them
because I am so like them.

In the two passages just quoted Bradford perhaps forgot that,
in the early days, besides his fascination with Arnold and the es-
ablishment of a permanent affection for Trollope, he edited Macau-
lay's Life of Johnson for which he wrote a sympathetic preface,
acknowledged that Ruskin was a means of bringing him to poetry,
admired Sartor Resartus, praised the style of George Eliot,
enthusiastic about the now-forgotten Henry Seton Merriam, gave
excited attention to Browning, and even admired phases of

2. Published in 1895.
5. Ibid., p. 61.
7. See, for example, J., ed. B., pp. 48-51.
Dickens' art. The pages of the earliest Journal, it is true, have few literary Victorian references—Bradford was obviously thinking a good deal about the Elizabethans and the Romanticists. But the Pater and the Arnold essays come in the late 1880's and the Macaulay editing some half dozen years later, and in the whole period I find no blanket condemnation of the Victorians. In a literary sense, at least, I believe that Bradford the youth and the young man was not as anti-Victorian as he thought when he looked back from middle age. The hostile sentiment apparently crystallized with the passing years.

One wonders what Bradford would have thought of the contemporary re-evaluation of the Victorian period and its writers. He would perhaps realize and admit, for example, a point of which he seemed too little aware. Clarence R. Decker puts it thus:

"It is the curious paradox of Victorianism that the great Victorians were strenuously anti-Victorian, and that the period they created, particularly in literature, was one of fertile achievement and vigorous protest—protest against materialism and complacency, against aesthetic and moral blindness."

Here were the very targets of Bradford's own youthful criticism. Why then was he not more in sympathy with these fellow rebels?

In one way or another, as earlier pages have suggested, Bradford associated most of these Victorian writers with the pattern of life into which he had been born and which he found so distasteful. It is well to remember also that if these writers were anti-Victorian

2. The Victorian Conscience, p. 11.
in their convictions, they were still largely Victorian by nature.

Thus, for example, many of them shared two generally accepted traits of the age, the related qualities of self-assurance and optimism—traits which especially irritated the Bradford of the later years. Again, with this self-assurance and optimism, these Victorians did not hesitate to grapple with the larger philosophical problems of life which Bradford tried so hard to avoid after 1900. Also, the reader will remember that one of Bradford’s basic complaints against the Victorians was their obscurity. Perhaps he did not make enough allowance for the fact that these writers were attempting to interpret the most complex society then known to man. And, of course, Bradford resented the fact that the age was essentially one of prose not poetry. It did not help matters that Victorian prose at its best could hardly match the Attic grace of the French critics Bradford so loved. In the later years Bradford’s special interests led him to a special aversion for the ponderous official biographies that were a part of Victorian literature. It is of interest also to note that, except for a few scattered references concerning individual writers, Bradford never suggests a general comparison which is sometimes favored by modern scholars—that between the Victorians and the Elizabethans. The idea, on first thought, would doubtless have startled

1. J. A. Symonds, in his Essays Speculative and Suggestive, written about 1890, attempted “an elaborate contrast” between Elizabethan and Victorian poetry but anticipated that in the future they would be more closely linked (Victorian Poetry, ed. E.K. Brown, Introd., p. xlv).
Bradford; in the present reinterpretation, however, the comparison becomes especially illuminating.

My hypothesis, then, suggests that factors in Bradford's rejection of most Victorian literature included the pressure of unhappy early associations and, particularly after the mental crisis of 1900, his growing distaste for key Victorian traits and for the techniques and content of much Victorian writing. There was, of course, a climate of revolt against the orthodox Victorian writers—the revolt centered in the esthetic movement, which reached Bradford especially through Pater and the French critics. Again, there is perhaps something in Bradford's own suggestion, in reply to Boynton's criticism, that he disliked the Victorians because he was so much like them. Professor Wagenknecht has also made this point—and aptly—concerning Bradford's attitudes towards Henry Adams and Henry James. In the Bradford making the long wait for fame, I believe that there was a certain envy of Victorians like Adams and James and the great Englishmen who, in their own fashion, had conquered both fame and the Giant Philosophy.

1. It is true, of course, that from the beginning Bradford had not accepted several of the best-known Victorians—in the early years he generally had his individual reasons and did not dismiss them, as it were, merely because of their affiliations.
2. Conversation, July 6, 1953.
3. There may or may not be significance in the fact that, especially in the later years (with perhaps only his temporary admiration for Browning the exception in the early years) Bradford never attached himself to a reigning Victorian favorite. Arnold, he was convinced, had not made a popular success("Matthew Arnold," p. 1).
PART II

BRADFORD'S THEORY OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Chapter I

Esthetic Theory

1. Early Stimuli

Literature. In esthetics, as in most phases of his life work, Bradford was largely self-taught, with the chief method his intensive reading program. Particularly important in that program was his constant study of his beloved English and Greek poets and dramatists. Nature, music, and plastic art all played their parts in stimulating Bradford's response to beauty, but never could they match the influence of poetry. Thus the salt spray had hardly dried on his luggage in Italy when he declared that nothing made him more eager for literature than the compulsory abstinence from it on a trip. Weeks later he was overjoyed when a lost steamer-drunk turned up with cherished poetry volumes, which, he asserted, were unequalled by any picture gallery.

We have seen enough of Bradford's early environment and character to understand how on a bleak winter day in bleak Boston or Cambridge the youth, forgetting the checks of his frail body and his New England home, could unbend his heart and unchain his imagination in his passionate search for beauty. And in later life the printed page,

2. ibid., p. 72.
then remembered as a precious first source of beauty, was always with him in his beloved Wellesley, while art and nature—in their more celebrated aspects, at least—were at the mercy of his poor traveller’s back and stomach, of his crippling vertigo.

From Bradford’s first acquaintance with poetry it was never a question of mere technique or content alone. The rhythms and the very sounds of the words had an Elizabethan fascination for him. The early years of closet reading developed a quick, instinctive taste in such matters. His later conviction as to the supreme importance of style only heightened his love for the poetic devices of sound. Doubtless another factor in this love was Bradford’s long experience with literature orally presented. His first actual glimpse of the theatre seems to have given him a start in the appreciation of both oral and pictorial art. During a stopover in New York City during the winter of 1871, the seven-year-old boy and his young brother went with their father to Barnum’s Museum. Straying into a side gallery, they suddenly found themselves in the upper balcony of a theatre where a fairy play was in progress. The father lacked the heart to tear his enthralled sons away before the play was over. The incident made a deep impression on young Bradford, who tried to reproduce the little drama at home with his brother, and for the rest of his life kept it in his memory as a vision of novelties that seemed to transform any later theatregoing.

Oral reading apparently began about four years later when Bradford's father spent several months reading aloud most of Shakespeare and many modern comedies. The senior Bradford also stimulated the oral habit by encouraging his son's use of a home puppet theater. A few years later Bradford was charmed by Silsbee's poetry readings. The later period of reading to his wife, the play readings with his neighbors, and his interest in the expressiveness of the speaking voice in everyday life (as shown, for example, in his talks with Robert Frost), were all outgrowths of the happy oral tradition of his childhood.

Nowhere, then, was Bradford more certain to find beauty—whether it was for the outer or inner ear and eye—than in the pages of his beloved writers. First, perhaps, the word and metrical virtuosity of the Elizabethans, with an especial preference for the light, graceful verse of John Fletcher, and the Romantic poets, and then the magnificent rhythms of the Greeks drew him. Since ordered beauty became more and more Bradford's passion, he soon came to delight also in the delicate precision of the French prose masters of the nineteenth century. It is a curious fact, however, of which I will take more notice later, that among the stimuli of poetry Bradford should record so little reaction to figures of speech.

Nature. What a man sees and what a man hears in life about him are certainly factors in his esthetic perceptions. Bradford both saw

and heard the beauties of nature with an intense delight. His
taste for nature grew up with and was as real as his taste for lit-
erature. In 1883 two of the six reasons he enumerated for giving up
college were the opportunity to walk in a beautiful countryside and
the possession of a magnificent sunset view—features the young na-
ture lover felt would aid the development of his poetic genius. As
long as he was physically able, Bradford enjoyed nature in his be-
loved Wellesley. Why a few square miles of rolling Massachusetts
land sufficed him should be already clear. The gracious lawns, the
friendly trees, the secluded garden, the sociable ponds for swimming,
boating, and skating, the fascinating wood trails with the birds
Bradford knew so well, and the challenging hills—especially stout
old Munus—gave Bradford an almost Wordsworthian attitude and cer-
tain special affections like those for Theocritus and the nature
touches in the Elizabethan poets and broadened his whole artistic
perspective.

Thus a Journal entry for June, 1883, contrasts the Greek with
the modern attitude toward both external and human nature and finds
a weakness in the modern hostility, which, Bradford feels, stems
1. Unless otherwise specified, nature is here used to mean the exter-
   nal, physical nature around us.
2. *EJ*, pp. 21–25. The other reasons were these: opportunities to
   write, "the greatest of pleasures"; to read, "the next greatest";
   to enjoy music and the company of several people; and to ride and
drive (*ibid.*).
chiefly from our religious feeling, which teaches us "that in the
natural condition we are unholy..." Thus we have been weaned "in-
directly from the breast of external Nature, in which the Greeks
found such endless resource and comfort," the nature from whom,
Bradford declares
the miser learns generosity, and the spendthrift care; the
debauchee temperance, the ascetic ease; the Philistine beauty,
the idler toil, the passionate patience, the weary rest;
and all human beings wheresoever born, bred, and taught, to
bathe their hearts in the endless peace and joy and love of
God."

The reader of the Brooks Journal and letter volumes will find
a wealth of illustrations of Bradford's keen response to nature's
lights and shadows, her forms, her colors, her sounds (not for-
getting her "restes" or silences), her ensembles, and her seasons.
I agree with Van Wyck Brooks that the Journal's most poetic passages
are those recording Bradford's reactions to his daily walks about
the Wellesley countryside.

A further proof of the sincerity of Bradford's appreciation of
nature was his passion for a deliberate savoring. One of the rea-
sons he hesitated to buy an automobile was that the speed of the
driving made the natural scenery "spectacular" and deprived it of
the intimate charm he found on his daily walks. Thus he noted his

1. Ibid, p. 31.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p. 22.
4. Ibid, p. xii.
5. Ibid, p. 488.
preference for enjoying an October day by "slow, quiet, meandering
through the varied deliciousness." Elsewhere he exclaimed,

I do not ask for the great aspects, the sudden and enthralling
wonders [of Nature] ... just the ineffable, quiet touches that
are daily about me. The infinite, gradual process of the sea-
sons.¹

In this same vein is a passage from Life and I:

If you really love nature, you love it in your own dooryard,
in the endless play of the sky and clouds, which you can see
daily from the same window, and yet never find the same, in
the old wood walks, which perhaps you have taken from child-
hood, in which the birds and flowers are drenched, saturated
with childhood memories of love and hope.²

In the later years, certainly, one of the chief sources of nature's
charm for Bradford was the power of its associations with childhood
memories—a power, which, as he recognized, has long inspired poets.

Bradford's esthetic approach to nature was fostered perhaps al-
most as much by the observations of his favorite poets as by his own
experience. His article of 1895 called "Nature in the Elizabethan
Poets" reflects a basic origin of his delight in Elizabethan poetry.
Except for the brief neo-classical period around 1700, he declares,
no source of poetic inspiration has served English poets more freely
than the love of eternal nature. The major writers in the great,
spontaneous periods of English literature have always been close to
nature, even though that intimacy seems most apparent in the Roman-
tic poets.

2. Ibid., p. 214.
4. P-L, VII, No. 11, 529.
The linking influences of nature and literature are more specifically illustrated by Captain Silsbee, who simultaneously helped Bradford to an appreciation for the "depth and splendor in the sea" and the "varied land beauty" and a love for poetry. It was evidently not long after this schooling that Bradford, during a summer at Heron Island, liked to sit on the rocks and watch the tide flow "indolently" while he read Sophocles and Virgil. The grandeur of the classical verse seemed peculiarly fitted to the "vast movement of the oncoming waves."

Particularly in the early years, Bradford tended to relate natural and spiritual beauty. In the summer of 1883 he subscribed to what he admitted was a hackneyed concept: since men's churches decay and their altars become fetishes, the true, imperishable setting for the worship of God is in wood and field. He exclaimed, "The sky and Nature and Love and God!" and wondered what more one could ask.

Music. On April 13, 1928, Bradford wrote in a letter concerning music that "nothing except poetry has meant so much to me." If the

2. Ibid., p. 489. Once, at least, the balance between nature and poetry was nearly destroyed. Just before his twentieth birthday Bradford declared that study was not his element and that "the infinitely varied and endless poem of nature" was better than all the riches in books (§EJ, pp. 172-73).
3. §EJ, p. 118.
4. Ibid., p. 167.
statement was exaggerated courtesy towards a correspondent who had suspected in Bradford a certain lack of respect for music, it did have some foundation. His association with music began when he was a boy and lasted as long as he was able to get to a concert or a piano. Despite the fact that he sometimes wondered why he did not write more about the subject in his Journal, the volumes contain numerous musical references.

Bradford's relationship with music was both absorbing and tantalizing. He explains the general causes in Life and I.

Music appeals directly to the emotions and to remote, obscure, subconscious associations that are bound up with them. It is for this reason that the enjoyment is so evanescent and uncertain. If little distractions and fatigues have put us out of tune, music loses its hold upon us altogether. But when it does have full sweep and range, when our surroundings and condition put us in the mood for it, few things carry us away with so vast, so overwhelming, a mastery, make us forget so completely the petty preoccupations of the immediate I in the larger-emotional possibilities of the shadowy universe.1

Bradford added to these natural difficulties the belief that

1. Bradford had apparently been explaining his theory that music is "pre-eminent the art of the age in which we live. That age is an age of ignorance." (Life and I, p. 86.) It must be admitted that Bradford's comments reveal something of the nineteenth-century genteeel distrust of music; he would, for example, hardly give music the same artistic rating as poetry; and somewhere he expresses the traditional contempt for the character and mentality of musicians.2. P. 86.
he lacked "an especially musical ear, or musical temperament, whichever it is that really counts." His Journal entries are constantly revealing the "enjoyment ... so evanescent and uncertain." Thus he declares after a Boston Symphony concert in 1920:

Elaborate concerts of classical music may touch me at moments and carry me away completely. But in the main they are apt to leave me cold, and I have to sit through many hours for a few moments of exquisite rapture. This is especially so when I go seldom and irregularly. If I keep up the practice week by week, I get my heart and head both full of music, and my nerves are far more readily susceptible to it.

In a letter of 1924 Bradford's discussion of music as the modern art leads him to a pet phobia: programme music. Music's phenomenal recent progress, he suggests, may spring from the fact that the art is "so immensely a matter of form." Since the "vague emotional content," which is always at the bottom of music, is "simple and intangible, though for that very reason infinite," much stronger emphasis is necessarily given to the outward form. It was not surprising, then, that the great composers of a century ago "almost exhausted the resources of pure music" and that their successors tried all manner of devices "in the desperate need of varied and original expression." Today the composer's one inevitable resource seems to be a linking with the companion art of literature, to Bradford a "most dangerous, if not fatal"
direction.

The minute the solution of your musical problem depends upon a purely arbitrary key of written words, that minute does your music lose something of its sovereign hold on its own realm of spiritual emotion. 1

Though Bradford realized the superiority of the human voice over any other instrument, the programme nature of vocal music gave him an "incurable aversion" to it. 2 In a discussion of opera he gave another reason for his dislike of programme music. Beethoven failed in his operas because he could not write his own libretti and thus insure the true harmony of words and ideas. "At the same time a man who has the power of writing both poetry and music is not likely to make either in the highest degree perfect." 3 Programme music is thus almost inevitably limited by human capacity.

As one with some professional musical training and experience, I can only partially agree with Bradford on this problem. He has effective points concerning programme music in its most formal sense. Few musically great operas, it is true, have libretti worthy of the music; orchestral tone poems are apt to be weak in their verbal texts; and few hymns, even, are perfectly wedded to their tunes. In the broadest sense, however, it seems to me that for

3. Ibid., p. 5. Bradford called Wagner perhaps "the only great musician of our later time" because he could in writing his own libretti come closer to "true opera" than anyone else (Ibid., pp. 5-6).
most people music is "programmed" inevitably in the hearing, with or without directions from the poet or post-composer—the barest suggestion in a title, for example, may be all that is needed. Even in the strictest programme music, the listener, once he has become familiar with the piece, is at liberty to and generally does compensate with his own programming imagination, as it were, for the lack of balance between text and music. Again, in the broad sense music is "programmed" for most people over a period of years by the power of association.

Ironically enough, Bradford seemed to forget that his musical references in the Journal and the letters often use this programme by association and that his own response to music was largely emotional and spiritual, a response, I believe, that, despite his theory, involves a use of music's programme attributes. Bradford, for example, fills a Journal entry on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with an interpretation of it as "the history of a high and passionate soul." A few weeks later he devotes another full Journal page to developing his thesis that "The whole idea of [Goethe's] Faust seems to ... bear a general resemblance to the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven." And in 1920 Bradford looked back to the Beethoven

1. The theory holds true, I believe, that dramatic verse, which moves swiftly, and music, which moves slowly, can never be yoked smoothly. If they are combined, one or the other must suffer and be subordinated, a situation that particularly distressed Bradford. In this connection, Bradford's indifference to ballads is understandable (J., ed. B., p. 279) but also a reflection upon his musical tastes.
2. J., ed. B., p. 13. Further irony lies in the fact that this is Beethoven's only "choral" symphony.
sonatas he had so often played in his younger days to declare that they "meant more in my spiritual life for years, I suppose, than any other music."

Bradford could appreciate Wagner in the 1890's and a symphony by Sibelius in the 1920's, but he was essentially conservative in his musical tastes. Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven had his thorough esteem; Schubert and Mendelssohn he could mostly enjoy; but Brahms—"You might as well expect me to admire Dickens or Browning," the Wellesley man once exclaimed. His response to music is neither specialized, technical, nor impersonal—even his comments on his favorite composers have little or nothing of detailed reaction to such musical elements as rhythm, melody, harmony, or form.

It is difficult to give an exact analysis of the contributions of Bradford's musical knowledge and experience to his esthetic perceptions and theory. For one thing, he is too vague in describing his response to the art—"pure emotion" at "uncertain intervals" is not very helpful. Thus, beyond the concern over programme music, there is scarcely any probing of the relations between poetry and music, such a probing, for example, as produced Landor's Science of

2. Ibid., p. 300.
3. Ibid., p. 530. In disgust with modern music he once asked: "Is the purely emotional side giving way ... to the novel, the curious, the violent, the exciting, which appeals rather to the intelligence than to the feelings?" (Ibid., p. 507.)
4. A winter's study of Harmony (ibid., p. 231) with his years of playing and listening certainly put him beyond the "rank amateur" stage.
English Verse. As I have already suggested, the limitation of his musical ear may have been paralleled in his ear for the music of poetry. More positively, music, along with nature and poetry, reinforced Bradford's conviction that association is one road to the appreciation of beauty. A symphony, like a sunset or a poem, gathers favorable response through years of happy familiarity. And Bradford freely admitted, as we have seen, that at times music gave him complete release into a world of mysterious beauty—then indeed it acted as a stimulus and a tonic for his esthetic impulses.

Sculpture and Painting. Looking back on his second visit to Italy, the one which took place in the spring of 1887 as a sort of delayed honeymoon, Bradford declared it was then that he and his wife had discovered painting.

Though we had anticipated much, I don't think that we had even dreamed of the delight we should get from Rubens and Van Dyke, from Titian and Tintoretto, from Del Sarto and Botticelli.1

And some ten years later, during his last stay in Italy, he wrote in his Journal that "nothing in life but poetry and nature" delighted him as much as plastic art and hastened to add that his responses were supported by no actual experience in either sculpture or painting. These visits to Europe were indeed the high points of Bradford's experience with those arts, and the record in the Italian Journal is almost the only source for our knowledge of his tastes in those fields.

Early in that Journal Bradford listed the "sources of delight" for

1. *II*, p. 36.
plastic art: (1) the simple charm of form and color; (2) the virtue of isolation (which fixes immortally and apart from original surroundings we might not have liked); (3) the choice of subject; (4) the composition and treatment (with the effect of suggestion as well as the arrangement of color and design); (5) the sense of human skill—chiefly unconscious, the Aristotelian pleasure we take in imitation and in all beautiful work done by fellow beings; (6) the artist's personality. One can perceive in these sources a correlation between them and the sources for the enjoyment of literature—a correlation, however, of which Bradford seldom makes use. He observes that his appreciation operated quite in contrast to that of Hawthorne, for Bradford, in passing quickly through a church or a gallery, instantly perceived his likes and dislikes.

On his first trip to Europe Bradford had preferred the churches to the galleries, particularly Saint Peter's, which, he felt, was a summing up of the "enduring weight and might" of Rome. The Italian Journal has almost no architectural references beyond praise of the Colosseum as perhaps the most impressive relic of ancient Rome and approval of the Porta San Lorenzo chapel as the most impressive mod-

1. *II*, pp. 17-18. This list contains one of Bradford's very rare uses of the word Aristotelian.
2. Hawthorne's Italian Notebook disappointed Bradford with its surplus of "ordinary comment" and its almost Philistine, if honest, lack of appreciation for art(*Early Poems*, p. 72).
3. *II*, p. 5.
Bradford ignores Greek sculpture almost completely except for observing that great as it is, the Greek plays surpass it as the sculpture comes to us today, and for recording his delight with Praxiteles' Cnidian Venus and his impression that the Greek master's Faun had a too pert and inane facial expression.

Among Renaissance sculptors Bradford chose Luca della Robbia since his work was not marred by restless efforts to exceed the limits of marble which were obvious in Michelangelo and even in Donatello. It is not hard to understand Bradford's attraction for the Luca figures with, in Helen Gardner's words, their "serene wholesomeness and tenderness, which is neither profound nor sentimental."

The sculpture of Michelangelo first gave Bradford the impression of strain, "the sense of tour de force in everything he does," the appearance of a lack of imagination "in every direction." The master's "David," Bradford found later, despite its "painful clumsiness," in contrast to the work of Raphael, had a certain grandeur and a noble attitude; the American called "Moses" the finest Michelangelo work he had seen.

Among painters Botticelli was an especial favorite and even prompt-
ed a literary comparison. In "The Birth of Venus," which attracted with its "mysterious color so subtle in its harmonies, strange and weird and infinitely suggestive as the mind of the painter himself," Bradford felt that Venus was Christian not Greek as she cast all beauty under her feet. Later he found it difficult to make a choice between this picture and the "Spring," which struck him as having more richness and variety in composition. Who else of the Renaissance, he wondered, would have dared give the pagan goddess a Christian face? Bradford wondered if Botticelli's blending of Christian depth and questioning in the pagan Venus resembled Berra's "magnificence for mingling beauty and death or Donne's "deeper, passionate intrusion of spiritual concernment into the contemplation of pure beauty .... Neither exactly, though perhaps a touch of both."

If Titian's "Assumption" was deficient in its too obvious break between the figures in heaven and those on earth, his portrait of Aretino was to Bradford "magnificent," and his "Sacred and Profane Love" was "far and away the best picture in Rome."

In a letter of 1926 Bradford remembers that he found the Rubenses in Antwerp ... a revelation. I do not think the glory of the life of this world, the splendor of firm, solid flesh, has ever been more vividly and tangibly caught by any painter than by Rubens. He has the substantial humanity of the great Elizabethans, though he has not the lurking spiritual passion that they blended with it. And then Rubens was such a master in building his pictures .... His madonas are all earthly, some of them grossly, repulsively so. Magdalen

1. *Ill., pp. 6-7.
was more in his line. But his nymphs and satyrs are marvels of pure paganism, and I myself have a very great liking for the Medicis pictures in the Louvre. Material, yes; but materialism pushed to that point of imaginative power and depth becomes creative. ¹

In the same letter Bradford praises "a really wonderful collection of the German primitives," which he recalled during a visit in Cologne.

There was the same charm that attaches to the music of Bach, the same tension and spiritual rigidity in manner, but often-times underneath more richness of human passion than one would expect.²

The contributions of Bradford's experience in sculpture and painting to his esthetic perceptions in literature are no more specific or direct than those from music. He once asserted that a great painting brought him a more dependable response than a great symphony.³ And after a tantalizing afternoon of music he wrote, "For me at least the world of sight ordinarily dominates that of sound altogether. I live by my eyes." Yet the records of the years following the last trip to Europe put much more emphasis on the Athenaeum, the Wellesley woods, and Symphony Hall than they do upon the Museum of Fine Arts. When his health was good, Bradford apparently went with some frequency to Boston galleries, but

¹ L. Ed. B., pp. 218-49.
² Ibid., p. 249.
³ J., ed. B., p. 255.
⁴ Ibid., p. 263.
⁵ Not one reference to the Museum is indexed in his Brooks selections from the Journal and the Letters.
more and more he found it easier to enjoy a book in his study, a
sunset from his porch, or a concert from a reasonably comfortable
seat in the Huntington Avenue hall. In the later years, certainly,
his favorite authors and nature could give him enough of the human-
ity, the design, and the color he had found in the great artists.

The relations of sculpture to poetry suggest, of course, the
work of Lessing. In 1918 Bradford confessed that he had read the
German critic "to some extent, as a duty" but had found little sat-
isfaction. It is not surprising then that Bradford left no real
material on the linking of sculpture and painting with literature.
But, hard as it is to identify, the esthetic influence of those
three visits to Europe must have been inescapable. The experience
of seeing at strategic periods of his early life much if not most
of the great art of the western world then collected in Europe surely
survived in Bradford's memory as pictorial splendors, splendors assoc-
iated, in Edman's words, with "the whole repertory of human passions."
The few suggestive linkings of art and literature that Bradford left
imply further if unrecorded linkings. The Italian Journal reveals a
correlation, which later pages will bear out, in the tastes of Brad-
ford the man, the taster of art, and the critic of literature. His
experience with the art of sculptors and painters must have enriched
greatly his general esthetic sensibility on which Bradford the writer

2. Irwin Edman, Arts and the Man; an Introduction to Aesthetics, p.
80.
was to draw heavily.

2. The Nature of Beauty

The scrupulous thinker, who allows no scholarly progress without the firm stepping stones of precise definitions, will be disappointed in much of Bradford's theory. Thus, for one who early declared himself a devoted servant of beauty, Bradford gave surprisingly little effort to describing it and never did achieve a satisfactory definition. In the early years he was apparently too busy absorbing and trying to create beauty. The reasons for his comparative silence in the later years are suggested in the opening sentences of the chapter on beauty in *Life and L:

There are few subjects upon which have been piled a greater luxury of metaphysical definitions than upon beauty, and this has often been done by persons whose own susceptibility to the beautiful was not noticeably great. I am not competent to rehearse or criticise these definitions....

We see here Bradford's later fear of "metaphysical definitions" and his distrust of aesthetic theorists.

1. See especially the pages of the Early Journal, 1879-83.
2. The scrupulous thinker will perhaps be more lenient when he remembers that more than one recognised critic has—and with some reason, I think—criticized T. S. Eliot, probably the most influential modern critic writing in English, in the words of Stanley Hyman, for "fuzzy and contradictory thinking that results in key terms that are meaningless or nebulous...." (*The Armed Vision*, p. 76.) The scrupulous one should also remember that the road to beauty is "pockèd with the graves of theories. But the ghosts walk and, as the road is always misty, few can tell the vital from the dead." (*Dictionary of World Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley, p. 36.)
3. P. 77. Bradford also wonders if words ever have "plain direct meanings...." (*Ibid.*, p. 61.)
His own scattered attempts at definition point to four approaches: first, the early idealistic one; second, what might be called the psychological one; third, the practical if negative one set forth in the late twenties; and fourth, the simple, spontaneous, and probably the most constant one of his later years.

Quite naturally, the first attempts smack of Plato, of Emerson, and of his own youthful, basic Christian faith. Thus, in a Journal passage for 1883, he writes:

The infinite, unchangeable, as it comes to our eyes, is reflected in what we call the ideal realm, (which is the only real realm) into three supreme forms: Love, Beauty, and Truth.\(^1\)

From another passage of the same volume we learn that Love is Beauty, Beauty is Truth, and Truth is Love, all standing for the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "inextricably joined." In such a partnership, Beauty is obviously compounded of divinity and nobility. Such beauty, too, implies a duality in esthetic expression; the artist's "execution and manner cannot be beautiful without beautiful thoughts behind them."\(^3\) A further Emersonian note appears in Bradford's assertion that "originality ... is the essence of all beauty in art."\(^5\) And Emersonian is his cry: "If the touch of beauty is

1. *EL*, p. 28.
2. *BR*, p. 165. Years later Bradford noted that he had arrived at the Trinity theory before reading Emerson, and felt thus a proof of the power of intuition ("Notes on Reading," 1903, n.p.).
5. *EL*, p. 82.
not in the commonest things, the most prosaic things, would we only 
observingly distill it out, then life is not worth living."

In this early period Bradford records a shifting of opinions con-
cerning his theory that Love, Beauty, and Truth are the "composition 
of all things." Perhaps, he says at one point, Love is conduct, Truth 
is Science, and Beauty is Art. Elsewhere he declares that in this 
"so-called real or practical world ... History, or the record of facts 
corresponds to Beauty; philanthropy, the harmonizing of facts, corre-
ponds to Love." Again, he tackles the "tremendous question" of his 
scale of Beauty thus:

Religion or love is so inasmuch as it appeals to the soul 
through the feelings and emotions. Truth is so inasmuch as 
it appeals to the soul through the intellect. So Art and 
Beauty are so inasmuch as they appeal to the soul through 
the perceptions of Beauty, which is the name for what you 
can hardly call the bodily senses, but rather the sense of 
the Spirit.

Art, therefore, is degraded as it appeals less to the soul through 
the perceptions of Beauty, as it is satisfied with letting these per-
ceptions become merely sensual. The result is the change from senti-
ment to sentimentality in art. Some twenty years later Bradford re-
peats and slightly enlarges upon one of his early concepts:

I believe in God in his three forms of Love, Truth, and 
Beauty.... First the Father, truth, power, creating, sus-

3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Ibid., p. 125.
5. Ibid.
taining all.... Second the Son, Love, communion, sympathy, uniting and cementing all.... Third the Holy Spirit, Beauty, Joy, Freedom, light which elevates all, the sense of happiness and delight.¹

What might be called Bradford’s psychological approach to a definition of beauty seems to have come first as merely a fragmentary, indirect suggestion. In “A Gospel of Joy,” dated 1897, after observing that the simple nature of music can move the heart as much as a Beethoven symphony, Bradford goes on:

They tell us that all beauty is reducible to the association of ideas. It is, perhaps, an attempt to explain the simple and the easy by the complex and difficult. But anyone can feel how much of the charm of music comes from associations.²

Though Bradford appears hesitant about the theory, his later journal and letters repeatedly show that he recognized the importance of associations in his appreciation of the beauty of poetry, music, nature, and art. Witness, for example, the lines he quotes so often from Cowper:

Scenes that soothed
And charmed me young, no longer young I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.³

Or consider this passage from a letter of 1922:

Personally, I confess that, being an indolent, conservative, and timid spirit, I get more satisfaction out of the poets of an older day. It is a spiritual wrestle to read my contemporaries, Sophocles and Virgil, Shelley and Heine give me repose as well as rapture. And I do not for a moment insist that the older writers are better. Besides their own merits,

1. #“Notes on Reading,” n.p.
². P. 52.
³. As, for example, in BS, p. 148, and L, ed. B., p. 64.
they have a cloud and halo of associations from the love of millions of readers who have woven them into their lives. Take Virgil. The best thing ever said about him is Fitzgerald's little sentence: 'One loves Virgil somehow.' And why does one love him? Because Dante loved him, and Milton, and Sainte-Beuve and Boissier and Fitzgerald himself. 1

And from another letter of 1922 comes this:

I think that at least half, if not three-quarters, of the value of the old established poets consists not in their own intrinsic beauty but in the mass of associations that has gathered about them, the affection and devotion and acquaintance of millions of readers which multiplies infinitely the enjoyment that the masterpieces in themselves can give us. 2

In Life and I Bradford shows that the unique beauty of the literary art, which "works through words alone," is based partly on association:

The magic of words is one of the strangest things in the world.... Their power consists not only in plain direct meanings, if there are any such, but in subtle, remote associations, which plunge far down into the unconscious and cannot be disentangled by any research or investigation of the probing intellect. 3

The third attempt at defining beauty follows the sentences quoted above from Life and I, a definition which Bradford calls "an elementary and very negative distinction, which has working value":

The beautiful, then, is what attracts us without obvious usefulness, or direct appeal to the great fundamental instincts of self-preservation and propagation and to the moral instinct, if separate from these. The beautiful may or may not be indirectly connected with these instincts, but the connection can be established only by remote and persistent ingenuity. 4

1. Ibid., p. 126.
2. Ibid., p. 123.
4. P. 77.
Even if Bradford had felt that a more elaborate definition would fit "the practical character" of his book, and even if he had not for years feared metaphysical analysis, it is doubtful that he would have placed beauty firmly in the old trinity. With the passing years, truth had become more and more elusive, love was too often incomprehensible, and the God behind them had faded into a great question mark. Only beauty, perhaps, had the clear features of the old vision, but it was a beauty confined largely to the poetry of another day and the physical nature around him. The last sentence in the Brooks' Journal selections has a plaintive note:

Strange, strange, how the tradition of beauty has disappeared from everything. Music, poetry, painting, fiction, all are haunted and tormented by this passion for the novel, the exciting, the extraordinary, and the monstrous. The passion for merely exquisite beauty which glorified all the superb realism of the Greeks and the Renaissance has faded utterly.2

"Merely exquisite beauty," with no metaphysical trailers, had come to mean more and more to the elderly skeptic. And, in the brighter moments of his later years, Bradford's instinctive answer to the problem of defining beauty is perhaps what he wrote to a poet friend:

Beauty is with us in spite of all the pedants. Beauty is sure, even in its infinite fleetingness and intangibility. And beauty is so simple: great poetry and great music and clouds and flowers and stars.3

The fact that beauty is simple does not mean that it cannot take many

1. Life and I, p. 77.
2. F. 540.
3. L., ed. B., pp. 82-83.
forms. Thus Bradford refuses to name the most beautiful line in English poetry because he believes that thousands of lines exist "equally and differently beautiful." Thus in Life and I, drawing on his impressions of the physical world and the arts of sculpture and painting, he describes the multifarious nature of beauty:

There is the variety of forms, the ample suggestion of spaces, the delicate grace of curves, the intricate interweaving of lines that blend and fade off with shifting hint of limit and infinity. There is the overwhelming splendor of color, the sharp, voluminous impression of strong contrast, the penetrating, haunting seduction of finer shades, the glory of light, and the subtle, insinuating magic of shadow. And through form and color both there is the intriguing, perplexing relief and intoxication of movement, of change, by which shapes fade and alter, and in their changing take on a swift felicity of grace, which "teases us out of thought as does eternity."  

