An attempt to define the function of modern poetry

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Thesis

AN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHENTIC RANGE OF POETIC FUNCTION OF MODERN ART

by

Eric Walter Carlson

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submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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### A. Subjective obscurantism

Inadequate interpretation as a cause of seeming obscurantism

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Part I
THE FUNCTION OF POETRY IN THEORY

I Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the boundaries of the realm within which poetry must function as an art. That has been at least the implicit object of every essay on the function of poetry, but because of some unfortunate element of prejudice or some theoretical preconception, the few ventures made by the best critics have fallen short of comprehensive and significant treatment. My plan has been to make a thorough investigation of whatever has been written on the nature and function of poetry in essays, textbooks, and criticism. Of the material in print, the books of I. A. Richards on literary criticism have been the most significantly helpful and are therefore referred to in greater detail than are those of any other single author.

In large part, however, criticism has been of little assistance in suggesting standards or points of reference. It has been necessary, therefore, to construct from the subject-matter of psychology and critical controversy a framework or outline of approach which, it is hoped, will be more suggestive than confusing. Hence the exposition on introversion, extroversion, and intuitivism in parts I and III, as well as frequent references in part II. Space and time do not permit carrying such discussions to their limits, if indeed they can be said to have limits; nor is it possible to
make more than an initial, suggestive, and more or less tentative, beginning on this problem, in so far as it is a project in applied criticism. The choice of types of poetic art in part II is based on the central purpose of this thesis: to attempt to establish the central range of poetic function by the method of delimitation. Nowhere has it been my intention to deal with any particular author's work for its own sake, but rather to use some small bit of his writing to illustrate, and by inductive reasoning to determine, the peripheries of poetry as art. In some cases the results may seem unfair to this or that author—but such an objection misses the point entirely as no critique of any author has been intended. And yet a sound basis of applied criticism is necessary to this discussion, as it is with the most theoretical consideration of any form of art. Such attempts to define the name, nature, or use of poetry as have been made by Housman and Eliot* may be said to have failed because of a lack of definitive criticism, Housman's standard being mere personal feeling and Eliot's past critical opinion. One need no longer hesitate to say that authentic meaningful criticism can no longer do without some application of what we know, or should know, about psychology and esthetics.

Finally, in part III I have endeavored to set forth briefly some of the more obvious implications of what has been unearthed and to suggest a possible solution for the dilemma caused by the schools of extroversion in art. The

*See bibliography (11) and (16)
problem of poetic function cannot be that of either subject-matter or treatment alone. It is at best the problem of how the poet deals artistically with a particular subject. Whether or not this or that subject can become material for art is mere idle speculation unless related to artistic need and artistic method.

II The Need for a Basis of Criticism

Now and then, with the passing of years, a faint cry has been heard above the tumult in the wilderness of literary criticism. On one occasion the voice was Conrad Aiken's, uttering a plea for a criticism having "a solid and permanent basis." That basis, he said, must be an understanding of the function of art in life. Unless related to the function of art, criticism will continue its feverish, ant-like activity, without the control of fact.

Another prophet in that jungle wilderness is I. A. Richards. In his most recent book, one reads that "Twentieth-century criticism has been marked...by the betrayal of general inability to read anything with safety on the part of most of those who have anything to say."** The most optimistic sally into the wonderland of literature will reveal that a heavy, thick, "Critical Fog" hangs over the lowlands and obscures the mountain regions, the subconscious basis of art and the super-

**A Basis for Criticism. New Republic. April 11, 1922. pp. 1-6
conscious activity of the artist. These seemingly impenetrable barriers to literary values can be pierced by the spotlight of definitive criticism, but that means establishing a few guideposts which will keep us in touch with Art as the mother source of the fine arts, poetry included. This is no easy matter. No more so than an investigation into the nature and wherefore of the way of life; in fact, carried far enough a probing into ultimates will show that art is experience.

To mention a few of the more prominent investigators, F. C. Prescott has made what purports to be a study of the poetic mind.* His failure to put his research on a functionally esthetic, instead of a documentarian, basis has produced results of limited value, mystical in conception and romantic in application. In a Harvard lecture on Poetry and the Criticism of Life, H. W. Garrod found it necessary, in this day of antipathy to moral and didactic writing, to attempt a reunion of morality and poetry.** Although successful in stating the significance of poetry as a moral force in life, in explaining how poetry functions as such he made little progress, being without a functional basis from which to view art. These instances are offered as evidence of the fallacy of discussing the function or value of poetry in terms other than those of human psychology, biology and history. A reading of Garrod’s eighth lecture (Methods of Criticism) will disclose the same diffuse, rambling talk about antiquated methods of criticism, historical, biographical, etc.

*See bibliography

**
Most poets, unlike Aiken, are poor critics, whose fragmentary and superficial comments are well illustrated by John Masefield's lecture on "Poetry". For the first five pages one is made a partner to a vague and completely unsuccessful search for the essentials of poetry, which finally on page six reaches the definiteness of "radiant energy" as a term to designate the primary requisite of poetry. The remainder of the lecture resembles too much a popularized retelling of the events in Macbeth, Agamemnon, etc. to be worth considering as authentic criticism.

A professor of Latin at Cambridge, A. E. Housman, gave in 1933 a lecture on "The Name and Nature of Poetry." Although humble enough in calling attention to his limitations as a critic, Housman's humility falls short of being sincere by the very fact of his lecturing on poetry as an art. Having originally intended to talk on versification, he feels that as a "man of science" he would have been more competent to consider the intricacies of that subject.

One must not expect too much from people like Housman who regard literature as a form of recreation to be "read for pleasure." 'For the pleasure of a sentimental flow of tears', he should have said. "..in these six simple words of Milton-- 'Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more--' what is it that can draw tears, as I know it can, to the eyes of more readers than one? ...I can only say, because they are poetry,..."(p.45) That his opinions are "personal", as he warns, cannot be doubted when one reads that his standard of
Poetic quality is an emotional quiver, especially when shaving.

Experience has taught me, when I am shaving of a morning, to keep watch over my thoughts, because, if a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so that the razor ceases to act. This particular symptom is accompanied by a shiver down the spine; there is another which consists in a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes; and there is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from one of Keats's last letters, where he says, speaking of Fanny Brawne, 'everything that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear.' The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach.

I have quoted this passage intact in order to include the reference to Housman's stomach. It would be almost impossible for the reader of Housman's verse, unless informed of this biological fact, to know where such sensations originate.

Poetry that has no meaning, no intellectual content, is the best, according to Housman. "Even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out." It is far better "to swim in the sensations" evoked by a poem than to apprehend its meaning—the peculiar function of poetry is to help us swim. "It is that thrilling utterance which pierces the heart and brings tears to the eyes" which is all-important because it entangles the reader "in a net of thoughtless delight." Housman's dependence on Romantic passivity, excessive undergoing, is clear from his opinion that the production of poetry "is less an active than a passive and involuntary process"..."I should call it a secretion."

The reader, too, may well sigh with relief when Housman says at the close of his lecture that he goes back with "relief and thankfulness" to his "proper job."

As a basis of criticism or appreciation, Housman's ideas
on poetry are confessedly inadequate: witness the doubts he expresses of his own ability to recognize poetry. (pp. 30-32)

But the reader who takes a glance at the passages he cites as "perfect" need have no doubt about Housman's critical insight; he has none. If, according to Amy Lowell, "it is commonly said that Freud being an unmarried man and an Austrian has gained most of his knowledge of women through prostitutes and that he is by no means to be taken as a criterion on the psychology of women of a different type," then may it not be likewise said that Housman, being an unmarried man and an Englishman, has gained most of his knowledge of poetry through sentimental pseudo-lyrics and that he is by no means to be taken as a criterion on the function of poetry of a different type?

But it is time to return to the jungle. In spite of (perhaps because of) the fog of criticism which envelops the wilderness of literature, critics are constantly engaged in a great civil war dedicated to the annihilation of every verbal opponent. In this imbroglio, I. A. Richards has been the favorite object of attack by Allen Tate, Max Eastman, and T. S. Eliot (et al). Tate disagrees with Richards on the "practical utility" of poetry, and proceeds to hack away with his battle-ax at "pseudo-statement", certainly the least vital because most obvious element in the approach of Richards. Then, just as the forces of Conservatism were beginning to grow weary with a sense of their own futility, Max Eastman, the bold and red-eyed knight of many dragon fights, began to
belabor Richards unmercifully. It seems that he understood Richards to have doubted the utility of his scientific gear in coping with any life-situation. Disagreeing basically with Richards' conception of the uses of language--the scientific for naming (a directing toward the thing*) and the poetic for emotive purposes--he dashed in to shout that science (and hence scientific language) is not separate and distinct from practical activity; it is practically activity as an aim upon which science is based. Eastman's "Note on I.A. Richards' Psychology of Poetry"** is an unsympathetic, biassed treatment of a significant contribution to the theory and practice of criticism. His readiness to regard Keats' Ode to Autumn as 'pure poetry' because it "says absolutely nothing" is proof enough of his forgetfulness or ignorance of what Richards has done. As for the chapter entitled "What Poetry Is", it is the old game of collecting definitions and tidbits of critical opinion, none of which are worth the effort.

The last knight to concern us is the Masked Marvel of Mysticism: T. S. Eliot. In a chapter on "The Modern Mind" he comments on the method suggested by Richards for establishing contact with one's 'predetermined harmony'?** A reflective consideration of the most baffling problems or facts of life. To Eliot this "is nothing less than a regimen of Spiritual Exercises." One of Richards' points--"the facts of birth and of death, in their inexplicable oddity"--Eliot remarks on as follows: "I cannot see why the facts of birth and of death

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*See pp. 12-13
**The Literary Mind, pp. 297-317
***Emerson's term for the artistic personality.
should appear odd in themselves, unless we have a conception of some other way of coming into the world and of leaving it, which strikes us as more natural.** Which amounts to saying, 'Hail to the literal-minded! No pseudo-statics we!' The literal interpretation of Richards' points was wholly intentional on Eliot's part, Krutch feels, in his review of Eliot's published lectures. Many would agree with Krutch that about all Eliot has succeeded in saying is "a poem is a poem."**

I leave the jungle for a peek into the laboratory of experimental aesthetics. A recent book by George D. Birkhoff*** carries the methods of quantitative measurement, unrelated to functional situations, to the point of reductio ad absurdum. He has attempted to construct a basic formula, founded on physiological psychology, for measuring aesthetic values in the various arts. In simplest terms, this formula divides the coefficient of Order (significant associations) by the coefficient of Complexity (tension) to find the index of aesthetic value. When applied to the musical quality of poetry, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and vowel sounds are registered on a minute scale of sound values. The formula is much too complex and time-consuming for practical purposes, and is inherently fallacious in its dissociation of sound qualities from meaning, intention, feeling, and so forth. The author admits that it is a wholly mechanical measure unrelated to the qualitative and intuitive side of aesthetic experience, but does not offer any suggestion for the synthesis of his technique.

***(11) 132-3  ***See bibliography
** Krutch, Joseph Wood "A Poem Is a Poem" in The Nation 137: 675-7
with other necessary factors that go into the evaluation of art. The result is an undue emphasis on such formal qualities of the art object as unity, variety, symmetry, repetition.

Regarding the theory of esthetics which holds that the expressiveness of sensuous qualities—lines, e.g.—can be explained without reference to the observer except as being subject to biological tendencies (natural eye movements, for instance), Dewey writes:

While the optical apparatus may be isolated in anatomical dissection, it never functions in isolation...the visually experienced qualities of the lines cannot possibly be referred to the action of the eyes alone.

Nature, in other words, does not present us with lines in isolation. As experienced, they are the lines of objects; boundaries of things. / Hence lines...carry over the meaning of the objects of which they have been constituent parts.

The habitual properties of lines cannot be got rid of even in an experiment that endeavors to isolate the experience of lines from every thing else.*

It is only a step around the corner from the laboratory to the university in so far as literature is concerned. Factual teaching in the arts is with us yet, as any student, or his ignorance, of literary values will testify to. The course of study for the Ph.D. is still notoriously a regimen of grabbing for unrelated facts and vestiges hitherto undiscovered by literary paleontologists. Amy Lowell summed up the situation by saying that literature is being more and more taught as a science and less and less as an art... 

Of course one reason that it is so difficult to teach literature as an art is that so few teachers know enough of the art in question to be able to impart their knowledge or

*(10) 100-1 Cf. another quotation from Dewey on page 97
or their enthusiasm.*

(And from her essay on Poetry, Imagination, and Education, in reference to the lectures of an eminent Harvard professor on Shakespeare [presumably Professor Kittredge] whose course she took for two years:)

We learnt everything about the plays we studied except the things that mattered...Not once in those two years were we bidden to notice the poetry, not once was there a single aesthetic analysis.**

The thickening fog around both professional and neophyte in literature has turned many a born optimist grey with disillusion. Some of the more advanced cynics have sought a way out through a mystic Chinese philosophy, or through a mystic Anglo-Catholicism. T.S. Eliot, a member of the second group, notes that three members of the former group: Ezra Pound, I.A.Richards, Irving Babbitt: shared an interest in Chinese philosophy.*** "It seems to indicate, at least, a deracination from the Christian tradition." There is little reason to doubt that a real understanding of Emersonianism by these three gentlemen would have supplied the lack they experienced in Western thought and religion. But without experiential knowledge of transcendental symbolism, they could not see the treasure of philosophical and aesthetic values in Emerson's writings. The problem is similar to that encountered in Eliot's reading of Richards; it is the problem of all 'men of science.'

Irving Babbitt, that champion of "the conscious and rational self" in the war against Rousseauism, saw in Emerson only two contradictory forces or ideas: Platonic idealism and Rousseauistic instinct.****

*(9) 533 **(19) 52-3 ***(11) 132 ****(2) See chapter on Sainte-Beuve
Does he [Emerson] employ the word 'intuition' Rousseauistically or Platonically? He plainly has the Platonic perception of unity with the elevation and serenity that go with it. At the same time he exalts and puts on the same level with this perception the purely centrifugal powers of personality. ... Instinct is equally honored with intuition and often identified with it. (356-8)

Emerson, then, is a wise man whose influence often works against that humility which is the first mark of wisdom; a true sage who must yet be numbered among the sycophants of human nature; a somewhat baffling blend...of Rousseauism and insight...(361) But Emerson was not only a Rousseauist but a seer, and his insight as well as his Rousseauism appears, as it seems to me, in the dictum that Goethe did not worship the highest unity. (366)

In seeking for some faculty "above the ordinary intellect", Babbitt was driven to reject Emersonianism because of his own inability to see that transcendental psychology regarded the world of fact or sense and the world of spiritual or ideal values together, not separately. Moreover, the ideal world that Emerson conceived was not Platonic. Failing to see the vast difference between Platonic transcendentalism and Emersonian transcendentalism, Babbitt could hardly appreciate the wisdom of trusting the instinct to the end, when it shall ripen into truth, that is, into an illumination of realized truth. (Emerson's understanding of 'Intellekt' was equivalent to our use of 'Intuition'.)