With the caution that probably "no one path can hold all who journey," a recent authoritative source groups theories of beauty into four classes: essence, relation, cause, and effect. Against this scale Bradford's attempts show some range if little depth. His first concept, for example, has implications for all four categories; his second is largely concerned with the subjective element in cause; and his fourth concept links especially with essence.

Bradford's theories have, of course, certain interrelationships and varying significances. The basic concept, I believe, is the early, idealistic one. It involves a monism, a recognition that great art, as Fausset puts it, is redemptive "because it transcends the opposition

1. *L.,* XXVII, 110.
2. P. 80.
of good and evil," and that in this art "we experience the world of
'becoming' as a creative activity, and realize that ethics and esthet-
ics are one"—a monism that particularly satisfied in the young critic
his idealistic and moral nature, which, however the years chipped away
at it, remained essentially intact.

In practice, Bradford seemed to recognize that the second or psy-
chological concept suggests not so much an excluding definition as a
common means for the appreciation of beauty—a means implied by T. S.
Eliot, for example, in his observation that most people reach opinions
of poetry through their sentimental memories. In Bradford's case,
certainly, the admission of the esthetic power of association both as
definition and as method was due in part to the lasting influence of
the ideas and hopes and dreams which had engendered the early ideal-
istic concept. One proof is that the approach to the psychological
theory, which came in 1897, was followed in a few years by a reassertion
of the first theory.

Concerning the third concept, the reader will remember, Bradford
explains that he has adopted this "elementary and very negative dis-
tinction which has working value" for his own purpose. The infer-
ence is that he inserts this definition as a springboard for his
treatment of the subject in that particular chapter, a treatment con-
cerned solely with beauty. It is worth noting, too, that Bradford

3. "Notes on Reading," R.P.
4. Life and I, p. 77.
does not deny the possibility of the relation of beauty and the moral
instinct. He avoids considering the process by which the relationship
might be proved, since, as he suggests, it could lead into the meta-
physical jungle. But there is always the possibility of such a link-
ing, particularly, as the definition points out, if beauty does not
flaunt an "obvious usefulness." This negative, working concept of
the esthetic, then, may be reduced pretty much to a plea against ob-
vion, i.e. inartistic didacticism, a plea which need involve no basic
contradiction to Bradford's idealistic concept.

Bradford's fourth and final theory has more than one link with the
first one. Thus in the early theory Bradford finds "the touch of beau-
ty" in all life, "in the commonest things, the most precious things"; in
the later theory beauty "is with us always ... Beauty is so sim-
ple" and takes myriad forms. Another link is the mystical element,
inherent in the earlier concept and recognized in the final one when
Bradford asserts that "the beautiful may be had ... merely by Lear-
ing to give one's self up to it in pure quietude of heart." Further,
he observes that beauty from the poets comes to us "in silence and
quiet," and adapts itself "perfectly to our moods, as and when we
will." And in the later years, as in the earlier period, the pages
of the Journal, for example, show that, like nature to the young
Wordsworth, beauty was to Bradford still a friend, a teacher, and a

2. MId., p. 126.
If Bradford's concepts of beauty in their fragmentary generalities are all oversimplifications, the final one is most patently so. It was, perhaps, all the theory that the aging skeptic could allow. Yet, as succeeding pages show, beauty kept for Bradford the basic connotations of the early period. The older Bradford still sought love and truth and beauty, however much they had lost their earlier Christian context.

3. The Significance of Beauty

Beauty and Religion. As an aspiring poet and—at least, as he thought—a practicing dissenter from Puritanical Victorianism, Bradford never lost sight of the significance of beauty, a significance which he perceived in many phases of life. Around 1900, for example, he wrote this: "Every religion must make a place for beauty. For beauty is an essential to the human race. And if beauty is not for religion, it will be against it." The Greek religion, he remembered, had fallen into corruption by giving beauty precedence over love, but the Christian religion, in its modern form at least, counts beauty and is thus also vulnerable.

When you shall show me that man who shall be not only what Jesus was but what were Plato and Newton and Homer and Raphael (sic) and Shakespeare and Beethoven; then will I say to you, 'Here truly is God on earth.' Until then no manifestation of miracle or monster shall convince me. 2

In Bradford's own early and ardent if not original concept of

1. "M. J., p. 103.
religion we have already seen that beauty found its important place. The young man cannot accept the Bible and feels that creeds, "except for the beauty and rhythm of the language," are merely for the intellect, but yet considers himself a Christian, largely because of the beauty in the life and teachings of the Christ who teaches the highest things men know, the things that men need for salvation. Christ, indeed, the incarnation of love, is more personal and vital than Plato.

Wonder and Love and Awe (all closely synonymous or inextricably entwined, of course, with Beauty) are the ways to God, not the intellect or even enlightenment. 1

And, surely, one of the chief reasons that Bradford in later years abandons a great part of his early religious concept is that he can see little or no beauty in the creeds and practices of his day. Thus he writes in 1921, after observing that the world is in desperate need of some type of religion,

but I am in no position to suggest one, having none of my own. I have groped and wandered through years of vague speculation and have finally abandoned the abstract for the passionate study of concrete individualities, which are inexhaustible in interest and charm. 2

Bradford's reappraisal of Christianity in the Life and I of 1928 seems to recognize the same basic elements of beauty that he found in the 1880's. The difference is, however, that the clear beauty of the early skies has been largely obscured by ugly clouds.

1. *EJ*, p. 103.
The English Bible, for example, still has an "unsurpassed charm," but the psychographer, applying the tests of his art-science to the New Testament, finds a "confusing, misleading, veiling base of conflicting reports and narratives." When he attempts to impose on this chaos some of the order and harmony that Art and Truth require, he finds a crude ignorance of the practical world, an unsightly bigotry, and, most disheartening, a lack of aesthetic awareness and of genuine intellectual curiosity.

Jesus himself, that "simple, august, earnest figure," retains a certain beauty as he talks first to humble fishermen and shepherds and later to curious, often doubting, great folk in the Syrian landscape, "with its wide reaches of country, its blue sky, its blue waters, and the snowcapped mountains in the distance." And Jesus still reveals his "supreme genius and singular profound spiritual insight" in transforming the "ancient negative" of the Old Testament "with one divine, creative touch, the touch of love." But the world has yet to live out this gospel. And now Bradford feels that Jesus is chiefly interested in "matters of morals and conduct" with the emphasis on sin and sinners. Thus he writes:

In studying Jesus' great nineteenth-century follower, D.L. Moody, I was impressed and oppressed with the complete absence in Moody's life and interest of beauty, of aesthetic emotion.... And although Jesus' reported words suggest a delicate sense of natural beauty,

1. Life and I, p. 157. 2. Ibid., p. 169. 3. Ibid., pp. 172-73. 4. Ibid., p. 166. 5. Ibid., p. 176. 6. Ibid., p. 175.
I cannot see that in his conception of life the world of Greek art ... finds any more place than in the conception of Moody. Most of all do I miss the golden grace of laughter ... the sweetest and gentlest agent of tolerance and kindness, dissolving grief and rancor and fear and misery away. 1

And yet, despite his denial that he had a substitute creed, Bradford found one, I think, in a humanistic framework. Thus he turned from what he felt were the sectarian struggles of the church to the love of his fellow man, which is based on an awareness of man's brotherhood and common identity; he left what he saw as the ignorance and bigotry of contemporary Christianity for the intellectual curiosity of the scholar and the hope of the skeptic; and he abandoned what seemed to him the Christian's ugly emphasis on sin and sinners for the beauty which the artist lover of man sees in the world about him.

Beautv and Morality. Though Bradford was contemporary with the aesthetic movement of the nineteenth century, never in practice and, despite the uncertain tone in the definition of beauty quoted above from Life and I, never essentially in theory did he divorce serious art and morality. 2 In the early 1900's Bradford recognizes the obvious truth that, since life is the matter of art and morals are a part of all life, art cannot avoid the question of morals. But this

2. In the generally accepted sense of the term, certainly, Bradford never wrote an immoral line.
question, he sees, involves many problems. Too often, for example, morals have been only an excuse for dogmatic criticism. And since much art is wholly amoral, there is the difficulty of deciding what art is immoral. Morality in art inevitably brings up the question of didactic art. Bradford says in an early essay that "sugar-coating instruction with imagination results in the emptiest works of art"; in contrast, he is sure that the use of art as a mere pastime of an idle hour is the most certain way of degrading it.

Again, there is the problem of how much to allow for dramatic license. An early Journal passage suggests as a general rule the exclusion of subjects like that of The Cenci and up to that point permission for a writer to follow his own taste. If a particular work of literary art does not please an individual, he need not read it. The young critic believes that there is—what is to be avoided—a simple love of filth and—what is to be cultivated—an eye which looks only for artistic effect. Elsewhere Bradford observes that objective things are less harmful than is generally supposed, but that the insidious deceives through habit. In one sense, of course, art with its ideal world is above the morality of our everyday world, since, as Bradford puts it, in morals we have to accept conventional standards (or suffer the consequences) whereas in art we can enjoy

it's supreme privilege of freedom.

One need not read far in Bradford's early writings to discover the high morality he finds in great art, especially in his favorite literary types, poetry and drama. His first attempts to define beauty, as we have seen, locate it on the highest plane. An examination of the section on poetry which follows shortly will confirm beyond doubt Bradford's faith in the moral nature of that form. In "Notes for Classes and Lectures" Bradford lists four reasons for the moral value of tragedy. Elsewhere he declares that the greatest music and poetry give him a nobler feeling for the good and at the same time urge him on in the quest for beauty. In the passing years, however Bradford's concept of the purpose behind the religion of his day fluctuated, he never lost his conviction as to the high purpose of great art. In certain moments of despair, perhaps the aging doubter thought beauty the only religion, the only morality.

Beauty as Vocation. Young Bradford struggled painfully to establish for himself the justification of beauty in a world so ruled by Philistinism. Thus he cries out that if beauty has the lofty nature he is convinced it has, why should man think it inferior to money, to food, to gossip, and even to philanthropy?

Cannot mind give to mind, as well as body to body? When I

2. N.p.
Labor for beauty do I not do my duty as when I labor for love? Why should I torment myself with this perpetually? I am not made to read pamphlets about Indians, or devote my life and strength to the barbarous African. "But," they say, "it is easy to dream it your duty to sit in a comfortable chair, and drowse away the time in pretty fancies of rainbows ... to read, and delight your soul." O, God, it is not easy! If one but knew. What could I teach the savages, who know nothing myself? ... Such is not for me. ... Beauty is my mistress: her I follow. Let the world call me sluggard, dreamer, selfish enthusiast, or (its final of opprobrium) poet. What care I? My path is before me.

A man, Bradford continues, must use his special talents. He feels that his own work for beauty is a "labor of the soul."

A few months later, after a talk with a friend about the Philistines, Bradford records another grappling with the problem, concluding that "a man who devotes himself to study and thought without writing a line gives a noble example and influence. ... A few days later he declares that if he cannot create beauty and poetry at least he will study and teach them. Twenty years later he is more confident. "A thing of Beauty is a joy forever. That," he declares, "is my creed. To study and write poetry—that is my life."

Beauty and Education. Bradford's first concern for beauty in education was evident, perhaps, when he decided that Harvard would not provide an atmosphere favorable to his development as a poet. He became convinced that the prescribed college curriculum would interfere not only with such phases of his experiences in beauty as writing and

2. *I.,* 1663-64, p. 17.
reading but also with his enjoyment of music and physical nature.

In an essay of 1900 Bradford attacks the conventional high-school course in literature as being too much under college domination. He asserts that good literature is the most valuable form of art since it can be enjoyed with neither effort nor expense. Thus it should be the first if not the only purpose of teaching good literature to stimulate a love for it and the habit of reading intelligently and pleasurably. The typical practice of stressing memorizing and criticizing has doubtless been the reason that few people really like poetry. Bradford does not suggest a definite program but does emphasize the importance of individual taste and impressions and the need for relating literature vitally to life.

Bradford was concerned over the problem that the tremendous increase in knowledge poses for education. Educators, he thought, had turned in despair to "pure utilitarianism": the selection from the overwhelming mass of material which bore directly upon man's struggle for existence. To Bradford, however, the solution seemed "to lie in beauty." Hence his delight at Frost's appointment as "Poet in Residence" at the University of Michigan. Frost was to "stand for" beauty.

3. Ibid., p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 10.
not with any stir of preaching, or any apparatus of pre-
Raphaelite quaintness, but simply with love and adoration
and large, serene endeavor to fill all the busy lives about
(him) ... with the sense that the beautiful helps us just
by its immediate satisfaction and that the beautiful may be
had without professors and without libraries and without
vexation of spirit, merely by learning to give one's self
up to it in pure quietude of heart.¹

Beauty as Release. We have seen how Bradford as a young man
found release not only in the beauty of literature but also in that
of nature, of music, and of sculpture and painting. From Life and
I comes a discussion of beauty "viewed from the standpoint of re-
ception" as contrasted with that from the standpoint of creation.

When we are weary of ourselves, and seek escape and oblivion,
nothing helps us more than beauty in its varied forms. It
scatters sordid preoccupations, shakes off trammels and fetters,
and sets us free.²

As specific examples of the "merely receptive side" of the apprecia-
tion of beauty, Bradford goes on to discuss the collector and the
critic.³ Whereupon he again stresses the freedom which rightly be-
longs to art.

In the enjoyment of the beautiful, at least, we may follow the
impulse of our own souls and if we will, worship what we like,
and eschew what we dislike.⁴

Despite the fact that so few people really avail themselves of the
opportunities involved, Bradford concludes that

the charm of this aesthetic deliverance, with the conscious I
intruding in it, is incomparable, and those who learn to culti-
vate it and give it way provide for themselves one of the right-
est and most enduring satisfactions that this world affords.⁵

2. F. 78.
3. Ibid., pp. 78–79.
4. Ibid., p. 79.
5. Ibid., p. 80.
Chapter II

Literary Theory

1. Literature in General.

The Nature of Literature. Literature, writes Bradford, is in the broad sense "all the written records of mankind." A "more human definition," he hastens to add, is that "literature is the expression of life. Books are nothing but speech in permanent form." And speech is "always the effort of man to communicate his own life to other men. Literature is nothing more." Only such an approach, Bradford thinks, can give an old literature reality to later readers. Elsewhere Bradford calls literature "the concrete embodiment" of our human joys and sorrows and hopes and passions.

When he defines literature as the expression or reflection of life, Bradford uses the word "life" in both its group and individual senses. Thus he discusses literature as the expression of a nation and an age. "Taine's theory that literature is the outcome of national life and character is entirely just, so far as it goes, and endlessly fruitful." Almost always the greatest books of a nation reflect that nation. Bradford points to the traits of national character found in classical and modern European literatures.

2. *[Teaching of Literature in High School,* p.10. Bradford, of course, made distinctions, but he once wrote, "I find it difficult to admit that any reading is worthless...." Even the poorest writer may reflect life in some edifying way (*ibid., p. 2h).]
He reminds us, however, that "back of the book is always the man—or woman." Those general outlines of national life and contemporary trends which Taine stresses are but a background for the subtle, flexible human personality. Besides the diarists, the essayists, and the lyrical poets who often wear their hearts on their sleeves, the objective writers like Tacitus, Gibbon, and Macaulay also expose themselves on every page. Even the dramatists reveal something of character. Bradford concludes that the true way to understand a book is to know as much as possible about its author.

Literature is an art, or tries to be, Bradford believes, when the writer uses all the possible skill and wit and genius he can summon to express himself most perfectly for both profit and delight.

Take the first essential element of all art, composition, where has it so unlimited a scope as in literature?...

The principle of artistic order applies equally to a philosophical treatise and to a work of romantic fiction. Its object, of course, is more perfect expression.

Bradford proceeds to trace briefly the process of development in literary form, not chronologically but psychologically according to the blending of "vital substance and artistic treatment."

Thus, he observes, at the beginning of the life of nations come bare annals with neither instructive comment nor artistic handling—

corresponding to the factual diaries for individuals. Letters, which appear at the next higher stage, still concern facts but, because they are written to other people, show some consideration for expressive form. With life still the basic core there is a transition to more formal literature: annals become history and diaries and letters become biography through the efforts of literary artists working with real life but using form for effectiveness.

Bradford does not find in the shift from factual to imaginative literature the expected gap, since imagination, however it transposes and transforms, must work on life and life only. Thus many historians are almost novelists, and novelists invent names of characters and webs of circumstances simply to gain freedom for presenting the essential truths of human nature. Even in the less serious fiction "the hero and heroine must be you or I, going through what might happen to me or you. Otherwise the book is simply dead to us." 3

Nor does Bradford find a change in taking the step further which leads to verse. "Truth of earth in the language of heaven are all we learn from any great poet." Then comes the drama, which, the most complex of all objective literary forms from the Greeks to

2. Ibid., p. 161.
4. Ibid.
Shaw, is an "incessant, curving, inexhaustible expression of life." Lastly, in that "most subtle, elaborate, artificial of literary forms, lyrical poetry," we find that "the wheel is come full circle and we are swept back once more to the elementary, intimate expression of personal life" as in the diary.

In "A Gospel of Joy" Bradford declares that "do what we will, we cannot prevent literature from being personal. Every artist presents things to us as he sees it." This new personal aspect—provided it be not a shallow interpretation—gives a piece of literature value and interest. In a paradoxical vein, however, (perhaps chiefly from a momentary exasperation at what he calls the trite thoughts of his own essay,) he declares that most literature is commonplace and that nine tenths of it is "commonplace lies." Everything good has been repeated until it is common property. Nevertheless, elsewhere, as we have seen, Bradford finds it hard to admit that any literature is actually without value.

If literature is personal, it is also, naturally enough, inconsistent. Since life changes from day to day, "If we are good for anything, our opinions change with it. Inconsistency is the sign of life, consistency of death." Though literature is personal and thus

2. P. 11.
inconsistent, it must yet, in order to be "true or permanent," have
general ideas. "No art can subsist on these alone, but neither can
they be altogether thrown overboard."

The qualities that Bradford seemed to prize most in creative lit-
erature were lucidity, sincerity, charm, and laughter. In his later
years, alarmed at finding these qualities so rare in contemporary lit-
erature and overwhelmed by the flood of new works demanding attention,
he turned more and more back to the classics of all languages. Brad-
ford's attitude here was more than an old man's preference for the
favorites of his early years; it was also the logical (and illogical)
result of his belief that literature was the reflection of life. That
life, as he saw it about him in the period following World War I, was
increasingly complex, chaotic, and ugly. Though he was willing to
make allowances for the dated backgrounds of his own criteria and prej-
udices, he could not help feeling that contemporary trends placed an
increasing and perhaps a crushing burden on literature's task of re-
reflecting its age—he did not seem to realize how this assumption
threatened the validity of his basic definition of literature as life.

2. *L., XXIII, 4.
3. Ibid., LII, 77.
4. Ibid., VIII, 15.
5. See the later years of the Journal and in the Brooks edition of the
letters passages like those on pages 123 and 160.
Thus he wondered how literature would eventually express the intricacies of American life. Would there be an instinctively American literary product, he asked, or would the blending be impossible?

The Significance of Literature. Bradford's key definition of literature as the reflection and interpretation of life for both the group and the individual obviously establishes its significance. In the section called "Beauty and Education" the reader may remember Bradford's conviction that literature is the most valuable aesthetic form since, in comparison with such arts as music and painting, it offers pleasure with neither effort nor expense. What books meant to the young Bradford, as he remembers in his Autobiography, is a further explanation of the universal value of literature. Thus books are "souls ... throbbing with vitality, full of rich and endless revelation about humanity" and more satisfying than actual social intercourse. If human beings are not always clearly revealed in books, at least the reader has time to study them unhampered by the artificial conditions under which he would meet them in real life.

Bradford would have been the first to admit that one can indulge too freely in this bookish intercourse, but the admission would not invalidate the basic value of literature as a way to knowing one's fellow men and hence ourselves.

In any historical period, of course, a nation's literature re-

1. "Literature and Life," (1924), ER, III, 159. As late as the mid-twenties Bradford could write, "The aesthetic development of America must be a large and fruitful subject." (*L., XXXIV, 202.)
2. But, of course, this is not strictly true.
3. P. 248.
cords the national traits. Bradford was especially impressed by the manner in which great literature expressed and interpreted great periods of national life as in the case of the Periclean and Elizabethan ages. Thus in "The Study of the Classics" Bradford gives these reasons why Greek and Latin are significant for modern education: (1) literature has value for carrying out Arnold's object of education, i.e. "To know the best that has been thought and said in the world"; (2) the most important reason—the classics, handed down from the Renaissance, permeate all the literature and life of modern Europe so thoroughly that one cannot understand the modern world without a knowledge of Greek and Latin; (3) today in this the third great civilized era we can through the classics compare our era with the other great periods and adjust accordingly. In a letter Bradford makes a specific application in English literature of the second point above: "Shakespeare and Milton and Fielding and Sterne and Shelley and Byron are the best possible commentary on Shaw and Wells and Hasefield and Lewis and Dreiser." Elsewhere Bradford states that great classics—and here Bradford is doubtless using the term in a broad sense—have "vast spiritual connotations."

In his "Notes for Classes and Lectures" Bradford classifies certain functions of literature. Thus "Books as Helpers" include those which give direct practical advice, those which give consolation, and

2. *<ref>, XXIX, 249.
those which bring inspiration. "Books as Companions" include books before printing, which Bradford observes, are not as few as might be supposed, and books after printing which now flood the world and make the library significant as a quiet retreat. With this second broad classification Bradford apparently puts memoirs, which he calls the "backstairs of history."

Under "Books as Idols" Bradford summarizes ways in which books are of negative significance. First, concerning the reputation of authors, one finds it hard to strike a mean between superstition and irreverence. Second, for the antiquarian's obsession with books, details loom too large. Third, excessive reading can choke the mind, as it did with Southey, and can diffuse if not weaken the memory. Fourth, the fact that education from books is idolized overlooks the basic truth that books in themselves are nothing. Fifth, scholars, in their apparently needful isolation, may incur pedantry and its attendant evils. To retain his balance, the scholar needs contact with the practical life. Sixth, and closely related to the three preceding points, is the pride of knowledge which comes from the worship of books.

When one adds the above paragraphs to the evidence in the sections on esthetic theory, on the separate literary forms, and on the applied criticism of individual works, it is clear that to Bradford literature had an all-embracing significance. He realized, as he said in connection with the fourth point under "Books as Idols," that literature

2. Ibid.
demands creative reading, the lack of which is one of the chief reasons why books do not attain their full importance in the contemporary world. He constantly realized also the dangers in the complex nature of words. On a very few occasions, indeed, he seemed even to doubt the validity of his beloved art. Thus a reading of the Saturday Review, with its bewildering vista of contemporary writing, made him wonder why he was a member of the "most dishonest, the most pretentious, the most artificial, and the most thoroughly useless profession in the world." But in general, of course, literature was the breath of life to him.

Bradford's general theory of literature—as befits the lover of Greek and Elizabethan literature—has both classical and romantic qualities. If it does not specify, particularly for the modern world, the classical confidence in a "rationally ordered and harmonious universe," nor suggest rules in the neo-classical manner with emphasis on such confining principles as "correctness" and "good sense," it does, for example, with its insistence that literature is always based on life and should be true and permanent, and its assumption of the interrelationships of past and present literary ages, approach the universal aspect of classicism. And Bradford's idea of literature as a reflection and interpretation of life is so broad that it perhaps includes another basic classical concept. Bate says that classical art,
though imitating what was essential truth in nature, was an attempt
to help man complete himself: "to carry out, to the fullest extent,
what is best and most distinctive in him." All men leading vital
and full lives express in one way or another the essential qualities
in "nature." The classical writer, pledged to reproduce living imi-
tations or counterparts of these qualities would presumably treat
nothing really foreign to man's experience and interests. Thus the
writer who, in the Bradford manner, was pledged to record and inter-
pret human life and who felt, also in the Bradford manner, the ser-
ious human purpose of literature, would inevitably deal with, by
whatever names, the same basic qualities of "nature" and develop or
idealize or "imitate" them.

Romantic, of course, is the insistence of Bradford's theory on
the importance of the individual behind a piece of literature with
the psychological implications involved. His theory also hints at
what will appear more clearly in his concepts of specific literary
types—the romantic idea of literature "as expression, as the in-
tense and vital capturing of the unique character—or, to use Ger-
ard Manly Hopkins's term—the 'insecape' of the object." Literature
as a "concrete embodiment" of man's life experiences suggests
the realistic portrayal of "men as they are" as well as the realist-

2. Ibid., p. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 272.
ic concern for detail and the romantic attention to the particular. Bradford's concept of literature accords with the romantic conviction that art performs many of the important and beneficial functions of human life.

Bradford’s general theory of literature is neither complete nor original, but, at least, it is a catholic one. It suggests, if it does not furnish adequate means for, the avoidance of empty classical formalism, of futile romantic escapism, and of realistic mediocrity. It would aim rather at a literature of full dimensions, of flexibility, grace, and vitality.

2. Literary Modes: from a Humanistic Base

In 1903, after attacking what he felt was a contemporary school of false romanticism, Bradford warned against critical systems: systems, he declared, make people see things as they wish to. Some twenty years later he observed half ironically that Paul Elmer More

knows, he has an absolute standard of morals and art and philosophy.... I know nothing and have no standards ... only a bit of love and human sympathy.1

About two years before his death, in commenting on the thesis of a contemporary writer that the critic of the future must not only know esthetic technique but must build first on the economic and social background of the author, Bradford cautioned that "social art is not art but propaganda" and that the critic working under such a plan

1. *Notes on Reading*, n.p.
would be likely to treat human nature as if it were secondary, to fit
life's realities to his own fleeting theories.

And the remedy for this ever-breathing peril is ... to seek
the fundamental unity [of humanity] which is the sure and
lasting foundation of all art and all criticism that count.¹

These observations, which cover more than half of Bradford's
writing years, reveal, I believe, that his major base of approach to
the various critical schools, the approach which he most clearly recog-
nized and admitted, at least, was a broad humanism. ² In the early days,
as we have seen, he was both tantalized and tormented by what might be
called supernaturalism. ³ At the other end of the scale, scientific
naturalism, particularly in the honesty of its purpose, attracted him
until he suspected a tyranny of things and systems. But Bradford was
always at home on the middle road of humanism, the road of his beloved
classics. "Humanism," Bradford wrote, "is the study and still more the
love of humanity as such, just because it is human." ⁴ Certainly, from

¹ [ER, VI, 17k].
² See also, for example, [L., XXXIV, 23]l, and [E., ed. B., p. 292. More
satisfactory than Bradford's own brief definition, which comes a few
lines later, is Webster's non-technical definition: "A system, mode, or
attitude of thought or action centering upon distinctly human inter-
est or ideals...." (New International, 2nd ed., p. 1212.) If Bradford
never accepted the systematic doctrines of orthodox literary humanists
like those of the English Renaissance, the eighteenth century, and the
recent More-Babbitt school, he shared with them a strong sense of the
values in the heritage offered to men by the classics.
³ There seems to be no term at the supersensory level quite parallel
to humanism.
⁴ [ER, III, 105].
the first biographical study of 1887 and the early poems, plays, novels, and critical essays to the last volume of the distinguished psychologist of the early 1930's, Bradford's chief concern was the sympathetic study of man.

When the humanist turns to the past, Bradford declared, he cuts away the superficial differences of speech, dress, and manners and goes down to the human heart beneath. "So humanism is the one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin." Here we find a key doctrine in Bradford's psychography, indeed in his whole writing: the common identity of mankind beneath the surface differences. Again, Bradford wrote that the humanist

should be universal, should be perpetually using the past in close, intertwined connection with the present, and should be at all times ready to use both for the interpretation of the future.1

One is reminded here of the Bradford who loved and reconciled the old Greek with the modern French drama, who saw the beauty in "The Novel Two Thousand Years Ago" by Xenophon and the novels of the twentieth century, who enjoyed both Shelley and Trollope, who discerned the humanity and the Americanism of Lee, who gave understanding answer to correspondents of all ages from all parts of the United States, who analyzed and prophesied concerning the bewildering literature of his day, and who wrote over one hundred portraits of

1. *BR, III, 105.*
2. Ibid., p. 107.
4. In such articles as "Idealism in Literature," "Mid-Nineteenth Century Realism," "The Mission of the Literary Critic," and in many passages on poetry and the classics.
sins, saints, and ordinary sufferers from many times and nations.

Humanism in the stricter sense usually suggests anesthetic outcome in classicism. But Bradford's humanism, we have just seen was indeed broad. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that no one label will suffice for his literary theory. Bradford's tidy New England mind (tidy in some respects, at least) approved a good deal of classicism while the emotional confusion of his revolt against Philistinism drove him to much of romanticism—a logical and common enough paradox for young men with orderly minds and active emotions. Meanwhile, the realists won some of his approval, but, more significantly, Sainte-Beuve and those disciples who, led by Lemaitre, in Bradford's opinion best revealed the master's spirit, were impelling the young writer towards a catholic impressionism.

**Classicism.** Since Bradford had little interest in critical theory *per se*, his actual discussions of the various schools are scattered and fragmentary. For example, nowhere, I believe, has he a formal treatment of the principles of classicism. A poem of 1895 reveals certain bases for the appeal Greek art made to him. In "Greek Sculpture..."

2. The use of school headings for this discussion perhaps assumes too much for Bradford's theory—at least, they have organizational value.
3. The true devotee of classical criticism, one would naturally suppose, would have a fairly intimate knowledge of Aristotle's *Poetics*. But as late as 1926 Bradford wrote, "I know nothing about Aristotle..." He did admit, however, that he had read enough in the history of philosophy to know what the Greek stood for (J., 1925–26, p. 177).
ture" he says that neither music nor painting can bring again the calm perfection of Greek excellence and the beauty that came from the philosophy which stressed the perfection of the whole man. An early Journal passage praises the Greeks for possessing beyond other peoples in nearly perfect balance the "three Divine elements of Love, Beauty and Truth..."

Bradford was nowhere more impressed technically by the Greeks' sense of proportion and balance than in their poetry, especially in its hexameter line, "the most perfect form for narrative that has ever been devised by man..." Only English blank verse is comparable, but "the result of the comparison...is to show the relative failure of the English..." Bradford finds that Everywhere in the Greek hexameter the essential unity of the line is always dominant, yet no verse-form in the world so perfectly accomplishes precisely what you are aiming at, the same and highest perfection of unity, variety, and flexibility combined.

This love of classical balance and control in poetry was obviously a major cause for Bradford's lifelong aversion to what he considered lawless verse rhythms and for his love of the old forms and his conviction that they were far from exhausted. Contemporary poetry, he felt, with countless thousands writing it, needed not new form but new thought.

The charm of Greek simplicity and clearness in form and thought always held Bradford. Clearness, indeed, became almost a religion to him. Much of his antipathy to Victorian literature, as we have seen, grew out of what he called its "turgid obscurity." The complexities of certain modern poets drove him more and more to take refuge in the clarity of the old classics or of the French prose masters of the nineteenth century. And Leopardi fascinated Bradford with the purity and simplicity of a style admittedly based on Greek and early Italian models.

One phase of universality (albeit with romantic connotations), Bradford felt was the very keystone of his successful writing, his conviction that human identity is "the basis of biography." In his early years the impact of reading world poets made him declare that their greatness lay in the loss of individuality:

the infinite in one form or the other has taken possession of them, swept them beyond the bounds of the human, the individual, the transitory; and borne them into the ever-pulsing centre of the Great Soul.

The resultant calm, which is the calm of Homer and Shakespeare, may not always satisfy "feverish youth," which hates boundaries, but the mature man "sees that everything is large enough for him, that his work cannot possibly fill his space." Bradford's early favorites, Goethe and Arnold, shared, of course, this universal outlook, this equilibrium of the spirit. In his early days the biographer revered

1. NS, p. 11.
2. BH, p. 27.
3. WM, p. 40.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
and actively sought what he felt he needed so much—the spiritual poise of classicism. Later he could find a temporary if wistful relief in what he knew he himself could never achieve.

All his life, too, Bradford cherished what he seemed to think was a natural product of classical serenity, the sunshine and grace-ful humor of good nature as exemplified, for instance, in the sweet and wholesome tone of Xenophon or the cheerful sympathy of Pliny the Younger. One of Bradford's chief literary objectives, indeed, was to frame in verse the charm of a sane laughter he felt the world much needed. Such an attempt was A Prophet of Joy (1920); its failure was a bitter disappointment.

Bradford's treatment of that overworked critical term, nature, particularly in his early years, usually concerns the external side and has romantic empha-ses. An early Journal passage, however, involves at least one phase of a classical view of nature. If today, Bradford thinks, people would only go to external nature as the Greeks did, they would find that it teaches "all that is really necessary to the perfection of human nature: due boundary, moderation, and rounded balance of all good."

Romanticism. In his essay of 1887 called "Idealism in Literature," Bradford traces briefly his idea of the history of modern literature with emphasis upon the beginnings of romanticism. He feels that modern literature emerged with the first genuine influences of Christi-

1. NE, p. 262.
2. Ibid., p. 285.
anity upon life. In the preceding period, he believes, when religion, philosophy, and poetry went hand in hand, literature embodied all the noblest and the divine elements. But Christianity wanted the conquest of sin—not literary art. The result was too often a stormy eloquence, exaggerated in contrast to the harmony of the classical works; thence came the Gothic in architecture, Beethoven, Dante, and Milton, where everything is aspiration, an aspiration, Bradford fears, that is dead or dying today. Since ordinary human nature, however, is usually incapable of sustaining itself on the level of the Christian ideal, after the ascetic rule of the medieval period came the Renaissance where the critical and the sensual sides of man claimed their places, all the more powerfully because of the previous restraint. Thus was born the other great element in modern literature, the romantic. These two elements, the Gothic and the romantic, Bradford feels, were the two streams in which ran the real current of literature from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. Bradford suggests that the key to the whole romantic movement was the objective of story-telling, of entertainment. Shakespeare, for example, was fundamentally a story-teller who wrote to amuse and relax his Elizabethan audience, yet was also an artist whose power of thought and imagination dwarfed the story.

In 1913 Bradford wrote that in art the romantic movement, "if it means anything, means the desperate desire to get out of common, ordered humdrum conventional existence" and proceeds to list various romantic qualities in prose and poetry. Thus Scott and Dumas turned from the "gross, immediate reality of Fielding and Smollett to seek human nature in strange and distant gars and colors, wild adventure, chivalrous sacrifice, quaint device of fancy, purely decorative."

Meanwhile in poetry appeared

mysticism, supernaturalism, the deep sense of the unknown and the passionate desire to probe it, superficial and picturesque in Scott, delicate, strange and haunting in Coleridge and Shelley, profound and metaphysical in the German Faust.1

Aspiration is in the "wild revolt of Byron and Musset and Leopardi, the early Goethe, and the early George Sand." And all of these, declares Bradford,

however they differed among themselves, agreed that the world must be made over, the truth of nature, human and divine, animate or inanimate, must renovate the false, artificial, impossible conditions of a conventional age.2

In a letter of 1925 Bradford asserted his belief that the romantic rebels of the European Rousseauistic school had a valid incentive in the moldy fabric of contemporary society. Back in the 1830's Bradford felt that the failure of the Goethe-Sand-Byron-Shelley school, which aimed "to seek the cause and end of life," was "one of the

1. "Literature and Life," (1913), p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 35.
3. Ibid., XXVIII, 61a.
darkest signs for literature."

Bradford has little more to say about romanticism as a movement, but he can be linked in various ways with certain traditional attributes of romanticism. Earlier pages, for example, have shown something of his youthful, mystical idealism, his love for external nature, his fondness for bookish solitude, his delight in the classical and Renaissance ages, his conviction of the necessity for presenting the "'inscape' of the object," and his individualism. In the next few pages I shall attempt to enlarge upon and clarify his relationships with romanticism at certain basic points.

Bradford was nineteen when he wrote in his Journal,

A discussion with papa yesterday... I have my point of view, and he has his; and they are diametrically opposite. So true it is that some men are born idealist and some realist.\(^2\)

Bradford was right: he was born, and, though basis after basis seemed to crumble, remained an idealist to the end. This urge was at the roots of his later scepticism with its "blessed privilege ... that one is not obliged to believe anything disagreeable and is at liberty to hope for all lovely and noble and beautiful things." Even though Bradford had lacked the instinct, no such devoted and persistent reader of the great poets could long remain immune.

It was thus hardly an accident that Bradford should include in his first published book, *Types of American Character*, an essay called "The American Idealist." Idealism, Bradford says here, began when the first

3. bid., p. 159.
man postulated a life beyond or outside of this world. The young essayist believes that idealism comes essentially from the moral side of man's nature, since the intellect tries always to be impersonal.

The ideal is infinite in its persistence, infinite in its pro- tean power of reembodiment, remanifestation. All it demands is faith in something ... beyond the passing sensuous impression; give it that, and it will conquer the world.

Bradford feels that idealism is stronger than positivism and scepticism in that it is affirmative, constantly self-assertive, and completely masters its followers. No philosophy, indeed, is more triumphant, more positive, and more optimistic than true idealism.

The ordinary view of the idealist as being negative perhaps has some truth—he tears down that he may rebuild anew for himself. A believer by nature, he is not necessarily either religious or moral; he needs only a lasting enthusiasm for something that requires devotion and sacrifice. In the spirit of the pursuit rather than the thing pursued lies the distinction. Alexander and Milton, Bradford feels, were idealists. Caesar was not and, "so far as we can judge," neither was Shakespeare. To the idealist the Idea is not just a dogma; it becomes "a fact in his mind." Thus his conviction often brings intolerance.

1. Types of American Character, p. 29.
2. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
3. Ibid., p. 30.
4. Ibid., p. 22.
5. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
6. Ibid., p. 37.
7. Ibid., p. 38.
Since the anti-idealistic intellect is especially dominant in the nineteenth century, Bradford feels that nature takes partial revenge through the accompanying spread of pessimism, which is "idealism turned inside out." Types of contemporary idealists, Bradford points out, are the philanthropist and the critic, "perhaps I should say the scientist," who "has reduced his own personality to a minimum, and lives on curiosity." 2 Transcendentalism, the essayist finds, was "idealism incarnate" and "the most interesting point in the history of American thought." 3 Bradford concludes his study with the thought that idealism will never die because "something outside, something beyond, something larger than itself, humanity must have to strive for, to hope for." 4

The main thesis of Bradford's article "Idealism in Literature," which was written some eight years before the essay in *Types of American Character*, is the danger that the new realism will forget the necessity for aspiration. "In art you must look up not down. You must be a servant not a master." 5 The defects of this realism, coupled with the frivolous nature of the day's romanticism, a romanticism which uses novels for such purposes as journeys and headaches, makes Bradford wonder if there is hope for contemporary literature. Perhaps, he suggests, if to it can be restored some of the idealism,

i.e. the earnestness and seriousness which were lacking in Renaissance romanticism. The solution may lie further in mingling the elements of the Gothic and romantic in uniting aspiration and passion with grace, harmony, and charm. The salutary idealism Bradford has here in mind he proceeds to define in a vague and confusing fashion thus: the sweetness, the amenity of romanticism, the seriousness, the truth of realism, but a something of light, of intensity, of aspiration which is forever wanting in these as we know them now—in one word, the enthusiasm of the ideal.

We have seen something of Bradford's bookish solitude, of the isolation of a young artist who tries to create in an unfavorable environment, feelings of which he became increasingly self-conscious. Thus in 1819 he took an uneasy pleasure in a passage from Vasari's Life of Michael Angelo which described the great artist as a "devoted lover of solitude, devoted as he was to Art, which demands the whole man, with all his thoughts, for herself." Another Journal passage, however, reveals a different and a more profound isolation that is

1. "Idealism in Literature," pp. 12-13. A few lines later, Bradford asks abruptly, "What is the idea?" He answers that long thought has suggested to him that God is the idea. In any case, "he who feels the idea knows it and no one else can. That which ennobles the soul and makes it forget itself, passion and aspiration and faith, and pain also—these are the idea." (Ibid., p. 15.) One wonders if Bradford is not confusing or perhaps using interchangeably in the Platonic sense the words ideal and idea.

not far removed from a fundamental romantic pattern: the view of Pascal that "man's fate is the antithesis of greatness and misery" and that "man is first of all a creature lost in the universe and he makes his shelter, physical, social, and intellectual." 1

Passed a rather solitary day and somehow or other it bears in upon me more than usual the vast and insuperable isolation of life, of the life of the spirit, of the soul, it being remembered... that I have no faintest idea what I mean by the word soul at all. Indeed, nothing emphasizes that solitude more than such complete dissolution of the soul itself, reduction of all life and all one is to a mere shifting maze and complication of fleeting associations, held together by the vaguest sense of memory, and liable to be scattered and disseminated at any moment by the slightest external shock.... Oh, the strange sense of that solitude. It does not seem to terrify me nowadays as it did in youth, affects me rather with a vast curiosity. I think of myself—whatever myself is—as adrift, a mere speck of spiritual dust... 2

Bradford's love of the past was not wholly in the romantic tradition. In 1919 he wrote thus:

The Middle Ages—they tease me, they perplex me, they tantalize me. I know nothing of them, I cannot seem to get at them. Their literature is strange to me, not akin as Greek and Latin are, as the Renaissance is. My instinct is all with Sainte-Beuve, who, in discussing the mystery of the siege of Orleans, frankly declares his preference for the pure sunlight and warm earthliness of the great classical ages, as distinguished from the obscure epochs of moonlight and mist... 3

Perhaps a year later Bradford declared that he loathed the Middle Ages and hated its allegory. In the medieval background, of course, loomed the Schoolman, those terrifying giants of a speculation bitter experience had taught Bradford he must shun. Another

3. Ibid., p. 173.  
emphatic aversion for Bradford was the East, past or present. As late as 1927 he exclaimed, "I loathe the Orient, its cruelty, its lust, its lies." This sentiment, as his love for the Bhagavadgita showed, did not necessarily include the sacred philosophers. For the rest, he was much drawn to the immediate past, the early nineteenth century in England, France, and Italy which had produced so many writers congenial to his own temperament. It would be unfair to Bradford to leave the impression that his love of the past was, like Hazlitt's, wholly a purposeful escape from the "dust and smoke and noise of modern literature." Bradford's letter files are proof that though the writers of his own day increasingly amazed or perplexed or even disgusted him, they did not close his mind to new possibilities in books and men.

When Bradford wrote that "The key to my whole life certainly lies in the wild, uncontrollable violence of my imaginative activity..." he rejected any Freudian notion that sexual expression or repression was responsible. In this vein a journal passage suggested a linking:

Curious to compare my life and character with that of Rousseau, whose Confessions I am now re-reading for the biography book. There are some very marked points of similarity, the unlimited power of self-torture, the lawless wanderings of imagination in all directions and on all sorts of subjects, the extreme of, at any rate, imagined sensibility.

With such evidence of Bradford's belief in the significance of

4. Ibid., p. 195.
the imagination and in the relationship of his own imagination with a
traditional if less desirable romantic type, one might expect to find
in his writings considerable discussion of this faculty in the Cole-
ridgean manner. Strangely enough, except for a passage in the por-
trait of Keats and a few scattered references, Bradford's works are
remarkably bare of the word imagination.

Even the Keats paragraphs, the nearest approach to an analysis of
the all-pervasive, esemplastic imagination, are largely descriptive
and lean analytically on the poet himself. Bradford begins thus:

But what is most striking about this born poet [Keats]
in all these daily matters and relations of life is the rich-
ness and splendor of imagination with which he transfused and
interpenetrated even the commonest things. All readers of his
poetry are familiar with this quality.... But his letters are
at once less known and more personal, and the glow and glamor
of imagination touches them everywhere as it does the poems.
Often in the middle of a letter he burst right out into verse.
Or he brings in his memories of Shakespeare and other poets till
it is difficult to tell where they end and he begins. He him-
self marks this element of his correspondence and enlarges upon
it delightfully: 'If I scribble long letters I must play my
vagaries—I must be too heavy, or too light, for whole pages—
I must play my draughts as I please....' In no other writer
except Flaubert is this play at once so abundant and spon-

1. For example, neither the Journal nor the Letters edited by Brooks
has any index entries under "Imagination." The section on creative
ability which follows in these pages gives, of course, indirect ap-
proaches, and such a passage as that on the excitement of the cre-
ative passion and the creative process (J., ed. B., pp. 238-39) un-
doubtedly involves the imagination though the term is never used.
Coleridge's metaphysical discussions had perhaps frightened Brad-
ford off the subject.
taneous.

After showing Keats' imagination at work with that "most humdrum"
of concerns, money, Bradford continues:

And if imagination can so trifle with familiar matter
today, it is easy to see how wide will be its range in lar-
ger concerns that more naturally appeal to it. The plastic
arts were not much within the range of Keats's study or com-
petence. Yet here also it is evident that his aesthetic sen-
sibility reacted with singular passionate ardor, and imagina-
tion could hardly play more richly than it did about his "Grec-
cian Urn." So with music. His technical knowledge and exper-
ience were no doubt small. But the instant a musical sugges-
tion touches him it gets interwoven with a range of thought
and feeling far beyond the immediate present....

Bradford is especially impressed by Keats' imagination as it
works with both Elizabethan and romantic power in the realm of ex-
ternal nature.

Of all the great qualities of his poetry this is perhaps the
greatest. It works as much through the chaotic luxuriance of
'Endymion' as in the concentrated beauty of his great odes and
sonnets. From 'fast-fading violets' to 'earnest stars' there
is no natural object that is not transfigured and transported
into the realm of imperishable beauty.

But here too the letters afford a more personal and inti-
mate phase of the same passionate familiarity and rapture.
Sometimes it is a broad and almost comic handling of more super-
ficial aspects, say a trip through Devon blighted and thwarted
by perpetual rain.... Sometimes natural objects are converted
with Shakespearian alchemy into their human spiritual equiva-

cents.... Or again there is a flare of splendor when the whole
universe is laid under contribution to appease our mortal mis-
cery....

Bradford proceeds to quote the famous sentence beginning "In truth,
the great elements we know of, are no mean comforters...."

2. Ibid., pp. 217-18.
3. Ibid., pp. 218-19.
Such a significant and dominating "element of mental make-up" as was Keats' imagination, observes Bradford, "is inevitably much concerned with itself, and this was characteristic of Keats from an early period." Bradford then quotes from a Keats letter a "remarkable page" which analyses the "imaginative power ... with extraordinary subtlety and insight, not merely as a distinguishing gift of his own but in its essential nature."

A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity—he is continually in, for, and filling some other body. The sun, the moon, the sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity: he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures. 1

Such an imagination, Bradford believes, not content with mere self-analysis, "would be restlessly, eternally eager to project itself in some definite achievement of creative beauty." This eagerness became so intense and constant with Keats, says Bradford, that it was at last "interwoven with almost all his waking and sleeping thought." Bradford implies that Keats' imagination was at least a factor in the Englishman's composition methods, which were neither mechanical nor regularly spaced but included "times when the impulse swept down upon him, took possession of him" and other periods of "large, contented leisure when he asked nothing but to absorb..." 2

Supplementing the above description are two brief, isolated statements in which Bradford further explains the transforming power

1. Ibid., pp. 223-24.
2. Ibid., p. 224.
of the creative imagination. "Long ago it has been shown that genius consists nearly as much in selecting from others and transmuting their rough ore into gold, as in original production." In the same vein he observes that the great imaginative writers have rarely been the great inventors, that their genius seems to express itself rather in transfiguring the material supplied by lesser minds.

Earlier pages have revealed, I believe, that Bradford had some share of that "most characteristic romantic attitude," individualism. If his early absorption with Obermann, Amsel, and Leopardi did not make him the complete egocentric "devoured by melancholy or boredom" and his nonconformity with New England orthodoxy in religious and literary matters did not reveal him as "a fiery rebel against society," they do help to fit him into a pattern of romantic individualism. Bradford's pride in his Pilgrim ancestry, his early devotion to the author of "Self-Reliance," his long discipleship to the Sainte-Beuve who sought truth at all costs, his profound admiration for Abraham Lincoln, and the very philosophy of the literary genre he made his own, psychography, which is founded largely on the principle that "every individual is infinitely varied from every other," are further evidence that Bradford was no friend to regimentation of the mind or

3. Dictionary of World Literature, p. 352. 7. NE, pp. 11-12.
4. Ibid.
of the spirit. We need not forget, however, that earlier pages have also shown that Bradford was often more orthodox in his unorthodoxy than he himself suspected.

Bradford can thus be linked in varying degrees of intimacy with several traditional concepts of romanticism. Since the end of the last century, however, the theory of romanticism has been one of the most hotly debated questions in literary criticism. Recent authoritative and provocative attempts at a definitive analysis are found in the work of Arthur O. Lovejoy and Rene Wellek, most easily accessible, perhaps, in an interpretative article by Morse Peckham, and in the books of Horie N. Fairchild. Let us examine their conclusions briefly and suggest Bradford's relationship to these new concepts.

Peckham concludes that

> Whether philosophic, theologic, or aesthetic, it [Romanticism] is the revolution in the European mind against thinking in terms of static mechanism and the redirection of the mind to thinking in terms of dynamic organicism. Its values are change, imperfection, growth, diversity, the creative imagination, the unconscious.

Peckham suggests in addition a "negative romanticism" which is

> the expression of the attitudes, the feelings, and the ideas of a man who has left static mechanism but has not yet arrived at a reintegration of his thought and art in terms of dynamic organicism.

Peckham believes thus that Wordsworth retained "within his new atti-

1. The Great Chain of Being (1936).
4. See especially The Romantic Quest (1931) and Religious Trends in English Poetry, III (1949).
6. Ibid., p. 15.
tudes a nostalgia for permanence, an ideal of eternal perfection. Thus early do we have the compromise called Victorian. To Wordsworth, Peckham observes, this inconsistency meant the loss of his creative power and a return to a concept of a static, organic society.

The Love-joy-Wellek-Peckham theory, using an historical approach, offers a fundamental synthesis for the movement that culminated in western Europe around 1800. It must be remembered that most of Bradford's writing about romanticism was done about a century later when, as Wellek points out, the modern use of the term was only just being established. With this uncertain context and with Bradford's general suspicion of critical isms, it is not surprising that he should say little about romanticism as a movement in general or in a modern frame of reference. Most of his statements, indeed, suggest rather the approach, used by Fairchild, which identifies romanticism philosophically with what Albert Guerard calls a "universal and permanent" tendency.

It is this looser concept of romanticism that allows Bradford, in his only attempt at tracing the history of romanticism, to find the movement's beginnings back in the Renaissance. Many critics today are not content to stop at eighteenth-century pre-romanticism for origins, and the Renaissance is not the most unlikely source for the self-expression that was romanticism. Again, Bradford's suggestion that the key

3. Preface to World Literature, p. 150.
objective of the early romanticism was story-telling or entertainment, is surely oversimplification; yet story-telling is a part of the Fairchild concepts of romanticism which include self-expression, self-expansion, and "the illusioned view of the universe and of human life."

If Bradford would sorely disappoint Messrs. Lovejoy, Wellek, and Peckham as to general definitions in that vast area which has come to be included under the heading of "romanticism," he would perhaps be more satisfying concerning what Peckham calls the values of romanticism. Thus evidence has appeared and will appear in later pages that Bradford recognized the importance of such concepts as change, growth, diversity, and the creative imagination.

On the whole, however, I believe that Bradford can be located closer to the Fairchild ideas of romanticism just named than to those of the other three scholars. To Fairchild the

taproot of romanticism ... is an eternal and universal and primary fact of consciousness; man's desire for self-trust, self-expression, self-expansion."

This "taproot" concept is simplification, if not oversimplification, but it is an exceptionally useful example. It expresses aptly, I think, the essence of what has come to be recognized as the romantic

1. The Romantic Quest, p. 251.
2. For the idea of change, by way of illustration, note Bradford's early interest in Emerson's philosophy of dynamism(EEJ, p. 105) and his faith in the progress of democracy(EEJ, ed. B., pp. 112-13; EEJ, ed. B., pp. 191-92).
spirit. By this criterion alone, if need be, Bradford can be recognized as in considerable measure a romanticist. In a sense, of course, all men share a desire for "self-trust, self-expression, self-expansion." But self-trust was a particular need for one with the Bradford temperament, self-expression was a necessity for the young rebel caught in a philistine atmosphere, and self-expansion became a passion for the man who had to justify to himself as well as to his family a career in writing. The man who, at the age of fifty-eight, cried,

Here I am, old, decrepit, and decayed, with the oil of life utterly spent in me, and yet I long as passionately to live as I did forty years ago.

and "asked too much of life" was, whatever his expectation of success, striving to achieve, if not, in the later years, to retain or justify what Fairchild calls the "flower of romanticism,"

that illusioned view of the universe and of human life, which is produced by an imaginative fusion of the familiar and the strange, the known and the unknown, the real and the ideal, the finite and the infinite....

It must be conceded that, whatever the reasons, Bradford is lamentably weak in his expression of the theory of romanticism, permanent or historical. Nowhere does he give a genuine overall treatment or a synthesis of the ideas of romanticism. The nearest ap-

2. The Romantic Quest, p. 251. Fairchild also says that romanticism is "essentially a religious experience." (Religious Trends, III, 3.) Neither Bradford nor the Lovejoy group agree directly, but they do give romanticism equal importance. Thus the modern scholars call it a new philosophy of life ("Toward a Theory of Romanticism," p. 11) and Bradford thinks it a reaction against the medieval spirit.
proach lies in the efforts we have noted from the early period, the period in which he was most directly exposed to romanticism, efforts which are indeed juvenile and sketchy. In those early years, it is apparent, Bradford was taken up not with theorizing about romanticism but with experiencing and attempting to create much in the romantic manner. As I have suggested before and as the applied criticism section will show, Bradford's early criticism reflected that bias. Thus his appreciation of the Elizabethans, the Romantic poets, Hawthorne and Emerson, and such continental writers as Senancour, Amiel, and Leopardi had considerable romantic elements. These writers, for example, meant escape from the drab New England scene, they transfigured and expanded his love for external nature, some of them disclosed the secret joys of solitude, others whetted his interest in the past, most of them stimulated his wonder at the powers of the creative imagination and urged him to assert his own individuality. Through all this appreciation, however, I find running a vital thread of broad humanism. Thus the Elizabethans attracted chiefly because of their intense humanity, the Romanticists were admirable both as human beings and as rebels on behalf of a better society, Emerson's influence faded when Bradford found that the Concord man lacked humanity, Hawthorne remained chiefly as a supposed mirror of Bradford's own character, and the European apostles of solitude kept much of their influence by holding a spotlight on the inner man. However casual

1. See especially Bradford's essay "Emerson" of 1868.
Bradford's attitude was towards the theory of romanticism, the romantic philosophy meant significant and complex forces at work in his writing and criticism.

Realism. More definitely than for romanticism, in his critical thinking on realism Bradford considered two concepts. He obviously preferred what he felt was the older and deeper level of fundamental realism that had always permeated English realism, the realism, for example, which, coupled with imagination, had made Shakespeare's greatness, and which in all the great Elizabethans had been far truer than that of Zola, or the realism which "in the larger sense" had been all pervasive in the eighteenth century. Bradford seldom isolated this permanent realism for formal analysis, but in his applied criticism he did constantly treat it as an important literary quality.

From "Notes for Classes and Lectures" comes a brief definition of what may be identified as two subdivisions of the deeper realism. The first, characterized by serenity, is the realism which accepts the conditions of life and has no desire to get beyond them, the realism, for instance, of Fielding and Jane Austen. The second, harsh, bitter, and sad, is exemplified in Swift as well as in such nineteenth-century writers as George Eliot and Howells.

1. Bradford's later attitudes, it may be noted, involve a "nostalgia for permanence, an ideal of eternal perfection" which, in the midst of romantic ferment, suggest what Peckham calls the Victorian compromise ("Towards a Theory of Romanticism," p. 17).
The realism which shaped a movement in the century of Bradford's birth was to him a more superficial and ephemeral type, one, indeed, that he thought had already begun to wane. Since it was a contemporary literary issue, he gave it some theoretical analysis, particularly in such essays as "Idealism in Literature" and "Mid-Nineteenth-Century Realism." The latter essay includes Bradford's fullest attempt at defining realism in general. Thus he writes that the simplest explanation of the term might be "the attempt to see and depict the world as it is." But such words, Bradford declares, are meaningless. He continues,

"Every man sees his own world, and if he depicts it as it is there is little likelihood of its being the same as the world of anybody else. Bradford feels it is safer to say that "realism is the attempt to depict the world as the ordinary man sees it, the average, commonplace man." The typical realist of literature is thus Pepys, "the Homer of the commonplace." Bradford finds a difficulty at this point, for

the artist is by definition, not the average, commonplace man, and when he tries to be a thoroughgoing realist, his artist's genius is perpetually getting between his legs and tripping him up.

1. "Mid-Nineteenth-Century Realism," p. 452. Some fifteen years earlier, Bradford had not been quite so sure. He wrote, "In itself I cannot see that Realism does any harm. In fact, I do not know what it means. Is it the Howells version with men of ordinary dress and speech or is it the Babelaisian men and women of Zola?" ("Early Versions of Prophet of Joy," p. 86.) In the later version Bradford seems to have forgotten the apparent Howells source.
From this condition derive Balzac's fantastic and grotesque touches.

In "Idealism in Literature," as I have already noted, Bradford observes that nineteenth-century realism came as a protest against the "last degradation" of the romantic school which produced novels, for example, merely as entertainment for journeys and relief for headaches. He goes on to analyze a basic weakness of the new school.

The realist reproaches his adversary, Bradford says, for "coining a world out of his own imagination. Life, he says, is richer, wider, deeper than all your dreams." Bradford agrees with the point made here but notes that the realist, to avoid the error he is warning against,

goes to the opposite extremes. He wishes to take nothing from his imagination. He will simply paint common life; the world of every day, which any one can see and understand.

This, Bradford feels, is a mistake as bad as the other, since, if the realist paints for us merely "our superficial lives of everyday as we ourselves, common mortals, see them, what do we get from him?" The true artist works neither by

sheer imagination nor sheer commonplace. He takes life, indeed, as he sees it ... as we see it; but he shows us infinitely more in life than we could ever see.

Over forty years later Bradford comments in a similar vein that the defect of most realism lies in the fact that the drabness and lack of distinction of the manner enhances the similar drabness of the

2. WP. 10.
3. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
m.

In the earlier source Bradford goes on to declare that realism or "painting the world as it is" is not what it pretends to be—it is merely another name for a certain way of looking at the world. The realist, too, must select and combine and shape his material. At this time Bradford finds realism of value chiefly on the negative side as a protest against a false tendency in art, as an effort to return art to the serious and the true. He feels that on the positive side realism is too indefinite, lacks force or delicacy, and is not enough controlled by a passionate motive.

Bradford begins the essay of 1887 with the acknowledgement that the Realistic School, founded some fifty years before by Balsac and Stendhal and developed by Flaubert, Daudet, James, and others, has attracted much attention. He also admits that such an array of talent and genius tempt one to surrender to Realism without thinking. But in an essay apparently dated 1902 Bradford states that the decay of realism came about 1880. Men had asked realism for a new heaven and a new earth, but it had simply destroyed heaven and left an earth nearly the same, though more dull and foot-worn. And in 1913 Bradford declares that

already we are getting far enough from a controversial attitude towards the realists to study and appreciate them not so much as the final word of all literature, which they proclaimed them—

1. [L., XXXIII, 49.]
3. Ibid., p. 1.
selves to be, but as, like others before them, the interpreters, the product, the embodiment of the great and significant—and vanished—age in which they lived.

Bradford is not sure what will be the dominant tone of the period to succeed the realistic age, which is "vanished—or vanishing," he says cautiously, but he believes that there will be a reaction against the lawlessness of the nineteenth century.

Bradford's comments on realism are limited but sensible. He was neither swept away in the swirling currents of nineteenth-century realism and naturalism nor did he fail to see their usefulness against a decadent romanticism. He was astute enough to realize that the movement was a contemporary phenomenon born largely of the scientific era, and that a truer, more balanced realism had always been a vital part of literature. Like Stevenson, Bradford perceived that realism was not a final objective but a serviceable technique which also demanded formative work by the artist. If Bradford was somewhat premature in announcing the decay of realism, he was not the first to misjudge the confusing trends of the early twentieth century. Bradford's humanism, of course, was a factor in his suspicion of a writing mode that too easily lost the human touch.

3. Literary Types

Poetry, writes Bradford in his Early Journal, is not merely one of the arts which appeal largely to the senses. "It is the highest voice of mankind, not only on Beauty, but on Love and Truth." Some forty years later he calls poetry "the noblest and most splendid of spiritual exaltations." In contrast to music and painting, poetry comes to us "in silence and quiet" and fits itself "perfectly to our moods." It affords "the most perfect remedy for the misery and the far worse monotonous of life."

In 1903 Bradford defines poetry thus: "Poetry is a mirror which receives the image of the All, and reflects it back as God." He also points out that poetry represents the whole world according to the laws of Beauty and thus leaves Beauty still supreme. "Poetry," he continues, "is the harmonious echo of the world in the ear of the soul." And the novel The Private Tutor has this description:

Poetry is like the sun-drenched light, which gives an added, almost unutterable beauty to things already beautiful in themselves.

From Life and I comes the assertion that poetry is the typical literary art since prose, though it can achieve subtle and delicate effects, is too often used for purposes and in ways that are decidedly inartistic. Elsewhere Bradford calls poetry the language of passion.

2. *ib., XIV, 117.
4. Ibid.
5. *ib.,
and notes four ways in which it differs from common speech: its energy and directness, its imaginative suggestiveness, its figurative character, and its metrical form, which is a lenitive rather than a stimulating.

In "A Gospel of Joy" Bradford rebels at the separation of poetry from verse—a separation which is "only one of the subtle inventions of the prosaic mind." He admits that there is "much of true poetry" about prose writers like Hugo, Flaubert, Ruskin, and Pater.

But I maintain that these imaginative qualities come most richly, most freely, most splendidly with the peculiar excitation that accompanies metrical form. At any rate, if we separate poetry from verse we are caught in a snarl of metaphysical definition, which every lover of beauty detects and deplores. Let us be easily satisfied and call verse poetry and poetry verse, admitting that there may be good and bad of both.

Bradford puts into a letter of 1924 a passage which is basic for an understanding of his attitude towards poetic form and content, particularly those in contemporary verse. He has been discussing what he feels to be the dangerous if not fatal tendency of modern composers to resort to programme music and thus sacrifice some of music's "sovereign hold on its own realm of spiritual emotion." But in poetry, Bradford asserts,

the stress must always be chiefly upon the spiritual-intellectual content. Words are only the medium, the real originality must come in the thought behind them. Therefore when a language has developed in the highest medium of verse-expression of which it is capable—... the Greek developed the highest narrative medium three thousand years ago—the poet can go on securely

2. P. 32.
and safely pouring new richness of individual expression into that medium, provided of course that he understands all its resources and limitations and is able to make use of them to the utmost.1

Bradford has a number of comments on the problem of poetic content. In the Early Journal he declares that poetry is "essentially objective and from its nature deals with all things in the universe, bringing everything into its own form and idealization." Some forty years later he exclaims in similar vein that "every thing on earth belongs to poetry and the only test is how you do it." Thus it is largely the treatment that determines the poem's significance, and to Bradford a central idea is basic for that treatment. He finds, for example, in Thomson's Seasons "the incurable fault of all the Pope school of poetry: it has no centrality." A poem must have not just ideas but an idea of some sort to give unity. For Bradford the appeal of Robert Frost's conviction that the best of all poetry is action, "a central incident or experience, at the bottom of the lyric as well as of the drama," undoubtedly lay somewhat in its provision for unity. This emphasis on action suggests Arnold's poetic theory in the famous Preface to the Poems of 1853. In an essay of 1887, which he apparently revised in 1931, Bradford declares that the whole future of poetry rests on the question Arnold raised when he spoke

against contemporary nineteenth-century poetry on behalf of the Greek ideal, i.e. the depiction of noble and lofty actions. Bradford goes on to observe that the modern world, with its novels stressing passion, necessity, and living does not seem interested in the Greek theory and practice.

A Journal entry of the mid 1920's has a typical Bradford complaint.

Contemporary poetry is sickening because it is

so alembicated, so wetering in vague, incomprehensible, intangible depths of an ill-conceived and worse carried out psychology. There is such a total lack of simplicity, of saying in straight, strong words what the common mind can understand. If this field of common sense is quite worn out, then for heaven's sake let poetry alone altogether. Do not seek to be original at the expense of clarity and sobriety.

Elsewhere Bradford declares that much modern poetry lacks simplicity and that to him "simplicity with distinction" is "the climax and acme of the singing art." Young Bradford probably has poets of his day in mind when he approves Emerson's idea that the simplicity and sublimity of the great poets seem tame at first compared with the violence and strong coloring of the lesser poets. Again, Bradford says that the difficulty of contemporary poetry makes him want to return to Milton's idea that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate." Clarity was one of Bradford's most consistent preferences in all forms of art, but in the early years he made at least one concession when he

1. **Matthew Arnold,** pp. 7-8.
4. *S.,* p. 34.
In the ideal poet we might demand perfect clearness; but almost all the great poetry which actually exists is full of obscurity.

In a letter of 1919 Bradford declares that every successful poem must reflect the poet's own experience. And contemporary American life, he believes, should afford rich experience. To a poet he writes:

There is such an immensity of material, of real human stuff, all about us, crying for poetical interpretation. Take the modern woman, for instance, whether one treats her as really a new development of evolution or as merely a revamping of an ancient theme—what endless stories she has to tell us and to give us to tell others.

It is logical then for Bradford to look askance at modern poets who employ such a sensual setting as the old Orient with the pretext that under those remote conditions they can better satirize the world about them. So common is brutal frankness today, Bradford feels, that poets need no such excuse. The need for timely reality appears again in Bradford's complaint that contemporary poetry is too literary with "either the echo of something gone before or the evident effort to avoid something gone before." The natural results are a lack of substance, spontaneity, and, of course, reality.

2. #L., II, 87.
4. #J., 1927, p. 9. Bradford's general ideas on the relations of poetic art and morality have been given in the section on Esthetic Theory.
Reading Clement Wood's *The Soul of America* suggests to Bradford a further penalty for the poet's divorce from reality. Bradford both wonders and doubts whether contemporary American poets, in contrast, for example, to the Greeks and the Elizabethans, can fairly and fully interpret the soul of their country. Since America, he feels, has not up to the present been a poetical nation, its poets, who have been and are especially today a class apart, interpret not from reality but from their own wishes. A valid attempt at a study of America's soul, Bradford believes, would need to pay more attention to Edgar Guest. Elsewhere Bradford explains and appraises Guest's work thus: "To take the common daily interests of the human heart and put them in a form that touches and appeals to millions is a great achievement." Guest attains this, Bradford feels, by a "singular breadth of sympathy and also by a most original use of all sorts of resources of form and expression, which show wide reading of the poets as well as of human nature." Guest not only interprets human hearts, declares Bradford; he also helps them, "which is infinitely more."

1. *Ibid.* XLIV, 55. As Professor Wagenknecht has well said (Conversation, March 22, 1954), in view of the fact that Longfellow did this sort of thing much better than Guest, Bradford's attitude of superiority to the earlier poet is obviously illogical.
Though Bradford, as we have seen, was theoretically ready to admit all subjects as poetic content, granted that the treatment were fitting, in practice, as his criticism and own poetry bear witness, he put first the subject of man. And Nature, in both its ordinary physical boundaries and its transcendental enlargement, was a not-too-distant second choice.

Bradford may have written, as he did more than once, that, after all, form counted little as compared with matter, or, still more, with spirit; yet poetic form always held a strong appeal for him. And, as we have seen above, he felt that the rich old forms were still unexhausted and ripe for the thought of the day. An example was his belief that his own time, in its flood of almost formless lyrics, had neglected eighteenth-century form and that a reasoned return to the "common sense" of that century was desirable.