These and other problems of the contemporary literary scene are involved in the controversy between Classicist, Romanticist, and Modernist.

It remains to give recognition to I.A. Richards for his contributions to criticism. His distinction between "symbolic [scientific] language" and "evocative language" is central to all literary art. The former function of language is denotative,
directive, designatory, a prose function. The second function of language is poetic in that it makes full use of the sound qualities of words, with their immediate and associated emotional effects.* As Dewey has said, "Science states meanings; art expresses them...Statement sets forth the conditions under which an experience of an object or situation may be had."

(H\textsubscript{2}O, for example) Art "does something different from leading to an experience. It constitutes one."**

In addition to stating the need for a study of the influence of language upon thought, Richards has been instrumental in authenticating the application of psychology to literature, especially as far as applied criticism is concerned.*** In his most recent book, he has set forth a high conception of the part poetry can and should have in the life of today.

The dissolution of consciousness exhibited in such prose [Joyce's or Mrs. Woolf's], forces the task of reconstituting a less relaxed, a less adventurous order for the mind upon contemporary poetry. There can be no question of a return to any mythologic structures prevailing before the seventeenth century:..Poetry can no more go back on its past than a man can.****

Now that the edifices of man's intellectual superstructure have collapsed (the Neutralization of Nature****), pure knowledge appears for what it is--irrelevant to his aims and with no direct bearing on his feelings and conduct. Richards concludes that poetry "is capable of saving us" from the mental chaos impending as a result of the destruction of traditional beliefs.

*Ogden and Richards, \textit{The Meaning of Meaning}, pp. 235-240

**(10) 84-5

***[22] and (23) especially

****(21) 227

*******\textit{Science and Poetry}, Chap. 5
The analysis of language brought him to the conclusion that poetry as an art is more complicated than we think. Poetry has found kinds of meaning.*

1. Sense, or verbal meaning; the pseudo-statement; that is, what the poem says in so many words. But since a poem cannot be literal, it does not mean what it says: the pseudo-statement is simply the verbal instrument upon which the poet plays his othersmeanings, his poetic overtones.

2. Feeling, or emotive meaning, engendered by the poem in the reader or appreciator; the nuance of interest about (attitude to) what is spoken of.

3. Tone, or tonal meaning; the attitude of the person speaking (in) the poem to the person addressed (a character or the reader) as implied in the way a thing is said.

4. Intention; the speaker's "aim, conscious or unconscious, the effect he is endeavoring to promote"; what the poet expects the reader to get out of the process of individual interpretation.

These four functions of poetry together constitute the Total Meaning of a poem. "...many, if not most, of the statements in poetry are there as a means to the manipulation and expression of feelings and attitudes, not as contributions to any body of doctrine of any type whatever.*** This is the "subjugation of statement to emotive purpose,"--a function which of course is not peculiar to poetry alone.

*(22) Part III, Chapter I **(22) 186
Subordination (as opposed to abrogation) of sense is nearly omnipresent in poetry. The poet makes a statement about something, not in order that the statement may be examined and reflected upon, but in order to evoke certain feelings, and when these are evoked the use of the statement is exhausted. (354)

As we shall see later, the emotive meaning, important as it is, may be conceived to have a significance not warranted in poetry as an interpretative art; at least with Richards the emotive meaning has been a convenient recourse in the case of some obscure poetry, thus hindering the discovery of the full meaning and intention of the poem.

But for the moment the main point is that Richards has seen that art does not deal with fact and doctrine. Factual knowledge belongs to science; poetry deals with the eternal values, the intangibles and incommensurables of life. A known fact, accepted as scientifically true and final, should not be included in poetry for its own sake. (Tennyson made the mistake of bringing into his poems incidental bits of factual knowledge.) If truth of a factual nature is discovered by means of art, something still unrecognized by science, that is a valid function for art. But an already established scientific fact can be justified in art only as a means to something beyond itself, as a symbol, or as a subject for imaginative realization of further truth. To use doctrine that is final, absolute, authoritarian, prevents all possibility of discovery or individual interpretation,—and the final test for art is the sense of discovery. "A poet", wrote Shelley, "participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates

*For example, the discovery of the Freudian subconscious by the Russian dramatists before Freud.
to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons, and the distinction of place, are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry." What we need is "the creative faculty to imagine that which we know."

*from A DEFENCE OF POETRY
III Introversion and Extroversion

In his essay on Poetry, Watts-Dunton discusses two distinct kinds of poetic imagination: dramatic imagination and lyric or egoistic imagination. The former he also called absolute dramatic vision, "being in its highest dramatic exercise unconditioned by the personal or lyrical impulse of the poet," and the latter, relative dramatic vision, "being more or less conditioned by the personal or lyrical impulse of the poet." Pertinent to our problem is his statement that "It seems impossible to classify poets, or to classify the different varieties of poetry, without drawing some such distinction as this, whatever words of definition we may choose to adopt." For, in attempting to trace and to account for divergences from the main track of poetic function, we shall find it helpful to refer to the two main trends of any art form--internalization and externalization.

Watts-Dunton describes the poet dominated by the lyric imagination as largely preoccupied with his own individuality, and as indulging in a personal and romantic reaction to his environment. The mere sense of wonder, the wonderfulness of the world and the romantic possibilities of life, were all-sufficing for the Asiatic poets, the Oriental mind being accustomed to turn within itself for the satisfactions and pleasures of an imaginary dream-world. The dramatic poet, on the other hand, turned to the actual world about him for material and gave scope to characters of a different nature.
from his own. The Western mind is more inclined to such an external approach to life and art.*

The terms 'introversion' and 'extroversion', first employed by Jung, will be used to indicate these two tendencies of the poetic mind. It is understood that no hard and fast meanings are attached to these words, but that as names for tendencies they serve a purpose for which there is definitely a need, as will become clear in the ensuing pages.

John Dewey, in Art As Experience, has made a similar distinction between types of art on the basis of what he calls the two main forces (or tendencies) in any artistic or esthetic experience: doing and undergoing. An excess of doing or action (the outgoing of energy to meet the 'object' of the experience), results in a disturbance of the balanced, harmonious relationship between subject and object. On the other hand, an excess of undergoing or receptivity also detracts from the esthetic quality of an experience.**

There have been whole periods of art when one or another of these tendencies has predominated. The neo-classical age, for instance, produced few literary works of significance as art, for the simple reason that outside factors in the artistic process were allowed to determine to an inordinate degree the final result. It was an age of extroversion in art. Romanticism as a movement was a reaction to this almost complete objectification of life and art. Later, Symbolism as a movement carried out another protest against a denial of the per-

*(29) 8, 85-90
**(10) 44-45
sonal element as practiced by the Parnassians. "It was the tendency of Symbolism--that second swing of the pendulum away from a mechanistic view of nature and from a social conception of man--to make poetry even more a matter of the sensations and emotions of the individual than had been the case with Romanticism: Symbolism, indeed, sometimes had the result of making poetry so much a private concern of the poet's that it turned out to be incommunicable to the reader.** That is, the Symbolist poet tended to tip the balance too far in his own direction, to the exclusion of external reality. "...the symbols of the Symbolist school are usually chosen arbitrarily by the poet to stand for special ideas of his own--they are a sort of disguise for these ideas. 'The Parnassians, for their part,' wrote Mallarmé, 'take the thing just as it is and put it before us--and consequently they are deficient in mystery: they deprive the mind of the delicious joy of believing that it is creating. To name an object is to do away with the three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem which is derived from the satisfaction of guessing little by little: to suggest it, to evoke it--that is what charms the imagination.'*** In chapter II (part II) on Subjective Obscurantism is a summary account of Verhaeren, one of these Symbolist poets, whose work illustrates the difficulties for interpretation caused by the use of private symbols, which are so indirect that, as Wilson says, they disguise the meaning instead of permitting a progressive discovery of values. Nature, in the sense of perceptible fact external to man, becomes a mirror of man's own

**ibid. 698

*(27) 697 (in chapter on Symbolism by Edmund Wilson)*
self. In the objective scene he sees his own feelings, desires, and aspirations projected. Such is not the natural and proper way of life; according to Dewey, we have become what we are—sensitive to color, for example—by millions of years of perpetual adjustment to Nature, so that what we now 'read into' the outer world is made possible only by a long history of interaction with Nature—the color of objects has worked on our organs of sight to make them sensitive to color.*

No real art can be produced without some reference to the personal, the internal, the subconscious, because art is a relating of the artistic personality to objective fact, by means of which the social personality is transcended.** As Croce says, it is the "contemplated fact" that is intuitive and hence artistic, in contrast to mere sensation.***

Romantic art has been the pet subject of attack by Classicist, Neo-Classicist, and Humanist because of an excessive indulgence in personal emotion by the Romantic poet. But for the very reason that an objection to gush and effusion of sentiment is a valid criticism of Rousseauistic Romanticism,

*Compare these statements from (21):
The colours of Nature are a suffusion from the light of the mind, but the light of the mind in its turn, the shaping spirit of Imagination, comes from the mind's response to Nature...*(152)

**all the sensory qualities of Nature arise only in the interaction of Nature with perceiving organisms.

***This idea is carried further in the explanation of how introversion and extroversion are reconciled in art.

***See pages 31-32
it is only a short step into the fallacy of concluding that
all so-called Romantic poets are fit literary targets of a
verbal barrage with the same critical artillery. Such was the
error of Irving Babbitt and of many a professor before and
since.

The inadequacy of Humanist criticism has been exposed
by the anomaly that arises in the case of Wordsworth or Byron.
It is not uncommon, for instance, to find praise heaped upon
Wordsworth's *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge*. There is little,
if anything, in eighteenth-century rational literature, it is
truly that can equal the strength of emotive appeal that Words-
worth conveys in this poem. The feeling of latent power and
activity, of "a calm so deep", is similar to the "psychic
calm" that impressed John Cowper Powys* on Sunday morning in
New York City. The tone of deep reverence before a scene of
Awe-inspiring beauty may also play a great part in producing
in the neo-classical critic the corresponding attitude of
reverence for the poem. Can one be critical of reverence
without being irreverent? I venture to suggest that to psy-
chologize regarding this poem is no more disrespectful than
is reasoning according to the critical point of view with
respect to the Old Testament.

In taking the point of view that Romantic art is based
on feeling rather than intuition, one can make convenient
references to Croce's theory of intuition. As he himself has
pointed out, the Romanticist depended on feeling rather than
intuition, on the emotion or sensation before it was

*See his essay called "The American Scene and Character"
"aesthetically elaborated" into form or intuition or expression. Spiritualized emotion alone can be expressed as an artistic intuition, that is, with and in form. Otherwise the feeling is inchoate and diffuse. Croce's statement that "Art is not feeling in its immediacy" is paralleled by Dewey when he says: "Without emotion, there may be craftsmanship, but not art; it may be present and be intense, but if it is directly manifested the result is also not art. ... There is, when one is mastered by an emotion, too much undergoing... and too little active response to permit a balanced relationship to be struck... In extreme cases, it works to disorder instead of ordering material."*

In other words, Romanticism is based on feeling which is highly emotional but not focussed, as the measure of all things. Sensation is just a pseudo-thought, an inchoate, vaporous perceptive mode that does not stop to realize itself in form. Language, says Croce, that is used in a mechanical way, merely for convenience--most phrases of social etiquette are so used--is not really language at all because there is no realization of the meanings inherent in or attached to words as the expression of intuitions.

Baldwin has discussed the same stage or mode of realization under the name of pre-logical interpretation. This type of emotionality is characterized by an uncritical acceptance of social dogma; subjectivism, frequently to the extreme of personal caprice; mysticism; superstition and religious fear; excessive emotionalism; and so forth. It "leads to a mystical and emotional interpretation--'fearful' in the religious

*(10) 69-70
sense--of the commonest objects of the external world."*

Wordsworth's sonnet reveals this kind of reaction,--or lack of sufficient action, as Dewey probably would say--an overemotional (sentimental) and mystical 'perception.'** If sincere Wordsworth was of course justified in feeling as he did, but what he has put into words is not the expression of an intuition--it has not been elaborated by anyflowering of the imagination into thought, and from thought into intuition; it is more or less crude 'sensation' rather than 'contemplated fact.' Excess of undergoing has resulted in an intense emotion powerfully expressed, but there is no valid excuse for the absence of a relationship which could give meaning as well as feeling to the experience. The emotional glorification of a moment of natural beauty has no value in and of itself; it is merely self-indulgent self-expression, best kept in one's private diary where it belongs. In order to merit attention as functional art, as significant experience, a poem that depends upon intensification must focus on what is representative. Otherwise it cannot have an implied meaning or value.

Though consistent, the diction of this sonnet is too vague, general, and conventional: "bright, glittering, splendor, saw, felt," etc.--these merely talk directly about the beauty; they do not convey to the appreciator (the reader) any stimulation to the realization of the beauty. The poem is not a profound, intellectual, or modern work of art, but a static, explanatory, inchoate effusion of feeling.

*Baldwin (3) 17-21  **Dewey's term for intuitive realization
In contrast to introversion is the tendency to externalization, here designated extroversion. Synonymous with the point of view in art which exalts the external fact over the personal element are Rationalism, Classicism, and Humanism, all of which agree in theory at least on the superiority of the objective reality. It is only in the stage of logic or judgment (rational) that the datum is allowed to dominate in the response; therefore classical art is largely an affair of the intellect* or the rational faculty. Externalization as practised by the Imagists is inherently neither intellectual nor emotional, but merely leaves the material in a more or less raw state of development or realization.

Spengler has called classical and Greek art an expression of the Apollinian mind because it represents, especially in its emphasis on sculpture, whatever is objective and static as opposed to the mysterious, the subjective and the wonderful. As an art, sculpture gives a sense of movement arrested and of time suspended, and is indicative of finish, repose, balance, peace, gravity.** The Greeks thought of a statue as an ideal surface separation of space; the emphasis was all on defined space and contour, no emotion, movement, or vitality being recognized as within the function of sculpture as art.