One aspect of form (used in the broad sense) that especially fascinated Bradford was rhythm. In the Early Journal, he went so far as to say that great lines of poetry depend as much upon their rhythm as upon their thought. Many years later he wrote that he had formerly felt little difference between poetry and prose but had come to discover in poetry

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. P. 36.
a suggestion of ecstasy and transport in the excitement of the more definitely musical rhythm which the hidden and elusive movement of prose can never quite convey.

In this matter of rhythm, though he tried to keep open-minded, Bradford still preferred the older forms. Thus he wrote in the mid 1920's concerning two contemporary American poets that their rough rhythms made him wonder if the new generation was developing an entirely new music sense which his old ears could not accept or if it was simply trying restlessly to do what could not quite be done. To Clement Wood he wrote in January 1930 the following:

We should both agree that the essence of artistic beauty was the preservation of some law of unity in variety, and the only difference would be one of degree, as to just how far unity and regularity should be maintained, or could be better emphasized by delicate suggestions of variation.

I think the more varied and freer effects which you seek in verse rhythms appeal to me somewhat more in prose.

Bradford goes on to state his belief that

the present tendencies in American verse came largely from the effort of the French Symbolists to give their verse something of the elasticity and varied grace in which their prose so far surpasses.

He thinks that in this connection the influence of Amy Lowell was distinctly unfortunate.

For nothing is richer or more significant than the different endowment of different languages from the rhythmic point of view, and English has just the verse capacity for rhythmic effect which French lacks.

The Greek hexameter, "the most perfect form for narrative" ever devised by man, accomplishes most nearly just what both he and his correspondent aim at, "the acme and highest perfection of unity, variety and flexibility combined."

In another letter of the late years Bradford observes that free verse, which, he confesses,

represents a perfectly legitimate impulse to achieve greater variety of emotional expression ... has not succeeded in substantiating itself and is distinctly on the wane, though the spread of it has certainly shaken out the hampering folds of the older forms.

Bradford continues thus:

Is it not, after all, true that there are inherent limits in each language which almost necessitate certain art-forms which experience has developed and which cannot be modified to any great extent? I think this shows most in the matter of metre. 3

Bradford goes on to observe that, despite a pressing need, "no effort of genius has ever yet contrived to import" the Homeric hexameter into any modern language. Nor can the "infinitely varied and delicate effects of our English blank verse" ever be

2. Ibid., p. 333.
3. Ibid., p. 208.
carried over into a Romance language, "and the French is forced
to be content with the pitiful substitute of the Alexandrine....

Still, I repeat, let the poets innovate in form
as much as they please. If they can touch and over-
come us with new beauty, we shall accept it with in-
finitive gratitude. Nevertheless, I cannot help think-
ing that the true field for innovation is in thought. ¹

Bradford was even more conciliatory in what seems to be an intro-
duction to a volume of contemporary poems.

Back of the impulse for novelty in the verse of
today there lies the far deeper spiritual restlessness
which is the marked characteristic of our dawn-
twentieth century, the urge for something undiscovered,
the bitter revolt against the accepted ... the profound
desire to be true, whatever it costs ... to go to the
bitter end, if there is any end, and if there is not,
to find out and say so.

And, naturally enough, form has followed substance so that we find
in this reflection of modern life no careful, exact balancing of
syllables.

These two lines are part of a little poem written by Bradford
on February 2, 1922:

Rhyme has made more poems than reason,
   Songs are sound as well as sense. ²

And he writes to a fellow poet a year later: "To me rhyme is a fasci-
nation so great that I cannot quite understand it...." ³ His appreci-
ation is more definite in a letter of 1919:

Ah, what a delight it (Rhyme) has been to me all my life; the
solid, majestic terminations of the medieval Latin hymns, the

fleeting, fluttering grace of the Italian doublets and triplets, the delicate magic of Heine and Goethe, and the fascination of the sole link which turns French prose into verse with such a dainty and varied witchery. English is a poor rhyming language, to be sure; but it is good enough, if one makes it yield all it can and a little more....

A letter of 1920 further explains Bradford's attachment. In reading and writing rhyme he finds a joy which neither free verse nor blank verse can match for a moment.

Rhyme teases us out of thought like a chime of merry bells. And to write it is a charm for forgetting the wide misery of life. In a sense rhyme hampers thought; but again it creates it, and the poet who feels the full witchery of rhyme finds that it feeds his brain full of many fancies, glittering, tantalizing dreams, and whimsical gaiety.

In 1919 Bradford writes that usually for him come more delightful surprises from perfect, but unusual rhymes, than from imperfect ones, which seem altogether too easy.... the older I get, the stricter I grow; I mean as to my own practice, which may be, after all, one of the numerous symptoms of the creeping timidity of age.

A year later Bradford notes that he is still suspicious of identical rhymes. Certainly, he believes, one would never use them in single rhymes in a simple couplet. He declares, however, that nobody has ever yet, in any language, made double rhymes in triplets without using identical rhymes. In the same period Bradford also expresses his opinion that compound rhymes are a mistake because they usually require an unpleasant forcing of either sense or sound. He himself

2. W., IV, 182.  
4. W., IV, 104.  

Bradford once comments that Butler and Swift are the models for "double rhyme in tetrameter," but that, like Byron, they are too lax in their compound rhyming. (Ibid., I, 128)
prefers "unusual and novel rhymes, whether double or triple."¹

In 1919 Bradford wondered if the best way to compensate for the lack of rhyming facilities in English were not the use of false rhymes.² About ten years later, however, Bradford records his surprise at the preference of certain modern poets for false rhymes as well as for jarring rhythms.³

The subject of verse forms for political satire prompts Bradford to write the following:

I heartily agree... that the couplet is the thing. Octosyllabics are treacherous.... The rhymes are so apt to get the better of one and lead the fancy into a witch-dance more exhilarating than profitable. The couplet, well-handled, has infinite resources not only of vigor and point, but of gaiety and grace.⁴

Thought and narrative, says Bradford in a letter of 1921, are the least used and the most promising emphases for the poetry of to-day.⁵ About the same time he declares his strong faith in the future of narrative poetry. It is more original and permanent than the lyric, he believes, and, if the poet uses all the possible resources of style and diction to make vivid the story’s dramatic movement, poetic narrative should attract a larger variety of readers.⁶ Our younger poets, Bradford observes, prefer to sing pure songs simply for each other, unless, like Edgar Guest ... they are content to appeal to the commonalty through the utterly common. But poetry, after all, should be read by the mass of intelligent people, and such people will read intense, passionate narrative when they will not listen to mere music.⁷

In another letter of this period Bradford asserts that the obstacle to narrative poetry is the lack of an adequate medium. Free verse, he points out, cannot be sustained for any considerable time. The couplet is a sort of "alternating current whose succession of shocks never leaves the spirit free to follow the dramatic movement." It is strange indeed, Bradford thinks, that the Greeks hit on the matchless hexameter three thousand years ago. From still another letter comes Bradford's opinion that the Spenserian stanza, with its "slow, reiterated interweaving ... absolutely kills narrative, whereas the octave just seems to fill the story out and give it color and body."

Bradford also declares that for swift, modern narrative the octave with its fluency and grace is the most suitable stanza. He does admit, however, that the final couplet disintegrates the octave stanza. He continues:

Blank verse is so little more than measured—unmeasured—prose. The couplet is so abominably prim and stilted, any form of stanza, no matter how cleverly handled, will box up the story into air-tight, water-tight, interest-tight compartments.  

1. **L., VIII, 15–16.**  
2. **Ibid., I, 119.**  
3. **L., ed. B., pp. 90–91.** In the same letter Bradford refers to a poem called "Canopus" by Clement Wood, in which the poet uses an original stanza which does away with the final couplet, "giving the formal stanza something of the continuity of the terza rima, which latter medium has never, so far as I know, been used very successfully in English, in spite of Shelley's 'Triumph of Life.'"  
4. **L., ed. B., p. 90.**
Bradford did keep his admiration for the octave form. In a letter of 1920 he expresses delight that a contemporary poet should still use that stanza, "a magnificent instrument ... as capable of passion and pathos as of startling, stinging irony and satire."

Bradford wrote in his Journal for February 12, 1918:

The heart and the life of America have not yet found a poet. And what material such a poet has before him!—not only beauty but ugliness, not only grace but power, all the manifold struggles and aspirations and passions of modern life, which are perhaps as old as the world, but are taking a thousand new forms which the world has never seen before. And in my vision our poet's work will not be lyrical, but rather epic, a presentation of new America in perhaps a semi-comic garb, taking comic in its largest and deepest sense, say the brilliant, fluid form of Ariosto and Byron, but without their cynicism, which will be replaced by the warm, tender, sunshiny laughter and kindliness of Cervantes and Shakespeare.

Some three years later, he wrote to a poet friend: "The spirit of rich comedy ... is, I am sure, the right tone in which to interpret contemporary life."

In a review of a new comic epic Bradford points out that the lines of a narrative poem should not demand rereading for the meaning. He also notes that a commonplace hero has dangers. He suggests too that the poet relieve his bitter comedy by treating the new phenomenon, the American woman—after all, "woman is the natural property of the comic poet."

Elsewhere Bradford declares that the comic poem needs a "swift,

1. H., XXXII, 12.
4. Review of Nleq Beg, #8R.
5. Ill. 93.
6. Ibid., p. 97.
light, dainty movement that reads itself in immediate adjustment with
the sense." The verse should carry the reader along rather than "jolt
him into rugged reflection." Such an effort, Bradford feels, requires
a most delicate manipulation of the pentameter. In a Journal passage
Bradford observes that the octave form, with its fine variety and ease
and license in rhyme, is fitting for comic verse. Again, Bradford
warns that the writer of comic verse narrative should not let the bur-
lesque and the grotesque mislead him; under such conditions a high-
strung imagination tends to throw off all restraint.

In his "Notes for Classes and Lectures" Bradford, not satisfied
with the dictionary definition of a lyric as a poem expressing the
personal thoughts and feelings of the poet—a definition, he feels,
which does not fit many short poems which are lyrical though non-per-
sonal—attempts one of his own. Thus the lyric is

roughly any short poem not narrative in tendency, or more
particularly a short poem expressing personal feeling
or turning upon one incident ... and expressed in light,
graceful, musical form, that is having a unity of impres-
sion like a song. 4

In "Literature and Life" the reader may recall that Bradford puts
the lyric, which he calls the most artificial, elaborate, and subtle of
forms, last in the literary cycle. Yet, he exclaims, "the wheel is
come full circle and we are swept back once more to the elementary, in-
timate expression of personal life," as in the diary. Lyrical poetry,
Bradford continues, is the most appealing when it is the immediate out-

1. #L, I, 13.
2. #J, 1918-19, p. 114.
3. #J, II, 26-26a.
4. As is often true of the fragmentary
material in this source, this passage is
incomplete and hard to decipher.
pouring of universal emotion. Its paradoxical nature is not easy to explain. Perhaps, Bradford suggests, its subtle and complex form "demands matter that shall be at once simple and overwhelming." He also points out, in developing his thesis that literature is the expression of life, that the differences in national literatures are most marked in lyrical poetry.

From a letter of the early twenties comes Bradford's conviction that "order and design are just as vital to lyric poetry as to narrative or dramatic." The poet should first conceive what he has to say, though this may be done so rapidly as to be almost coincident with the primary expression, and the work, when finished, should convey some definite story or at least experience to the reader.

Melody, "the subtle harmony which comes from the instinctive arrangement of sound to accord with sense ... must be instinctive, to be really fine and valid."

In another letter of the period Bradford observes that the amorous side of personal life has been overdone, but that many other sides are ripe for poetical treatment. The line of direct expression, he feels, is the biggest field for contemporary poetry.

On July 13, 1927, Bradford writes to a correspondent:

I wish I could be of more assistance to you in your researches regarding the American Sonnet, but I am not sufficiently familiar with current contemporary poetry to be able to help very much.

He believes that the sonnet is not a vital form in American poetry of

1. [Footnote: I, 11.]
2. [Footnote: Ibid., II, 24.]
3. [Footnote: *L., VI, 33.]
4. [Footnote: Ibid., V, 109.]
the day because the leading poets are not using it extensively. Bradford is thereby somewhat puzzled because the mark of today’s poetry is generally spiritual subtlety and the interpenetration of emotional experience, and it might be supposed that the sonnet was especially adapted to this.

Bradford's tentative explanation is that "just because the matter is so subtle and remote ... the poets instinctively turn to a more direct, simple, mobile, flexible, malleable form." Bradford proceeds to some structural analysis:

I have myself attended to the sonnet with a great deal of curiosity. For example, I once made a very careful study of Petrarch, and most profitable I found it. I was especially interested in the different forms of the sestet, and the obvious adaptation to them which Petrarch felt in using those forms. I have always been interested in the different possibilities of sonnet-structure from the point of view of matter. Watts' theory of the wave-structure always seemed to me somewhat fantastic, at least as a general formula. But there are many variations, all allowable, and all effective, if properly used. There is the continuous development, right through both parts, working to a final climax, and this of course finds its best expression in the Shakespearean. There is the statement of a more general treatment in the octave, to be followed by an intensely concrete illustration in the sestet. There is the development of an entire contrast in the two. And there is the strict wave-form, which rises to a climax at the end of the octave and then fades delicately away in the second part.

Back in 1921 Bradford had written that he preferred dignity in the sonnet.

In 1887 Bradford notes that satire is a suitable form for the day but requires much work lest it become vulgar or die an early death. It

1. L., ed. B., pp. 277-78. 3. L., VIII, C7
2. Ibid., p. 278. Unfortunately, Bradford seems to have left no record of his Petrarchian studies.
should deal with the universal along with the temporary and local follies. Satire, lyric poetry and the elegy, he decides, are the only possible forms for the day. Over thirty years later, after agreeing with a correspondent that political verse satire would best be handled in couplet form, Bradford continues thus:

The satire should be the satire of Horace, not of Juvenal. I personally have never been able to get much pleasure or profit from Juvenal or any of his imitators. What good does bitterness do? What healing comes from the scourgis? And especially I think the American temper demands good-nature first of all. You may reprehend him, discern his mistakes and indicate them, and devoutly wish him otherwise; you cannot hate him. A large, wise, kindly comprehension, if not tolerance, is the first step towards making one is wit and criticism tell, and the last goes no further in poetry than it does in pedagogy.

And some months later Bradford observes in his Journal:

I have often thought vaguely of political satire, but have been deterred from it by my hatred of all satire, that being, of all literary forms, the one that is most repugnant to my present literary taste and instinct. This has not always been so, and indeed I think I have rather special gifts for bitterness of tongue, so special as to be induced by them largely into the hate and dread of satire that I have just spoken of. But the field for political satire in this country is so wide and splendid, and a brief, swift, incisive reproduction of the medium of Pope and Swift and Voltaire commends itself to me in so many ways as capable of immense and immediate application, that I was tempted to essay it, at least for once.

Truly great art is a fusion of classical, romantic, and realistic qualities. By the same token great criticism partakes of this fusion. If Bradford's theory of the nature and function of poetry is not great criticism, its ideas are comprehensive enough to satisfy, at least in several respects, adherents of the three schools. His concepts of poetic matter and especially of poetic form, however, are less catholic.

In theory he meant to be broad in such matters, but, particularly as the years passed, his convictions went little beyond traditional criteria. For his views on poetic content the impressionistic habit of his critical thinking, i.e. his tendency to favor his spontaneous reactions, as well as his lack of vital contact with the outside world, did little to alter his innate Victorianism. Thus he found it hard to endure the cynical, brutal realism that was all too integral a part of the post-World-War-I society. At any rate, Bradford's recognition that poetic matter needed new directions and fresh emphasis was a salutary one in days when some poets were trying to throw content out the door.

As for Bradford's theory of poetic form, besides the limitations just mentioned for content, he was hampered, I believe, by an overly conservative if not an actually defective ear. Here again the lack of contact with the workaday world must have been an important factor. Modern theorists suggest, logically enough, that the rhythms of traditional verse forms do not adequately reflect the patterns of our complex modern life. Shortly before Bradford's death, indeed, Edmund Wilson wrote an essay with the thesis that the technique of contemporary prose was "absorbing the technique of verse" but was showing itself

1. We have already seen Bradford's own distrust of his musical ear; the section in Applied Criticism concerning Davenant will illustrate, I believe, a flaw in his ear for poetical music.
2. See, for example, the introductory section to the Whitman selections of American Literature, ed. Davis, Frederick, Mott, II, 28-30, and especially the Wilson essay referred to in the next footnote.
quite equal to that work of the imagination which caused men to call Homer "divine": that re-creation, in the harmony and logic of words, of the cruel confusion of life.  

However Bradford might have agreed with the truth of Wilson's thesis, only with difficulty would his heart have warmed to or his ear been pleased with the new prose-poetry.

In a passage discussing the correspondence of modern irregular poetic form with modern spiritual restlessness, Bradford observes that form follows content. He so often speaks of form and content apart, however, that it is apparent he does not, for purpose of analysis, at least, consider the two elements as inseparable. The complete devotee of the principle that form and content are one, finds it logical to assume that a poem cannot, for example, be at once romantic in content and classical in form. Yet, obviously, many a poem has suggested and received just such a classification. Ideally, and perhaps always essentially in great art, it may be conceded that form and content are one. It should be remembered, however, that if great art is a fusion of classical, romantic, and realistic qualities, only the greatest art

2. *ER*, VI, 198.
3. This discussion, of course, oversimplifies a profound philosophical and critical problem. For my part, I tend to agree with Rene Wellek's assertion that Croce's denial of "the validity of all stylistic and rhetorical categories, the distinction between style and form, between form and content, and ultimately, between word and soul, expression and intuition ... leads to a theoretical paralysis ...." Unless such distinctions are maintained "till the final unity," Wellek continues, the process of criticism cannot be carried out (Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, p. 188).
contains this fusion in perfect balance, i.e., in a condition where one or two of the modal qualities will not predominate. It is understandable then that, especially since historically and critically form and content have often been considered separately, lesser artists and even the great artists at times have concentrated (whether consciously or not) on one or the other phase with a resulting modal bias—the poet who began with romantic content may, for example, in a particular poem be experimenting with classical or realistic techniques. In this connection an analysis of Bradford's theory of poetry reveals, I believe, an emphasis on romantic substance and classical form. If such a distinction represents a lack of balance, it at least offers a basis for an understanding of the stage of theoretical development Bradford had reached.

Fiction. In an early Journal entry Bradford distinguishes between the novel and the drama. The latter concerns the struggle of character with circumstances; the former treats characters in the light of ideas. Because the drama is representation and the novel is narration and comment, the two forms often borrow from and melt into each other. Thus, in Goethe's words, "The novel is a subjective epic"—Bradford would substitute here the word drama for epic. Thus, too, "in the novel everything depends on the mind which creates."

1. The same conclusion is suggested, I feel, by Bradford's work in poetry and psychography.
And both types can deteriorate into sensation and melodrama.

Bradford is aware, of course, of the possible divergencies of purpose in novelists of different periods. From "The Novel Two Thousand Years Ago" comes his observation that the Greek stories discussed in the essay were written to amuse and enchant, i.e., for those readers who in the nineteenth century read Scott and Dumas. Bradford notes that a professor finds such stories, with no psychology and no realistic pictures of life, not on a level comparable with modern novels.

Bradford agrees, however, that the novel, as a serious contemporary literary form, deals with truth, that it often reveals the deepest observation of the human heart, and that it is masterly in its expression of human emotions. He declares, indeed, that the novelist has no more important function than to interpret the major shifts and spiritual changes of the present with "light and color" and "dramatic treatment."

In "Literature and Life" Bradford stresses the realistic nature of the novel when he asserts that fiction must be based on fact and that the novelist is concerned with expressing life. Though the fiction writer invents character names and a web of circumstances, his purpose is simply freedom to present the essential truths in human nature. Even for lighter fiction, "the hero and heroine must be you and I going through what might happen to me or you. Otherwise the book is simply dead to us." Elsewhere Bradford observes that the advent of nineteenth-century realism brought the novel into its element.

1. AJ., 1883-84, pp. 100-101.
2. AJ., pp. 150-59.
4. AJ., XXIX, 251.
However Bradford might agree with the need for realism in the serious novel, he did not agree with the naturalistic technique in fiction. Thus the last Journal entry used by Brooks comments on a "hideous novel" sent Bradford for examination.

Powerful in its way, but so execrably ... sordid and disgusting, like the people it deals with, that I can find no pleasure in it whatever.... It is human in a sense, of course, with the humanness which I make a boast of depending upon as the basis of my work .... In all this book there is not one trace of charm, not one vaguest hint of humor, not a suggestion of spiritual dignity of any sort. I believe that it is possible to suggest truth of human nature in an altogether different spirit, whether in the novel or in poetry or in biography, and I at least shall struggle to make that spirit more manifest.

For "pure story-telling," in contrast to the "literary novel, which relies for its interest upon other things than mere narrative," Bradford feels that in plot the "fortunate instinct" counts as much as "the deliberate design.... Design there may be, but it is rather unconscious than laboriously intelligent." The novelist, as we have seen above, is permitted to invent a "web of circumstances." Important in that web, Bradford believes, are "intensely effective and striking scenes," which one finds often in Trollope, (for example, the slap on the face Slope receives from Eleanor Bold, the battle between Mrs. Proudie and Mrs. Grantly, and the "delicious scene between Lady Lufton and Lucy Roberts"), and which are "perhaps the best thing in a good novel." Bradford explains that

The life of such scenes comes from the everpresent and admirably sustained interest of character, and this interest gives to Trollope's novels a unity which is wanting in their plots.  

Bradford again quotes Trollope concerning novel action:

...there is no objection to sensation, no matter how violent, provided it is always subordinated to the development of character. When character is subordinated to sensation, the proper name is surely melodrama.

In the absence of direct statements concerning Bradford's general theories of characterization for the novel, we can infer from the role he gives to characterization in his own novels, in other types of creative literature, and in applied criticism of a novelist like Trollope how significant he felt that element to be. The most interesting if not the most successful attempts found in his own novels are the adaptations of the Shakespearian clown, "the richest and most original of Shakespeare's creations." Examples are George Buckingham ("Flitters") in Matthew Porter, Maurice Lanier in Autumn Love, and Robert Gordon in The Private Tutor.

"French fiction may surpass English in skill of construction, in finished elegance of style, in grace and charm," declares Bradford. "It never approaches it in fertility, variety, and strength of character production." Bradford continues thus:

One has only to compare Dumas with Scott, George Sand with George Eliot, to feel the force of this. Balzac, like Molière, is great because he is an exception; but, like Molière, he accomplishes with Titanic effort what Shakespeare, Fielding, Miss

1. NE, p. 133.
2. FAW, p. 125.
3. MM, p. 250. For Bradford's interpretation of this type see ahead my section on Shakespeare's characterization as well as the portrait of Charles Lamb in Bare Souls.
Austen, Thackeray, and Dickens do with divine ease and unerring instinct.1

Concerning *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *Esmond*, and *Jane Eyre*, Bradford quotes with approval from Trollope's *Autobiography*:

"These stories charm us, not simply because they are tragic, but because we feel that men and women with flesh and blood, creatures with whom we can sympathize, are struggling amid their woes....

No novel is anything, for the purposes either of comedy or tragedy, unless the reader can sympathize with the characters....

Truth let there be, truth of description, truth of character, human truth as to men and women."2

Bradford continues with appreciation of Trollope's own practice.

From the very fact of pitching his characters so largely on a middle note, of choosing them and keeping them always in the common light of every day, Trollope gives peculiarly the impression of having lived with them, and of making us live with them. He often goes into very diffuse analyses of the thought and actions of his heroes and heroines; yet in so doing he does not seem to sap their vitality as do Thackeray and George Eliot. The reason of this is that he does not appear to be explaining, but speculating. He does not say, "I made this machine, and I can tell you just how it goes." He talks to you as a friend would talk about another friend in a desultory, twilight chat, before a smouldering fire. His characters seem to exist entirely independent of their author, and to work out their own natures with no volition or even control from him.3

Of the lesser phases of the novelist's craft, Bradford took particular interest in dialogue, which he called "that subtletest test of the novelist's genius." Conversations in novels, and perhaps in plays also, he says in a letter, carry the reader along. What Brad-

ford calls his own boredom with the average novel's description and analyses fostered his conviction that readers prefer dialogue. In 1924 he experimented with a novel which was to have a minimum of background and description while the dialogue was to handle the narrative. He admitted that such a method needed more intense action than he himself was accustomed to use. A year later, while planning another novel, he realized that he must not rely too much on dialogue. Bradford felt that writers should avoid using adverbs with nearly every speech. Another technical point which has a certain concern with dialogue was his belief that one should not use dialect in passionate fiction because of the distorting effect.

Bradford shrank from first-person narrative technique, probably, he admitted, because he could not maintain it himself. Though the great story-tellers such as Scott and Stevenson liked it, no writer, Bradford believed, used it flawlessly.

Bradford pointed out that George Eliot's habit of analytical reflection and intensely personal comment, though it devitalizes the character treatment to a certain extent, gives in general remarkable depth and a large and sympathetic view of life.

1. #L., XXIII, 165. Bradford does not identify the novel in this reference, but it was probably Her Own Way, which appeared in the August, September, October, and November issues of The Stratford Monthly for 1924. Without knowing of the possible special technical significance of Her Own Way, I found it indeed a conversation fest involving, one might say, a tea party of graceful dolls in a world where nothing mattered but talk.
2. #J., 1925, p. 145.
4. Ibid., XX, 60. Bradford finds this a fault in Percy MacKay's Tall Tales of the Kentucky Mountains.
5. Ibid., IV, 49.
In a Journal entry made not long before his death, Bradford declared that he hated "the historical novel in general and the classical novel in particular." In earlier years, however, both the subject and the practitioners of the historical novel held considerable interest for him. Proof rests, for example, in the fact that he wrote essays specifically on this type of fiction and that he commented rather extensively on such writers as Scott and Dumas.

In his essay called "The Historical Novel" Bradford observes that it is difficult to distinguish clearly between the historical romance and the romantic novel in general. He suggests that

the historical novel is one in which the author endeavors to depict an age considerably anterior to his own, relying necessarily on historical sources for his facts."

In the course of a brief historical survey of the type Bradford observes that if the history of the historical fiction supplied by the great medieval romance cycles was not true, it was profoundly believed, "which is all that matters." He observes also that the Elizabethan and Jacobean romantic drama is closer in spirit to the modern historical novel than anything in literature before the nineteenth century.

Bradford feels that Scott was the first to grasp the true principle of construction for the historical novel: that central characters should be imaginary with historical characters treated as subordinate. If, in the Shakespearean manner the hero is an historical figure, Bradford is sure that either history or story suffers in the working out. Scott's

historical persons have, in Bradford's opinion, a rightful if subordinate place in the action; they are not, as in the work of later imitators of Scott, simply dragged in as lay figures. The American is convinced that Scott took from Shakespeare the life and truth of the novelist's minor characters and his general richness, and from Beaumont and Fletcher a certain grace, a fresh and honest gaiety, and the lively depiction of manners.

In more than one respect the work of Bradford's other favorite romancer, Alexandre Dumas, fills in the gaps in the concept of the ideal historical novel left by Sir Walter's deficiencies. First of all, Dumas showed eminently the national French gift of story-telling, of seeking by instinct the group-effect, as it were, of a set of characters, their composite relations to one another and the development of these relations in dramatic climax.

The French theory lets the characters develop only as much as the action requires. "They are there for the action, not the action for them." A penalty for the strict observance of this principle, however, can be "loss of human truth in a mad eagerness for forcible situations, that is to say, melodrama."

Dumas, of course, is always courting melodrama.

The situation—something that shall tear the nerves, make the heart leap and the breath stop—for Dumas there lies the true art of dramatist and novelist. And what situations! No one

2. Ibid., p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 190.
ever had more than be the two great dramatic gifts, which perhaps are only one, the gift of preparation and the gift of climax.1

Bradford believes that the result is not all melodrama.

The creatures are not always mere puppets.... We hate them sometimes, sometimes love them, sometimes even remember them.... Under all his gift of technique, his love of startling and amazing, the man was not without an eye, a grip on life, above all, a heart that beat widely, with many sorrows and many joys.2

Great actions such as are found in the grander historical novels require, in Bradford's opinion,

a large background, which should be handled with the wide sweep of the scene-painter, not with the curious minuteness of the artist in miniatures. The very abundance of these characters, the vastness of the canvas, help the reality, and in this matter of amplitude Dumas and Scott show their genius, and triumph over the petty concentration of later imitators.3

Bradford thinks that Dumas's style is

the style of melodrama, but it is also far more. No one knew better how and when to let loose sharp, stinging, burning shafts of phrase like the final speech of Antony, 'Elle m'a resistée; je l'ai assassinee,'—shafts which flew over the footlights straight to the heart of every auditor. But these effects would be nothing without the varied movement of narration, the ease, the lightness, the grace—above all, the perpetual wit, the play of delicate irony, which saves sentiment from being sentimental and erudition from being dull.4

Bradford realizes that Dumas's style deserves some of the abuse that has been heaped upon it, but he appreciates Stevenson's famous description of it:

"Light as a whipped trifle, strong as silk; wordy like a

1. Ibid., p. 161.
2. Ibid., pp. 161-62.
3. Ibid., p. 188.
4. Ibid., p. 182.
village tale; pat like a general's despatch; with every fault, yet never tedious; with no merit, yet infinitely right."

Dumas may have used dialogue to excess, Bradford grants, "but who has ever carried it to greater perfection?"

In M. Lemaître's excellent, if somewhat cynical phrase, Dumas's dialogue has "the wonderful quality of stringing out the narrative to the crack of doom and at the same time making it appear to move with headlong rapidity."

But let it string out, so it moves. And surely Dumas's conversations do move, as no others ever have.

In contrast, Bradford feels that Scott simply cannot develop his plot by dialogue.

Bradford is inclined to admit the justice of Dumas's claim that concerning the preceding five and a half centuries he had taught France "more history than any historian."

"Mankind in general do love to hear about Henry IV, Richelieu, and the Stuarts ... and in hearing they do learn, even against their will. Pedants shake their heads. This birth-date is incorrect. That victory was not a victory at all. When Dr. Dryasdust has given the slow labor of a lifetime to disentangling fact from fiction, how wicked to mislead the ignorant by wantonly developing fiction out of fact! As if Dr. Dryasdust really knew fact from fiction! As if the higher spiritual facts were not altogether beyond his ken and his researches! As if any two pedants agreed! Take the central fact of history, the point from which everything of importance and interest emanates—human character, the human soul. What pedant can reach it, can analyze it with his finest microscope? ....

In fact, Dumas has undoubtedly taught the history of France to thousands who would otherwise have had little concern with it.

In further support of the claims of Dumas is Bradford's assertion in

1. NE, pp. 182-83.
2. Ibid., p. 163.
4. NE, pp. 186-87.
"Notes for Classes and Lectures" that the distinction between history and fiction is false: history is great so far as it is art, and fiction is great so far as it is real.

Bradford's short essay, "Fiction as Historical Material," discusses in some detail the relationships between history and the historical novel. No one knows better than the historians, he points out, the amount of fiction, more or less conscious, found in history. Fiction, on the other hand, is based on the reality of human life, which is the foundation of history—else fiction could not attract its most superficial novel readers.

Bradford feels that historical fiction is especially important for its individual portraits. Thus the average man gets his conceptions of Cromwell and the Stuarts from Scott, not from Gardiner. Bradford echoes the above passage in the Dumas essay when he declares that if one complains that such fictional portraits are inaccurate,

there are no true historical portraits, none reliable, none final. Character is but the generalization of habitual words and actions. Even our recorded knowledge of such words and actions is unreliable, confusing, and perplexed.

This does not mean, Bradford observes, that we should abandon character study, which is, after all, most real for us and a part of nearly all our daily actions.

To make history both vital and alluring Bradford feels that the historian must be preeminently a student of human nature. He should read

1. N. p.
the great poets and novelists, since they are the ones most able to
teach him a major part of his business. It is not completely true,
Bradford remarks, that the most effective way to know man is to live
in daily contact with him; authors and poets, he believes, are most
successful at the difficult task of examining man's heart from his
words and deeds. The novelist is free to discard the non-essential,
to shake off the "trammels of superficial circumstance by which the
formal historian is ever bound so rigidly," and to handle truth con-
cerning the larger elements of life only as it is universal, necessary,
and enduring.

Bradford points out that historians can receive valuable data on
manners and fashions of thought and the like through historical or peri-
od novels. The material will vary, of course, with the writer in-
volved. George Sand, for example, reveals inner experiences, Dumas the
outer ones; especially valuable, of course, are Jane Austen, Balsac,
and Turgeniev.

Bradford finds truth in Balsac's suggestion that fiction tends to
emphasize the unusual, even the vicious in life. One might say that
"virtuous people find their chief diversion in reading about vice."
Bradford insists, however, that we read chiefly to decipher the souls
of man and

men do not show their souls so readily when they are
walking the calm path of everyday convention as when
they are jolted out of that path by some quick blow,
or sudden shock, or violent disaster.

2. Ibid., p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
But if Zola distorts everyday life scarcely more than does Tacitus, who wants us to think that most Romans of the first and second centuries were poisoners, adulterers, and the like, we must remember that "There are laws of perspective for the pen as well as for the brush."

If the historical novel can be of professional assistance to the historian, it can also, of course, have value for the lay reader. A Journal entry for March, 1881, describes a therapeutic result, here concerned specifically with Scott, but suggestive also for readers of the many worthy if lesser followers of the master.

Consoling my ill days with Scott lately, not the poems, but the novels.... He was a man born for his art two centuries too late. He was an Elizabethan, and in that age he would have been a great man.... Scott would not, could not, see what was, only what had been. Hence his value to us now is not one of helpfulness or sympathy or comfort. He has no comprehension of our modern doubts and sufferings and torments.... What he really brings us is rest. We read him, as I have been reading him lately, when the body is worn out and the mind incapable of facing its enemies. It is a relief to turn out of the hot, dusty highway, into such a pleasant meadow; but one could not stay there, one could not live there.... The secret of Scott is health.... a certain strong tonic force as of seablue breeze strengthening us, bracing us, giving us stomach, heart and lungs, in order that we may be fitter to fight with our souls.2

Bradford has a number of comments on the contemporary novel. In a Journal entry for early in 1884 he finds the novel with its subjectivity somewhat like music which

by its strange, vague longing, its power of expressing exaggerated and undefined emotions, its passionate sensuousness, its equally passionate idealism—seems to be the very fittest expression of all the confused mixture of emotions we call life now—days.3

Both the novel and music, Bradford believes, may be very weak and yet attractive and can please the most uneducated taste easier than can other forms. Thus they are more adapted to an age which tends to elevate the masses. Novelists and musicians find their greatest danger in the temptation to be merely pretty to gratify the popular taste.