The admiration of Keats for Greek art led him more and more to an externalization of poetic experience. By objectifying what is normally used inwardly as the material of a poetic experience he created a wonderland for the poetic mind,

*See (10) 232-4
Not in the Emersonian sense, but referring to the architectonic imagination. Cf. p. 75
in the sense that the appreciator was supposed to carry the attitude of wonder and marvel to panels of poetic material waiting to be integrated into a focal idea. This is essentially the opposite of lyricism, in which the 'outer vision' is merely the occasion for the song that follows.

In accepting Keats as their forerunner, the Imagists likewise became concerned with poetry without focus, with the communication of raw material out of which poet experience may be had. The result has been a poetry which, many writers maintain, does not mean anything, but is a sample of life; which tends to dramatize thought and experiences; and which tends to raw realism, artistic unification being left to the reader.

Glenn Hughes quotes Hulme as believing in the artistic value of 'small, dry things' (See page—) as opposed to the Romantically vague and infinite; and as holding the theory that art should deal with only 'the vivid patches of life', in contrast to the banalities of life as it is. In trying to find the basic theory of beauty and to determine the relation of literature to esthetics, he developed a creed which involved both symbolism and Imagism. He insisted, in part, on the fact that man is a being of earthly limitations, always living a contemporary life—these points in opposition to the ethereal attitude and nostalgic dreaming over the past, characteristic of Romanticism. Furthermore, "Each word must be an image seen, not a counter or cliche." "A man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification
before his eyes.* It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm. .. Creative effort makes new images. .. The great aim is accurate, precise and definite description.** .. The art of literature consists exactly in this passage from the Eye to the Voice.***

These passages from Hulme are only a few of many that have been culled from his notebooks by Professor Damon. I have selected those which show Hulme's emphasis on externalization. The Imagists took over these ideas of Hulme, but rejected his thoughts on 'intention', symbolism and analogy—in short, the ideas having to do with intuition, and thus the chief modern element.

The doctrine of the Imagists centered around the use of the image in an endeavor to "render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous." Whether the Imagist poets were aware of it or not, the visual image soon held a pre-eminent place in their writing, in comparison with images appealing to the other senses. The importance which Hulme gave to the 'image seen' was no doubt instrumental to this end.

Archibald MacLeish has contributed his own Ars Poetica in support of the views propounded by the Imagists, and in so doing poetizes on extroversion as art.

*Cf. Richards (22) on Visual Images, pp.362-4, where he says that "it is possible, for many people, to think with the utmost particularity and concreteness and yet make no use of visual images at all."

**Cf. Mallarmé's statement on page 19.

***(9) 198-9
ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit
Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb
Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown--
A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs
Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,
Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind--
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

A poem should be equal to:
No true
For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf
For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea--
A poem should not mean
But be.

This poem, true to Imagist theory, minimizes the value of
the lyrical or musical quality of poetry (Dumb, silent). It
is enough to present directly what is seen as a part of life
(empty doorway, maple leaf); the less interpretation the
better (A poem should not mean, but be). As we shall see in a later
chapter, Robert Frost's doctrine and use of poetry are based
on these principles of extroversion.
IV Promethean Integration

Prometheus is a symbol of the intuitionistic integration of the self and the environment, of human nature and nature. The idea as such goes back to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, in which Prometheus becomes through an individual integrity achieved through experience a symbol of doing as well as undergoing.*

In describing the pattern common to all esthetic experience Dewey** holds "that every experience is the result of interaction between a live creature and some aspect of the world in which he lives." The process of interaction continues until a mutual adaptation of the self and the environment emerges—this constitutes the experience—and it comes to a close in a felt harmony. Doing and undergoing in alternation do not constitute an experience; it is the relationship between the two that gives meaning and that determines the significant content of an experience. (43-4) "What is done and what is undergone are...reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other...and to the whole under construction."(50-51) The measure of esthetic status is the completeness of the integration of organism and environment. "...defect in a work is always traceable ultimately to an excess on one side or the other, injuring the integration of matter and form."(277) "Esthetic experience...is esthetic in the degree in which organism and environment co-

*(15) Chapter III The Promethean Soul contains a more detailed clarification of the symbolical aspects of Promethean integration.

**(10)
operate to institute an experience in which the two are so fully integrated that each disappears." (248)

Richards has based his theory of Beauty on psychology in reaction to formalism in art. After rejecting the Platonic theory of value as an ultimate idea—that is, the existence of any supersensuous ultimate Ideas or abstract entities such as Good, Beauty, etc.—he presents a theory of value centering around the observation that "anything is valuable which will satisfy an appenency without involving the frustration of some equal or more important appetency, [understood in the sense of a seeking after, mostly unconscious]."** The esthetic experience does not differ from other experiences in kind, but in the degree of organization or systematization of impulses so as to give the greatest freedom, clarity, and richness to experience.**

"Beautiful" is defined as 'having properties such that it arouses, under suitable conditions, tendencies to self-completion in the mind;***beauty, though still objective in origin, "ceases to be the name of any ascertainable property in things."

A (work of art) causes B (an effect in us) which as the character in

A causes B.

We speak as though A:B(Beauty) were perceived as such.****

Although Richards grants the convenience of the terms 'Beauty', 'Beautiful', etc. for purposes of reference, it is

*(23) 48 *(23) Chapter VII
*** (22) 358-9 Cf. Ogden, Richards, and Wood The Foundations of Aesthetics
****(23) Chapter III
the systematisation of impulses and interests that really matters in the perception of beauty. When these diverging interests reach a state of equilibrium or harmony, synaesthesia is attained.*

Dewey's comment on this psychology of esthetics calls attention to the danger of making the individual appreciator (the 'subject') the primary, if not the exclusive, factor in an esthetic experience:

...What is overlooked is that it is not the painting as a picture (that is, the object in esthetic experience) that causes certain effects "in us." The painting as a picture is itself a total effect brought about by the interaction of external and organic causes. The external causal factor is vibrations of light from pigments on canvas variously reflected and refracted. It is ultimately that which physical science discovers--atoms, electrons, protons. The picture is the integral outcome of their interaction with what the mind through the organism contributes. Its "beauty", which, I agree with Mr. Richards, is simply a short term for certain valued qualities, in being an intrinsic part of the total effect, belongs to the picture just as much as do the rest of its properties. (250-1)**

Significant for the whole understanding of art as experience, and related to the varying emphasis of introversion and extroversion, is the function the senses play in the realization of esthetic values. Dewey regards the so-called work of art as a canalization of experience; "the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience."(3) "The eye, ear, or whatever, is only the channel through which the total response takes place." (p.122) Oppositions of the material or sensuous and the spiritual, of mind and body, soul and body, etc. all originate in a restricted conception by the

*See the final chapter in The Foundations of Aesthetics
**Cf. page 97
moralist or the academic philosopher of the part our sense-organ's play in life.

There is no limit to the capacity of immediate sensuous experience to absorb into itself meanings and values that in and of themselves—that is in the abstract—would be designated "ideal" and "spiritual." .. The sensible surface of things is never merely a surface. .. Nothing that a man has ever reached by the highest flight of thought or penetrated by any probing insight is inherently such that it may not become the heart and core of sense. •

Whitehead seems to attribute such a fusion of the senses and s senses and spiritual values to the Romantic poet.

There is no real dualism, says Whitehead, between external lakes and hills, on the one hand, and personal feelings, on the other: human feelings and inanimate objects are interdependent and developing together in some fashion of which our traditional notions of laws of cause and effect, of dualities of mind and matter or of body and soul, can give us no true idea. The Romantic poet, then, with his turbid or opalescent language, his sympathies and passions which cause him to seem to merge with his surroundings, is the prophet of a new insight into nature: he is describing things as they really are; and a revolution in the imagery of poetry is in reality a revolution in metaphysics. •

This summary is generally correct except for the underlined phrase (italics mine). The Romantic poet's harmonious interaction with Nature was at best only approximate and when more than that he was a modern artist (as was often the case with Shelley and Coleridge).

In the difference between Intuition and Sensation lies the difference between Romanticism and Modernism. As Croce has defined sensation, it is equivalent to the impressions with which an artist works, formless and inchoate, impulsive, variable and changeable and passive—in short "emotionality not aesthetically elaborated" or spiritualized. ••• Intuition, \(^{(10)}\) 39 \(^{(27)}\) 689, from "Symbolism" by Edmund Wilson \(^{(6)}\) Selections from Croce. Cf. page 20.
on the other hand, is active, productive, spiritual, human, constant form, growing out of the refining of sensation into expression (or intuition) by the intellectual activity." Intuition is contemplated or transcended feeling or fact; it is not feeling in its immediacy. (This difference is discussed by Dewey in terms of 'emotional discharge' and 'expression.') It should be noticed that 'expression' with Croce is not the same as 'externalization' or 'objectification' loosely understood, though the two are of necessity closely related: "intuition is only intuition in so far as it is, in that very act, expression. An image that does not express, that is not speech, song, drawing, painting, sculpture or architecture—speech at least murmured to oneself, song at least echoing within one's own breast, line and colour seen in imagination and colouring with its own tint the whole soul and organism—is an image that does not exist."** *(Italics not in original.)*

As the discussion of romanticism brought out,*** art that is the outpouring of unformed, unchanged feeling or emotion is not really art. Likewise, the sheer objectivism of the poetry of extroversion cannot be intuitive because it leaves the material of art in its raw state, as Keats tended to do in *Lamia* and *Hyperion*, and which the Imagists sought to do in the 'new poetry'. The point of view toward art which says "This is life, not literature," by its own statement has transferred its attention from the necessity of fusing object and subject to the object alone, untrammeled by interpretation. Thus sheer objectivism (as in Robert Frost) and sheer Imagism

**(6) 266  ***See pages 20-23
* See (6) pp. 82-83, 45-46
are not intuitive (and hence not modern) art but one-sided responses resulting in poetry of extroversion that might be called quasi-classical, due to the prominence of the external reality.

The problem of art thus resolves into the problem of making art intuitive, just as the issue in epistemology has become a question of the esthetic mode.* Only through intuitive insight can the artist realize the truth or value that is born out of the interpenetration of man and nature, and this realized reality cannot be passed on directly as such to any other individual but must be realized anew by the afforded appreciator through the stimulation to such a realization by the work of art. That is what is meant by the canalization of experience in the work of art. (Cf. page 30)

Meaning comes only from the established relationships between the self (the representative of all past experience) and the environment. A word takes on meaning only through the experiences a person has had with that word's referent.** In other words, language is symbolic.*** It is intuitive expression.**** Thus the symbol is the prime device of art, being directly or indirectly the only connection between the world of material fact—the sensible world—and the world of meaning or value—the ideal world. Artistic unity is impossible if the sensuous, the material, the actual is made the subject of an attempted explanation by the abstract or rational intellect. On the contrary, it is only by means of

*(3) 25-31  **The Meaning of Meaning, p. 11
***Ibid.  ****See page 22
*See criticism of "Borrower", pages 43-45.

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and for this purpose the symbol as a way of establishing a parallactic relationship is necessary—

that the personal (social) self and its limited range of experience can be transcended and a realisation of the way of life as a whole (the epic values) made possible.*
Part II

THE FUNCTION OF POETRY IN PRACTICE

I The Lyric

"All art is", says Watts-Dunton, "--if we search deep enough, --an expression of an egoism stronger and more vital than common--an egoism too strong to be content to 'die without sign'; but lyric art is egoism's very self. 'I enjoy--I suffer'; this from Sappho downwards, has been the motif of all the very finest lyric music. The lyrist, it is true, 'learns in suffering what he teaches in song'; but he has learned nothing but the poignancy of his own joys and woes,--'Son cœur est un luth suspendu si tôt qu'on le touche il résonne.'** Lyric poetry tends to become egoistic in its expression of personal feeling more or less unrelated to external conditions. As a form of introversion it often serves as an escape from a harsh or drab or obstructive environment. With respect to pure lyricism the following passage also is worthy of note:

With regard to...the pure lyricists, the impulse is pure egoism. Many of them have less of even relative vision at its highest than the mass of mankind. They are often too much engaged with the emotions within to have any deep sympathy with the life around them. Of every poet of this class it may be said that his mind to him "a kingdom is," and that the smaller the poet the bigger to him is that kingdom. To make use of a homely image--like the chaffinch whose eyes have been pricked by the bird-fancier, the pure lyrist is sometimes a warbler because he is blind. Still he feels that the Muse loves him exceedingly. She takes away his eyesight but she gives him sweet song. And his song is very sweet, very sad, and very beautiful; but it is all about the world within his own soul--its sorrows, joys, fears, and aspirations.**
How far a poet should allow his personal feelings to be expressed in a merely tonal or musical form apart from any significant thought-content is a question of the relation between music and poetry. Conrad Aiken, one of our most skillfully melodic poets, has always insisted on the need for a fusion of thought and music in poetry. For the most part, his criticisms indicate that he has found modern poetry lacking in "art," by which he means harmony, melody, "verbal magic." On the musical aspect of poetry, he writes:

It has been said that all the arts are constantly attempting, within their respective spheres, to attain to something of the quality of music, to assume, whether in pigment, or pencil, or marble, or prose, something of its speed and flash, emotional completeness, and well-harmonised resonance; but of no other single art is that so characteristically or persistently true as it is of poetry. Poetry is indeed in this regard two-natured: it strikes us, when it is at its best, quite as sharply through our sense of the musically beautiful as through whatever implications it has to carry of thought or feeling: it plays on us alternately or simultaneously through sound as well as through sense.*

The reader familiar with Aiken's poetry will not be surprised on finding that "it is after all the occasionally-arising brief cry of lyricism which thrills and dissolves us."*** But on another occasion: "I like poetry which plays with ideas quite as joyously as with moods or sensations."***

Amy Lowell was also conscious of the danger which faces poetry in its tendency to become music..."music is chiefly an art of tone, poetry an art of ideas...When music endeavors to do away with tone and substitute the actualities of noise, its perpetrators overstep the boundaries of their particular art. When poetry seeks to suppress thought and substitute

*(1) 91  **97  ***288
sound, ...the same sharp defeat occurs.*

Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* is frequently referred to as an example of meaningless sounds. In the sense that it has gone to extremes in the direction of internalization, it is an excellent case of introversion, depending as it does upon a delicate weaving of eerie, sinuous threads of tone to convey the quintessence of poetic atmosphere and feeling. From the dominant tonal meaning arises the feeling, the vagueness, and the wonder. Coleridge made effective use of sound values and tonal pitch, as he also does in *Youth and Age*, *Christabel*, and *The Ancient Mariner*.

That Aiken has carried out many of Coleridge's ideas in poetry is evidenced by page after page of his verse. The lyric which I quote here for consideration is not symbolic, as much of Aiken's verse is, but it effectively illustrates the trend of poetry to become music at the expense of thought-content.

You are as beautiful as white clouds
Flowing among bright stars at night;
You are as beautiful as pale clouds
Which the moon sets alight.

You are as lovely as golden stars
Which white clouds try to brush away:
You are as bright as golden stars
When they come out to play.

You are as glittering as those stairs
Of stone down which the blue brooks run:
You are as shining as sea-waves
All hastening to the sun.

Written in melodic, rhymed cadence, this short lyric from *Variations (VI)* has a distinct appeal to the ear. One notices, for instance, the use of identical rhyme, the repeated phrase "You are as...", the skillful variation of rhythm in the

*(9) 489 CF. D.H. Lawrence's letter, page 95*
stanzaic pattern. The fluency and richness of tone is partly due to the rich, open vowels, and the liquid consonants L M M R S. The similes serve as a figurative instrument upon which the poet plays his lyric tune. The emotion of adoration is essentially not passionate; here it is calmly harmonized in a realization of beauty, in a truly felt mood of tranquillity and pause. The sincerity of feeling places a lyric of this kind in a class quite apart from the pseudo-lyrics of Housman.

Beautiful as these verses may be, they should be recognized as differing materially from interpretative poetry. Having found a richness of emotive and tonal meaning, we ought also to find something resembling a basic idea; but in that respect the poem leaves us without more than a vague inkling that some one is adorable. In other words, there are no real ideas, no relationships establishing any meaning, no implication of any thought or intention. Although not sentimental like Housman, nor mystically emotional like Wordsworth, this lyric stops short of any Total Meaning. Not that one has a right to expect any "message" or moral or story, but to be truly interpretative there should be something equivalent to a basic idea in or behind the poem. It should be noticed, however, that a single lyric utterance of this kind may take on a value in combination with others of a similar sort. Aiken has undoubtedly had in mind some total impression that his Variations would make, rather than that of any individual poem.

A few pages on in Variation's poem XII, a good example
of a lyric carried a step further to fulfill the interpretative function of poetry.

Wind, wind, wind in the old trees,
Whispering prophecies all night long...
What do the grey leaves sing to the wind,
What do they say in their whispered song?

We were all young once, and green as the sea,
We all loved beauty, the maiden of white.
But now we are old. O wind, have mercy
And let us remember our youth this night!

The wind is persuasive, it turns through the trees
And sighs of a miracle under its breath.
Beauty the dream will die with the dreamer,
None shall have mercy, but all shall have death.

Through the use of a few conventional symbols, the
author has touched a meaning that is true of the way of life.
The Oxford English Dictionary gives wind as a symbol of
"violence or fury, swiftness, freedom, or unrestrainable
character, mutability or fickleness, lightness or emptiness."
In this poem the wind is a created symbol of inexorable fate.
The leaf, on the other hand, is a symbol of frequent occurrence in Aiken's poetry (See, for example, Dead Leaf in May, Variation XIII). The dictionary refers to its symbolic use for "the state of Man, or of the way of life." Let us say that in this poem it symbolizes man. Then the poem as a whole is seen to be an intensification and clarification of man's yearning for beauty. Old age, disillusioned and cynical and sad (grey leaves), awakens to at least one more desire for what life might give in the way of ideal beauty.* But destiny cannot satisfy the pleas of these hardened sceptics; it is too late. It is impossible to relive any part of the past--

*King Jasper had such an awakening. See chapter III (part II)
unless through a miracle—because "Beauty the dream will die with the dreamer", that is, beauty is an affair of the soul, of the inner man, and lies beyond reach if the person is incapable of an artistic experience. There is no hope, says Fate (life), of recapturing beauty unless we are capable of recreating beauty ourselves.*

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An analysis of the Housman type of lyric will disclose additional problems that the lyric touches upon more often than other types. Housman's poems embody his theory on the function of poetry, already discussed.** Poetry, it will be recalled, is doing its best, according to Housman, when it enables the appreciator to "swim in sensations." The result would be truly romantic art if it were not obviously insincere. It is not merely that these poems reveal an excessive undergoing, but it is an undergoing for no good and sufficient cause. Richards has a great deal to say about such cases in his chapter on Sentimentality and Inhibition.*** Here I can only note that Housman's lyrics fall under the definition of sentimentality because they are not justified by a situation of adequate "concreteness, nearness, and coherence."**** If most sentimentality results from inhibition and the sentimental response replaces some painful aspect of life,***** then in view of Housman's love-lyrics, his bachelorhood may explain a good deal.******

*Compare Carlyle's view (in "Biography") that a belief in life and its significance is necessary to a belief in art as an interpretation of life.

**See pages 5-7.

***See page 22.

****Ibid., p.264.

*****p.268.
OH, WHEN I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU

Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well did I behave.

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

This pseudo-love poem is no more than a sentimentalized skit. It is as deep and profound as the adjective "cute" could ever connote. The slight titillation of feeling has nothing of the truly Romantic about it; hence it is far less sincere than Wordsworth's sonnet. In form it is artificial with a neo-classical simplicity. (Compare the shallow and trivial love lyrics of Edmund Waller.) When I Was One-and-Twenty and With Rue My Heart is Laden are examples of the same kind.

To select a poem that is more in the favorite Housman type of "Up, lad, up", let me quote the following:

THINK NO MORE, LAD

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:
Why should men make haste to die?
Empty heads and tongues a-talking
Make the rough road easy walking,
And the feather pate of folly
Bears the falling sky.

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking
Spins the heavy world around.
If young hearts were not so clever,
Oh, they would be young for ever;
Think no more; 'tis only thinking
Lays lads underground.

These lines reveal the anti-intellectual attitude of Housman as well as his sentimentality and emptiness. 'Think no more
"lad; Oh, 'tis only thinking lays lads underground' is but a whimper that fails utterly to be, as feeling, concrete or near to reality. A wistful sentimentality will never produce deeply real poetry. One might almost think that Emerson wrote about Housman in the following passage, if it were not for "delicate tunes and rhythms" and "a man of subtle mind":

I took part in a conversation the other day concerning a recent writer of lyrics, a man of subtle mind, whose head appeared to be a music-box of delicate tunes and rhythms, and whose skill, and command of language, we could not sufficiently praise. But when the question arose, whether he were not only a lyricist, but a poet, we were obliged to confess that he is plainly a contemporary, not an eternal man. (from The Poet)

It may well be doubted whether Housman is contemporary; he certainly is not modern, for his poetry and criticism show no intellectual penetration, no intuitive insight, no discovery of values. His great reputation has been due to British sentimentality and to the temper of his time. Some critics still lavish praise on his verse; but in such cases it is not difficult to detect lack of insight on the part of the critic. Braithwaite's high-flown panegyrics, one of which is his Introduction to A Shropshire Lad (later edition), have long since been recognized as mere 'word-blewing.'

Of English critics, Edith Sitwell has come the nearest to an honest appraisal of Housman. Her criticism calls attention to the "threadbare texture", "lack of vitality", and "stiffness...rigidity of the structure" of his verse, which is "for the most part rhythmically dead." "Professor Housman's understatements are rarely impressive." And she doesn't fail to see their "spurious pathos". Furthermore, he has "no
visual sense...no gift for illuminating or transmuting things seen."

Essentially, the basic trouble with Housman's verse is that it fails completely to function as poetry should function: it stimulates the reader to no sensed discovery. The cause for this, as already noted, is its sentimental pretense at the disclosure of a value. Housman's emotion is not an honest reaction, but is predetermined by a group pattern, consciously or unconsciously, resulting in sentimentality instead of sentiment. When the basic idea is a stock idea, as in the verse of Edgar Guest, there can be no poetic experience. Real poetry is an intense expression of an esthetic hunger for richer experience; to be real art—as distinct from play or amusement—the expression of the felt need must in process satisfy the demand for a harmonic whole. For this to take place there must be a harmonious interaction of poet and environment.

In order to illustrate how poetry of introversion can remain within the bounds of authentic poetic function, let me consider briefly "A girl's song" by Mary Carolyn Davies.

BORROWER

I sing of sorrow
I sing of weeping
I have no sorrow.

I only borrow
From some tomorrow
Where it lies sleeping
Enough of sorrow
To sing of weeping.

In these few lines there is not only a beautiful lyric quality and an excellent poetic attitude, but the poem itself
is a remarkable illustration of the function of poetic art. In her pseudo-statement the author says, "Although I am but a young person, having no sorrow, yet I write about it in poetry. Why is this? I only borrow from the sadness that is inevitably to come." The feeling or emotional reaction is that the author, now no longer a girl, has come to grief. By means of this emotive meaning and the tone of plaintive, wistful wonder, the reader is able to realize that this poem reaches out beyond one individual's experience which is not a bit sad to the way of life as a whole. Art has fathomed the future. The poet is prophet.

The intention of the author here, then, is to stimulate us to a realization of the psychology of artistic experience. The function of poetry itself is made the basis of a poetic experience. As a condensed and profound expression of the artistic process the poem subtly exemplifies the degree of profundity and subtlety that poetry is capable of. It is not a statement of a psychological fact—the province and function of science—but the realization through artistic experience of the psychological nature of art as experience, a searching to find the meaning of artistic searching. By transcending the limits of the self, the poet has succeeded, through a subconscious discovery, in touching upon the way of artistic experience and the way of life. She has experienced a feeling toward a subtle awareness that sorrow is an important part of life, and that by giving expression to that sorrow as inherent in the present, as well as inescapable in the future, a mellow
ing of the shock of tragedy is made possible.

Such a realization of the way of artistic experience has never been conveyed in prose, which, primarily the medium of statement, is not adapted to the stimulation of subtle overtones of psychological meaning. Moreover, psychologists are almost invariably not artists and therefore cannot convey the meaning of artistic experience intuitively.

As a lyric, Borrower surpasses any of those considered in this chapter and represents the height to which poetry can soar in a realization of the epic values of life. It is truly 'epic' because it touches upon the way of life as a whole, not epic in the traditional sense of being characterized by rhetorical magnitude and panoramic sweep. In fact, it proves how lyric poetry can surpass the pseudo-'epic' (the classical epic) when quality or value or meaning instead of quantity or size and scope of action, etc. is the standard of judgment. (In this connection, the reader will find a discussion of Robinson's pseudo-'epic' in Chapter III (part II)).

From the point of view of art, it is a fallacy to compare different forms of poetry, such as the lyric and the narrative. These terms, as Croce has insisted,* are merely convenient names for tendencies in technical method. Each poem is an experience sui generis; as such it can only with qualification stand comparison with a poem whose function is quite different, or whose function is only partially the same. And what, after all, is the value of determining whether one form of poetry or prose is "greater" than another? Each form has its place, its special function. Unless the discussion

*See (8), section on Literary Kinds and Aesthetic Categories, pp. 267-268
revolves around that fact it is merely speculative and theoretical. And who is to say that one function or experience is superior to another? If that is the only final criterion, then we are brought around to the qualitative evaluation of poetry and art, which regards mere size and quantitative proportions incidental to the final effect produced in the observer. If the realization of universal truths and epic values is the highest function of art, then we have seen that the lyric also can fulfill that function. All art forms are potentially capable of reaching out to the One and Infinite; in fact, as an art form every kind of poetry has the function of realizing the way of life-in-the-large. "Universal" is not something metaphysically anterior to all experience but is a way in which things function in experience as a bond of union among particular events and scenes...art is the most effective mode of communication that exists. For this reason the presence of common or general factors in conscious experience is an effect of art. Anything in the world, no matter how individual in its own existence is potentially common."

The five lyrics discussed in the preceding paragraphs illustrate four different types of lyrics of varying significance. Aiken's "You are as ..." exists only on the merits of its tonal and emotive meanings; thought content or significant relationship is missing entirely. The poem is not effusive like Wordsworth's sonnet, and yet it is romantic because the images have merely an associational value. Whether they are *(10) 285
the products of a conscious or unconscious process of association does not much matter because, in any case, the poem remains on the level of 'sensation', where there is 'no productive association.'* In brief, the poem tends to be extremely lyrical or musical, without any basic idea.

Housman's lyrics are also without real basic ideas, but for different reasons. The thought or reaction, being sentimental, is conventional and trite—the expression of a previously patterned response; the pseudo-statement, in other words, cannot rise by implication above the pseudo-level of meaning. Aiken's "You are as ..." at least indicates by its original pseudo-statement a creative personality in the author, but Housman's lyrics are unmistakably the stereotyped products of an automaton grinding out player-piano verse. That is why his poems have no ideational value and convey no sense of discovery. Their sole raison d'être must be sought elsewhere: their style and form, however, are also disappointing, for in these respects one meets with the old-fashioned (nineteenth century) popular-song tune and structure reminiscent of the family album. Not only is the sentimentality like the pathos of a hymn-sing, but the form recalls the "threadbare texture", the "rigidity", and the poor rhythm of the ordinary church hymn with its lack of any subtle (artistic) quality, its thumping meter, obvious alliteration, etc. In short, one must conclude that Housman's lyrics are not even good musically, and therefore cannot be justified on the basis of either meaning or music.

*For a discussion by Cree of association as sensation, see (6) p. 34
In "The Wind in the Old Trees" symbolism gives the lyric its necessary significance as interpretative poetry. Though it is the foremost method of indirection, symbolism is not essential to the poetic function, however. "Borrower" represents, in contrast to the other lyrics, poetry that achieves an artistic fusion of sound and sense, of music and meaning. Poetry must maintain some contact with thought or interpretation and with the musical quality; otherwise it degenerates into mere tonal introversion.
II Obscurantism

Not only may poetry become too musical or too sentimental, to the detriment of its artistic function, but it also may become so obscure that individual interpretation is rendered extremely difficult, if at all possible. In "The Cult of Unintelligibility" Max Eastman has pointed his finger of ridicule at the freakish productions of modernistic writers like Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, e e cummings, Edith Sitwell.* Why he did not include a novel of James Branch Cabell's is a mystery, unless—as is most likely—the novels of Cabell have been so cryptic to Eastman that even the obscurantism is hidden from him. The symbolism in Conrad Aiken's poetry, not intentionally obscure, is nevertheless beyond such a prominent critic as John Middleton Murry, whose unfavorable appreciation of Aiken's verse seems to be due to that alone.** Charles Williams, in his Poetry at Present (Oxford, 1930), admits outright that the obscurity in the poems of T. S. Eliot is too much for him, and makes no pretense or effort toward an interpretation. Even I. A. Richards goes too far in denying symbolic content—however obscure—to the poetry of T. S. Eliot, as will be seen later.