A Journal comment of the late twenties declares that Williamson's powerful novel, The Pathway boxes him with its contemporaneity. In general, Bradford declares, the contemporary novel gives him a feeling of "respectful boredom." A short time before his death he confided to his Journal that modern novels, especially those written by women, are totally lacking in both humor and charm and contain instead many pages of dreary psychological analysis of dull people.

In this late period comes another thrust at the current fashions in fiction with Bradford's comment on one of his own novels: "It has no sin, no sex, and no socialism, and what is a novel without these?"

In the late twenties, Bradford observes that a century before, novels were written partly for the moral lesson involved but chiefly for pleasure. Then came the scientific spirit with the result that today the novel is supposed only "to portray life, heaven save the mark!" Typically swarms of earnest and careful observers visit the underworld and record with terrifying minuteness not for our pleasure but for our instruction, especially concerning sex. Bradford

4. *J.,* XII, 55.
believes that Freud has made it the first duty of the faithful novelist to depict people of doubtful morals.

Proof that, despite his aversion to many tendencies in the field, Bradford could on occasion criticize modern fiction sanely and wisely is found, I believe, in his opinions of certain novels of the 1920's. There is, for example, his estimate—the only one of Bradford's recorded, I think, concerning the stream-of-consciousness technique of To the Lighthouse. In the Journal he notes what seems to him to be the surprisingly original method of the Woolf novel and, confessing his ignorance, wonders if it is like that of James Joyce. With "extraordinary originality and skill and delicacy" and with no pretense at story, Bradford finds, Virginia Woolf makes minute and subtle attempts at capturing the fleeting states of mind. This procedure, Bradford feels, may be suggestive for psychography—but he has his doubts.

Should not the artist, after all, imply and suggest these processes, rather than develop them so confusingly and elaborately? Does not Shakespeare connote them, really, and is not a magnificent synthesis (sic) necessary on the basis of them? Then on what can such subtle analysis be based? Must it not be in the end subjective? It cannot be observation. It cannot be record. It must be fundamentally built on the artist's own spiritual experience as a foundation.

Bradford is not convinced that To the Lighthouse, suggestive and stimulating as it is, represents a truly satisfying path for the art of the future. We can know the fleeting spiritual experiences of no one but ourselves. We neither do nor can have any detailed account.

of them from other people—thus Virginia Woolf is "simply objecti-
ifying her own experiences in similar situations and transforming
them to others." Her artistic effort is thus plainly limited, de-
spite the fact, Bradford admits, that her attempt has the closest
relationship to the foundation of his own art: the common basis of
collective human experience which all artists treat. Mrs. Woolf
thus has a tendency to merge the individuality of her characters in
"one common blur of the experience of Virginia Woolf." Bradford
thinks that the difficulty remains insurmountable. If he did not
see how closely related to the technique of all psychological fiction
Mrs. Woolf's practice was, Bradford did perceive that the stream-of-
consciousness technique was neither as new nor as flawless and self-
sufficient as some of his contemporaries were ardently proclaiming
it to be. In the quarter century that has elapsed since then, the
history of this fictional type would seem to vindicate Bradford's
judgment and its implications. Professor Wagenknecht well says:

As a type, the Stream-of-Consciousness Novel may well dis-
appear altogether, while the experiments which its practi-
tioners made remain, like the free verse experimentation
in another field, to widen and enrich more orthodox pat-
terns.\(^2\)

Bradford's stand on the theory of the novel is not unlike his
stand on poetic theory. Again he is willing to admit the validity of

1. \(\#J\), 1928-29, p. 6.
2. Cavalcade of the English Novel, p. 532. Another example of Bradford's
criticism of a novel of the 1920's is his comment on Main Street as "a
big, strongly-muscled book.... But it is mainly the gross material stuff
from which art should be distilled." (J., ed. B., p. 278.)
recognized novel types and of the further potentialities that the
novel's supporters claim, but again his final preferred critical
type (and practice) is less catholic. Thus, for example, well
on into the middle years Bradford recognized the contribution of
the historical novel, only to reject it in the later period. Thus,
too, he first acknowledged the novel's peculiar effectiveness as
an instrument for interpreting the complex life and thought of mod-
er society, but later hesitated at what he felt was the ugliness
of the modern novel.

Up to the 1920's, it appears, Bradford was unusually well read
in fiction. Besides his acquaintance with specimens of several Eu-
ropean languages, he had a broad knowledge in the English field, and
his years of reading for the Athenaeum and the Boston Public Library
kept him abreast of contemporary developments. Professor Wagonmech
notes that Bradford claimed in the later years to read no modern fic-
tion but detective stories; in the late 1920's Bradford's work for

1. In 1902 Bradford predicted that the novel of the future would turn
increasingly to the psychological analysis of character, since, he
felt, more incident soon tires the reader(4"The Historical Novel,"
2. From 1909 until 1919 Bradford read "every week two new novels for the
Boston Public Library Committee on Fiction." Incessant vertigo forced
him to abandon the practice, but the spring of 1920 found him agreeing
to continue(1, ed. B, p. 201.)
3. Conversation, July 6, 1953.
the Book League was only partially concerned with fiction. Despite his considerable experience through the early and middle years, however, his lack of critical interest is shown in the fact that, except for the few essays on the historical novel, Bradford's theory of fiction rests chiefly in his writing on Scott, Dumas the Elder, and Trollope, as well as in his own attempts at novel making.

Bradford never fully explained why he turned from the historical novel in the later years. The reasons may have included, besides the general neglect of that form in literary circles then, his own increasing preoccupation with character and his accompanying distaste for mere incident, his belief that too often the historical novel had no serious purpose, and his dislike for modern examples of the type.

Bradford's most unique suggestion for a character type in fiction, we have seen, was an adaptation of the Shakespearean clown. It is unfortunate that he limited his discussion of the theory and appli-

1 In 1902 Bradford felt that contemporary historical novels, though better technically than those of Scott and Dumas, lacked life and originality in comparison with the old masterpieces ("The Historical Novel," p. 13). Professor Angelo Bertocci raises the interesting point as to why Bradford the psychograph apparently wished to bring the novel so close to history as to confuse the two (Conversation, March 11, 1951). One cause, perhaps, was Bradford's distrust of the Olympian attitudes of such formal historians as Edward Channing (See L., ed. B., p. 362). Another possible factor was an unconscious desire to reduce history, as it were, to the level of fallibility which, as my later pages show, Bradford came to admit in psychography as well as in the novel. A historian, of course, is in a sense a competitor of as well as a collaborator with both the novelist and the psychographer. A third factor may have been Bradford's later tendency to believe that "all creative literature is nothing but biography disguised and generalized...." (L., ed. B., p. 291.)
cation for the type almost wholly to the work of Shakespeare and a few other Elizabethan dramatists and to his own novels. This limitation may or may not be proof of the restricted possibilities of the type—I rather think it ties in with Bradford's general lack of systematic novel criticism.

Bradford preferred to think of the novel as subjective drama rather than, in Goethe's definition, as subjective epic. It is not likely that he was influenced directly by those two nineteenth-century Englishmen who frankly aimed to put drama into the novel: Dickens, whom he had read closely but thoroughly disliked; and Charles Reade, whom, I believe, Bradford never mentions. Bradford's devotion to the English practice of character emphasis was perhaps a factor—at any rate, the novels of Trollope had drama enough for Bradford's purpose.

One cannot deny that Bradford's criticism of the novel is hampered by his antipathies in the three centuries—particularly his aversion to the nineteenth-century masters—which have seen the development of this most modern of literary forms. The specialist in modern fiction would be disturbed, of course, by Bradford's failure to use the terminology of contemporary novel criticism or to refer to certain experimental trends in recent fiction. And yet, with Bradford's ideas, for example, on the relations of fiction to life, on character, on basic

1. Bradford expressed admiration for Sterne as a comic writer (see, for example, L., ed. B., p. 5) and for Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe(J., ed. B., p. 278), but, in general, he keeps clear of the great eighteenth-century English novelists in whom he doubtless disliked the satirical tone and the frank masculine atmosphere.
realism, on dramatic interest, on dialogue, and on style, his theory is adequate, I believe, for an understanding of much of modern fiction and perhaps of most that is essential and permanent in all fiction. Bradford deserves credit for arriving at the basic points of his theory in the years when novel criticism was in its infancy and the form itself had not gained its footing in American colleges. If, like his early contemporary Henry James, Bradford drew back from the aesthetic bias of Gautier and the naturalism of Zola, he was also ready to admit their right to their points of view; never did Bradford go so far as to declare with James that the novel is "the most magnificent form of art."

Drama. In one of his last letters Bradford wrote that

the theatre is preeminently the art of life, the art that sticks closest to life, the art that is most dominated by life, and the art that has the most superb chance of dominating and interpreting and creating life, provided it sticks always to the actual conditions of representation and to the demands of an average human audience.

Bradford also left an unpublished essay called "A Handbook of the Drama" and dated December, 1906. The similarity of his opening description of drama in this essay with that just quoted shows that his basic concept of this literary type did not change in the last quarter century of his life. In "Literature and Life," the reader may remember, Bradford declares that the drama is the most complex

2. "L. L., 55.
of all objective literary art forms from the Greeks to Shaw and is the
"incessant, cunning, inexhaustible expression of life."

Two of Bradford's own reactions to drama suggest two of the more
significant functions of that art form. Thus a spell of reading plays
in February of 1926 convinces him that

More and more the dramatic form, with its intense and concentrated
brevity, its elimination of the needless elaboration of narrative,
appeals to me and holds me more than any form of novel except the
best and most effective mystery stories.2

Over forty years before, apparently through his experience in reading
Lear at a critical time in his own emotional life, Bradford found that
drama has a deeper function. It rebukes our native egotism by giving
us effective contact with the joys and sufferings of others. The drama
moves us to pity and sorrow as genuine sorrows do; the representation
of justice and compensation, which are fitting to a play, relieves us
from feeling rebellion and horror against the appearance of divine in-
justice in the case of real suffering.3

Drama, Bradford notes, always rouses strong opinions and thus influ-
ences and to a certain extent creates public opinion. "The theatre may
instruct, it must please." Since it must "amuse the dullest" and "edify
the wisest," one need not wonder that it so often fails to edify. In
consequence, "saints and sages have again and again condemned the dra-
ma." Nevertheless, Bradford remarks, it flourishes and its enemies
would do well to remember Matthew Arnold's words: "The theatre is irre-

3. J., 1863-64, p. 64.
sizable. Organize the theatre." Bradford notes also the old para-
dox that, despite the conflict between religion and drama, our drama
has always sprung from religious ceremonies.

Because of Bradford's belief that drama is the art closest to life,
it was logical for him to declare that the drama is the best field in
which to study what he calls the three great original periods of west-
ern world literature, periods which accompanied a unified and vigorous
national life: the Age of Pericles, the Golden Age of Spanish litera-
ture, and the Elizabethan Age.

We have already seen Bradford's linking of the drama and the nov-
el. In the Handbook he further develops the relationship. He notes
first that the novel's great advantage of coming directly to the reader
has been so strengthened by the expansion in book publishing that the
drama may never regain the position it held before reading was less
universal. The novel, Bradford points out, has room enough for de-
scription, for analysis, for plot and character development, and can
adapt itself in different parts to various readers (since they are
free to skip), but the drama permits no skipping and must hold every-
body. Thus the good play demands, above all, absorbing movement.

For this reason there are far fewer good plays than good novels
and perhaps a thoughtfully, perfectly finished play is to be re-
garded as the highest triumph of literary art.

A Journal entry for 1892 makes a brief comparison of the drama
and the symphony. The musical form, says Bradford, works its main

ideas over and over into new forms and shapes; the drama progresses from point to point and depends solely on its end. In consequence, the movements of a symphony have both unity and interest—the whole work, of course, has its own unity—but the fragments of a play can hardly be interesting.

Dramatic themes, Bradford believes, must have a universal appeal and involve the basic passions of mankind: love, hate, self-sacrifice, jealousy, revenge, ambition, and avarice. If the form varies with the age, he feels that the substance varies but little. Bradford observes also that the most notable point about dramatic themes is that ninety per cent of them concern love, though love-making is only a small part of the average life. He explains that the reason is clear: most people understand love, but only a few understand such passions as ambition and avarice and self-sacrifice. From a letter of the early 1920's comes Bradford's observation that the mythological sources of the Greek drama always held audience interest in contrast to Shakespeare's non-historical sources: the English writer's chief objective was ever character.

Construction, Bradford thinks, is perhaps the most important and certainly the hardest phase in the making of drama since the chief interest and effect of the work depend upon it. The average spectator neither is nor should be aware of the construction. None of the many exist-

ing rules need confine a genius if he can achieve construction with-
out them. In Bradford's opinion, the

rule-ridden Racine uttered the final word on the subject:
"The greatest rule of all is to please and touch the emo-
tions."

Stage-experience, however, does reveal certain broad and helpful prin-
ciples. Aristotle showed the need for a beginning, a climax, and an
ending and pointed out that the best effect came generally from the use
of a process of development before the climax with a subsequent series
of complications to intensify the conclusion. From this comes the
structure of the old Greek tragedies and the usual five acts of the
older French and English plays. Modern dramatists, of course, usually
reduce the number of acts and place the climax earlier. If the cli-
max is perhaps the most significant element, Bradford feels that the
exposition is probably the most interesting; witness the number of de-
vices used.

Bradford thinks that Lessing and Sarsley left the most practical
comments on dramatic construction. He likes particularly Sarsley's
insistence that "Preparation is the whole art of the theatre." Thus
everything, following clearly from what comes before, should in turn
make clear what is to go after. A drama, Bradford is convinced, should
always have movement, action, i.e. dialogue concerning the play's ac-
tion. We have already seen Bradford's belief that Dumas possessed
superbly "the two great dramatic gifts, which are perhaps only one,
2. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
the gift of preparation and the gift of climax."

In his essay "Prologues and Epilogues" Bradford observes that the pre-curtain and the post-play bustle of the modern theatre would seem to obviate the dramatist's careful writing of prologues and epilogues, which thus belong to "the lost arts." He finds a certain attraction in some of the Elizabethan examples and in the work of Dryden, "the master who really raised the prologue and epilogue to a place by themselves among the classes of poetry." Bradford points out that in these erstwhile dramatic appendages we have "the satisfaction of tracing the rise and fall of a literary phenomenon completely." He feels that upon their decay we can probably agree with Walpole's declaration that the prologue and epilogue are unnecessary.

Bradford cannot accept Joe Jefferson's conviction that dialogue has little value beside dramatic action.

This might have a certain force, if you could get along with no speech at all, as in the movies. But your persons have to speak. And if they speak poorly, trivially, vulgarly (in the literary sense) ... their speech will spoil the most dramatic moment and make the most vivid conception of character feeble

1. [Book Reference]. Bradford accepted the belief that later critics fostered the false unities of time and place upon Aristotle. A reading of a handbook on scenario writing (for the silent motion picture) brought his comment that "the greatest of all the beauties and privileges of the screen is its mobility ...." A shift of a thousand miles is permissible "provided the essentials of fundamental Dramatic unity are observed." (*Lb., XI, 130.)

2. *F., 2.
4. *Ibid., p. 11.
and worthless.... Of course you must have dramatic substance too, not mere talk for itself. But no amount of dramatic substance will really last if it is matched with expression that has not one atom of genius.1

Back in the 1880's Bradford had criticized contemporary drama for its overemphasis on situation.

If it be asked why intensity of situation is not as great as sublimity of poetry and clear delineation of character, I say that it is because intensity of situation is a trick, the effect of which lies in surprise and illusion, and when the surprise and illusion are past, the effect is nothing. Of course sublimity of poetry and delineation of character may be combined with force of situation as Shakespeare knew so well how to do. But the temptation is to let situation get the upper hand, and then all is lost. To this weakness is owing the absolute want of sublimity and nobleness in the modern drama.2

In the apparently unfinished "Handbook" Bradford fails to discuss dramatic setting. He does state in Types of American Character (1895) that contemporary stage settings seem to be choking the drama, a condition due in part to the separation between actors and managers and the literary class, which, Bradford complains, makes the case of American literary drama almost hopeless. And again, in the 'twenties he observes that theatrical people become so obsessed with construction and technique that they neglect the vitalizing imaginative element.3

The Greek, French, and Spanish playwrights, Bradford finds, put the life and essence of their action into a few characters and thus tended toward over repetition of a limited number of types. In the work of

2. Ibid., p. 50. 5. *J., XVI, 170.
the English dramatists, by way of contrast, "the characters exist first
of all for themselves to live their own life, walking in and out of the
action with proud independence." Though the artistic unity suffers
from such treatment, the resulting characters make all others in the
drama seem lifeless. As to the truth of character drawing, Bradford
feels that the great writers of all these literatures are equally
flawless and the lesser writers equally ineffective.

Bradford points out that the phrase "development of character" has
caused considerable misunderstanding. On the surface it would seem to
mean a gradual psychological change through natural growth or the pres-
sure of circumstances. An example is the character of Macbeth, unsur-
passed as a "profound study of psychological development." In this
field of character growth the dramatist, since he must take his people
at a crisis, is limited compared with the novelist. Bradford reminds
us that the word development is often used "in a purely artistic
sense" meaning "simply the gradual revelation of the different ele-
ments of which the character consists." The various methods for
achieving this revelation "afford the finest test of a dramatist's
tact, skill, genius."

A character is best developed by his own speech and action, Brad-
ford thinks, a process which the dramatist can aid by a skillful juxta-
position and contrast of characters. Bradford admits that actual de-

2. Ibid., but see Bradford's comments in the Applied Criticism section of Elizabethan drama.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
scription or comments on one character by others are often needed. In any case he believes that the most effective procedure is that every piece of character depiction should also advance the total action—an ideal seldom completely realized.

We have already seen Bradford's distrust for the drama of mere incident. Statements in two letters of the 'twenties show his preference for the drama of character. Thus he declares that "the real drama lies in the soul." And, after a discussion of the "mobile" action picture, he says, "The real stage must be in the main static and only on that condition can it get real spiritual movement."

Bradford further explains that the Greek and French drama, using this limitation, produced the theatre's supreme art form: Elizabethan drama, in contrast, rebelled and tried to be mobile, "with the sole result of childishness."

Bradford once wrote that nothing else fascinated him so much as "the artistic effort to make human beings reveal themselves by the means of spoken words...." We have already seen his belief that poor dialogue can mar both dramatic action and characterisation. He also points out that it is what the characters say that renders them vivid.

3. *Ibid.*, VIII, 130. This is one of Bradford's surprisingly few expressions of irritation at the technical carelessness of the Elizabethans— if it can be fairly called carelessness.
If dialogue is important for its relation to action and characteriza-
tion, it is also vital in its responsibility for style. Great plays, declares Bradford, hold their place in large measure by "the beautiful, the effective, the telling word." The better the play's construction, the more important it is that the dialogue should "empha-
size and intensify the large dramatic effect." So too the apt figures
and other devices of an adequate style can furnish a deeper insight in-
to the characterization. Elsewhere Bradford concludes that style is
"really the essential in the permanent creation of character and also
in the turning of great moments of passion from melodrama into gem-
ine drama." Thus he suggests that if the Greek and the Shakespear-
ian plays were to be stripped down to mere dramatic structure they
would seem equally cheap and melodramatic. "It is the literary ex-
pression which makes the final greatness and distinction."

Bradford points out, however, that certain qualities of style are
not as appropriate for the drama as they are for poetry or the novel.
"Oratory has its own art of expression. Good speeches are not always
good reading." A dramatist may be profound and original, Bradford re-
minds us, but he must be intelligible and effective to the general pub-
lic. Thus it is that Dumas fils and Scribe, though they are not masters
of literary style, found success with their plays. Despite their com-
monplace diction they knew how to use the dramatic word in the proper

place. Even the greatest dramatists, Bradford observes, are not always
the most effective.

Bradford's practical emphasis concerning stage dialogue appears
again in the advice he gives to a young lady who aspires to play writ-
ing. Use, he says, the simple and forceful prose dialogue of today
about the actual events and experiences that go on around you and thus
gain ease and naturalness. And in a late Journal entry he says that
the charm of the dialogue in the French dramatists Nielhac, Paley,
and Fleur is "largely the ... process of selection from just the com-
mon material of ordinary speech."

Bradford the psychographer never forgot that he had wanted to be
a dramatist. One of the consequences was the series of short dia-
logues which fill many pages of his later Journal. The first example is
a discussion of Bradford by two of his fictional characters (Milly
Erskine of Between Two Masters and "Flitters" of The Secret of Wood-
bine Lodge) who believe that they are more real than their creator.

4. Ibid., 1921-22, p. 83. A sample list of dialogues follows:
   Frances Williard Visits Eve Du Deffand ("J., 1922, p. 73)
   Lincoln Visits Booth in Hell (Ibid., p. 20)
   Shakespeare and Bradford (Ibid., 1922-23, p. 29)
   Sainte-Beuve and Bradford (Ibid., p. 28)
   Christ and Caesar (Ibid., 1924-25, p. 54)
   Touchstone and Bradford (Ibid., 1926-27, p. 46)
A collection of the dialogues centering on Lincoln, Darwin, and Moody
was published under the title of The Haunted Biographer in 1927 as
one of the University of Washington Chap Books.
In succeeding dialogues Bradford often uses himself as one of the speakers as well as the subject of discussion. Many of the little pieces concern famous figures of literature and history, particularly those in whom he had a special interest and those to whom his psychographical studies had sent him.

Bradford felt that this dialogue practice was an extension of his interest in both drama and biography. Thus, after confessing to a friend that the revelation of character by dialogue had a supreme fascination for him, he declares that, since he has not been able to do this successfully in his formal plays, he would like "at least to make a pretence of it by the little scraps of dialogue."

Indeed all the various people with whom I deal in my biographical work are perpetually hovering about me with shreds and snatches of conversation and almost forcing me to write it down.  

Nowhere does Bradford go into detail concerning his theory of the dialogue; in two short passages, however, he reveals his general procedure. Thus he writes that he has tried in the dialogues to distill the essence of the characters in a quick ... instantaneous vision, exactly as Iandor does not; but very likely I have failed worse than he.

Again, he calls his dialogues "the habit of recording my self-analysis and general analysis in my journal." Bradford came to believe that he had thus instituted a new form of journal record.

In the "Handbook" Bradford defines tragedy by comparing it with

2. W, XL, 197.
comedy. If laughter in comedy is "the great clarifier of life," freeing, at least for the moment, from many petty ills, Aristotle's "purging by pity and terror" suggests a similar if more profound function for tragedy.

The vaster suffering, wider, universal sweep of moral struggle takes us out of ourselves, makes us forget all pettiness and rise to the level of the eternal, even as laughter does, but, under the treatment of genius, with a more ennobling grasp, a more solemn elevation than ever compatible with laughter. Also the revelation of human character is deeper, more impressive, in tragedy than in comedy.

Comedy depicts the ordinary social life in which men hide their souls, says Bradford, but tragedy, with the shock of great passion, lays souls bare. Lucretius points to the natural pleasure we find in reclining safely on the shore as we watch others struggle with the waves. Is tragedy then, Bradford asks, utterly cruel—do we get pleasure wholly from seeing others suffer? He thinks not. In all really satisfying tragedy, Bradford asserts, the suffering is tempered by the sense of justice. He believes that mere physical suffering is not justified and that even moral torment is scarcely endurable unless it is most clearly related to moral imperfections.

Noble natures flamed and twisted, hurried into crime by some unexpected weakness or some sudden gust of passion, meeting the dire consequences of their guilt, but bearing them with heroic fortitude, or better still working out salvation by means of them, have always made and always will make the finest theme of tragedy.

2. Ibid., p. 5.
Great art, Bradford continues, clothes these real men and women with an imaginative beauty which takes them out of the

sordid sphere of everyday existence. Precisely in this point lies the immense advantage of poetical verse tragedy over the modern drama in prose. People complain that verse makes tragedy unreal. Of course it does. The biting agony of Ibsen's "Ghosts"—modern people, in modern clothes, speaking modern speech, intolerably real, wringing the nerves with an immediate horror which removes all abstract, esthetic contemplation almost impossible—seems hideous, for all its power, beside the broad glory of Oedipus or Lear, because it is too real in a merely superficial sense. The poetry of Sophocles and Shakespeare makes human suffering less immediately real, less bitterly poignant, and more impressive and solemn in its eternal significance. And art has suffered few greater losses than from the modern distaste for verse, which has tended for nearly a century to confine tragedy within the limits of prose.¹

In "Notes for Classes and Lectures" Bradford reaffirms his point that prose is overwhelming in tragedy and lists briefly what he believes are the reasons for the moral value of tragedy: (1), the strengthening of human will; (2) the purging value of intense emotion; (3) the knowledge of human life—(a) general as reflecting ourselves and (b) of other characters; (4) the development of sympathy and pity—but of excess pity in the nineteenth century.

Comedy, says Bradford, is generally considered to be a satire of the weak points of men, helpful in showing them what to avoid. But this is a narrow view, which neglects the beautiful idealism of laughter. Laughter is incompatible with hatred and with care, the great clarifier of life.... The great masters of comedy teach us to see our trifling egotism in the light of eternity. What matter the vexations of an hour in the progress of the world?²

Bradford thinks that Fletcher finds "the essence of the comic spirit" in these lines:

What need we fiddles, idle songs, and sack,
When our own miseries can make us sorry? 1

In Life and I Bradford observes that

over against the tragedy, there is the relieving charm of
laughter, laughter sometimes harsh, cruel, and bitter, but
at its best tender and human, and even at its worst with a
certain quality of rich distraction which is not to be lightly
thrown away. 2

"A Gospel of Joy" explains the deeper implications of comedy.

Bradford points out that modern comic writing has made effective use
of the

profound secret of the Renaissance, unknown or little known
to the ancients, the secret of blending tears and laughter.
One may think the habit has become too fixed, one may long
for the old, bright, genuine merriment, which steered firmly
clear from pathos and pity... 3

Bradford reminds his readers of the "admirable effects" which Shakes-
peare and others give us by combining the two sides of life. If peo-
ple complain that Shakespeare does not make his audience laugh,

They have reason on their side, the greatest comedy is
not the most side-splitting. Why? Because the comic is
not merely the ridiculous. The ridiculous is laughter
all by itself.... In the comic jest is merely a guide-
post pointing the way to the earnest. The true comic is
full of wisdom, built solid of wisdom: laughter is merely
the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual
grace.... The true literary comic is an exquisite attain-
ment of the proper blending of mirth and matter, the matter
being always deeply and broadly human, not local, nor the
more trifling and ephemeral folly of a day. 3

2. P. 83.
Bradford's theory of comedy seems to have been shaped largely by his love for Shakespearean comedy, which, to lovers of the realistic, satirical type—a type often considered the comic norm—is in some respects no comedy at all. It should be admitted, however, that neither the literary critic nor the psychologist is completely sure about the nature of humor. In two important respects, however, I believe that Bradford's theory of comedy agrees with the best modern thinking in the field. First, there is little doubt today that tragedy and comedy are not far apart, that the Renaissance playwright was wiser than he knew in exploiting his "secret of blending tears and laughter." Second, Bradford's belief in "golden laughter" as opposed to derisive laughter seems to be gaining ground. If comedy is aimed at the good of the spectator, certainly good-natured laughter at oneself (and with the characters of the play) would seem more constructive psychologically than the laughter which is built on vainglory and contempt for others. In man's present state, he is altogether too prone to derisive laughter—in this imperfect world doubtless some men will never lose the tendency and some will never respond to the gentler, kindlier laughter. It is a promising sign, however, that today we consider truly nature only those who are capable of "golden" self-laughter. Essentially, of course, Bradford agreed with the basic purpose of the comedy of Jonson and Molière—his quarrel was chiefly with its manner.

1. See, for instance, Martin Eshleman's article on humor in the Dictionary of World Literature, ed. Shipley, pp. 213-14.
In a broad sense, Bradford's dramatic theory is a practical one—
nowhere, I believe, does he consider "closet drama" as a type; on the
contrary, he is constantly thinking, if not in a novel fashion, of the
rights and desires of the audience. As one would expect, in many ways
Bradford's theory is based on the practices of his beloved Greek and
Elizabethan dramatists. Thus his conviction of the dignity and func-
tional values of the drama are not far removed from Greek ideas on the
subject, and he has a classical respect for the Aristotelian analysis
of play construction. Classical, too, are his acceptance of the spirit
of Greek dramatic unity and his refusal to burden Aristotle with Renais-
sance distortions. Bradford's dramatic theory is Elizabethan in its
emphasis upon a wide range of vivid and independent characterization,
an emphasis that seemed to give the English writers an incomparable
ability to make people come alive.

Both Greek and Elizabethan dramas, of course, satisfied Bradford's
requirements for style and poetry on the stage. Bradford's preference
for poetry in drama is interesting in the light of recent challenges to
the hundred-year-old supremacy of prose drama. Bradford would doubtless
have found much to approve, for example, in a recent statement by T. S.
2 Eliot. When Bradford advises a beginner to practice simple, realistic
3 prose dialogue, he seems to be convinced that the recipient of his coun-

1. —even in his criticism of the Browning plays, which he came to dis-
like so strongly. One reason, undoubtedly, was his general aversion to
nineteenth-century practitioners of the form.
3. #L, LIII, 214.
sel needs the solid objectivity of everyday prose, and he is reflecting the practical demands of a stage which hardly questioned the fitness of prose as a dramatic medium. Essentially, for great drama at least, I doubt if Bradford would quarrel with Eliot's idea that there is a triple distinction to be found between prose, and verse, and our ordinary speech which is mostly below the level of either verse or prose. So if you look at it in this way, it will appear that prose, on the stage, is as artificial as verse: or alternatively, that verse can be as natural as prose.  

The Bradford who applauded old Fletcher's reluctance to use prose in his plays would doubtless approve Eliot's belief that

Today ... because of the handicap under which verse drama suffers ... prose should be used very sparingly indeed; ... we should aim at a form of verse in which everything can be said that has to be said; and ... when we find some situation which is intractable in verse, it is merely that our form of verse is inelastic.  

Bradford's criticism certainly accords with Eliot's conviction that such dramatists as Ibsen and Chekhov were "hampered in expression by writing in prose," that only poetry is adequate for the dramatic "moments of greatest intensity." Bradford's description of the effects of great poetry in tragedy, as contrasted, for example, with the effects of prose in the plays of Ibsen, agrees with Eliot's belief that it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation.  

1. "Poetry and Drama," p. 31. Bradford once observed that the average man's talk is heavy with fashion, is "anything but simple." (Literature and Life," p. 3.)  
2. Ibid., p. 32.  
3. Ibid., p. 37.  
And Bradford's conviction that the greatest dramatists of the past were master poets would suggest his support of Eliot's contention that if we are to have a poetic drama, it is more likely to come from poets learning how to write plays, than from skilful prose dramatists learning to write poetry.  

If Bradford's love of poetry in the drama led him to anticipate at least one recent trend of the theatre, the modern student would still find the Wellesley man's theory old-fashioned: never, I believe, does Bradford refer to such modern experimental forms as symbolist or expressionistic drama, to say nothing of the twentieth-century types of naturalistic drama. Bradford declares in a letter of 1923 that the Greeks and the Elizabethans "were the great masters of style, whereas it is the distinct lack in the modern people," condemns Pimre and Archer's version of Ibsen in particular for stylistic weakness, and decides that style makes Wilde and Shaw the two "who count, in spite of their imperfections." Amazed that the clever Archer does not see the drama in this light, Bradford remarks:

But these theatrical fellers [sic] are so obsessed with construction and technique that they forget the imaginative element without which construction and technique are lifeless things.  

Less than three years before his death Bradford regretted that he himself had accepted the verdict of others and had given up his play writing when, he believed, "with circumstances a little more favorable and just a little more effort" he could have produced plays.

"as good as O'Neill's, if not better." It was probably this withdrawal, along with the pressure of his biographical writing and his uncertain health, which kept Bradford from following contemporary dramatic trends. Certainly he would have been in sympathy with the reactions against realism and naturalism which led to technical simplifications; and he would have understood the expressionistic thesis that man's inner self is "not a fairly orderly organism ... but ... a highly unstable compound of promptings and confusions." But the obscurity, both intellectual and spiritual, of much of the symbolicistic and expressionistic drama would have repelled Bradford.

However Bradford might sympathize with the aims of modern drama, he would hardly forego his conviction that in its neglect of great poetry and in its passion for the real and commonplace as well as for "the novel, the exciting, the extraordinary, and the monstrous," this drama, with other modern art forms, was losing the tradition of beauty. In the final analysis, the older Bradford would—indeed, to all intents and purposes, he did—turn back to his beloved Greeks and Elizabethans with the observation that these masters, without losing the drama's vital contact with the people, have enough of realism, of symbolism, of expressionism, or of any other contemporary ism—and perhaps he would not have been far wrong.

Biography and Psychography. In a Journal entry for 1927 Bradford attacks the conception of Sidney Lee that the object of biography is to commemorate distinguished men. Such commemoration, Bradford thinks,
is a very minor and secondary motive, and our passion for commemorating the great is mainly an artificial and stage affair, which would never get us very far. The real motive and basis of biography, and what I shall make the foundation of my book (Biography and the Human Heart), is our passion for knowing the lives and souls of others, and this mainly and fundamentally because such knowledge not only illuminates our own lives, but actually helps us to live them. The study of others as bearing upon ourselves, that is the real secret.1

Bradford supports this passage in a sentence from "Confessions of a Biographer":

Every living human being is a biographer from childhood, in that he perpetually studies the souls of those about him, detects with keen and curious thought the resemblances and differences between those souls and that still more present and puzzling entity, his own, and weighs with the most anxious care the bearing and effect of others' thoughts and actions upon his own life.2

Elsewhere he declares that biography is "merely the intimate revelation of passions and experiences and tragedies and comedies that are daily being accomplished within ourselves." And in a letter of 1927 Brad-

1. J., ed. B., pp. 460-61. Professor Wagenknecht notes that Bradford gave up this book as he had originally planned it when the publisher turned it down; the posthumous volume called Biography and the Human Heart includes parts of the original project and older material (Conversation, March 22, 1954).
2. Wives, p. 11.
3. Ed., VI, 5. For the original "Biography book" Bradford planned a chapter to be called "Biography and Literature," which would develop the idea I have noted above: "that all creative literature is nothing but biography disguised and generalized, culminating in the lyric,... the most intensely personal literature we know, from the Psalms and Sappho to Emily Dickinson." (L., ed. B., p. 291.)
ford asserts that

The highest aim of biography should be to bring out common humanity, that is to show that the elements of greatness are instinctive and inborn in you and me, and it needs only courage and patience and persistence to bring them out, at least to some extent.1

One would suppose from Bradford's approach that he would consider biography and psychology closely and harmoniously related. He declares, however, that precisely because they are so alike they are extreme enemies. Their objects are

fundamentally different. Biography is the study of the individual, pursued with all the aids of psychology, but always centered on the individual at last. Psychology is constantly and properly occupied with the general and uses the individual only to illustrate the general laws and conclusions.2

Character-drawing, to Bradford, the great objective of biography, is, he finds, both fascinating and baffling. In the first chapter of A Naturalist of Souls, Bradford gives what he calls a "no doubt crude metaphysical analysis" which he has found adequate for his own use.