A. Subjective Obscurantism

The response of a poet in an artistic experience may go too far internally into the private recesses of his subconscious, with the result that odds and ends or major conflicts in his past history may escape later verification and

*Chapter I, Part III in The Literary Mind
**Aspects of Literature, pp. 91-98 (Collins Sons, London, 1921)
and remain unrelated to experience-in-the-large. Failure to reveal the internal similarity between the symbol and the meaning when the symbol is not a familiar one causes a great deal of confusion for the reader. But more often than not, it is the reader himself who creates obscurity where there is none. The reading of poetry, as Richards has said, is an arduous discipline; even the simplest-looking poem may call for an intensity of concentration on the part of the reader denies that the 'play' theories of art (literature for pleasure, amusement, recreation, etc.) fondly nourished by the dilettante.

Whatever interpretation ignores the 'basic idea' of a poem by recognizing only the pseudo-statement, the emotive meaning, or the tonal meaning is a denial of artistic intention. Not to arrive at the author's intention* is equivalent to missing the poem's raison d'être. The Total Meaning, in other words, is the only real meaning; anything less is a partial appreciation that does not do justice to the poem as art.

Accumulated criticism affords innumerable examples of interpretations that consider only one or a few aspects of meaning. Watts-Dunton, able critic that he was, insisted that Poe's Ulalume was merely a poem of sound and tone, to which the author "was obliged to add gloomy ideas, in order to give to his work the intellectual coherence necessary for its existence as a poem." "The poet's object in that remarkable tour de force was to express dull and hopeless gloom in the same

*See page for explanation of these terms.
way that the mere musician would have expressed it...**

But a few critics today are less ready to assert that Poe was simply weaving tone poems out of his own hypochondria. Take, for instance, this footnote of Damon's: "I include Poe as a symbolist because it is inconceivable to me that so conscious an artist could have been wholly unconscious of what he was doing. Moreover, the elimination of the last stanza of 'Ulalume' as too revealing shows that he and Mrs. Whitman knew what the poem was about. ...***

Just as Ulalume and other poems of Poe have been made out to be sound poems with other values—if any—subordinate to the tonal meaning, so have the poems of Coleridge been regarded for only their subsidiary meanings. Partial interpretations of a poem like Christabel have arisen from attempts to straighten out the pseudo-statement alone. And since the pseudo-events of this poem cannot be tagged and labeled satisfactorily, even by the most literal-minded person, it remains essentially obscure as far as the author's intention is concerned. That Coleridge intended an underlying, psychological meaning need not be doubted, though few critics or teachers seem to have discovered that Coleridge, as reported in Table Talk for July 6, 1833, said: "The reason of my not finishing Christabel is not that I don't know how to do it—for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

*(29) 56-7 *(9) 255
Typical of the reception given such a stated intention is the following comment by one of Coleridge's editors after noting that the author of *Christabel* had himself said that certain incidents illustrate something which is 'the main object of the tale': "One suspects, and hopes, this was mere quizzing on the part of Coleridge, indulged in to relieve the pressure of prosaic curiosity..."* Certainly that gentleman never considered poetry as a functioning art. Curiosity about the intended meaning of a work of art may be out of place in the presence of the author, but it is never prosaic. And because it is never prosaic, it is never mere curiosity: it is an attempt at the interpretation (discovery) of art values in the highest sense of the word. Chronic objectors to 'analysis' of poetry seem to forget that such a step is preliminary and instrumental to the final appreciation, the synthesized evaluation, the poetic experience. Of course, analysis that does not relate its findings to the intention of the poet is wholly academic and prosaic curiosity—the preoccupation of the 'man of science', of the scholar. The esthetic analysis, on the other hand, proceeds on the basis of use and artistic purpose.

If it was Coleridge's intention to convey an idea, "an extremely subtle and difficult one", it behooves us to inquire what underlying meaning there is in *Christabel*. A suggestion comes from what we know of Coleridge as a person who set an unusually high value upon friendships. He was frequently disturbed by some chance remark or episode into questioning the depth and sincerity of a friend. This hypersensitivity in his...

*These quotations are taken from page 604 of James D. Campbell's edition of Coleridge's poetical works. (Macmillan, 1925)

**See pages // for Amy Lowell's references to the teaching of literature
relations with men might possibly be accounted for by his unhappy marriage, which could have caused overcompensatory expectations in friendships. At any rate, the poem is unmistakably about a subconscious, psychological conflict between loyalty to an ideal love and the returning temptation to revert to a previous abnormal (homosexual) relationship. The medieval allegory furnishes the needed symbolic disguise for this Freudian conflict. The dramatization of the "war within the cave", of the turmoil in the subconscious self, is evidence of Coleridge's psychological insight, despite the probability that the use of the friendship situation was subconsciously predetermined by influences of whose significance he was only partly aware.

The intended meaning of Christabel, however, can be understood on the basis of traditional and Freudian symbolism, and need not further concern us here where obscurantism is the main topic.

The passages quoted from Wilson's chapter on Symbolism called attention to the tendency on the part of the Symbolist poet to use symbols and references that were so cryptic, private, and subjective that only he (if a conscious artist) or a capable psychologist could explain. Fortunately, such an investigation of subjective obscurantism has been conducted by Charles Baudouin, both psychologist and poet. His book, Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics, is a study of the symbolism in the work of Emile Verhaeren, a Belgian poet of the Symbolist group. The frequency of obscure symbols in Verhaeren's poems illustrates
the danger to which the poet of introversion is particularly susceptible. In his youth Verhaeren's ambition for an artistic career came into conflict with his father's wish that he prepare himself for a position in the factory not far from home. After this crisis the factory became a symbol of the pressure of authority, from which Verhaeren sought refuge in his garden, which in turn became a symbol of escape and introversion in the form of wish-fulfillment through dream reveries. In a similar way, after another crisis in his life, a cloister and its monks were used as symbols of ascetic introversion. These and other experiences and objects (black, gold, trains, towers, clocks, etc.) grew into fixations with Verhaeren. Furthermore, the symbols were in a constant state of flux or metamorphosis, taking on added and different meanings as the years passed. And to make matters still more complicated, Verhaeren's struggle with himself brought into activity the algolagniac instinct ("the inner unity of a tendency embracing two instincts, the instinct of suffering and that of making others suffer") which caused a crisis of introversion, involving neurasthenia and hypersensibility to outer stimuli. While under the influence of religious asceticism, a condition of autophilia caused a condensation of crude sexual images with religious images (symbols). The ascetic tendency finally turned his fantasies of maleficence upon himself (self-hate), coupling the image of love and life (gold) and the image of death (black).

Condensation of symbols is common in Verhaeren's poetry; especially in the Oedipus trilogy are there interesting combinations of classical, Greek symbols and Freudian conflicts.
and attachments. Baudouin speaks of this as "the law of the subjectivation of images ... works apparently objective in conception tended towards the realization, in symbolic form, of a subjective drama within the soul of the poet; such realization may be involuntary and subconscious." (299-300)

In summarizing his findings, Baudouin emphasizes the polarisation of conflicts around the idea of mother (introversion) and the idea of father (extroversion). Introversion was associated (by subconscious, affective, symbolic relationship) in Verhaeren with symbolist poetry, the "garden", the past, regressive tendencies, autophilia, mysticism and love, the "country," Christian faith, death, individualism, the "monks", and black (as the color of any object). Extroversion similarly found expression in classical art, the "factory", progressive tendencies, the future, heterophilia, asceticism and joy, the "town", pantheistic faith, life, social activity, the "Flemish women", and gold (as a color). Verhaeren eventually succeeded in synthesizing these two tendencies in a balance which expressed itself in terms of what Baudouin calls "classical symbolism".

Verhaeren's use of symbolism points to one of the difficulties that arise in understanding poetry. The symbols themselves are authentic enough on the basis of psychology, but in using them the poet has not shown or sufficiently indicated the relationship represented by each symbol; so that without resorting to Baudouin's psycho-analytical approach, the reader is unfairly at a disadvantage in discovering the underlying meaning.
A similar tendency to subjective obscurantism is observable in poems of Conrad Aiken where he has transcribed a dream, sometimes word for word. Although every poem is more or less symbolical, "it is more symbolical in proportion as the work of the imagination is less modified by the interference of the conscious mind."** Whereas in consciousness a disguise of the truth is constantly liable to detection, in the dream the devices of symbolism--condensation, transference, and displacement--are free to distort or mask the real cause of an affective state. In the dream one self masquerades for the other, usually by means of some displacement of affective stress. Displacement involves "the simultaneous working of condensation, transference, and subconscious activity"... "tends to thrust down into the subconscious the more important images (those to which the feeling or the emotion really attaches)." Complete repression into the subconscious is often "a process of repression whereby we automatically disembarass ourselves of something disagreeable. This explains why we so rarely dream of our major preoccupations. In reality we do dream of them, but they appear under a mask."***

According to Houston Peterson***CLIFFMEETING was "transcribed by Aiken rapidly, word for word, from a dream", and is supposed to describe the final incident in a love affair which was also the source of "Sound of Breathing." A brief look at a part of this poem will serve to show the problem created by the use of a private, obsessive symbol like the kind already referred to in the summary on Verhaeren.
The first three sections of this poem dramatize the realization by the two characters that the love which once brought them together is now dead; each is a stranger to the other. The instantaneous discovery of such a truth is a favorite point of emphasis in Aiken's poetry. (Compare *Symbols, White Nocturne.*

"What's in a face or eye
That gives its secret, when the moment comes,..."

So it was that he saw in her eyes the ghost he loved..."the blue still waters of her soul". There are at first no other outward signs of any change—they both seat themselves on the cliff. But during that afternoon he noticed that she made no response to his advances. When he kissed her, "with eyes open", she "plucked up unmercifully" the sea-pink that "nodded betwixt thumb and finger." On parting, the secret again gave itself away in his eyes or his face: "She saw weariness in me, love gone down like the sun, the fleet ghost gone." She left, miserable, pathetic, drooping with the burden of added evidence that she had not been able to retain his love.

And on the morrow, when she did not come,
There by the cliff's edge, staked, I found a letter
Mystic, insoluble, with few words written,
Saying—(and it was strange, and like a dream,
For, as I read, the words seemed only marks
Of bird-claws in the sand--) that she was gone
Down to the village, darkness, gone forever;
But left this bird for me, that I might know—
What I should know. And in the short grass lay,
There with the sea-pinks, a blue cormorant,
White eyelids closed, and dying. Her I lifted
Between my hands, and laid against my breast,
Striving to warm her heart. The bird was starved;
The eyes drooped open, and the livid beak
Opened a little; and I gave my hands
To her to eat, having no other food;
Thrusting a finger in the beak, that she
Might eat my flesh and live. But she was dying,
And could not move the purple beak, falling
Against my hand, inert; and then I thought
That, seeking to make her eat, I did but hasten
Her death. For in a moment, then, she died.

Along the cliff I walked, taking the bird,
Holding it in my hands... What had she meant
In leaving this blue cormorant for me?
Was she not coming? Everywhere I looked;
By rock and tree; in coigns of heather; even
Down where the moving brows of foam came in.
Nowhere—nowhere. The sun went west behind
Two waves. It was the hour of parting. Would
She come not now for that?

The darkness gathered.
The sea-pinks lost their colour. And I walked
Along the cliff's-edge, losing all power of thought,
Taking the cormorant into the dark with me.

At first sight it may seem that the events of the second
day symbolize those of the first: the bird representing the
sender, who, starved for real love, cannot nourish herself on
his sensuous offerings, which merely hastened the end of their
former love. But on reconsideration—especially if this is
a dream—it seems more likely that his failure to realize the
meaning of her message and the blue cormorant is evidence of
the subconscious repression of a disagreeable truth, here dis-
guised in the form of the cormorant as a symbol of the man's
sensual self. As a bird of gluttony and voraciousness, the
cormorant may well represent his greedy sensuousness. Though
he may be starving from sexual hunger—as far as she is con-
cerned he can die from it—she sends the dying cormorant to
show her loathing for him. (Representation of the cormorant
as blue in color I think can be traced to Aiken's predilection
for that color as a symbol for the pain and suffering that
pervades life.) As a whole the episode dramatizes that which
could not be represented in a dream except by symbols—the rationalization of the poet in an attempt to preserve a value or a relationship, his obstinate (conscious) refusal to accept the meaning of the facts at their face value and his consequent bewilderment, and the eventual surrender to disillusion.

Aiken's poem called DEAD LEAF MAY is an interesting presentation of the way the poet may intuitively conceive a symbolical relationship in observed facts. During a walk from Winchelsea to the little village of Rye, the poet sees an "insane gay skeleton of a leaf", a last year's leaf, tossed by the wind (destiny) to lodge itself between two hawthorne blossoms. The incident took on universal significance in a flash of insight. He tries to vent his ire by dislodging the leaf, but that does not really help—it does not change the fact, as it appeared to him, that life, like death, is a leveller of all values, mingling indiscriminately the dead, the ugly, the useless with the living and the beautiful of the present. What right has a dead leaf to cavort among May blossoms?

At this point the mind of the poet undergoes a second realization ("That was the moment: and my brain flew open like a ripe bursting pod." ) that our past experiences (the dead leaf), our past self, which cannot again be relived or brought to life, can and should, nevertheless, be absorbed in the creative productiveness of the present (the blossoms). "Be the paired blossoms with dead ribs between" is another way of expressing the idea that the past is always part of the most glamorous present.
B. Intentional Obscurantism

At the beginning of this chapter, reference was made to the confessions of critics, expressed or implied, that the meaning of some of T.S. Eliot’s poems was beyond their comprehension. It is little wonder that Eliot’s poetry is obscure, when he holds that the poet who is deliberately esoteric can only hope that public taste will develop to the point of understanding such poetry.

When a poet deliberately restricts his public by his choice of style of writing or of subject-matter, this is a special situation demanding explanation and extenuation, but I doubt whether this ever happens. It is one thing to write in a style which is already popular, and another to hope that one’s writing may eventually become popular. From one point of view, the poet aspires to the condition of the music-hall comedian. Being incapable of altering his wares to suit a prevailing taste, if there be any, he naturally desires a state of society in which they may become popular, and in which his own talents will be put to the best use.*

In addition to practicing obscurantism deliberately T.S. Eliot has become the leader of a group of English intellectualists and American expatriates who challenge the idea that emotion is the central factor in poetry, maintaining that intellect, not emotion, is the real basis.** "Eliot adopted the aristocracy of the intellect over the cruder emotions", writes Kreymborg.*** This exaltation of the intellect over feeling was a reaction to Romanticism in literature; and support for such a view was not difficult to find in the long tradition of rationalistic literature (especially in the metaphysical poets) and in the rapid progress of scientific thought and discovery during the nineteenth century.

But once the reason was found to be limited as an instr-**(11) 21-2  **Fletcher, John G. "Two Elements in Poetry" Sat. Rev. of Lit. IV, No. 5 (1927).  
***(16) 526
moment in the search for truth, disillusion set in. To quote Kreyneborg again, "The Eliot regime is based on the general disillusionment of the World War aftermath." (526) Professed humanists in literature, royalists in politics, and Anglo-Catholics in religion, men of Eliot's stamp have sought refuge from the fatalistic implications of the mechanistic or determinist view of life by shifting their reliance upon a philosophical external destiny to religious mysticism and institutional religion as authority. And if such an escape from reality leaves any detail unaccounted for, it can be quickly and conveniently be shunted under the protective wings of "the higher will."

A development of the historical sense by depersonalization on the part of the poet will, according to Eliot, place the poetry of the present in the main stream of literary tradition. "Surely the great poet is, among other things, one who not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but one who in his poetry re-twines as many straying strands of tradition as possible."* In speaking of Jonson, Eliot says that he admires Jonson's third requisite for the poet—"'Imitation, to be able to convert the substances, or riches of another poet, to his own use.'"** It is because of this method of reweaving phrases from various sources of classical literature that leads Untermeyer to call Eliot a "Scholarly joiner", which term indicates not the intuitive, creative artist, but the manipulator whose chief faculty is the rational, architectonic imagination.

*(11) 85 **(11) 54-5
...no genuine work has ever been a repetition of anything that previously existed. There are indeed works that tend to be mere recombinations of elements selected from prior works. But they are academic—that is to say, mechanical—rather than esthetic. (Dewey, p. 288)

That such a rehandling of materials familiar to only the classical scholar interferes with the poetic function in the communicative sense is readily apparent from the reaction of both public and critic to Eliot's poetry. In commenting on the prevalent objection to obscurantism in Eliot's poetry,* I. A. Richards, the very able English critic, holds that such criticisms (J. M. Murry's, for instance) are due to the over-intellectual approach and to the fallacious principle that poetry should be unambiguous in its immediate effect. The reader of Eliot's poetry should not seek intellectual coherence; unity is obtained through the interaction of emotive effects. The numerous allusions—which have led many critics to regard Eliot's poetry as overintellectualized—are brought in for the sake of the emotional aura and the evocation of attitudes. "Allusion in Mr. Eliot's hands is a technical device for compression." "The most characteristic feature of Mr. Eliot's technique" "might be called "a 'music of ideas.'" The ideas are of all kinds...and, like the musician's phrases, they are arranged, not that they may tell us something, but that their effects in us may combine into a coherent whole of feeling and attitude and produce a peculiar liberation of the will. They are there to be responded to, not to be pondered or worked out.**

One cannot question the need for a synthesized, intuitive response that Mr. Richards here emphasizes, but it remains to be seen whether the emotive and tonal meanings of poetry, as

*(23) Appendix B  **(23) 293
inducements of 'synaesthesia', are not overvalued. If the

technique of Eliot is not 'a music of ideas'--if instead Eliot
is presenting ideas cloaked in cryptic, symbolic form--then
interpretation should at least be attempted.

An examination of the symbolism in Eliot's Salutation
will reveal the manner in which poetry becomes too obscure if
based on a conglomeration of erudite symbols.

SALUTATION

(e vo significando)

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree
In the cool of the day, having fed to sate
On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been con-
tained
In the hollow round of my skull. And God said
Can these bones live? Can these
Bones Live? And that which had been contained
In the bones (which were already dry) said chirping:
Because of the goodness of this Lady
And because of her loveliness, and because
She honours the Virgin in meditation,
We shine with brightness. And I who am here dissembled
Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love
To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd.
It is this which recovers
My guts the strings of my eyes and the indigestible portions
Which the leopards reject. The Lady is withdrawn
In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown.
Let the whiteness of bones atone to forgetfulness.
There is no life in them. As I am forgotten
And would be forgotten, so I would forget
Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose.--And God said
Prophesy to the wind, to the wind only for only
The wind will listen. And the bones sang chirping
With the burden of the grasshopper, saying

Lady of silences
Calm and distressed
Torn and most whole
Rose of memory
Rose of forgetfulness
Spattered and worshipped
Exhausted and life-giving
Worried reposeful
The single Rose
With worm eaten petals
Is now the Garden  
Where all loves end  
Terminate torment  
Of love unsatisfied  
End of the endless  
Journey to no end  
Conclusion of all that  
Is inconclusive  
Speech without word and  
Word of no speech  
Grace to the Mother  
For the end of remembering  
End of forgetting  
For the Garden  
Where all love ends

Under a juniper tree the bones sang, scattered and shining.  
We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other.  
Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand.  
Forgetting themselves and each other, united  
In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye  
Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity  
Matter. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

"Salutation" is here used in the religious sense. Eliot,  
in this poem of his own conversion to the Catholic faith (Latin: signifying his devotion to the Church (Lady) (e vo significando). After a life of sensuousness, he has atoned and purged himself of sins of the flesh; white leopards are symbols of atonement for voluptuousness; the juniper tree (durability) for a long atonement. The sins had fed on the vitality of the body (legs), courage or emotion (heart), passion (liver), and the mind (brain). Now he is asking God if there is any possibility of redemption (Can these bones live?). Because of the goodness of the Church (Lady), there is hope (the bones said chirping—referring to the Greek myth of Tithonus) of immortality. He resigns himself to his faith by denying any meaning to experience or physical living (oblivion), by complete self-abnegation (forgetfulness) and prayer (Lady of silences.
etc.). Then a final section on Eliot's waste land.

The symbols here are not only obscure individually, in large part, but they clash and confuse the reader by being from different sources: Dante, Greek myth, religious symbolism, classical literature, etc. Symbols of different kinds, expressed or implied, can be woven together skillfully, no doubt, but the result will be craftsmanship, not art,* for the mechanical imagination has been at work combining, but not creating. Poems like this do not emerge of their inherent power from a subconsciously controlled imagination (the creative imagination, the 'predetermined harmony'). Although the experience here described, religious conversion, is introspective, it is not introspectively treated, and hence is not a poem of introversion. With this poem of Eliot's we have crossed the boundary of introversion and extroversion, if there can be said to be such a thing. In any case, this is not an example of obscurantism that is the result of extreme internalization, but an example of remote and mixed symbolism.

To be aware of the symbolism is, of course, to be conscious of a Total Meaning that is far greater than emotive meaning alone. "Salutation" illustrates the use of sound, drama, and emotion, as well as ideas, in poetry that is interpretative. Its shortcoming lies in the manner in which the ideas are conveyed, or rather not conveyed.

*See page 22
III The Pseudo-"epic" Narrative

If any poetry has convinced us that a good poem need not be limited to a certain length, it is that of Edwin Arlington Robinson, who in his long Arthurian legends has maintained a concentration and a unity of tone and idea which have been the despair (so the critics say) of his unsuccessful imitators. His ability to distill modern ideas in crucibles of a traditional make has resulted in more than one exceptionally effective narrative. The dramatic narratives of Robinson reveal his philosophical perspective and his concern with the deeper psychological reality of human conduct and endeavor. In these respects and others Robinson's long poems differ from most other long narrative poems. Charles Cestre stresses the psychological quality: the dramatic narrative is with Robinson "nothing but character-drawing moved from the static to the dynamic stage. He draws up a story--generally the bare outline of a plot--simple enough not to absorb the reader's attention, yet sufficient to bring in a succession of situations and attitudes. Psychological analysis remains his chief object. His main preoccupation is with the gathering impetus of a master-passion, its progress through subtle phases of development until it reaches its climax in thought or action, its growth from mood to mood leading up to a happy or tragic ending where the spiritual elements are fully revealed in repose or in heart-rending intensity. As Robinson understands human nature, this means an acute searching of the obscure ways of the subconscious gradually dawning into clear con-

*See pages 46-47 for justification of this term.
sensuousness. The narrative is less a tale of events—although some sequence of episodes is necessary to provide a guiding thread—than an adumbration of the mysteries of the cognizant and sentient being that is man.**

In his last work, "King Jasper", Robinson continued his search for psychological realities, but it is a question in this poem whether he has not exceeded the bounds of poetic function. Narrative is essentially a function of prose, which can more adequately fulfill the expository and analytic needs of developing plot and characterization. The psychological novel has long since been employed for subtle, extended analysis of motive and character. Both the portrayal of outward events and happenings on a large scale and finely-drawn tracings of thoughts and feelings seem to be the functions of prose, especially of the novel. How far can poetry penetrate upon the realm of the novel and the short story without losing its standing as poetry?

In his comment on Robinson's longer narratives Kreymborg says that "there is no continuous passionate drive on the part of the author or characters."*** These words are particularly applicable to "King Jasper", lack of unity being one of its most serious defects. The cause of this lack is not traceable to the absence or blurring of a dominant idea; the failure is rather in the author's lack of emotional intensity. Robinson's inclination to intellectual, reflective analysis obviously predominates here over the emotional intensity he has shown himself capable of on other occasions. And because his passions

**Casteen, Charles "An Introduction to Edwin Arlington Robinson" (Macmillan, N.Y. 1930) page 135
***(18) 312
are not stirred deeply and sincerely— but more as if he were a jaded spectator of the same old human tragedy— the elements of the poem remain on an intellectual and more or less prosaic level. Without the inner dynamic, emotional drive, the poet cannot fuse the elements of the rational imagination into a crystallized singleness of effect. (This is essentially the same inadequacy that was found in T. S. Eliot's poem and doctrine.)

As a result, the reader must struggle through passage after passage of prolix, long-drawn-out psychological analysis for the larger part of 108 pages. It is not long before one realizes that this is not Zoe or Jasper speaking but Edwin Arlington Robinson, the master ventriloquist putting on another Hunch and Jury Show, the reading audience being the jury while Robinson cross-examines his characters. As usual the circumstantial evidence is overwhelmingly against the man up for trial. The proceedings might be interesting enough if the public had not been treated before to innumerable trials of a similar sort with the same ultimate judgment of doom. In other words, the main ideas are not new: the tragic self-realization of the emptiness of material success, the futility of direct-action methods of the radical reformer, the superior insight and wisdom of the feminine mind, etc.

The substratum of intellectual content is covered over with the thin and worn veneer of allegory, assisted by occasional witty sayings and parentheses, and burdened with as many involutions of thought more roundabout than pungent.

wanting in basic idea, poetic attitude, and effective
symbolism (or any form of indirection), the poem cannot be expected to justify any real excellence by means of diction and rhythm. As an example of diction which is hardly distinguishable from that of ordinary talk, take the following lines about Young Hebron's mother:

... Hour mother was dark. Yes, I remember."

"She must have been. But she was dead before
My memory was alive, or born. My father
Said once that my complexion and my eyes
were hers; and that's as far as I dare lean
On heritage, for my mother was beautiful.
She would have liked this house--if she had lived,
And father had lived. I'm not sure that I shouldn't
Myself--if it were mine, or if my wits
And qualities were like yours. We cannot all
Be kings. I beg your pardon. Forgive me, sir."(60)

The rhythm of this passage and of the poem as a whole is its only saving grace, but grace alone cannot make up for the lack of inherent solidity. Although there are many separated passages of psycho-realism (in the sense that the working of the mind is revealed), one finds only glimpses of dialectic psychorealism. Robinson confines everything within the limited pattern of blank-verse rhythm with the result that artifices creep in that are not wholly unnoticeable. The lines cited illustrate the tendency toward parenthetical insertions; favorite expressions of this kind, very convenient to fill in lines, are "...and I am not," or "...and you should not," and the like.

In connection with psychorealism, one can appreciate the validity of the following ideas but not their being expressed in speech by Young Jasper to his father.

"Zoe, harrah
For father!" cried the prince, applauding him
With joyful palms. "He has said everything that
That every other king with a top-hat,
And a wrong understanding of the part
That he was given to play, has said no better.
Father's an old dog, Zoe. If you stroke him,
He'll treasure the attention, for he likes you,
And value it the more because he fears you.
But you may teach him nothing. He knows more
Than pride and habit and uneasy caution
Will give him tongue to say; and he knows you--
More than he dares. So, Zoe, don't annoy him;
And for the sake of all who are too old
To see the coming of what they have called for,
Don't prick him, for the joy of seeing him winces,
With your old wise man's knife that's like a needle.
Now father's wondering what we mean by that.
So, don't excite him. I'll sound an older theme, (22)

This passage and similar ones on pages nineteen and twenty-six
for instance, lead one to suspect Robinson of having gone too
far in the externalization of thought to make few good dramatic
realism possible.

The psycho-realism of the mental process itself is the
chief value of the poem, however loose or disjointed, biased,
and incomplete the treatment may be. Many an author and critic
has referred to the inelectable workings of Fate, but Robinson
succeeds in catching the impressions that the ubiquitous yet
invisible hands leave on the mind. His ability to weave the
subtleties of conscience and consciousness into a pattern of
cumulative significance and import lead the author to make
poetic capital (as they say) out of these obscure workings of
the invincible destiny. One of the best examples of the
realizations and rationalizations which the human mind is heir
to is the following:* 

The massive wealth
Of house and home was armor too secure
For change to shake or pierce. Or, were those hands
That she felt everywhere on everything
Blasting already with unseen decay
Walls, roofs, and furniture, and all there was

*See pages 10,11,12,51,72 for other instances.
For her to feel and see and never to know.  
She watched the flame and wondered why it was  
That she was always waiting, and for what.  
The king would soon be coming down the stairs  
To praise her and to worship her discreetly,  
And probably to say again to her  
That time, whenever he stole a year from her,  
Replaced it with another loveliness  
Fairer than youth—all which would have been true,  
And would have been a comfort undenied,  
If there were not those hands always at work  
Somewhere.