He distinguishes character from individuality, which he describes as "a vast complex, based primarily upon the body, the material, physical organization, and consisting of all the past history of that organization" and, even by the concrete methods of novelist or dramatist, beyond complete recording.

Fortunately, in the weltering chaos which is totaled by the word 'individuality,' there is one clue that we can seize, though it is frail and insecure. As we observe the actions of different men, we find that they follow

2. SM., XLI, 102.
3. SM., IV, 14.
certain comparatively definite lines, which we call habits; that is, the same man will perform over and over again actions, and speak words, which have a basis of resemblance to each other, though the basis is often obscure and elusive. And back of the words and actions we assume from our own experience motives of sensation and emotion, which serve to strengthen and confirm such resemblance. On this vague basis of fact is built the whole fabric of our study and knowledge of our fellow men. The generalization of these habits of action, sometimes expressing itself very obscurely and imperfectly for the acute observer in features and manifestations of the body, constitutes what we call qualities. And the complex of these qualities in turn forms the fleeting and uncertain total which we sum up in the word 'character.' An honest man is one who does honest actions. A simple man is one who does simple actions... And so on, almost without limit.

"Character, then," repeats Bradford, "is the sum of qualities or generalized habits of action."

Especially significant in character to Bradford is "the infinite identity in infinite isolation of the common human heart..." He feels that it is the varied phases of that identity... [the] fundamental common human elements that make biography real, that make it possible, that make the story of one over and over again the story of all.

These elements include

love, the basic instinct of sex, perhaps the most universal and the most easily understood of all human passions and motives, not only in its grosser foundation, but in its subtle, infinitely varied and complicated refinements.

Bradford believes that love "in its more serene and normal course... in its robust, wholesome, insignificant domesticity" is not exter-

1. NE, pp. 6-8.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. BHM, p. 8.
sively treated in biographies, in contrast with its abnormal manifestations. A second "universal element of biography ... is ambition, the desire ... to do something ... that men will cherish and remem-
ber." The common man may think that he can do without it, but, Brad-
ford declares, ambition

is nothing but the hunger for success, and ... there is no great or little to that hunger, which is simply the absorbing interest of our lives.3

A third element is money, "from which high and low, good and bad, never altogether escape." The remaining elements are or stem more or less from physical health and moral health with all their ramifications and include success, the sense of failure and depression, such temptations as drink and sex, and the various forms of hate and jeal-
ousy.

In urging "human identity as the basis of biography," Bradford does not forget that

human difference is also an important and conspicuous element of it, and when one has once established and recog-
nized the identity as a basis, the study of difference be-
comes almost, if not quite, as interesting as the study of resemblance .... each individual who discusses himself is naturally disposed to declare, like Rousseau, at the begin-
ing of the Confessions: 'I am not made like any of those whom I have seen; I venture to believe that I am not made like any who exists. If I am not better, I am different.'6

Bradford also wishes to remind his reader that the acceptance

of human identity as the foundation of biography means to the

1. [Note]
2. ibid., p. 13.
3. ibid., p. 12.
4. ibid., p. 10.
5. ibid., pp. 12-20.
6. ibid., p. 23.
Wellesley man not bringing the great man down to the level of the average man but raising the average to the great. He protests violently at the whole position of Carlyle and Nietzsche as to heroes and supermen .... the more closely one studies human nature, the more one is impressed with the fundamental, essential resemblances, and the cardinal fact, that the same good and evil are latent, if not always patent, in us all.¹

In the introductory chapter to *Wives*, Bradford discusses at some length the requirements of good biography and the difficulties of writing it. He notes that people generally think that biography is easy to write.

All you have to do is to pick up the facts and set them down. It sounds simple enough; so that people write biographies who never write anything else and obviously never could. All the same, there are difficulties.²

First, Bradford notes, is "the purely artistic difficulty," in which it is required that the biography be an "interesting ... beautiful .... well composed, designed, combined, and finished performance." Bradford hastens to point out that this problem is "the smallest part of a biographer's troubles, so small that he must leave it to the providence of God," realizing that if he lacks the "instinctive gift for it, he has simply got into the wrong business."

Bradford proceeds to discuss the difficulties which are native to the mind and temper of the writer himself. He declares:

The man does not exist who can write on any subject without preconception, without postconception, with a complete absence of personal bias....³

¹. *BHII*, p. 27.
². *F. L.*
⁴. Ibid., p. 5.
Bradford thinks, indeed, that "the best biographies are apt to be those that are written with a considerable amount of bias, for or against." The biographer can hardly escape completely such general prejudices as those of race, creed, and politics. Two more subjective elements are the biographer's tendency to arrive quickly "at a personal feeling about his subject..." and "the natural instinct of the writer to heighten lights and shadows merely for artistic effect...."

If there are problems in the writer himself, there are also problems in "the man written about, quite as serious and perhaps even more subtle and perplexing." One derives from the fact that in general biographers have to depend on documents, printed or manuscript, and "printed material can never be relied upon with any assurance at all." The liberties of older editors make Bradford suspicious of the validity of anything printed before 1850; meanwhile the original manuscripts have either been destroyed or are almost always hard to get at and use.

Usually, indeed, the biographer, thinks Bradford, has too much material, "such as it is," material which divides into what the man said or wrote of himself and what others told of him. The testimony of others, Bradford notes, though often interesting and valuable, is limited by the personal idiosyncrasies and actual contradictions of the reporters.

The testimony of a man about himself breaks down into what others

2. Ibid., pp. 6–8.
3. Ibid., pp. 8–9.
4. Ibid., p. 9.
have recorded and his own actual writing. The use of the records of
others, which are usually put down "from memory a considerable time
after they are uttered, and often by persons whose memory is anything
but trained to exactitude," demands great caution.

More reliable are the words of the man himself.

At least we know what he said. Then comes the question of
what he meant to say, whether he is deliberately deceiving
us, whether he was unconsciously deceiving himself, and the
puzzle becomes more complex than ever....

Most interesting, thinks Bradford, is "the varying instinct of self-
revelation in different persons." He compares Pepys, "who has an
actual genius for turning his soul inside out," with the deeper and
reserved Robert E. Lee.

"But," Bradford reminds us, "even when the material is given,
there remains the hardest part of the task, that of interpretation."
To Bradford "the real object of the biographer ... is the analysis of
his subject's character." With the best of material "no perseverance,
no ingenuity, no insight" can ever make the biographer's interpreta-
tion "binding or absolute."

An editorial which Bradford called "Biography as a Fine Art"
gives more hints on technique. The first element in the training of
a biographer, he points out, must be thoroughness, as it is needed,
for example, in the sifting of material. The minor characters re-

2. Ibid., p. 11. Bradford insisted that letters and diaries are not
types of biography but only its raw material and that even autobi-
ography is at a different level (ibid., XXIV, 189).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Ibid., p. 13.
6. XXVI, VI, 88.
quire careful treatment to serve as background for the main character. Perhaps nothing, Bradford asserts, reveals the biographer's art more than the use of quotations. In this respect, conversation is important. "A good biography abounds in reported talk, and this is perhaps the supreme value of the great work of Boswell." But, Bradford cautions, the talk should be relevant and significant. One of the characteristics of typical biography that led Bradford into his practice of psychography, indeed, was what he felt to be its tendency to the superfluous and irrelevant. Biography, he asserts,

is bound to present an elaborate sequence of dates, events, and circumstances, of which some are vital to the analysis of the individual subject, but many are merely required to make the narrative complete.

Bradford declares elsewhere that "biography is the story of life, and the supreme art of the biographer is to live the lives of other men." Biography thus demands a high imaginative faculty. The biographer is enabled to live his subjects' lives because of the profound identity which lies beneath them all. Hence Bradford does not agree with the theory of Andre Maurois that the biographer should treat only with those who he feels are akin to him. If one is properly con-

1. *19*, VI, 90.
4. *19*, VI, 92. Elsewhere Bradford warns that "Imaginary—not imaginative biography is in my opinion a literary and intellectual crime." Life itself, he believes, has enough color(*19*, XLIX, 1902).
stituted, says Bradford, all humanity is akin.

Bradford finds biography no exception to his rule that true literature, whatever its form, demands style. In his essay "The Art of Biography" he declares, "It is style that makes all books live that do live." And in a letter of 1927 he concludes that "after all, what makes biography, like any other literary form, really worthy to endure, is style...."

Bradford once wrote to a friend that for himself he did not want "an official biography with all sorts of extracts from letters and journals cemented together by a lot of editorial eulogy and explanation." In a late Journal entry Bradford observes that such writing may furnish valuable biographical material, but it is "not only unprofitable but positively damaging, because it interferes with the notion or appreciation of independent critical biography altogether."

Boswell, Bradford adds, has much to account for in following the official biography's tendency to present its subject

in the best possible light.... marvelously well. But no doubt the instinct of the Anglo-Saxon race for personalities without the guiding influence of taste has largely entered in.

In Biography and the Human Heart Bradford emphasizes

1. "J., 1930, p. 119. Earlier Bradford makes what might be a partial concession to Maurois when he exclaims at the burden of writing about people whose interests one does not know("J., 1925, p. 192).
2. "ER., IV, 46.
the folly and the failure of the pious, the exemplary biography, which, instead of revealing the subject as human, carefully hides and obscures all those weaknesses and failings which mark him as essentially at one with humanity.

Bradford agrees with Sidney Lee that the two methods for accomplishing this are those of "surprising facts and ... of misrepresenting them...." Whichever method is used, the American feels, "the result for biography is disastrous, and the extent to which it has always prevailed is unbelievable." He cites as examples Plutarch, who, despite great natural curiosity, sometimes preaches too obviously, and the extreme Life of Washington by Parson Weems.

In a letter of 1929 Bradford says he feels that the distinctive element in the new biography is its application of the scientific spirit.

The influence of Darwin had wholly changed not only our science, but our religion, our economics, our fiction, and our poetry. Why should it not revolutionize our biography also? I believe it has. In other words, instead of trying to write a man's eulogy, or commemorate his achievements, or hold him up as a profitable example, we are simply trying to understand what manner of man he was....

Bradford goes on to express the hope that some day students of biography will realize and appreciate the great importance of Sainte-Beuve, who ... should occupy the same place in this development of the scientific spirit that is given to Darwin.

Bradford admits that the Frenchman's influence has been less direct than that of Darwin. He is convinced, however, that

1. BHH, p. 29.
3. Ibid., p. 329.
when you take the subtle, profound, penetrating quality of
his [Sainte-Beuve's] work in especial combination with its
really astonishing quantity and variety, it will be evident
that he was by far the greatest biographical force the world
has ever seen or probably ever will see....1

In Biography and the Human Heart Bradford discusses what appears
to be an offshoot of the new scientific biography, "the current fashion
of what are called destructive, iconoclastic biographies." He feels
that many elements go into its making. Thus there is the attempt "to
shake the kernel of human truth out of the husk of age-old reputation
and glory," a process that makes some good reputations look "tattered
and shriveled...." Other elements probably include a biographer's in-


celent instinct "of smartness and cleverness," which reveals itself "too easily
in carping and picking flaws," the "instinct of envy, which tears
greatness down, simply because it cannot rise itself," and the commer-
cial instinct, which makes money out of "scandalous assaults upon
things that the world has been taught to revere." Bradford decides
that, despite its handicaps,

the fashion of critical biography is a thoroughly healthy one,
and is not likely soon to pass away. It is founded fundamen-
tally upon the sense of human fellowship. After all, if the
great were totally unlike us and belonged to a different
world, they would not interest us in the least.3

And, he points out.

Human greatness is great only because it is human. The great-
ness which cannot bear to have its humanity exposed is shallow,
petty, insignificant, and unenduring.4

1. Ibid., ed. B., p. 329.
2. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
Bradford criticizes another aspect of contemporary biography: the tendency
to borrow the methods and manners of the mystery novel to a
perilous extent. The followers of Mr. Strachey have been so
impressed by the brilliance of his pyrotechnic dexterity that
they copy it in a way calculated to shake the confidence of
those accustomed to more slow and sober methods. ¹

Bradford concludes his opening chapter of Biography and the Human
Heart with a plea for the possibilities of biography in education be-
cause of biography's human basis and human value and because of contem-
porary educational conditions. With Greek irretrievably lost and Latin
no longer supplying "the foundation of intellectual nourishment for the
mass of cultivated people," Bradford reminds us that the nineteenth
century had been confident that

a more concrete universal mental training would take the place
of it [classical education] with entire success. That hope was
soon disappointed. It became evident that the vast increase of
possible information, in all directions, would be beyond the
grasp of any human intellect, even to summarize or to synthe-
size. ²

Bradford finds that the resort to practical education is "to say the
least, susceptible of dangerous and dire perversion." ³

Bradford feels that at this point "the concrete and practical con-
ception of biography might help." The recent establishment of depart-
ments of biography at two American colleges strikes him as a promising

4. *BR*, pp. 31-32. The work of Professor Ambrose White Vernon at
Carleton College and at Dartmouth.
development.

After all, the individual human being is the centre of the world, and perhaps no better key can be chosen to help human beings to understand the world. The human being is all of history. He makes it and in turn is made by it. To understand the great movements of history, you cannot have a richer clue than personalities as they intertwine with each other to make events. But the same is true of all other fields of human interest. In literature, in art, in science, in religion, there is always the man, first and last. Get at the man, and you will have double interest in the work. 1

Biography has educational value, Bradford thinks, because it appeals to all ages but especially because it teaches conduct.

It teaches us to understand the lives and the motives of others, and nothing is more helpful to us in living our own....

In other words, biography is, or should be, or might be, the yeast, the ferment, of the human spirit, which should stir and rouse it to the highest sense of its own achievement and its own powers. 2

Bradford coined the word psychograph for himself before he real-ised that Saintsbury had used it a few years earlier concerning the work of Sainte-Beuve. The American was never especially attached to the word, partly, perhaps, because such friends as Bliss Perry and William R. Thayer felt it was unnecessary. He confesses that he did

1. BEH, p. 32.
2. Ibid., pp. 32-33. On occasion Bradford had his doubts about the use of biography in education. Thus he suspected that many biographers would use their subjects merely for displaying prejudices (*L., ed. B., p. 61), that biography has too much "fluid and uncertain" material to be of value (*J., 1931-32, p. 98), and that much biographical material is so trivial, sensational, or diffuse that the biographer can reach no final conclusions about human characters (*L., LIV, 6).
3. B., p. 5.
not suppose that psychography was particularly novel in meaning, but it seemed to sum up processes that have been rather vaguely employed before and to give them a name which might be useful in attracting the attention of the jaded, over-loaded American reader.¹ "Psychography," writes Bradford for a basic definition, "is the condensed, essential, artistic presentation of character." He realizes that "the proper affinity of psychography is, of course, with biography." But he feels that there is enough difference, even in the aims, to make valid a distinct classification. In his essay "Biography and Haystacks," which serves as the Introduction to Wagenknecht's The Man Charles Dickens, Bradford summarizes the differences between biography and psychography. Thus biography is "the orderly and systematic narrative which follows the chronological current of a life." If artistically done, it "develops a complete likeness and portraiture of the animating soul." But biography has such dangers as "digression, irrelevance, and the chronological movement," the last of which almost inevitably involves masses of material which will threaten both the clarity and the continuity of the piece. In contrast, Psychography discards chronology, does not concern itself in any way with the sequence of external fact, except in so far as such is absolutely necessary to make clear the background. It concerns itself wholly with the essential elements of character, endeavors to establish these by all possible varied evidence ... to disentangle them from the ephemeral and inconsequential, and to bring them out with such emphasis of contrast

¹. 115, p. 4.
². 11id., p. 9.
³. 11., ed. E., p. 33.
and climax as will at least enforce the reader's attention
and hold his interest. Whether it compels entire agree-
ment is another and quite a secondary matter. 1

In a newspaper interview of 1925 Bradford is quoted as saying that he
discards chronology entirely

because, after all, a man's mind and spirit—his soul, I
mean—are continuous throughout his adult life. That con-
tinuity is what I try to catch, because it seems to me the
real man. 2

Elsewhere Bradford declares that psychography, in its concern with
the subject's soul, "is occupied only with the central spiritual
unity, so far as there is any such." 3

In his Autobiography Bradford says that he wandered into psy-
chography "as a by-path of criticism." 4 He observes also that the
psychological element in the French critics—especially Sainte-Beuve—
had always interested him. Sainte-Beuve called himself a "naturalist
of souls," but neither he nor his followers had ever disentangled this
function from literary criticism. Bradford came to feel that a sharp
distinction must be made. Psychography, then, is not properly lit-
erary criticism. And in the Appendix to The American Bradford
observes that, as is the case with biography, psychography with its
interest in the individual is not psychology. 5

Bradford also points out that the product of psychography is "not
at all properly conveyed or suggested by the word 'portrait'," a term

1. The Man Charles Dickens, p. xi.
2. "The Soul of Men in Cammell Bradford's Eyes," Boston Evening Trans-
3. Ibid., ed. B., p. 33.
4. F. 379.
5. Ibid.
he has used, he admits, because it had the authority of Sainte-Beuve
and others and because he himself lacked the courage to use "psychogra-
phy" and knew that editors and publishers would not tolerate it.

But 'portrait' is very unsatisfactory. To carry the terms
of one art into another is always misleading, and I have ex-
perienced this in the complaint of many critics that as a por-
trait painter I could present a man at only one moment of his
career, that I depicted his character at only one phase, one
situation, one set of conditions and circumstances.

Now the aim of psychography is precisely opposite to this.
Out of the perpetual flux of actions and circumstances that con-
stitutes a man's whole life, it seeks to extract what is essen-
tial, what is permanent and so vitally characteristic.

One of the psychographer's basic concerns, of course, is a clear
understanding of character. Bradford found the most satisfactory
technique to derive from the "crude metaphysical analysis" discussed
a few pages back and reaches the conclusion again that character is
"the sum of qualities or generalized habits of action." Besides un-
derstanding, the psychographer needs, in Bradford's opinion, a positive
attitude. The greatest observers, Bradford declares, men like Shakes-
peare and Cervantes and Sophocles, "have always loved; sometimes laugh-
ed a little, teased a little, mocked a little, but loved always." Obvi-
ously—and here Bradford makes another concession to the Maurois theory
referred to above—it is an advantage for a psychographer to have a
subject he "cannot help loving."

As in the case of biography in education, Bradford feels that psy-
chography has no more significant purpose than "mutual self-knowledge."

1. NS, pp. 4-5.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. LS, the American, p. 282.
He realizes that such a purpose would seem to imply for subjects the choice not of important figures but of the man in the street, he "who has lived a little petty life of trifles such as we live." Bradford argues, however, that

the man in the street is less accessible. He does not leave letters and memoirs. His speech and actions are not jealously observed and faithfully recorded.

Also, the great men

bring more of their humanity into action.... A man who for forty years has carried the world's burdens on his shoulders may not have finer natural faculties than you or I, but at least he has brought every faculty into use with all the might he has in him.

Bradford continues:

When it is shown that great personages, who ... had only qualities like ours, often defects like ours ... made their greatness perhaps by a happy balance of qualities or by an extreme development of some particular quality, perhaps even a little by the kindliness of fortunes, it seems to me that we should be led to emphasize rather what we may be than what they were not.

Such a conviction was an important factor in Bradford's choice of material and, indeed, in his whole psychographic emphasis.

Fishlyn points out that the psychographic form has two aspects: that of content and that of arrangement. The first concerns the types of material, the elements of character, and especially the all-important selection of material. The second aspect has to do with such matters as the building up of sections and chapters, the "chronology," and

1. See the American, pp. 279-81.
the arrangement for effect.

Bradford felt that without the right material—material in which the subject reveals himself unconsciously—the psychographer simply cannot "do" a subject. Thus, even more than in the case of conventional biography, he emphasizes the problem of appraising the material.

At the heart of the phase of interpretation, of course, is the motive behind the act, so difficult to distinguish and disentangle. Here, indeed, is where the material chosen must prove its value in the suggestions of clues to the subject's motives. As a psychographer, Bradford was particularly interested in the soul clues of the subject's self-records. Speeches, formal autobiographies, and words reported by others he found to be the least satisfactory of such records; letters, journals, and diaries he came to feel were far more revealing. Thus letters provide, if not the richest, "the most general and the most satisfactory clues for the naturalist of souls." Even in the most charming and psychographically informing letters, however, in letters like those of Doudan and Fitzgerald, Bradford found a surprising variation in the degree of self-revelation.

The daily diary, Bradford decided, offers probably the "richest clues to the great field of souls." Particularly valuable are the

3. Ibid., p. 4.
4. Ibid., pp. 6-8.
5. Ibid., p. 8.
directly personal diaries, in which skilled and scientific analysts have endeavored to set down the daily process of their lives with the most minute and anxious care. Even with such material, however, the skilled observer from the outside is likely to agree with the old Greek poet who said, "Many things are obscure to man, but nothing is more obscure to him than his own soul." The very process of self-observation "tends to make the living of it artificial and distorted." Sometimes, indeed, Bradford felt that the objective diarists give more accurate pictures of their inner lives than do the deliberate analysts.

Bradford once disclosed his order of treating his material thus: I take first the outside sources, the secondary matter, the hearsay and gossip of those less likely to know, and then get to the heart, the essential biographies, and the man's own words. Perhaps this is a mistake. I may get prejudices from the unreliable sources that I do not afterwards eradicate. But I somehow feel as if this were the most natural form of approach, what one would adopt in real life, and so far it seems to work reasonably well, besides that in some cases my method is quite different.

Though the psychographer uses the materials of the biographer, he is restricted by the need for condensing these materials far more than does the author of a two-volume biography. Thus his process of selection is a rigid one. He must use "only the telling, vivid, significant bit, which in a few crisp words reveals what Sainte-Beuve so powerfully calls "bare soul." Such a procedure requires the psychographer to cover a great amount of reading for the fragments he actually uses.

1. BS, p. 7.
2. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
4. BE, II, 192-93.
When the psychographer selects his material, he keeps in mind the character elements which concern love, religion, ambition or love of glory, money, physical and moral health, esthetic temper, "ruling passion," and common identity. Most of these elements Bradford took from his master, Sainte-Beuve. The latter did not use ambition as a distinct element but as ambition for love, for money, and the like. Sainte-Beuve's character pattern also included the essential vice theory, i.e., that every man has an essential vice or weakness, which is predominantly of a moral nature. Bradford enlarged this concept to include more recognition of the physical side. The following Journal passage is here pertinent:

With Sainte-Beuve I feel that the larger traits of character are fixed and remain so, from the cradle to the grave. We are constantly misled as to development by the appearance of permanent traits in new manifestations, owing to the endless play of circumstance. But the traits are there, from the beginning. Doubtless there are cases of striking development, all the more interesting from their rarity. Doubtless there are modifications in every case, which should be noted.

In a later entry he expresses concern—paradoxically enough—as to whether in his portrait of George Sand "the psychographical method allows enough for development in character." He observes that he

1. This is Fishlyn's summary, except for Sainte-Beuve's reaction to nature, which Bradford surely uses(Fishlyn, p. 1v). Perhaps Fishlyn included it under "esthetic temper." Bradford naturally varied the application of the list with individual characters. In the introductory chapter of Damaged Souls he includes such subdivisions as alcohol and word facility(pp. 10-11, 13-14).

2. Fishlyn, p. 158.

has always felt it important "to suggest and indicate the nature of such development," though of necessity this has to be done briefly. He goes on to reiterate, however, that even with George Sand he is "more and more convinced that development in the sense of any fundamental or vital change rarely occurs."

The assurance that once the psychographer had determined his subject's traits in early life, he need not be concerned for their alteration, obviously would simplify the task of character detecting. As the Journal passages suggest, however, Bradford made complicating concessions. "The appearance of permanent traits in new manifestations, owing to the endless play of circumstance," for example, could involve as many problems as the admission of free character development. And now and then, as in the case of George Sand, Bradford had his doubts about the flexibility of his method, doubts which perhaps stemmed largely from that basic concept of the essentially static nature of character.

It is apparent that Bradford the theorist of psychography and the creative artist did not simply borrow from Sainte-Beuve or draw on his own imagination for the elements of the character formula. His experience in living as well as in reading had made most of them real to him. The special connotations of love, ambition, money, and physical health

2. Bradford's reservations about this concept leave it but a short distance from at least one idea of evolution. (See also L., ed. B., pp. 230-32.)
are immediately obvious. Fishlyn believed that Bradford felt the religious instinct to be less powerful and prevalent than the desires and an instinct which asserted itself chiefly in moments of physical weakness or in fear of death. When Bradford traced the aesthetic instinct, Fishlyn observed, he put special emphasis on the subject's reactions to poetry and music.

Nor would Bradford find that this suggestion of the relation of his own life to his use of the character elements was out of place. The Transcript reporter quotes him thus:

A series of psychographs is really a series of interpretations of the soul of Gamaliel Bradford, checked and controlled by my sense of the ostensible subject's reality.

The great human document is one's self. That is the microcosm, as it were. From that identity, the biographer works outward evaluating the difference according to their kind and degree. Such is the real basis of the art of biography...

If one of the elements, especially love, money, or ambition, takes an abnormal, dominant form, it becomes the "ruling passion." Sainte-Beuve had accepted in part 'this seventeenth and eighteenth-century development of the humor theory but did not agree with Balzac that it controlled every man. In his earlier work Bradford

1. Fishlyn, p. 128. Professor Wagenknecht does not agree with this conclusion: he feels that Bradford gives far more attention to religion than most secular biographers (Conversation, March 13, 1954). Personally, I believe that Professor Wagenknecht's opinion is more in keeping with Bradford's essential character.

2. Fishlyn, p. 8.


4. Fishlyn, p. 132.

5. Irving Babbitt, Masters of Modern French Criticism, p. 182.
accepted the "ruling passion" even less, though admitting that it did exist as an abnormality in some people. Sainte-Beuve had found its origin as either organic and inherited or manifesting daemonic power. Bradford, rejecting all physiological sources except where physical weakness required compensation, felt that the real source for the ruling passion was in man's soul. The distorted emphasis of the master passion would seem repugnant to the humanistic temperaments of both Sainte-Beuve and Bradford. But, whether from a more positive conviction or because of the unity the device brought to his structure, Bradford greatly intensified his use of it, especially in the later short portraits.

Basic to Bradford's formula, indeed to his whole theory and practice of psychography, is the element of "common identity." Fishlyn is probably right in associating it with Emerson's "Over-soul," by which the Concord sage meant "that Unity ... within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all others...."

Bradford sometimes had his doubts about the wisdom of avoiding the chronological sequence altogether in favor of presenting his subject's character qualities, "arranged and treated in such a logical order as shall give a total impression that will be most effective and enduring." He feared that discussing qualities in the abstract would be "academic, pedagogic, monotonous." But, writing in 1915, he

3. Fishlyn, indeed, believes that it became the "fulcrum on which all the others elements of the formula are balanced." (P. 189.)
asserts that his doubts are fading daily.

Indeed, it is in this regard that the originality and significance of psychography impress me most, and I am astonished to find how rich and varied are the possibilities of artistic presentation with every individual character. Instead of a monotonous renewal of the same qualities in the same order, every individual seems to suggest and require a different arrangement, a different emphasis. So that I come to feel that Nature herself is the artist and that all one has to do is to lend a patient, earnest ear to her dictation.

"The uncertainty and unreliability of psychographic art," it is true, is apparently emphasized when Nature dictates "not one but a dozen possibilities of composition ... in every case," but this variety of treatments is related to a much wider variety of the material used, and the "search for the best form of developing the material is as delightful as the discovery of the material itself."

Bradford felt that the condensation and brevity demanded of the psychographer heightened the difficulties of such biographical problems as the avoidance of all kinds of repetition, the building up of genuine and effective climaxes, the striking of a proper balance for contrasted traits, the keeping clear of the exaggerations he found so instinctive with himself, and the reconciliation of new points of view that come after a work has already been planned.

Bradford believed that his quotation technique was a distinct contribution to psychographical methods and was surprised that the critics

1. [NS], p. 20.
2. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
took so little notice of it. Where Sainte-Beuve generally used
long passages, "often entire letters, of which only small bits are
really essential to his purpose," Bradford developed the practice of
interweaving quotations in "brief scraps" and in
close, compact fashion... The secret is, to use what you
want and only what you want; for the first necessity of
psychography is to economize space and the hurried reader's
time."¹

Bradford once said that he took the most pains with his conclu-
sions. Later he wrote of the incredible amount of effort "in working
up climaxes that will be telling without being artificial."² Whether
he ended with a question, a quotation, or a declaration, he preferred
to sound a positive note with an overtone of the irony which a skeptic
can always find in life. And, fittingly enough, he often invoked the
"common heart" motif by linking some key trait of the subject with
"all of us."

Bradford suspected, particularly in his longer studies, the danger
of artificiality, or, as a friend called it, "schematism," into which
he felt he might easily fall without realizing it. Another defect
of the psychographic method drove Bradford into temporary despair as
late as 1929: the "hopeless and unavoidable repetitions, from one
portrait to another and even from one part of the same portrait to
another."³

² Ibid., p. 158.
³ Ibid., p. 392.
⁴ Ibid., p. 144.
⁵ 1928-29, p. 188.
And, in the background, there was always a characteristic, inherent in biography itself but particularly emphasized by psychography: the lack of finality. It stemmed from the constant turning up of new material and especially from the complexity of character portrayal. To Bradford this lack of certainty was more a virtue than a vice, pointing, as he thought it did, to the tolerance and flexibility of psychographic findings. His own Sainte-Beuvian habits of delaying or not even reaching decisions obviously stressed the tentative note. Now and then, however, as when Bradford exclaimed—half in mockery, half in surprise—at the sureness of other biographers or psychographers or wondered whether Strachey's firm and vivid strokes were really an artistic blemish or not, the American apparently sensed the irritation for the reader that can come from the writer who stops too often at the question mark, who seems to refuse the responsibility of conclusions. On the whole, however, Bradford's faith in psychography and his psychographic method, which he felt was his distinctive contribution to literary technique, stayed reasonably secure; his claims to what it could do remained modest.

Not to be true, not to be final, not to be exhaustive, simply to make one's readers think, to make them feel, and so for a few minutes live, that is all I can expect and all I aim at.

If Bradford's dramatic and fictional theories seem, for the time at which they were written, partially dated, his biographical and psy-

chographical theory need not answer the same charge. In the field which brought him fame, he himself took a definite part with the new biography which reacted so emphatically against the discreet examples of hagiography that the Victorian temperament encouraged. Bradford's conviction that the scientific spirit, "the essential element of the new biography," revolutionized life writing would appear an exaggeration to some critics. Perhaps Bradford was right, however, in that the period of great eighteenth-century biography, against which the Victorians had reacted, did not feel such a conscious dedication to the impartial, truth-seeking spirit, nor did it have available such tools of psychology (tools which Bradford himself did not use, however) as has the modern period.

Bradford's statement that the new biography is "simply trying to understand what manner of man" its subject is, "to analyze his character and motives, and to classify him" is misleading in the light of Bradford's total approach to the subject. Other statements of his often point to a conception of the new biography far richer than that of a mere cataloging of souls. Thus, in the problem which inevitably arose as to whether this biography should be truth or art or both, Bradford holds with those who feel that the two sides can be reconciled. He is sure that great biography demands imagination and style as well as truth. He can agree, in part at least, with Maurcie's declaration that for understanding a
man not analysis or synthesis but a "coup d'etat" is needed. Paramount also is Bradford's conviction that a life story is the revelation of a man as a human being for the knowledge, the assurance, and the inspiration of fellow human beings. "It is the day of the biographer; he is the dramatist, the essayist, the romanticist of the future," exclaimed Heslooth Pearson in 1930. Bradford never made such a sweeping statement, but he did arrive at the related idea that "all creative literature is nothing but biography disguised and generalized...."

Generalisations, as Bradford well knew, can be troublesome; the preceding one is confusing, for example, in the light of Bradford's criticism of both Ludwig and Strachey for fictionalizing tendencies in their biographical work. The equating of biography with creative literature is also misleading in relation to other statements in which Bradford likens biography to science. Here, of course, we have further proof of his informal attitude towards literary theory—nowhere does Bradford satisfactorily amplify and unify his views as to the nature of biography and its relations to other literary types. If he had been driven into a corner on the problem, I think he would have preferred the stand that biography, however

1. Aspects of Biography, p. 133.
2. Ventilations: Being Biographical Asides, p. 68.
3. Ibid., p. 291.
4. Ibid., p. 295.
5. Ibid., pp. 303-304.
6. See, For example, Rare Souls, p. 3.
its modern practitioners affect scientific methods and objectives, is essentially an art. As Bradford points out, character portrayal rests

so largely upon delicate scientific observation entirely out of the range of scientific precision and still more upon the quality and temperament of the observer, that any pretense of finality

is "absurd." Again, the great biographer handles truth and reaches conclusions beyond the scope of pure scientific thinking.

Bradford's basic theory of biography was, if not complete, commendably sound and timely in the 1920's; in some respects, however, it is not as timely in the 1950's. A glance at the publishers' lists and the evidence, for example, of Allan Nevins suggest that the current trend is to longer works which utilize the best characteristics of the older biographies, including the Victorian examples which Bradford could not tolerate. Thus Nevins asserts that

the best of the Victorians ... proved that taste and proportion can be combined with utter frankness. What could be more candid than Edmund Gosse's portrait of his father in 'Father and Son'?!