The treatment of the subconscious mind is more conventional (not traditional) than realistic. Jasper's dream is too obviously (consciously) and coherently planned out to conform with dream psychology; it is extremely unlikely that a dream representing the major Freudian climax of a lifetime would be directly set forth and explained with almost no symbolic or other indirect means employed. It is clear that Jasper's burden (Hebron), which turns into gold during his seemingly endless climb, is symbolic of his weight of conscience and sense of remorse for having led a life of overweening ambition and avarice. The narrow chasm represents the space of years which separates him from youthful pleasures, which fact Jasper ignores in his leap across to eventual defeat and destruction. When Zoe's knife pierces his heart, he suffers the "wound of his awakening" (the realization that youthful love is not for him). These meanings are fully, or nearly fully, explained either in the dream itself or in the pages preceding and following, so that the reader is given little opportunity to make a discovery of meanings and values. The failure to achieve some measure of dramatic suspense is the most serious weakness of the poem as a dramatic narrative, and adds materially
to the effect of tediousness.

In the introduction to this poem, Robert Frost writes:

"Not for me to search his sadness to its source. He knew how to forbid encroachment. And there is solid satisfaction in a sadness that is not just a fishing for ministration and consolation. Give us immedicable woes-- woes that nothing can be done for-- woes flat and final. And then to play. The play's the thing. Play's the thing. All virtue in 'as if'." Little need there is to search for the source of Robinson's sadness--that has nothing to do with literary values. It is quite another and more important matter to place a value on Robinson's attitude toward life, and the way he sought to deal with life and its problems. His tragic grief, however inescapable it may seem, the only fact that counts? Are we to resign ourselves to the tragic destiny of life--"and then to play"? As if play were the thing! Frost's "as if" echoes the doubt in his own mind.

On the other hand, if we grant that the play is the thing, then this poem as drama or poetry or narrative must seek to satisfy the demands of literature. From this point of view, "King Jasper" does not succeed in becoming much more than a melodramatic version of Robinson's well-known attitude of complete despair. If instead of toying with his prejudices he had honestly tried to find a few positive values that attach to any quest for one's soul--whatever the ultimate outcome of such a quest--the results may have been not only more encouraging for our King Jaspers and company (a merely incidental value) but also more significantly interpretative of life (because
more comprehensively true) rather than merely entertainingly(?) tragic.

As far as poetic function is concerned, the melodramatic ending of "King Jasper" has little importance except in so far as it indicates Robinson's own sense of the need for something more than thinking aloud and word-play. Frost admires Robinson for his being able to find old ways of being new (See Introduction).

The final scene of this poetic drama, however, stands out as an old way of being old. A shooting scene at the end is a traditional and hackneyed, dime-novel method of resolving a situation carried beyond the powers of the author. Edith Wharton's ending of "Twilight Sleep" is another good illustration of the way the rational faculty arbitrarily manipulates its material according to a preconceived plan. As stated previously, the sense of impending doom and inescapable destruction pervades "King Jasper" from the very first page, running throughout as the main thread upon which a series of events are suspended. For this reason the climax has little value, and could have little value. The tragic fact is the only thing that matters, to Robinson at least. His only implications here are (1) woman isman's superior in wisdom and insight--Zoe must go it alone because only she accepts life for what it is in all its tragedy and (2) life will somehow carry on by means of the élan vital but man the materialist, the idealist, the reformer, or the carefree optimist is doomed to an ignoble defeat.

Another aspect of the dramatic and narrative quality of the poem is the allegory. Because of its static nature, allegory is at best of questionable value as a device of indirection.
The fixed and limited meanings which attach to any form of mask symbol restrict the interplay of forces and resultant changes, and in general the developments and subtleties which belong in psycho-realistic literature. That is why the modern mind prefers Debussy to Wagner's leitmotif system. Organic form (form determined from within) cannot exist where its forms of expression are already determined in advance from without.

As implied above, Robinson is not naturally an inductive thinker or artist. In "King Jasper", for instance, he has not imagined realistically the development and outcome of a given situation. As far as interpretation goes, the plot ends nearly where it began; no experience is allowed to play a normal part in the development of character—a few episodes take place detached from time, place, and reality, and a spotlight is thrown into the dark corners of some one's mind to show what results, if any, can be distinguished. These glimpses into the inner life of the characters are interesting only as abstractions, not as the living and inevitable ideas and feelings of individualized persons as real people. The figurines or puppets act and speak Robinson's utilitarian attitude toward the struggle of man, or more precisely, of the successful Babbitt attempting self-rejuvenescence, only to realize tragic defeat.

Obvious contrast is brought into play in the opposition of Hebron, the victimized idealist, and Jasper, the ruthless opportunist; of Young Heborn, the inflamed reformer, and Young Jasper, the carefree and swaggering optimist; of Honoria, representative of social conventions and honor for its own sake, and Zoe, the charm of youth and zest for life. With these
pre-established actors, Robinson proceeds to say that

there are some of us who cannot change;
And as we were, we are. And the world turns
Like a mill grinding minutes into years,
In which we live until we are no longer,
And can do no more harm. (38)

being

only incensed
With destiny somewhat, and sorry for man
Always; and for the curse of time on man
That shrieks to him unheard from history. (71)

Hebron is Jasper's ideal, better self, who went down
to defeat with all his youthful and creative idealism when
Jasper seized the opportunity that made him rich and prosperous.
The weight of Hebron and the gold become one and the same (a
condensed symbol) in the dream, because it was through the
sacrifice of the former that he obtained the latter, so that
both represent or symbolize the pangs of Jasper's conscience
which plague him with thoughts of what he might have been in
contrast to what he has become—a disillusioned cynic clutching
at the last few straws that may save him from going under com-
pletely. The chimneys (temples to Jasper's false gods of a
small heaven) symbolize Jasper's property and material accomplish-
ments, in which he vainly seeks security, only to find that they
too were but illusions, "the fire and gold of shining lies that
opportunity had held and waved until they were all tume." (73)

"There are two Hebrons and there always will be"—the
idealist and the reformer, the second the logical counterpart
and offspring of the first. The fear of Jasper, Zoe, and Honoria
for Young Hebron is the fear of the established order for
radical change and violent reform. And Robinson's climax makes
it clear that he does not have any faith in radicalism.

Anti-feminism reveals itself in the disruption which Zoe causes in the household of King Jasper. Zoe (literally "life"), her age and parents unknown, represents the eternally woman doomed to loneliness; nevertheless she continues to trust in the illusion of a happiness which has not been promised her; and worse still, aware of her sex-appeal, she deliberately interferes with the ways of men in a man's world—witness her effect on Young Hebron: "He fed his admiration till she wondered if all her clothes were on." King Jasper, three score years of age, and his folly brought Zoe into being—Jasper has been her father "for centuries" (47)—in a vain endeavor to relive the pleasures of glorious, charming youth. Jasper and Young Hebron are symbols of the male, old and young, eternally susceptible to the charms and wiles of woman; the blindness and stupidity of men lead them to inevitable doom via womankind.

These indications are sufficient to illustrate the fact that the symbolism is allegorical and static in kind, and as such identifies Robinson with the traditional school. The underlying psychological reality is not enough to compensate for the crude allegorical framework; and because of the spurious philosophizing, the predetermined pattern of relationships, and the weak drama, the psycho-realism becomes only a tragiad trivial value, parling on the reader instead of stimulating him to the realization of a deeply felt truth.

Through the use of rhythm, wit, and intellectual elaboration and contrast, the author manages to convey a sense of the
deep irony, despair, and absurdity of living. The overpowering odds against man are made irresistible by accumulation and repetition of evidence and mood within the limits of the puppet stage and within the area left untouched by the foreordained conclusion. Under such circumstances one can hardly speak of the relativity of truth in any meaningful sense, nor of truth or values in the process of becoming. The poem as a work of art has been determined by an interaction of the author's intellectual, cerebral faculty and one selected aspect of life, resulting in a detached, theoretical, rational analysis in place of what might have been a creative, experiential, intellectual, and dynamic contribution to an interpretation of life. One cannot help feeling that the poet's preconceived bases of thinking are outworn clichés of a fatalistic philosophy or attitude toward life. Robinson has many points in common with Hardy. Neither allowed the individual any chance of success in the unequal struggle for existence; only the tragedy of individual effort in the fact of an ineluctable destiny seemed worth recognizing as a basis for a philosophic perspective. A further sign of Robinson's remoteness from a modern conception of truth is his dependence upon "the wise, old man" from whom only Zoe had learned the secret truth of the way of life, all other men and women being doomed to self-victimization through their own ignorance, folly, and stupidity. In Robinson's world there is no knowing anything but the fundamental fact of the tragic destiny of life, and even that fact is cruelly withheld until man is most sensitive to its hurt.
IV Static Imagism

The emphasis that Hulme placed on the clear-cut visual image undoubtedly so influenced the group of Imagist poets that for some time attention was almost exclusively upon size, shape, color, and other particulars of appearance. In the long run, the 'image idea' seemed to become a matter of visual impressions rather than aural, tactile, kinaesthetic, and other non-visual impressions. In a sense, the development of the Imagist poets, especially Amy Lowell, from the stage of writing poetry of visual clearness and freshness to the later stage of more dramatic, inclusive, and deeply-felt poetry (dramatic Imagism) consisted of a breaking away into the by-paths of Imagism.

This change was gradual; it was not suddenly that poetry became dramatized or dynamic in nature. But the tendency has been in that direction, illustrated particularly well in the work of Amy Lowell. H.D.'s poems have been esteemed more and more highly as their intensity (subjective dynamism) has become more and more apparent. Her ability to fuse the various sense impressions at a white heat, and to maintain the intensity of her concentration by means of a nervous, palpitating cadence, places H. D. in the first rank of modern poets. Untermeyer and others have referred to her as "the only true Imagist" or "the pure Imagist". "Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling--beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light.
color and emotion that she achieves intensity. What at first seemed static becomes fluent; the arrested moment glows with a quivering tension."** An interesting comment for comparison with the preceding is Kreymborg's: "H.D.'s poems are intensely personal and the form completely impersonal. The varied forms are so finished, so statuesque, as to give the appearance of perfect figurines, cold to the touch--till one touches them. Then one is slowly heated and thrilled; one's veins and arteries beat higher and higher; one is flooded with love and runs mad with it, as this woman runs mad with it.***

In some of her poems, "Oread" for example, a realization of the meaning is stimulated almost directly by the cadence itself, but for the most part her poetry is characterized by a cadence all her own, a cadence which produces the effect of a hovering, fluttering, quivering around a statically held intensity. The omnipresent sense of vibration, gasping and nervous, places every object or incident in an electric atmosphere of heat lightning. Halcyon moments are rare indeed.

The absence of the sense of flux or of form in the process of becoming classifies much of H.D.'s poetry as Static Imagism, however unique and intense it may be. "Sea Poppies", for instance, is written in the usual H.D. cadence, which, as an emotive factor, combines or fuses with the concentrated pictorial sharpness of color, form, and metaphor to vivify the impression. But, in spite of the vibrant buoyancy of the cadence,--as with a hummingbird whirring but not moving in mid-air concentration on a flower--nothing moves or happens

*(26) 473  **(12) 349
in this single glimpse of the sea poppies. There is no cumulative or inductive intimation of a realizable truth or meaning, and hence no real sense of discovery. The value lies almost wholly in the clearness and freshness of visual description.

SEA POPPIES

Amber husk
fluted with gold,
fruit on the sand
marked with a rich grain,
treasure
spilled near the shrub-pines
to bleach on the boulders:
your stalk has caught root
among wet pebbles
and drift flung by the sea
and grated shells
and split conch-shells.

Beautiful, wide-spread,
fire upon leaf,
what meadow yields
so fragrant a leaf
as your bright leaf?

The poem is modern in form (cadence) and style (Imagistic expression) but not in attitude and in its reliance on merely objective presentation. As in the case of Aiken's lyric, thought content is absent. In order to be within the range of poetry interpretative of Nature, the subject-matter must be representative if intensification is depended-upon to bring out a value. Here there is no symbolism nor any other relationship that establishes meaning out of the interaction of poet and Nature.

The same criticism may be made of "Pear Tree". The image is originally figurative, sharp and clear, and re-enforced by the cadence. Around the central silver motif are woven a
PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted,
0 silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
one flower ever parted silver,
from such rare silver;

0 white pear,
your flower-tufts
thick on the branch
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

---

few metaphorical descriptive details, which are suggestive because fragmentary. The attitude is one of intense admiration and wonder, verging on the use of the flower as a symbol of promised happiness (summer) and fulfillment (ripe fruits). But the poem is essentially not symbolic—it does not use any detail of symbolic value. The effect, on the whole, is entirely static; for the same reasons that "Sea Poppies" is static, though "Pear Tree" is less directly pictorial and more figuratively implicative in conveying the visual impression.

An especially good example of an intensity held statically vibrant is "Heat". By an unusual imaginative realization of heat as oppressingly palpable and material, the poet has achieved the Imagist qualities of direct, clear, and strikingly figurative description. The vividness of feeling that is caught in these few lines may seem at first like a reality in the
HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air--
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat--
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

process of being realized. On analysis, however, that is seen
to be a purely concomitant, emotive value of the phrasing and
the cadence. As in "Pear Tree" the expression and rhythm
merely fill in the dominant aspects of a fixed and external
fact, made real by sensory appeal. "Fruit cannot drop" but is
held in place by the thick air--is static. The whole poem is
based on a point of view which realizes an essentially fluid,
evanescent, impalpable element of nature as something that can
be seen and grasped and cut, rent open, plowed through. This
attitude and resultant treatment illustrates the way kinetic
reality can be viewed, if only for a brief space, as fixed.
The inherent inadequacy of the set picture would be more ob-
vious in a longer poem. In short poems of the kind that we
have considered the intense concentration upon external sense
appeal can be maintained, whereas in the longer poem more sig-
nificant relationships would be expected and needed. H.D.'s
Pygmalion, The Helmsman, The Shrine are more extended poetic
treatments of relationships through symbolical realizations of meaning and truth, and because such poems are more comprehensively interpretative of life they take a higher rank as poetry. They are nearer the central function of all art.