After admitting that the reforms which began at the time of Strachey were of value in exposing "the stodginess, the dishonest evasions and

2. According to a distinguished scientist speaking on October 28, 1950, at a meeting of the College English Association held at Brandeis University, the scientist merely records facts—he does not reach conclusions.
3. In "How Shall One Write of a Man's Life," New York Times Book Review, July 15, 1951, pp. 1, 20. I choose this article because it represents what are to me the same and balanced ideas of one of the finest living American biographers.
the moralizing of the worst Victorian biography," Nevins observes:

Yet biography has, after all, not been revolutionized, for it never needed revolutionizing. If some stuffy traits of old-style biography have been destroyed, the great substantial virtues of the old-time masters of the field have been vindicated. The central fact which emerges from any survey of biographical writing in the past fifty years is the triumphant survival of the really outstanding qualities of the old-fashioned Victorian and pre-Victorian schools. ¹

Here, as in other fields, I believe, Bradford's aversion to the Victorians did him a disservice. He was hardly able—though he was frank to admit the limitation—to appreciate in the Victorian biographers what Nevins calls their best qualities,

their plenitude, their scope, their free use of letters and anecdotes to illustrate personality, their careful delineation of the social, political and intellectual background, their accuracy and their well-proportioned attention to what was significant in the subject. In short, their effort to furnish a full body of materials to understand the hero and his relationship with his time. ²

In the later years especially, Bradford perhaps looked at full-length biography too often with the eye of the psychographer to realize the importance to that form of unhurried amplitude. ³

After surveying briefly the biographical trends of the past quarter century, Nevins declares that great biography now and in the future must satisfy these tests:

2. Ibid.
3. Professor Angelo Bertocci has the interesting suggestion that Bradford, though he wanted supremely to "be a creative artist and dramatist whose chief interest was character," found that he could create character, intuit it, only as it was presented "in a life already lived." (Conversation, March 22, 1954.)
It must re-create its central character in a way which will give us a sense of rounded reality. Boswell's Johnson, as a piece of re-creation, is to be likened to Dickens' Micawber, or Balzac's Père Goriot, as a piece of creation. The classic biography must also tell a compelling story. Lockhart's "Scott," and Fenton's or Van Doren's "Franklin," and Churchill's "Marlborough," are all examples of vivid, continuously interesting story-telling.

Finally, a biography of the first rank must relate the character and the story in not only a significant but a poignant way to our universal human experience so that when we see Dr. Johnson standing penance in Lichfield market place for his youthful disobedience to his father... we feel that our own experience has been vitally touched.

Whether or not they agreed on the technique for achieving these objectives, Bradford and Nevins would see eye to eye on the first and third tests. For the second—nowhere does Bradford insist on narrative.

The implications are, indeed, as in his criticism of Strachey, that narrative in a biography would be too great a temptation for the novelizing instincts of the biographer. Again, there is the factor of the viewpoint of a psychographer who, in his own writing, is generally precluded from story-telling on a scale beyond the anecdote.

The quarter century of which Nevins writes has not been kind to psychography. Perhaps the only first-rate writing in the field besides the last portraits of Bradford has been that of Professor Edward Wagenknecht, who, in the midst of a busy career of teaching

2. Bradford would also approve Nevins' description of the commercial psychoanalytical biography as "tiresome, vulgar and mendacious" and his distrust of the indiscriminate debunkers (p. 1).
and scholarly writing, has used the form sparingly. For the rest, brief psychological portraits have not disappeared, but examples done in the Bradford manner have been extremely scarce. Is this falling off due merely to the current trend described by Nevins and hence a temporary phenomenon? Or are the causes in psychography itself, specifically, for our purposes, in the theory and method and practice left by Bradford? It is doubtless too soon for any final judgment in the matter—one can only ask a few questions and make a few assumptions.

Bradford, as we have seen, had his own misgivings, and certain critics have raised objections which may or may not be valid. A key point of Bradford's method, for example, is the avoidance of chronology. Bradford suspected danger on this point, but he would hardly have agreed with Maurois that it is extremely difficult to interest a reader in facts which are not presented in their normal order. The romantic interest in life springs from just that anticipation of the future.  

Bradford seems thus to ignore the narrative and dramatic possibilities of events presented chronologically. What makes this disregard of time sequence more natural for Bradford, of course, is his

1. Professor Wagenknecht's psychographic volumes include *The Man Charles Dickens, A Victorian Portrait* (1922), *Jenny Lind* (1931), and *Mark Twain, the Man and His Work* (1935).
2. A critique of Bradford's portraits, of course, is not within the scope of this study.
Sainte-Beuvian idea of man's fixed character. Maurvois observes that perhaps we moderns feel a greater need for chronology than did the old biographers with their ideas of static character. The case for chronology, however, can obviously be pushed too far—chronology need have no monopoly on dramatic effects. Certainly the novelist and the dramatist often rearrange the order of historical events to obtain stirring climaxes. It must be admitted, too, that the psychographer is hampered by space limitations in making full use of a normal time sequence. The point is, perhaps, that both narrative and drama can be more easily and naturally achieved, even in psychography, by at least some concessions to chronology.

Joseph Warren Beach brings up another problem that may arise in a pattern which avoids the natural variation of an adherence to chronology—the problem of articulation. He is irritated by "the clocklike recurrence of formal transitional phrases" in Bradford and quotes several from the portrait of Madame de Sevigne. This particular portrait, I believe, is an extreme example, but, from my own experience, I can understand how at least the constant reader of Bradford's portraits can acquire a habit of expectation for the regularly spaced linking phrases between parts of the character formula.

Harston Balch calls the Bradford procedure in psychography a "dry, schematic" one, which is "apt in the long run to tire the

1. Aspects of Biography, p. 58.
2. The Outlook for American Prose, p.
reader." One is reminded of the passion for "schematism" which was apparent in Bradford's daily life. The psychograph antici-
pated Balch's complaint, but he came to feel that the natural differ-
ences in the characters of his subjects would afford the necessary va-
riety. As a purely subjective judgment in support of Balch, I note
that personally I have found that a reading of many Bradford psycho-
graphs in succession makes the character formula seem repetitious—
like an iron frame with a transparent covering, whatever the surface
variations, the pattern is always firmly present. One wonders, inci-
dentally, if there is any connection between these reactions and the
fact that Bradford's portraits, which appeared individually with great
success in magazines of national circulation, never achieved best-
seller status when collected into book form.

The above objections to Bradford's theory and practice of psycho-
graphy add up to a lack of reader appeal which, in this semi-literate
post-war period, could easily account for the near disappearance of
the type. Meanwhile, other questions suggest themselves. There is
the possibility of a lack of writer appeal. As Bradford repeatedly
emphasized, the writing of psychographs is a process of condensation
which requires a great deal of preparatory work, often with compara-

2. It is possible, of course, that both Balch and I have been unduly
influenced by an awareness of Bradford's psychographic theory and
method.
tively little to show as an end result. Besides the labor there is the uncertainty. Again, as Bradford warns us, some people are simply not material for literary portraits—the inexperienced psychographer may thus waste considerable time on an unfruitful subject. Finally, the psychographer becomes more and more aware of the enormous task he faces in trying to "pinpoint" a man's soul. The portrait maker, indeed, is something like a man who has been given only one bullet with which to hit a difficult target. The biographer, in contrast, has at least a round of shots with which he aims at a broad and more general target. Small wonder, then, that today, when publishing, in the face of increasingly high costs, becomes more and more an economic gamble, both writer and publisher are cautious about a literary form with so many uncertain factors.

Yet psychography, I believe, in its fascinating challenge to the writer and its appeal to the reader who is interested in fellow souls, and in an age that is finding it more and more imperative to solve the mystery of man, will persist as a literary type. Thus Bradford will continue to deserve credit for defining psychography more clearly, for stressing the psychographer's need for broad human sympathy as well as scientific honesty, and for giving the form esthetic standards.
4. The Creative Mind

Genius. Bradford begins his observations on genius with some assurance as to its nature and function in society. In later years, however, perhaps because of his own struggle for a literary career, his experience in psychographical research, and the general plight of the artist after World War I, he is less dogmatic on the subject and even at times contradicts some of his early opinions.

An early Journal passage discusses certain broad types of genius. Bradford assumes the existence of three classes of men. The first type, those who are always positive, always optimistic in a "weak, baseless sort of way: a physical optimism," includes most of mankind but is rare among gifted writers since genius, Bradford believes, is not compatible with such states of mind. The second type holds the "negative men," those with deep and powerful natures who sometimes glimpse the truth but are destined never to be calm and confident. Byron and Carlyle, though the latter aspired beyond, are of this group. The final and supreme type are those who, having struggled through the negative stage, find, not the external and superficial calm of the first type, but the perfect inner calm that comes with the absence of fear, the possession of truth, and the knowledge of

1. Nowhere does Bradford give a precise definition of genius. Thus in many of the passages which furnish the material for this section the word is used loosely and interchangeably, for example, with great man and artist.
God, Jesus, Plato, and Shakespeare, exclaims the youthful Bradford,
are in this group.

In the same Journal volume Bradford expresses his agreement with
Emerson that the spirit of a great man sees its path by instinct,
seizes it, and pours all its energy and will into the path of the infi-
nite will, struggling with and not across the stream.

It is in this union with the order of Nature, with Fate, that
our greatness, our happiness consists; for thus we can subdue
Fate by submission, as it were.

Bradford was perhaps reflecting something of this Emersonian concept
of the great man when he had the Plymouth-born Mr. Parsons, of his
novel The Private Tutor (published 1904), declare that "passion is the
first element of genius."

Again the youthful Bradford observes that there is an active and
a passive greatness, that for one man who is productively great, a
thousand are receptively so. Most men, he believes, have at least a
perception of some kind of greatness—even if only in hog-raising.
Bradford remarks rather cryptically how curious it is that if the mass
of mankind reach their highest moments in a theory, the greatest souls
find their power lessened in a multitude.

In a short essay of this early period Bradford goes more directly
to the task of defining genius and enlarges upon the third classifica-
2. *EJ*, p. 69.
3. *EJ*, p. 70.
tion cited above. Carlyle called genius "an infinite capacity for taking pains." But, Bradford points out, a man can slave at breaking stone and yet be no Michael Angleo.

Genius, truly, is an infinite capacity for taking pains. For it does in a moment, what others cannot accomplish in years. Like the lightning, with an instant's flash it illuminates the world. Yet it never plods ... toils ... trudges.

The plodding disciple perceives the master ahead of him, "ever calm, ever smiling, never worn; for his toil is his rest." There is no genius in a Franklin or a Mill, thinks Bradford, since they dry up their hearts with the knowledge in their brains.

That is not genius, but an infinite capacity for taking pains. Go rather to Shakespeare. Always gay, always happy, always at peace; yet his great heart sucks in the world, as the plant sucks its food with all its fibres, and grows, and grows and blossoms eternally.1

Genius "assimilates, combines, creates (as far as the created can do so)" and "radiates what it has gathered...."

An early Journal sentence reinforces the idea of the originality of genius.

True genius studies always, and reverently, the masterpieces of other times, but it works on its own line and leaves these to act unseen and, as it were, instinctively.2

And a Bradford comment of the 1890's on Hamlin Garland's Crumbling Idols also emphasizes the idea.

He [Garland] forgets the supreme individuality of genius. He forgets that the seen does not make art, but the seer. Gushes of local color are nothing without the harmonizing and creating eye. Such eyes do not come often in a

2. Ibid., p. 2. 3. *EJ*, p. 82.
generation, and that is why we turn to the genius who has seen and can teach us to see, even if we have to go back a thousand years. Mr. Garland's assertion that we can see as Shakespeare saw is preposterous. We must, indeed, use our own eyes, but we must be taught to use them.1

Elsewhere Bradford insists that the natural concomitants of genius are "the crowning grace of inspiration, inevitability, spontaneity..." 2 And in "A Gospel of Joy" he points out that since the artist "presents life to us as he sees it," it is the new personal aspect of this interpretation that brings interest and significance to his work.

But the idea of originality in genius needs a certain explanation if not qualification. In his early essay, "An Elizabethan Mystic," Bradford writes,

Long ago it has been shown that genius consists nearly as much in selecting from others and transmuting their rough ore into gold, as in original production. It is thus that great artists furnish the best criticism of their predecessors.4

From an essay of the mid-twenties comes Bradford's observation that the great imaginative writers have seldom been great inventors. Lesser men like Lope de Vega, Dumas, and Scribe poured out plots but could not transfigure them; Shakespeare never got over the habit of borrowing.

The young Bradford sets up two other requirements for genius, requirements which are part of the overall control so necessary to the

1. P. 17.
4. P. 17.
great artist, that of self-knowledge and of knowledge of the times. This Browning's crucial weakness as compared with Goethe lies in the fact that the English poet "lacked the comprehension of his own gifts and of himself." Again, Browning, by going against the pattern of his age, i.e., by trying, for example, to use poetry for what demanded prose, revealed his own lack of genius. Bradford declares: "The greatest man is he who, like Shakespeare or Dante, is perfectly the child of his age.... Matter and form both must be intimately his," i.e., only thus can he achieve the harmony of supreme art.

In an essay of 1913 Bradford asserts that Taine was wrong in his earlier theory that literature is impersonal, a matter of "formulas and generalization" wherein an author's genius can play little part. The influences of race and time, in Bradford's opinion, supply only the foundation, the nurturing soil for "the flower of individual genius." The growth of this "flower" follows laws which men can analyze only vaguely. There is the problem, for example, of the genius with ordinary parents and mediocre children.

Bradford proceeds to list various types of genius in their relations to their environments. There are, for example, writers like Racine and Pope and Lope de Vega who seem to express their age and

1. "Browning's Versification," p. 14. The content and the general character of this undated essay suggest that it was written in an early period. A Journal passage of 1892, for example, has similar material (J., ed. II., p. 52).
nation fully and to do only that: another group, with writers like Dante and Molière, express their age perfectly and yet so far surpass it that they have enduring appeal for all men; still others, like Goethe and Rousseau, born out of time, instinctively anticipate many of the emotions and tendencies of the age to come and, if great enough, help to speed these changes; a fourth group, including men like Macaulay and Thackeray, look back to an earlier age; still others, like George Sand and Trollope, spread their lives through their work so that they seem to write autobiography more by instinct than by intention; a sixth group pride themselves on being impersonal—Bradford feels that Browning and especially Flaubert are nevertheless clearly subjective; the last group of geniuses in Bradford's list "profess to have the truth and to convey it for the benefit of all mankind" with a "robust and splendid egotism" and a consciousness that no other aspect of the matter exists than that which they "are ordained to preach."

In his portrait of Lanier Bradford asks why the artist should "fling aside health and wealth and ease ... to give the world what it never asks for and to demand of it in return what it yields only with brutal reluctance and usually too late?" He answers in Life

2. Ibid., p. 37. 6. Ibid., pp. 40-41.
3. Ibid., pp. 37-38. 7. Ibid., p. 41.
and I with the following list of stimuli for the artist: fame, the 
thirst for which, despite an artist's pose, "is everywhere patent 
underneath"; "the mere delight of diffusing beauty," as in the 
work of Henry James and Whistler; the urge to self-expression, which 
for the artist "is the effort to tell secrets, to pour out one's per-
sonality, and if it were possible ... to dissolve it in the personal-
ity of others"; and, finally, "the pure joy, the excitement, the rap-
ture of creation in itself," probably at its height "in the sense of 
creating human beings ... who shall live when you are dead and for-
gotten...."

Bradford felt that there are at least two basic and very different 
methods by which the literary artist composes: one the painstaking, 
drawn-out technique of a Flaubert; the other the "rapid, instinctive"
method that Bradford used himself. He describes the latter thus:

I do my revising and composing before I actually write at 
all and ... when I finally get my words on paper they are 
in a form which is final, at least for me. With me so 
much rests in the composition, the original conception and plan.5

This art of "pre-thinking," or composing without paper, Brooks points 
out, was acquired, as in the case of Prescott and Parkman, under the 
stress of ill health. With Bradford the pre-first-draft composing

1. F. 91.
2. Ibid., pp. 91-95.
3. Ibid., p. 95.
4. Ibid., pp. 95-97.
6. Ibid., p. xii.
and revising, which involved not only the larger structural problems but even the building of individual sentences, became more and more a swift, almost spontaneous process. When he was satisfied that his preparation was complete, the actual text of the first draft flowed at a steady, sometimes a remarkable speed.

Bradford was aware, of course, that there are variations and combinations of the two approaches. He writes, for example:

Artists vary strikingly in regard to ... composition. There are those who take it lightly, who sketch out their work and then develop it by instinct. And again there are those who must see every step and every detail planned carefully in its proper bearing, before they begin to give the final form.3

"Most notable" part of the creative process, however, and testified to by "all who have made great art and have at all analyzed the process of making it," is the phenomenon "that something enters in and possesses" the writer

far more than the mere superficial consciousness or effort. You sit down to your task quite hopeless, discouraged, incapable. Then suddenly, from you know not where, out of the depths of the subconscious, out of the inherited memory of ages, the power comes upon you, and you speak, or appear to yourself for the moment to speak, with the tongues of angels.4

This "release" was what Bradford later called the "real supreme secret

1. For an example of Bradford's sentence revision, see J., ed. B., p. 138.
2. *A.,* pp. xii, 275. Bradford said that he avoided regular dictation as a dangerous habit which encouraged slipshod thought and expression (*A.,* LIV, 111).
of art.”

Bradford was convinced that great genius does not shrink from life. Thus in a letter he declares that genius has no need of the abnormal; the happiest and most assured road to literary success is in maintaining one’s normal contacts with other human beings. It is a special gift of genius, indeed, as in the case of Shakespeare, to seek learning everywhere, to find its education in the great school of life. And a sentence from a late essay seems to summarize the relations of genius and life:

The true creative artist is he who guides and controls life, yet at the same time appreciates that it is the sole reality, the stuff of which success and achievement are made, he who loves life, studies it, respects it, uses it, and grows by it.4

With perhaps a traditional attitude, Bradford suggests that the literary class and artists of all kinds are always cut off from the general public by “a certain bohemianism of life and thought.” He believes, however, that in the great creative periods “a certain large sympathy ... involves not only the artist but the whole nation.” The supreme artist, of course, would rise above the limitation of the group, would admit enough of the vitalizing external influences to maintain the proper balance between his inner and outer worlds.

1. *W.,* XLI, 16.
2. *Wib.,* XXIV, 49.
3. Shakespeare, Bacon, and Common Sense,” p. 3.
4. *W.,* VI, 75.
In a review of Wagenknecht's _A Guide to Bernard Shaw_ Bradford finds particular interest in Shaw's "novel combination of the passion for ideas with the passion for publicity." Though one cannot doubt the sincerity of Shaw's belief in his ideas, the Irishman pushes them "with all the cynical ingenuity of a clever advertising agent disposing of a patent medicine." Shaw keeps himself in the limelight, and though he claims to do this that he may spread the truth, the limelight is very attractive. "Modern publicity," declares Bradford, "has transformed genius in a thousand subtle and inexplicable ways." He wonders what Shakespeare would have been under such conditions. Dumas and Whistler and Bernhardt had a keen publicity sense, but Shaw is the "undisputed and prophetic idealist" with "the curious intertwining and intertangling of his ideals with his instinct and his genius for publicity."

A good introduction to the later and final stage of Bradford's views on genius is contained in a letter of 1927. A correspondent had sent him a number of pamphlets with statistics on the heredity of genius. "The subject is certainly a fascinating one," Bradford writes, "and has a close and constant bearing on the sort of biographical work that I am doing." He continues:

"My only difficulty with it is the extreme delicacy and uncertainty which of course no one understands better than yourself. There is the very complicated question of what genius consists, and also the impossibility of making any sort of definite estimate of the varying degrees of it. The very subtlety no doubt increases the charm, but it is at

1. *Theatre, VI, 3*, "It has been remarked that every genius is 25% charlatan, and it is the charlatan (showman; cf. Shakespeare; Shaw) that takes the public." (Nancy Moore, "Genius," _Dictionary of World Literature_, p. 192.)
In an editorial called "Why Authors Are Not Gregarious" Bradford says that actually they are and cites an impressive list of literary clubs. Certain factors, however, conspire to make them not gregarious by nature; for example, the essential solitude of the writer at work, the writer's absorption in his own writing, and his rich life in the imagination. Gregariousness, of course, however the people may judge it, does not necessarily mean real contact with life. And what might seem to the general public further withdrawals from life occur when artists, as they do frequently, go through moods of depression. Bradford suggests that these moods may result from the artist's pouring such a great amount of energy into his art that routine daily life seems dull and tame by comparison. Bradford also agrees with a fellow writer that much of their own apparent dislike of society stems from fatigue and physical weakness.

A reading in 1930 of Matthew Josephson's Portrait of the Artist as American makes Bradford declare that the artist is usually a "hopeless, rebellious, incompatible creature ... always quarreling with something." Then Bradford turns for a possible remedy to the basic attitudes he has found so essential in his own art of psycho-

graphy.

I cannot help feeling that if the artist will only go deep enough, if he only has love enough, love being the great essential, he will find, as Lincoln did, vast depths of common humanity under the machine surface.... What the American artist really needs is a richer endowment with the two greatest of artistic solvents, beauty and laughter.

times baffling to such a point that one is almost tempted to give up speculation altogether.

Bradford thinks that in the problem of the predominance of maternal or paternal heredity it is utterly impossible to disentangle the different strains that come from the two sides, and the difficulty can easily be carried further back into the complicated heredity of a still earlier generation.

Again, in your discussion of longevity and genius, one of the most interesting of all, there arises the problem of competition. That is, I am constantly struck in so vast a country as ours with the immense and the inevitable delay of achieving all sorts of greatness, especially political. In a smaller world, like that of England a hundred years ago, where there were only a few thousands to compete with, a man like the younger Pitt could find his way to the top at once. In our millions the struggle is necessarily long and doubtful, and mere accident assumes a much larger role than ever before.

There is still another aspect of the problem. Given the greatest literary genius in the world, what chance has a Dutchman or a Portuguese of winning a world reputation? His limited language cuts him off at the start, and he who writes in English has an immense advantage at the start.

The problem of genius and modern competition had exercised Bradford for some time. Back in 1918 he had asked in his Journal if the "crowding herd of the mediocrities" could smother real genius. He wondered, indeed, if there would be any more "great writers." But his conclusion was hopeful: "Nature is fertile in finding ways."

Bradford's later uncertainty is reflected again in a letter of 1925 when he answers a request for a definition of genius.

Too complicated altogether. The faculty of taking pains goes a good way. What little success I have myself I attribute largely to an enormously persistent ambition more than to any particular gifts.

Before, he had noted his agreement with Robert Frost that genius
seems to be chiefly "a kind of dogged persistence through discouragement."
But in "The Fight for Glory" of 1929 he makes an important
reservation when he states that Frost and he both feel that, provided
one has the right natural gifts, perseverance is the key to literary
success.

From his previous utterances on style, it is not surprising to
find Bradford declaring in a late letter that he feels it to be the
most vital and the most characteristic element of literary genius.

In 1929 Bradford wrote to a correspondent of his plan for a
book analyzing genius at work, a book to be called Creation, with
an epigraph from Tasso: "There is no real creator save God and the
artist." Bradford had in mind chapters on the following aspects of
creation: splendor—Leonardo; triumph—Collini; struggle—Beethoven;
despair—Haydn (one certainly does not associate the composer Haydn
with despair. Possibly Bradford meant Haydon, whose Autobiography
and Journals he greatly admired); business—Trollope; process—
Hunt. Bradford also suggested a chapter to be called "The Eve
Creatrix, Cushman."

When Bradford's scattered comments on the nature of genius are
put together, it is not surprising to find that the main pattern sug-
4. *Ibid., LIV, 153. Bradford's portraits of Charlotte Cushman and W. M.
Hunt appeared in the posthumous volume Biography and the Human Heart.
gests Shakespeare, who voraciously assimilated, artistically transmuted, and radiated the stuff of the Elizabthan life about him. Again, in its total picture, Bradford's theory makes allowance for almost every kind of external and internal influence upon the man of genius—the psychographer had developed a healthy respect for the intricacies of human nature.

**Talent.** Bradford makes almost no specific use of the word talent. His early essay "Genius" and a passage from the early Journal of the same year do make comparisons which emphasize talent's lack of originality. In the essay he points out that the ability of genius to absorb the world and to grow and "blossom" perpetually differentiates it from talent. Though the two often develop together, they differ greatly.

Neither will their union always produce the greater man; for they often destroy, than supplement each other. Genius assimilates, combines, creates (as far as the created can so do); talent defines, bounds, calculates.

If genius "radiates what it has gathered" and gives forth renewed, talent continually accumulates and heaps up for itself. "Genius is the essence, the epitome of the eternal; but talent rather its miniature."

The Journal passage points out that in contrast to genius talent sets itself apishly to copy what it admires, and thus it loses the flavor of originality, which is the essence of all true beauty in art; and more than this, copy as it will, it can never catch the spirit of its model, for the breath of genius is not stolen.

The competition Bradford feared might another real genius was not

1. *"Genius,"* pp. 2-3.  
2. *EJ,* p. 82.
dangerous solely because of the numbers involved but also, Bradford felt, because of the talent represented. He writes in 1922:

There is an interesting conversation recorded between Sir Walter and Moore some hundred years ago in which they agreed that at that time poetry was appearing daily unregarded in the magazines that would have made the fortune of a writer in their youth. The condition, however, you may look at it, is a hundred times more marked today. And you will say, of course, that most of what is written is of no account. In a sense that is true. But the average technically is extraordinarily high ... and even in the clever simulation of poetical emotion and experience. Babes and sucklings in shoals and swarms are pouring forth verses that Moore and Sir Walter in their youth would not have been ashamed to own.

Five years later Bradford wrote in another letter:

I suppose, for a guess, we may assume that there are a hundred thousand men writing poetry today and two hundred thousand women, and an astonishing amount of it is clever. Of course the bulk of it perishes before it is born, and the bulk of what is born hardly more than sees the light. But what is posterity to do with such an accumulation, and how is it to select from it what is worth surviving? ... Whistler complained, when he was urged to appreciate the beauty of the stars: "There's too many of 'em." So with the poets today; too many of 'em. It is like a field of daisies, turned to weed by the exuberant splendor and abundance of their own beauty.

2. Ibid., pp. 271-72. Under "The Creative Mind," of course, logically imagination and imitation could be treated. I have included Bradford's significant ideas on the former, however, in my discussion of romanticism under Literary Modes. As for the latter, nowhere, I believe, does Bradford clearly use the word imitation with the more profound Greek meanings which have kept the critical pot boiling for so many centuries. Generally, indeed, he uses it in the popular sense as something for the writer to avoid; for example, in his statement that "in art everything is done by emulation, nothing by imitation." (Ej, p. 81.) Again, in his review of Garland's Crumbling Edola (pub. 1897) he refers to "Imitation, pale literary convention ... the curse of American literature." (N.d., n.p.)
5. Stylistics

Language, Words and Phrases; Translation. Bradford's first reading of Mencken's The American Language brought his approval of the author's attitude,

which takes language not as a dead mould and model to which new life must be strangled into withering conformity, but as a fleeting, flowing substance of evolution, ever altering, ever developing, making its own rules, or rather abolishing and overstriding all rules, in perpetual, joyous, flagrant assertion of its own spontaneous, irrepressible existence. One of the best things ever said about language is the little remark of Littrell that the finest evidence of the riches of the human spirit is that it should have created such a language as Greek and then let it die.1

Perhaps no aspect of language fascinated Bradford more than words with their power, "their magical charm, their immense influence, and their insidious dangers." In a letter of 1922 he exclaims:

How ... subtle, bewitching, how inexhaustible they are.... What else is there that can so delightfully beguile the enthralling hours, while we make a pretence of understanding them? Not that we do really understand them; for the mere mystery of their utterance, with all the subtle secrets it conveys, is one of the most delicate and difficult problems in the world and one we have made so little progress toward solving. As for their tangled, perplexed, ravishing interchange with thought, who shall attempt to get to the bottom of it?2

Seldom does Bradford attempt anything like a formal analysis of this problem of words. One of his few approaches is in a letter of 1919. In answer to a correspondent's assertion that "English or any other language can express anything," Bradford writes:

3. Ibid., p. 114.
We all start with a world of emotions and sensations that are individual and inexpressible. The progress of ages has devised a set of verbal symbols which, in the poorest and feeblest and most inadequate way, suggest these emo-
tions and sensations. With these we make a groping attempt to arouse in others some vague shadow of what we feel our-
selves. We never succeed even in direct speech, never are satisfied that we have conveyed even a small portion of what we have to convey. And just in proportion as our emotions are strong and deep, our expression is apt to be stammer-
ing, inarticulate, deplorably inferior to our intention and desire. What must it be then, when we attempt to trans-lit-
erate the expression of others' feeling, even in our own
language? ....

The main origin of the trouble is that words have not one single, simple meaning which exhausts them completely. Besides its elementary signification, every word has a pris-
matic fringe of the most complicated associations which we never stop to analyse but which we feel most acutely.

In A Naturalist of Souls Bradford uses another approach to empha-
sise the limitations of words.

Though we [biographers] employ to some extent the phrase-
ology of painting, it is essential to realize the difference between the two methods of representation which Lessing long ago discussed so fruitfully. Lines and colors give us at once the individual face. This words can never do. You may analyse features, you may dissect expressions, you may pile detail upon detail. But the more you elaborate, the further you get from unity of effect. The more you charge memory with particular outlines, the less you succeed in producing a complete, definite, permanent image. .... No. The art of the word painter is suggestion. 2

Thus it is hardly surprising to find Bradford declaring in a

Journal entry of 1918 that, since words have so many "vague and con-
flcting" associations of both sense and sound, he cannot accept

Flaubert's theory of the one right word. Some ten years later

Bradford reasserts his disbelief in the theory and observes that his own process of word choice is almost as quickly instinctive, i.e., governed by the aesthetic impulse of the minute, as his choice of inflection in ordinary speech.

Two vocabulary-building notes come from Bradford in the early twenties. In one he asserts that what people need is not just more vocabulary but "close, sternly and severely exact thinking"—the final conclusion, I believe, of most intelligent people concerning the recent mania for vocabulary expansion. And a Journal entry contains this:

There is really more originality in using old words in new and striking and apt connections than in coining new. The Elizabethans could coin more freely than we can. The language was more fluid then. Yet even Shakespeare's coinages, while sometimes splendid and successful, are often forced. But where there are inexhaustible possibilities is in the original and striking, while of course just, applications of everyday words. There has been a joke in the papers lately about someone's description of a children's festival as 'a white scream of laughter.' 'What,' says the cheap journalistic faultfinder, 'how can a scream be white?' Yet who ever invented the phrase, there is imagination and literary power in it. It is not the scream that is white; but simply that the impression born away from the whole thing is a most intense one of whiteness and joyous, high-pitched children's laughter, and, instead of elaborating that in conventional, obscuring phrases, the writer condenses and so conveys directly and completely, the whole sensation and nothing but the sensation. Similar is my phrase in Emily Dickinson, 'the haggard necessities of parlor conversation.'

In advising a young poet, Bradford once declared that novelty should come rather in "direct and passionate fervor of personal experience than in mere originality of phrase." Language individuality

2. *J.,* IX, 134.
4. *J.,* XXXVI, 36.
if not originality is at stake, Bradford implies, when he laments that the newspaper's standardization of English stifles the significant peculiarities of dialect.

A Bradford letter of 1929 to a Boston newspaper points out that the problem of translation is important today because people who are too busy to take up foreign languages are more and more deluded by the insinuation that they can get at the great literature of the past in translation. When they yawn over a translation they aren't giving the old writers a fair chance.²

Bradford was strongly convinced, and often declared, that translation is essentially futile. A Journal passage of 1919 reinforces the letter of the same year (quoted above on pages 249-50) and applies the idea to translation.

The difficulty is that words, besides their large, simple, elementary meaning, have a swarm, a complicated network of secondary suggestion, vague associations of emotion and underlying, subconscious experience, which never can be precisely held or analyzed, yet are enormously significant in our use of them. It is precisely this field of secondary association that the translator can never adequately reach. He gropes and flounders in the narrow range of cruder meanings, but what really counts, what is even largely bound up with rhythm and vowel and consonant color is wholly beyond his grasp. So much for theory. Practically, what counts is that nobody ever has successfully translated. For two thousand years people have tried to translate Greek. Nobody has ever done anything but fail dismally. And the main thing is the frightful self-revelation that comes in anyone's thinking he can translate.³

In an editorial of the 1920's Bradford declares that, "No translation can ever convey what is essential, spiritually essential, in a

2. *HL.,* VI, 10-11.
writer of real substance and power." Even for factual material, a translation can distort detailed meanings and the larger mental attitudes. "The essential vice of translation," Bradford asserts, "is, not that it gives only part of the treasure of the original, but that it disfigures, degrades, and debases the whole." He concludes that the moral is this: work hard at languages. "The man of one language is like one blind or deaf, cut off irretrievably from some of the greatest spiritual resources and pleasures of the world."

In a second and later editorial on the subject Bradford says that style is more closely tied up with thought than people realize and reminds us that blood has been spilled on occasion concerning a point of style. He also observes that the better the book, the harder the task it makes for the translator. Thus some of the finest translations are versions of tenth-rate authors.

Translation, however, can have at least a negative value as this short Journal paragraph reveals:

Read Dumas's Demi-Monde in the translation. Oh, the misery of these translations! But there is no better lesson as to the value and charm of style: all the grace, all the delicacy, all the subtlety, all the charm gone; nothing but a bare and ugly skeleton left.

In the same vein a reading of Archer's "clever version of Ibsen" brings the sentence: "Translation can never have great qualities of style, and

you feel the dramatist's characters and action hampered and trammelled at every step by the lack of the high imaginative medium."

If there must be translation, Bradford asserts that the best example "is not that which is most like the original but that which is most different from it." The effective translator thus needs what Fitzgerald had: "the language instinct, still more the human and literary instinct," which "goes further than grammars and dictionaries."

Bradford's strong convictions on translation are, for a man of his background and temperament, perhaps understandable and yet obviously extreme. Granted that translation does involve formidable difficulties, Bradford seems to ignore or forget the counter arguments which immediately present themselves and hardly need a complete rehearsal at this point. There is, for example, the fact that the new scientific study of language and the growing interest in comparative literature should bring a better understanding of translation problems; also certain languages (notably Hebrew and English) have congenial features that ease the burden of translation; and there is always the possibility that, as has happened before, a genius of one language at work in the translation of a masterpiece from another language may pro-

2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. BS, p. 292.
4. Bradford would have approved Professor Gilbert Highet's conclusion that the problem of translating Homer into adequate poetic form remains unsolved; the professor, however, does not call the task beyond hope (The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature, p. 489).
duce a new masterpiece. One wonders, in passing, why, for this problem of the meeting of languages, Bradford did not have more faith in the element of "common humanity" which he stresses so much in his psychographical theory.

**Style.** On March 2, 1911, Bradford wrote this little poem:

Style is nothing but the best
Form of giving thought expression;
An idea fitly dressed
Is an exquisite possession.

Words are thoughts. And in their train
Sweeps a world of dim suggestion.
Winged things—how oft in vain
Have I frayed their grace with question.¹

The relation of style to thought had been much in Bradford's mind when he attempted a more elaborate analysis back in the 1880's.

Style is not a question of the arrangement of words only, of the jingle of rhymes. It is a question of thought. A writer has first a general conception which he wishes to convey. This condenses itself into images or thoughts, and he then gives these a form of prose or verse as he pleases. A metaphysician might state it for me better; but every one who thinks, and studies how he thinks, must feel what I mean. Style, then, belongs to the second of these stages, that in which the general conception embodies itself in distinct images, or thoughts. But I can illustrate better by examples. Prospero, in the *Tempest*, says to Miranda

> "What seest thou else
> In the dark backward and abysm of time?"²

If he had said, "Do you remember anything else as you look back at your life?" he would have conveyed the same general conception; but what a difference in the image, what a difference in the impression on the mind! And the difference is simply one of style.³

Some may complain, Bradford admits, that he overemphasizes style, but

The point lies here: the expressions given above are to the intellect the same, their difference exists for the imagination only; but what appeals to the imagination as art, and the element of art in literature, as far as it concerns details of execution, is style.

Bradford was convinced that the distinction between style and form is extremely important and too seldom used. He applies it briefly to the stanza from Shelley's "Song of Proserpine" which begins thus:

Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth
Thou from whose immortal bosom
Gods and men, and beasts have birth ....

The form here, Bradford thinks, "is perfect ... but what a style." He calls the third line a "deplorable anti-climax." And in the same poet's "exquisitely melodic! "Lines to an Indian Air:

'I die, I faint, I fail!"

Bradford finds a jumble of ideas and remarks that Shelley "has too much of such writing. His genius for form was better than his genius for style." Later in the same source Bradford tries to condense his distinction into a definition: "Style is the language of the imagination, form is the language of the ear."

To Bradford these points concerning form and style apply also to prose but with the difference that prose is often of necessity used for non-artistic purposes. In learning facts we can and do tolerate a bad style, "but no wise man writes poetry except for an artistic purpose,

2. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
3. Ibid., p. 6.
and poetry must be judged by an artistic standard. Indeed, style gives poetry a right to exist, and style alone."

Bradford continued to link form and style, particularly in connection with his own art of psychography. Thus he writes in 1928:

"Structure, structure—more and more I see that that is the secret; structure and style, they both hang upon each other, and without either perhaps the highest accomplishment is impossible."

Yet, after all, Bradford suggests, "it may be that style is the one ... that really counts." Flaubert, for example, with his miserable form and his beautiful style, will doubtless outlive many a lesser writer with a flawless sense of structure. Again Bradford links style and structure and offers a broad definition of the former:

"I am of the firmest belief that structure without style can never give anything, at least to me, which is the reason why I am so utterly indifferent to all translation. And some of the books that I love most consist of style with precious little structure, style being used in its largest sense, of course, as the detail of thought as well as mere melody and harmony of sounds."

And from Bradford's essay "Beaumont and Fletcher" comes another distinction involving style:

"An author has a style when he rules his expression and has it thoroughly under control. He has a manner when his expression rules him, and forces his thought into a fixed mould, no matter what its subject. Carlyle and Browning have a manner. Shakespeare is the most glorious example of the absolute possession of a style."*

1. **"Emerson,"** p. 3.
4. *AM, Cl (Jan., 1908),* 134.
"What has style to do with life?" asks Bradford in "Literature and Life." "Everything," he answers, if one takes a certain broad view of literature. But Bradford goes on to a strangely limiting definition with the assertion that style is "simply the detail of writing" which aims at more perfect expression. The reader may be aware of nothing except that he is convinced. The simplest way of talking may have the best type of style; the average man's expression, on the other hand, is burdened with fashion, with dead figures and the like, is, in fact, "commonly anything but simple."

Thus the charm of the Bible and of Homer comes in part from their "perfect, instinctive simplicity in which words mean things and are not looked upon as lifeless symbols of forgotten reality." But

the greatest secret of style is not only to achieve simplicity negatively by absolute purity and directness, but to impart to the simplest expression a dignity, a grandeur which is inherent, perhaps, in the choice of words, in the order of them, or to show some subtle association which they carry beyond their elementary significance.¹

A later essay gives style a broader significance as

simply the interpenetration of all life by the imagination, by genius. It is the making over of life so that it takes hold of us as a new thing. This may be done by imaginative color. It may be done by rhythmic vigor. In many cases the secret is beyond analysis.

At any rate, Bradford continues, through style genius

makes the savor of raw life, of our own lives, come home to us with a zest and a tang of stingling veracity that we have never found in it before.²

A reading of Thomas Paine causes Bradford to exclaim that "nothing truer was ever said than that the style is the man." And a late editorial defines style as the perfect expression of a well ordered and actively functioning spirit. This is good style, but there are other spirits, and therefore other styles.

The personal aspect of style suggests Bradford's interest in the stylistic implications of speech. In 1921 he writes to a friend of a matter "that ... has received curiously little attention ... the matter of inflection, intonation, in the speaking voice." If philologists give much attention to what they call phonetics, to the general principles of all human utterances and the particular modification of language and dialect forms, the far more subtle question of the delicate expression of emotion in all its shades and variations by inflection and emphasis is largely neglected.

Elsewhere Bradford declares that so far the most penetrating if not scientific observers of the phenomenon have been the great novelists.

Bradford wonders if the results of such study could be applied to the writer's art. He notes, for example, that the Hamlet line

"So I have heard, and do in part believe"

can be read in a half a dozen ways, with an uncertainty as to which way would satisfy Shakespeare or Hamlet.

If intonation is so elusive, Bradford believes that

we have a much firmer hold upon rhythm ... that is ... even in prose, we can cast our phrase so that a certain rhythmic delivery of it becomes almost imperative for an intelligent person, and this, being more completely within our grasp, I confess interests me more as a matter of literary theory than the other.1

Elsewhere Bradford uses everyday speech to show how literary style is close to the average man and woman. These people, who find style in clothes important for their self-expression, should also realize that style in words is significant: they must speak and their manner of speech is very important since back of it is always life with its conduct.2

Further stressing the significance of rhythm in style, Bradford observes in "Literature and Life" that the rhythm of excited or slow and persuasive speech gives a proportion to the great writers which people cannot attain in ordinary speech. Bradford also feels that rhythm has an "enormous power" by virtue of its capacity for keeping language in ways more or less direct to its "one definite, unfailing purpose, the expression of life."3

If rhythm has the power to keep language to its definite purpose, so do all "the more elaborate forms and means of literary art."4 Thus figures of speech "make clear the less known by what is known better." Bradford thinks, however, that literary art very quickly

4. Bradford's few references to figures of speech are covered in the poetry and applied criticism sections. It is doubtless more than a coincidence that his poems are not distinguished in this respect.
goes beyond this and enriches and adorns its subject. Thus when Wordsworth writes in a "Lucy" poem

Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky,

he adds nothing to the reader's idea of the girl's beauty but he does express life by "coupling his profound emotions forever."

To Bradford the Achilles' heel of contemporary writing was style. But he could see the variety and the "supple vigor of imaginative splendor" in the work of Strodey, and he approved Edwin Arlington Robinson's use of the resources of the modern vocabulary with neither slang nor technical phrases. This, perhaps, was a logical catholicism in the taste of one who felt that style was "the essence of all literature," that literature was "the expression of life," and that all men, in their common humanity, had something to offer the sympathetic observer.

J. Middleton Murray once said that out of innumerable possibilities, the word style has at least three distinct meanings: first, as a personal idiosyncrasy; second, as a technique of exposition; and third, as the highest achievement of literature. Bradford was aware of all these meanings, I believe, but was more obviously concerned with the second and third, which he sometimes confused, and came more and more to emphasize the last one—which is hardly a definition. Going back

2. *J.*., 1920, p. 43.
4. The title of Part I of "Literature and Life" (1913).
5. The Problem of Style, p. 5.
to the basic Platonic concept that style is a quality in some but
not in all expression and the opposing Aristotelian concept that
style is present in all expression, we find Bradford again undecided.
Here is more proof—and especially convincing proof, since style was
to Bradford a vital quality of literature—that, whether because of
his general distaste for final decisions or his informal approach to
the role of critic, Bradford did not halt to take stock of and summa-
rise and unify his literary theories.

Bradford never mentions Remy de Gourmont, I believe, but when the
Wellesley man writes that

Style is simply the interpenetration of all life by the imag-
ination, by genius .... the making over of life so that it
takes hold of us as a new thing

and that through style genius "makes the savor of raw life, of our own
lives, come home to us with a zest and a tang of stinging veracity...."
he is obviously not far from the theory of the French critic. De Gour-
mont expresses it thus in "Of Style or Writing":

If there were an art of writing, it would be nothing more
or less than the art of feeling, the art of seeing, the art of
hearing, the art of using all the senses, whether directly or
through the imagination; and the new, serious method of a theory
of style would be an attempt to show how these two separate
worlds—the worlds of sensation and the world of word—penetrate
each other.1

The contrast and at least apparent discrepancy between the above
concept of style with Bradford's own simple statement elsewhere that
Style is nothing but the best
Form of giving thought.  

point up the difficulties stressed by Murry of attaining something
like a complete and satisfactory definition of style. Bradford's
efforts in this direction—if we can forgive him for avoiding, as
so many before him have, the larger decision and for neglecting to
clarify certain lesser issues—are commendable as far as they go.
He has, for example, a sensible and necessary view of the interrela-
tions of style and thought and life in general.

Bradford wisely noted the importance of rhythm as an element of
style. It is regrettable that, with his general knowledge of style
in various European languages, particularly in nineteenth-century
French prose, and with his concern for his own English prose manner,
he could not have devoted some of his analytical ability to what
Saidla calls "one of the least understood and most neglected aspects
of prose literature": rhythm.

Bradford's belief that simplicity and dignity are key ingredients

2. Even Lane Cooper's anthology called Theories of Style (1907) is lack-
ing in such attempts. An examination of some half-dozen anthologies of
criticism old and new also revealed surprisingly few theoretical dis-
cussions of style. Doubtless critics here find that discretion is in-
deed the better part of valor. Style is now such an equivocal term
that, as Edward A. Tenney suggests, it might well be expressed by new
terms for the basic phases (Dictionary of World literature, p. 399).
3. Particularly irritating, of course, is Bradford's failure to sort
out and explain his varying uses of style as form, as not-form, and
as point of view.
   365.
of style and his interest in the stylistic implications of the ordinary voice in daily life would suggest his agreement with the theory of such men as Wordsworth, De Quincey, Sainte-Beuve, and Emerson that some non-literary folk achieve an admirable style with unconscious ease. But Bradford seems never to have made this point; indeed he apparently took an opposing stand when he condemned the speech of the average man as being heavy with fashion and with dead figures. Quite involuntarily, perhaps, Bradford was not ready to ascribe freely a capacity for which he himself struggled most of his life and of which he was never quite sure.
Chapter III

Critical Theory

1. General Approach

Bradford says in a letter of the 'twenties that his interest in literary criticism, never very lively, almost vanished after his concentration on psychotherapy. Two early references and a late one offer some explanation for this indifference. In 1895 he wrote that of all literary types criticism is "the least likely to obtain a wide hearing from the general public, working, if it works at all, only indirectly through the few who receive and comprehend." About a year later he observed that criticism, "even the richest, broadest, and most sympathetic," does not quite compare with creative writing. Though in 1904 Bradford declared that "the critic is an artist just as much as the creative writer," a few weeks before his death he observed that "the mass of mankind will always look upon criticism as a mere secondary growth and the critic as a parasite on the work of higher and more important artists." Bradford also felt that formal criticism, as found, for example, in the nineteenth-century German critics of Shakespeare, was too often marred by pedantry. Another factor in Bradford's mistrust of the critics was his own experience with them. Nevertheless, he took pride in what he felt to be his special ability for reviewing.

3. *Il., p. 47.
he wished in the 1890's to live to complete some thirty-seven volumes of critical writing, and he left many comments in the field.

One of Bradford's last editorials discusses the origin of the word criticism, pointing out that it comes from the Greek meaning a judging, a careful, analytical weighing of all the elements involved. Thus, Bradford says, despite our modern emphasis on the fault-finding sense, the word really stands for a most valuable function.

In a review of Laura Johnson Wylie's Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism (1894), Bradford declares that "No subject is more in need of clearness of treatment than the history of criticism, a study still, unfortunately, in a most chaotic state." He then suggests that Miss Wylie take note of a few major principles.

In the first place, the evolution of criticism, English or other, can only be treated faithfully, at any rate at present, from the historical point of view.

Again, Bradford observes that the author does not maintain sufficient balance in her handling of nineteenth-century English criticism: she overemphasizes Coleridge, for example, and ignores such key figures as Lamb, Hunt, De Quincey, and Wilson. Bradford also feels that Miss Wylie does not distinguish adequately between literary and esthetic criticism.

4. Bradford does not further identify Wilson, but quite possibly he meant John Wilson (1785-1854), who was on the Blackwood's staff, contributed to the Noctes Ambrosianae, and was an early appreciator of Wordsworth.
A certain amount of aesthetics lies, of course, at the bottom of all criticism, and it is the historian's work to disengage it. But aesthetic study is at present in a very cloudy condition.  

Surprised to find that Miss Wylie says nothing about Sainte-Beuve, Bradford feels that a knowledge of this great critic would have enabled her to define clearly the conflict between classical and impressionist art, to distinguish between aesthetic and scientific criticism, and to keep nearer to the historical method. Competence in modern criticism demands at least a knowledge of the method of Sainte-Beuve and Taine.

2. Criticism from a Modal Point of View: Three French Schools

In his consideration of three French groups of critics, the Dogmatists, the Impressionists, and the Scientific School, who, Bradford feels, all show the influence of Sainte-Beuve, the American comes closest to dealing with the orthodox schools of criticism. Less conventional is Bradford's analysis of what he calls the three sides of criticism: first, criticism considered, in the Sainte-Beuvian manner.

2. We have already seen the dominant role Bradford assigned to Sainte-Beuve in modern biography. The next few pages reveal that in his middle period Bradford also used Sainte-Beuve as a focal point for French criticism in the late nineteenth century. Bradford explains the Frenchman's critical importance only in a general way, but, I believe, the history of French criticism supports the idea (see, for example, Horatio Smith's discussion of French criticism in the nineteenth century, Dictionary of World Literature, pp. 183-86). Ironically enough, as we have seen, in later years Bradford considered Sainte-Beuve as primarily a psycho­grapher.
as pure science; second, criticism as a possible aid to authors; third, criticism as a possible aid to readers.

Bradford likes the name Dogmatists for the Brunatière group since they revolt against the personal element both in the critic and in the subject and try to erect arbitrary standards "supposedly based on classical tradition." To Bradford, Brunatière was the leading exponent of the reaction against Sainte-Beuve. A work pleases or irks a Dogmatist critic for reasons which he can, or cannot explain, and thus it must also please his readers. "From Aristotle to M. Brunatière," declares Bradford, "the learned have tried to impose their taste on mankind in general—and failed lamentably."

The great stronghold for the Dogmatists is the "universal consent of mankind. As if there were such a thing in literary matters!" Conventional criticism today, Bradford says, makes Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare supreme. But the first has his "ups and downs," the Italian is "an invention of the nineteenth century," and the worship of Shakespeare was fashioned in nineteenth-century Germany. Augustine Birrell is a Dogmatist when he asks rhetorically:

Is substantial injustice at this moment done to a single English writer of prose and verse who died prior to the year 1801? Is there a single bad author of this class who is now read?

But Bradford wants to know who are the good and bad authors and who is to settle the justice and injustice. The American himself feels, for example, that Sir William D'Avenant is a "very good poet, better than

1. *L.,* XLIV, 161.
2. *"Sainte-Beuve and Modern Criticism,"* p. 17.
3. *"Mission of the Literary Critic,"* AM, XCIV, 537.
either Goldsmith or Gray," but finds no one else reading D'Avenant and realizes that this choice is a personal idiosyncrasy.

Bradford thinks also that the Dogmatists, using extra-artistic considerations, undertake to judge a literary work by its moral and immoral tendencies. He agrees that the Dogmatists have here a splendid theory but one which they put into lamentable practice. In the linking of art and morality, of course, many problems arise which can hardly be settled arbitrarily.

Bradford asserts that, despite their principles, the Dogmatists apparently have never defined their fixed standard of the beautiful. Such people, he feels, always approach literature with some unliterary preoccupation, like religion, or philosophy, or science, which they cannot let go.

Bradford admits, however, that the Dogmatists have their value. From the past that has delighted and profited mankind, one can draw generalizations which may serve, if not as laws, at least as guides for both creation and judgment. In art as in other things we have a natural instinct to seek authority, whether we can satisfy it or not. A capable critic cannot force us to enjoy what we find dull, but his interpretation may afford us an insight we would not have had otherwise. We are naturally more confident when we approach a work recommended by this critic.

2. Ibid.
The Impressionists, says Bradford, exist, in the French manner, to make war on the Dogmatists and are probably the truest representatives of the Sainte-Beuveian spirit. Their dogma, in Scherer's paradox, is "that there are no dogmas, only opinions." But, observes Bradford, the Impressionist shies even at something as fixed as an opinion. "My impression of a book is so fleeting," he cries. "It shifts from day to day, from hour to hour." Impressionism thus seems to dispense with criticism by making every man his own critic. It does get rid of stilted ex cathedra judgments. The Impressionists claim, however, that while they alter the critical method, they enrich and vary its substance. We get thus instead of a "dry, impersonal bracketing of authors and books" the effects they produce on different minds.

In other words, criticism is not an end, it is a beginning. Its object is to spur us, to open out before us wide vistas of passion and thought and beauty, which we had not discovered for ourselves. In giving us his own personal impression of a work of art, a critic is simply giving us one of a thousand possible interpretations, each of which has its own interest and value.

The more personal the critic is, Bradford continues, the more he aids us to think and feel for ourselves.

Bradford points out that the Impressionist attitude is often attacked for being personal and impertinent, since it gives only the critic's own experience and sensations. He protests, however, that

in reality the opposite dogmatic fashion of criticising is the impertinent one. "This is beautiful by all the eternal laws and standards. I say so. You must accept it whether you like it or not." I find it hard to relish that, even ... from Ruskin or Arnold.

When one does not agree with the sharp decisions of a Brunetiere, they smack of egotism. Lemaitre and the Impressionists do not arrive at such decisions.

As an example of an Impressionist critic at work, Bradford quotes Lemaitre (whom he considered the leading Impressionist) on Corneille and says that he himself has often felt the same about Shakespeare:

When one tries to receive from these venerable authors impressions as direct and sincere as if one read them for the first time, one falls almost inevitably from superstition into irreverence. Thus there are books as to which I have no opinion and never shall have. I am, as it were, condemned never to know them because I know them too well.

In 1926, when Bradford listed the writers who had influenced him most, he put in the front rank the French critics Boissier, Lemaitre, Scherer, France, and "above all" the master—Sainte-Beuve. Certainly one of the chief reasons for their hold on him was what might be called their humanistic impressionism, their questing, flexible opposition to dogmatism of every variety. Bradford and the French were not unique here, of course, but comrades in the attack joined by writers from

Blake to the present against

the nineteenth century's seduction by abstractions, by the
resounding appeal of moral terms or shibboleths that had
lost their basis in conduct and sincerity. 1

The momentum of this attack carried Bradford into the universal
scepticism of impressionism with its possibility of eternal hope
which he cherished particularly in his French mentors.

The Scientific critics, Bradford affirms, who oppose both Dog-
matists and Impressionists, are without doubt more characteristic of
the nineteenth century and stem directly from Sainte-Beuve. They
deem personal esthetic judgments to be an impertinence, and dogmatic
judgments according to ideal, ready-made standards, to be ridiculous
and impossible. These critics agree that an exhaustive study of the
sources of esthetic pleasure may reveal some psychological criteria
which can be measured and valued objectively. They feel that mean-
while, since literature develops in accordance with natural laws,
the critic has other richer fields. Thus literature as the expres-
sion of human living and thinking can be studied analytically and
the results put into generalizations. 2

A particularly wide and fertile field for the Scientific critic,
Bradford feels, is the life and psychology of the individual author.
"Back of the book is always the man—or woman." 3 In an essay of

3. Ibid., p. 540.
1888, indeed, Bradford goes so far as to say this:

"Literary criticism in its largest sense has for its object the study of the human spirit as it presents itself in books. I mean this without limitation. The Critique of Pure Reason, the Principia, the Origin of Species fall within the critic's aim from one point of view quite as much as Shakespeare or Homer. People forget this too often and see in criticism only a shallow dangling with belles-lettres. The real limitation lies in this: that literary criticism is not concerned with the object of books, or only secondarily; its real aim is to get at the person whom the book reveals."

Bradford goes on to state his belief that criticism, considered in its psychological function is "at once the broadest and the subtlest" of the sciences. Are not the known and unknown laws of the mind, Bradford asks, as vast as those which rule the world's movement? If the work of the botanist is bounded by the species, to the naturalist of souls the individual is "a world." The infinite revelation of human life constitutes the foundation and charm of scientific criticism. Sainte-Beuve's words, Bradford thinks, make an admirable summary:

"I botanize, I herborize, I am a naturalist of souls."

To Bradford the most obvious flaw in the work of the Scientific critics is the fact that, however one judges literature, its charm comes especially from its esthetic appeal. Books which neither please nor stir us may have curious material for the observation of human life. The Scientific critic, resolved to ignore esthetic considerations, is too prone to exalt writers who have had little influence on men, writers who

2. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
3. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
offer merely new and striking facts or furnish major links in chains of literary arguments.

Bradford's observations on two modern American books reinforce his objections to the scientific method of criticism. He appreciates the attempt of Farrington in The American Mind to tie in literature with its economic and social background, but he feels that the author, by overstressing the economic factors, presents a distorted picture.

Concerning the main thesis of Calverton's Chap-Book that the current emphasis on economics and sociology is revolutionizing criticism as well as history, biography, and fiction, Bradford feels that the emphasis is essentially a matter of terminology and that the literary scene is "terribly dominated by the laboratory." The modern critic, Bradford thinks, is too apt to yield truth for a formula. Sainte-Beuve, he feels, had about all the necessary economics and sociology.

Near the turn of the century Bradford said that a certain blending of the theories of the Dogmatists, the Impressionists, and the Scientific School, as it occurs in Sainte-Beuve, is possible and added,

2. *L.,* XXXV, 250.
3. *Ibid.,* XLVI, 216-17. In 1895 Bradford compared the critical method of Macaulay with the scientific method of Sainte-Beuve, much to the advantage of the Frenchman, but warned that "the scientific method in itself is apt to involve a predominance of heredity and environment to the detriment of the moral point of view." (Gamaliel Bradford, ed., Macaulay's Life of Samuel Johnson, p. 8.) Over thirty years later Bradford was not receptive to at least one development of scientific criticism when a reading of Freud prompted him to write, "How much more profit is to be got from turning over my marked Sainte-Beuve. How far more deeply did he probe the human heart than all the Freuds and Stanley Halls." (I., ed. B., p. 427.)
"I confess, I get most pleasure from the Impressionists." In "The Mission of the Literary Critic" he observes that the practical American will ask—Why not use all three of the schools? Bradford's counter question is this—Why not, even more sensibly, drop all these "formal watchwords" and set up criticism on a simple and more natural basis? He then proceeds to suggest, on the basis of contemporary conditions, a plan of operation for the critic who deals only with the book and the reader.

3. Criticism for the Author

For all his avowed indifference, Bradford cannot help admitting that he himself is "very susceptible" to the critics, so much that he tries not to read them, especially since, by nature, he tends to consider destructive rather than positive criticism as being sincere. He also thinks that a major handicap in the matter is the fact that most reviewers are not well enough informed to handle a particular book and thus are apt to substitute their own cleverness. Nevertheless, Bradford confesses, reviews have in many instances deeply affected his work.

It is worth noting also that just before his twentieth birthday

1. #Cutler Letters, 1896-1903, p. 79. Hitherto, the reader may have noticed, Bradford has treated the Dogmatists or classicists of later nineteenth-century French criticism as acting in reaction against Sainte-Beuve. Nowhere does he explain, though he perhaps understood, how Sainte-Beuve turned towards classicism in his later years (See, for example, Jander Macclintock, Sainte-Beuve: Critical Theory and Practice after 1850 and Irving Babbitt, The Masters of Modern French Criticism, p. 3#0).

2. All, XIV, 541-57.
Bradford declares in the Preface to his first volume of poems that his only object in publishing is to ask "the just opinion of real poetry lovers." The developing poet, he feels, needs the unbiased verdict of the general public, especially of the few genuine art-lovers in the host of "self-appointed critics." Here the young poet is ostensibly bypassing the critics, at least those who wrongly assume the label. Actually, of course, he is only turning to what he considers the best source for genuine criticism.

Two early Journal sentences imply the need and the possibility of a writer's profiting from criticism. Thus Bradford exclaims, "A man may know his own nature, perhaps; but where under heaven is the man who knows the value of his own work?" Again, he declares that the best critics are the truest judges of their contemporaries. And three more Bradford theories obviously suggest that what the critic writes can have validity for the author criticized. One is Bradford's conviction that the critic himself is a creative artist. Another is Bradford's belief that the critic should be an expert in his particular field of criticism, since no one is better able to catch an author's spirit, to enter into his method and intention, than another author who has worked in very much the same field.

The third is Bradford's principle that the critic should treat with sympathy young contemporary writers, a principle which may imply that

1. Bradford's ten volumes of poetry were never published as such. His published verse included one narrative poem, two small collections, and many separate pieces in various magazines.
4. Ibid., p. 149.
these young writers can profit from reading their critics. And, perhaps from his own experience, Bradford could see little value to a writer in the criticism written by a friend. The "words you didn't say... are always the most important part" of reviews written for friends.

4. Criticism for the Reader

Before the eighteenth century, Bradford observes, criticism was either purely speculative or for the benefit of writers. Journalism, however, made a decisive change so that today (the early 1900's) the critic, with no wish to advise the author, addresses hundreds of thousands and is interested only in the book and the public. This public cares nothing for the unities or for being told what it ought to like; it wants to know what will touch it, please it, amuse it, help it. It wants to be inspired, if only for a moment, with the passion and the joy of literature.

Bradford feels that to perform this function the critic needs especially two qualities: a genuine love of literature and an instinct, a passion for giving that love to others. Also the critic, to interest his readers, must be interesting himself. As we have seen above, the critic should in addition know the field of the book he is discussing.

For the critic who addresses the public, love is the chief qualification.

2. "J., 1925-26, p. 158.
4. Ibid., p. 542.
In short, the critic is an artist just as much as the creative writer; and, as it is the function of the latter to reveal to us new meaning and new beauty in the world of real men and women, so the critic reveals to us new beauty and new meaning in the world of books.

Thus the critic's "true mission ... is in the attempt to communicate to others his infinite delight in books."  

Bradford often discusses the critic's function in this vein. In 1906, for example, he observes that if the critic formerly classified and dogmatized, today the good critic does not even present a case. "He simply makes us hear and see and feel." From "A Gospel of Joy" comes the statement that true criticism "only seeks to reveal the beauty of the ideal more clearly and to increase the number of its worshippers." Elsewhere Bradford says that the critic's task is to teach us to read, to give us the critic's own enthusiasm, make us see what he sees, feel what he feels, in matters that would otherwise be dead to our unawakened apprehension.

Bradford never clearly distinguishes between criticism and reviewing. For the most part, indeed, he seems to use the terms interchangeably as he does, for example, in a letter of 1924.

My one idea of reviewing is that the reviewer should suggest, should stimulate, should convey to readers ... the essence of what is best and most permanent in it, from his own point of view, without attempting ... a formal judicial verdict on its excellence.

A few sentences later, Bradford drops the term reviewer for critic.

3. P. 143.
Another function of the critic, one which concerns the writer criticized as well as the reader, is the removal of figures from pedestals. As in the case of critical biography, Bradford considered the critic’s urge to unstuff literary reputations "largely healthy," though it may be perverted for commercial reasons.

In his study of Pater Bradford adds to the duties of the critic who works for his readers:

His task should be to detect relations, not only those which are subtle and microscopic, but those which are broader and visible to the general gaze of men if they would open their eyes to see them. He should not stop with the impression things make on himself, but allow just a grain of arbitrariness, and tell us what impression they make on us or ought to make.²

Bradford explains that his emphasis upon the positive and appreciative function of the critic does not mean the use of unqualified praise. "The love of literature is more than the love of any author." Only a poor critic, for example, will let his joy in Scott blind him to that master’s "careless and slipshod style and observation." The method of the true critic involves attention to the subject’s faults, a light touching of the shadows, and above all, the avoidance of "that worst failing of his order—cheap self-glorification obtained by displaying others’ defects." Bradford points out also that in measuring his subject the critic should not use "the narrow standard of the

1. [Note: page number not visible in the image.]
2. [Note: page number not visible in the image.]
technical unities," but should apply "the true spirit of these much-abused principles" to test for

that consummate arrangement, which is easily degraded and is worthless without style and characterization to support it, but which remains, after all, one of the essentials of artistic success.\(^1\)

Bradford's negative suggestions concerning critical methods include a condemnation of the use of the abstruse and the abstract, a dislike for satire, and an aversion to the use of a preconceived formula.

Perhaps Bradford's most interesting suggestion for critical procedure is his idea that the usual practice of taking the standard authors at their traditional value and of treating newcomers with "contemptuous patronage" be reversed.

A severe review advertises a worthless book almost as much as a favorable one. Let such things alone altogether. And for what attracts the critic, let him help it along.

In contrast, the critic should treat the classics as if they were just off the press. "There is no surer method of getting people to read and appreciate them." In this procedure Bradford thinks that the old and tested books will find little hardship. To carry out this method, to help and guide his readers, the critic must be himself, must admit,

1. EW, p. 200.
2. EM, II, 1. In a late dialogue Bradford asks if the effort to clarify the obscure may not risk losing the "delicate depths" and if the clear may not be "too close to the superficial." Perhaps, he answers, but the separation may be enormous(\#L, 1931-32, p. 108).
4. \#L, XXVIII, 131.
if there is need, that, for example, the Iliad bores him. "How little 
real love there is in the world's reverences, how much convention."

Bradford thinks that the difficulty critics have in looking frankly at 
literary traditions lends a peculiar interest to old writers who have 
not yet been finally placed. Euripides is one of this class—the 
American believes that critics should approach any idol of literature 
with the same honesty they use concerning Euripides. The true liter-
ary critic, Bradford concludes, will never forget that his mission is 
"essentially and always positive," that he has found sources of end-
less delight of which others are less aware, and that these sources are 
"the simplest, the cheapest, the most permanent, the most accessible 
that exist...."

In his introduction to the recent symposium called The Intent of 
the Critic Donald Stauffer classifies the critic's activities under 
three major roles: that of an individual responding to a work of art, 
that of an interpreter to an audience, and that of a judge. Bradford 
has general suggestions, of course, for all these roles; but even in 
the first and second, those most sympathetic to his temperament and 
bias, his critical theory is vague and fragmentary. And any adequate 
treatment of the critic as judge certainly suggests a far more con-
scious and substantial levying upon the great critics of the past than

2. Ibid., p. 5h3. As a young man Bradford decided that the universal 
ranking of a poet or an artist took place from fifty to one hundred 
years after his death (EJ, p. 1h9).
is found in a theory that contains almost no critical names beyond those of Sainte-Beuve and a few of his compatriots. In this connection, indeed, one wonders why the Bradford who doubted the value of criticism for the writer never seems to have thought of tapping directly the resources of such critical giants as Aristotle, Longinus, Dante, and Dryden.

A key reason for the general thinness of Bradford's critical theory is the fact that the impressionistic critic—if Bradford does not fit the impressionistic pattern completely, it is the pattern he favored and, I believe, most consciously practised, especially in the later years—needs fewer operating principles than, for example, does the classical or the scientific critic. Meanwhile, the sparseness of his critical theory is a limitation upon Bradford's whole work as a critic.

The greatest critics, it seems to me, work according to principles and are articulate concerning them, i.e., they achieve a certain balance between their theory and their practice. Would either Coleridge or Arnold, for example, hold his high place in English criticism today without the illuminating aid of his critical philosophy? And now Hazlitt's greatness is being vindicated in the discovery that his "scores of articles, reviews, and lectures, written under financial pressure and aimed at an immediate market," contain a substantial and admirable body of theory.

It is perhaps not fair to consider Bradford's incidental comments on a few English Romantic critics as truly representative of his convictions; but they command some interest, I believe, as almost if not his only recorded opinions on these critics. The Bradford who complained of Miss Wylie's overemphasis on Coleridge would doubtless be surprised at the attention now being paid the Englishman by such critics as I. A. Richards and T. S. Eliot. Who today calls Leigh Hunt and Wilson (whoever he may be) key figures in Romantic criticism? Granted that Hunt had a remarkable talent for discovering genius and left at least one apt statement of Romantic principles, he is still a small man in comparison with Coleridge or Hazlitt. And today one has to stop and think twice before identifying the Wilson of a past century. Even Lamb and De Quincey with their unique but limited contributions might be disputed as major figures of Romantic criticism.

Despite its flaws, Bradford's critical theory has a certain suggestive value. If it is geared practically to the impressionistic and appreciative techniques, in its recognition of values in both classical and scientific criticism and in its sympathy towards a possible synthesis of techniques and philosophies, it points to the fact which the next section of this thesis will demonstrate: that Bradford as a practicing rather than a theoretical critic fulfills more completely the three basic roles of criticism.