The brevity of a poem, however, need be no limitation of its power to function as a discovery, or a search, or a clarification, or an intensification of some relation between nature and human nature. Consider how much "Borrower" (page ) signifies, or "Oread" by H.D.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea--
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir.

Here the author is not concerning herself with the objective, visual appearance of a stationary element in nature. Although to some extent descriptive of an objective situation, the scene is not only observed but felt through the onomatopoetic cadence, the dramatized image, and the original metaphor. In addition, there is the symbolic value of an urgent yearning for re-establishing contact with the elemental forces of nature to the point of self-effacement, the sea being a common symbol for immortality, eternity, oblivion. "Cover us with your pools of fir" expresses desire for eternal rest and forgetfulness of life.
V Dramatic Imagism

Poetry may tend toward prose for various reasons, one of which is the desire on the part of the Imagist poet to escape from the even slightly worn phrases of his contemporaries and predecessors. The first point in the credo of the Imagists read as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly exact, nor the merely decorative word.

Hulme, the grandfather of Imagism, had stressed freshness of expression and picture, directness of presentation, no circumlocution of idea, avoidance of simple statements, the need of new metaphors, among other principles.

This desire for fresh and original expressions is partly the reason for the style of Marianne Moore, whose poems have been the occasion for another consideration of the boundary line between prose and poetry. In her case, however, poets and critics seem to agree that she has written prose in verse design. Kreymborg calls her writing "an extension of the art of conversation" and "undulating prose", and reminds us that the author does not demand that her book be called poetry. Untermeier believes "that Miss Moore's highly intellectualized dissertations are actually part of the domain of criticism rather than of poetry, and that her creations are in the latter division chiefly because of the physical pattern of her lines."

The poem called "A Grave" is perhaps as good as any to illustrate the extreme to which Miss Moore has gone in her seeking to avoid derivative phraseology and to catch the images

*(26) 522*
of moods and attitudes in the dramatic statement of a theme.

A GRAVE

Man looking into the sea,
taking the view from those who have as much right
to it as you have to it yourself,
it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing
but you cannot stand in the middle of this:
the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.
The fires stand in a procession, each with an emerald turkey-foot
at the top,
reserved as their contours, saying nothing;
repression, however, is not the most obvious characteristic
of the sea;
the sea is a collector, quick to return a rapacious look.
There are others besides you who have worn that look---
whose expression is no longer a protest; the fish no longer
investigate them
for their bones have not lasted:
men lower nets, unconscious of the fact that they are desecrating
a grave,
and row quickly away--the blades of the oars
moving together like the feet of water-spiders as if there
were no such thing as death.
The wrinkles progress upon themselves in a phalanx--beautiful
under networks of foam,
and fade breathlessly while the sea rustles in and out of the
seaweed;
the birds swim through the air at top speed, emitting cat-calls
as heretofore--
the tortoise-shell scourges about the feet of the cliffs, in
motion beneath them
and the ocean, under the pulsation of lighthouse and noise of
bell-buoys,
advances as usual, looking as if it were not that ocean in
which dropped things are bound to sink--
in which if they turn and twist, it is neither with volition
nor consciousness.

As one type of Imagist poem it is an elaborate endeavor
to convey the impression of the sea's inhumanity to man. In
fact, her intentional dramatization carries the poem too far
away from the minimum of poetic quality necessary to poetry.
One can imagine what Conrad Aiken, lyricist and anti-Imagist,
would say; as it is, I know of only a passing reference or
two by him to Miss Moore's "tortuously patterned logic" and
"studiously cerebral obscurantism".*

*(1) 241,162.
Miss Moore's natural preoccupation with matters of logic and reasoning may account for the prominence of abstract ideas, wit, and irony in her poetry. In "A Grave" the emphasis is recurrently on the central idea: those who enjoy the sea are not conscious of its eager claim upon the life of mankind. The fact that people do not realize that the sea always stands ready to visit death upon man becomes the subject of an ironical treatment.

In applying the Imagist method to this idea the author strives for a 'renewal of metaphor.' Original words and phrases are intentionally substituted for more common expressions. "Fires" in line seven replaces the conventional "cypress" as a symbol of grief. The "turkey-foot" metaphor is an unusual but not dramatized image. In line nine the diction collapses completely into prose--"repression, however, is not the most obvious characteristic of the sea;"--and when reading "advances as usual" it is with difficulty that one avoids thinking of the price of butter and eggs. "The wrinkles [ripples] progress upon themselves in a phalanx [the waves at the prow]" further exemplifies the reaching out for appropriate Imagist terms, as do "the birds swim" and "the tortoise-shell scourges."

Almost any other poem of Marianne Moore's is characterized by the same tendency toward prosaic statement. On random investigation one finds such passages as these:

..Then abandoning the stick as useless and overtaxing its jaws with a particle of whitewash pill-like but heavy, it again went through the same course of procedure. (from "Critics and Connoisseurs")
not live in such a place from motives of expediency
but because to one who has been accustomed to it, shipping
is the
most interesting thing in the world. (from "Dock Rats")

Although the diction of "A Grave" is not heightened by
any intensity of inspiration, the cadence is smooth, flowing,
almost monotonously indifferent like the sea. The intrusion
of verse design is noticeable, in lines two and three, for
example, where the cadence would naturally end after "it" in-
stead of "right". In general, it may be said that this poem
is distinguished from the static kind by the attempt to catch
through dramatization the feeling and mood of a living reality.
It is modern with respect to the elements of form, flunctualism,
and symbolism, but it remains essentially rational art in its
failure to satisfy through the medium of the poetic qualities
the need for a harmonic whole of sound effects.

Another result of the striving for Imagistic effects on
poetic quality can be illustrated by a section from Kreymborg's
"Dorothy" called Her Eyes.

**Her Eyes**

Her eyes hold black whips--
dart of a whip
lashing, nay, flicking,
nay, merely caressing
the hide of a heart,
and a broncho tears through canyons--
walls reverberating,
sluggish streams
shaken to rapids and torrents,
tempest destroying
silence and solitude!
Her eyes throw black lariats,
one for his head,
one for his heels,
and the beast lies vanquished--
walls still,
streams still,
except for a turn,
or is it a pool,
or is it a whirlpool
twitching with memory?

Although somewhat extreme in its dramatization of the subject, as a whole this poem is far more poetic than "A Grave". The first two lines are merely figurative, but the third and fourth attempt to convey the feel of what happened as it happened by means of strikingly bold metaphor. In the phrase "the hide of a heart" there is a slight jar of images, which can be justified only on the ground that "hide" is a condensed symbol standing both for the surface sense of the man's affections and for the hardening, toughening process he has subjected himself to in order to make himself less susceptible to her anger.

But, having learned to caress, she can now drive him to more violent actions, much against his will--the broncho is a dramatized image of the ready way in which he responds to the commands of her eyes. He finally succumbs to her lariat-like glances, wondering, however, whether or not the experience has been really deep and sincere.

The Imagist technique here tends to go out of control, as it does definitely in Her Hair and Her Hands. Not only are the images far-fetched and strained from an endeavor to be different and to do the extraordinary, but the same conscious concern with creating a sensation is evident in the form of the cadence. Instead of using dramatic cadence throughout, in several lines the author resorts to what looks like verse.
design. Hence the indentations and general symmetry of outline, with lines three and four as they are instead of in

dramatic cadence:

lashing,
nay, flicking,
nay, merely caressing
the hide of a heart

As noted above, the use of images here is not under

artistic control. The originality of image has had an adverse
effect on the diction, moreover, for in word-choice Kreyborg
from time to time has lost sight of the musical quality of

poetry.

slagghah streams
shaken to rapids and torrents
tempest destroying
silence and solitude!

In these lines the harsh and unmelodic consonants and sibilants

spoil poetic quality.
VI Impressionism

About mid-way between Dramatic Imagism and Pure Imagism lies the technique of Impressionism. It is like Dramatic Imagism in that it attempts to convey the feel of the realized impression to the reader, and like Pure Imagism in that it tends to lose sight of ideas and meaning. Minuteness of observation, sensitivity to details and nuances of color, tone, form and movement, a ready flow of precisely descriptive and figurative and emotive language—these are generally found in the Impressionist poet. As Joseph Conrad has written about his own art (impressionistic prose), it must "aspire to the plasticity of sculpture", "the color of painting", and "the magic suggestiveness of music." "All art appeals primarily to the senses." (from Preface to the Nigger of the Narcissus)

A short-story like "The Lagoon" shows how successful he was in the practice of this illuminist method of writing fiction.

John Gould Fletcher is an Imagist poet whose use of the impressionistic technique caused the following description by Aiken: "a poetry of detached waver and brilliance, a beautiful flowering of language alone, a parthenogenesis, as if language were fertilized by itself rather than by thought or feeling. Remove the magic of phrase and sound, and there is nothing left; no thread of continuity, no relation between one page and the next, no thought, no story, no emotion."

It would be inaccurate to apply Aiken's statement to any and all of Fletcher's poetry, much of which is significant in idea content as well as in other respects. But that Fletcher
sought new forms for poetry in view of the decadence of that art is interestingly disclosed in these passages from Damon's book on Amy Lowell:

The Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1911 and the Russian Ballet persuaded him that poetry, even as music and painting, must employ a new idiom. (209)

Miss Lowell discovered one of Fletcher's ambitions: that of writing a poem about a great modern city; and she asked how he would set about it. He told her that above all one should sit and look at things; one should not think about them in relation to oneself, but should grasp them as detached objects..

Another transfusing experience was the Russian Ballet, just over from Paris. Later generations can scarcely understand how exciting, how liberating that constellation of geniuses was before the War: the weird, rich music of the modernists conducted perfectly by Monteux; the wild and gorgeous colors of Bakst splashed across the stage; the incredibly expressive dancing of Nijinsky that burst through all the mechanical French conventions. The ballets they presented were not the usual gymnastics, for which the slight plot was only an excuse; they were vivid expressions of the human imagination. (211)

It was perhaps in these developments of the fine arts that Fletcher, as Aiken says, found his password in colorism. In "Irradiations", for example, are presented thirty-six glimpses of color to symbolize varying moods. A few of these symbolize also some truth conceptual in character; Irradiations XIV, XVIII, XXVIII and XXX, for instance, have some intellectual content, although it is kept as the minor element in comparison with the strength of feeling.

The items of attitude which constitute "Irradiations" are meant to be considered together as one whole. Some of these patches of color as symbols of moods are related by having the same dominant element, as in the case of I, II, and III, unified by emphasis on the dream, and by subsidiary images
like the cymbals in I and III; or as illustrated by IV V VI and possibly VII in the passing from dancing sunlight to clouds and rain, to sunlight and silence.

These poems also have a strong undercurrent of rhythm appropriate to the feeling or mood.

V

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades;
Glint of the glittering winds of dragon-flies in the light;
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards;
Rippling, quivering flutters; repulse and surrender,
The sun broderied upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Here Fletcher has used images from Japanese screens;
the effect is almost like a Japanese painting. The poetic picture is bordered by the two lines at beginning and end.

The impression upon the senses of this passage is made doubly effective by the quantity of alliteration (both initial and subdued), not to mention the rich imagery and color and rhythm. In addition to the skillful use of liquid consonants, several effective vowel and vowel-consonant combinations are noticeable, if not too noticeable, as in

"Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades."

The mood is not gay, flickering, scintillating, as in
Irradiation IV, where the dancing sunlight plays with green
patches of grass. The contrast between light and shade and colors is intense, but saved from cloying richness by the swaying onward rush of the clouds and the silver and golden glitter of the raindrops. Words like "flutters" and "rustling" convey the necessary feeling of movement in combination with the figurative dramatization of motion.

One can say, then, that this poem is stimulative to a mood of sense-appreciation for a scene of dynamic natural beauty. It is difficult to express in words the exact shades of feeling that arise from this poem in isolation; it is of course meant to form one facet of a larger, irradiant diamond--poem VI, the next in the series, varies or shifts the kaleidoscopic arrangement of colors; VII returns to the motif of rain.

It will be apparent from the foregoing remarks, brief as they are, that the basic idea is at a minimum. This poem, in so far as it is authentic poetry, depends entirely upon sound, image, and rhythm values for the expression of emotive and tonal meanings. To speak even of emotions here would conflict with psychology--emotions can be experienced only toward or about some object. Mood, on the other hand, suffices as an indication of the vague aura of affective change that is neither mere sensation nor directed emotion. Consequently, as in the case of the lyric--which does express feeling--the issue resolves into a consideration of the function of poetry. It is not enough merely to convey sensory impressions, without some implication of meaning, for to do so gives only a two-dimensional effect; inorder to have substance, there must be
at least three dimensions: the dramatic, the musical, and the ideational.

In "The Blue Symphony" Fletcher creates a problem that is only partly due to his impressionistic technique, for here symbolism of a special kind enters as an element to be interpreted, along with the suggestion of mood through selected images. This poem does not violate the function of poetry, and yet it stands as an obscure poem to the ordinary reader. Because the symbolism is neither intentionally obscure (as in T.S. Eliot), though remote in origin, nor private and obsessive (as in Verhaeren), the poet can hardly be held at fault for any lack of understanding on the part of the reader.

In the first movement of this symphony Fletcher establishes a mood of sombre sadness by setting forth, gradually, the gloomy aspects of his situation and surrounding scene. In this atmosphere of blue mist and sombre pools is placed the china-plate pattern of willow branch and pagodas. The pictorial identification of this pattern with the prevailing mood facilitates the sombre retrospect symbolized by blue as a tone associated with brooding over the tragic destiny of life.*

In part II the second theme evolves, the theme of a lost love. Though lonely still he is encouraged by a dream (hope) of eventual reunion to seek the higher elevations of his mood, the uplands and hills from which he can see across and beyond his present despair and sense of insurmountable death (black valleys, the theme of I) to infinity and immortality (blue-white mountains). The blue here is a symbol of a lighter, more elevated sombreness.  

*Cf. the use of blue in Aiken's "White Nocturne"
In the third movement there is a conflict of the themes of I and II in the doubt which arises as to whether his confidence (II) in meeting her again is valid or not. The sour sprites symbolize the deluding tantalizations of delight and hope. The willow-pattern as a symbol of sorrow is revived in the image of the dark trees shedding blue veils of tears into the water. A voice is heard saying

"In the palace of the blue stone she lies forever Bound hand and foot."

meaning that his love cannot be recovered from the finality of death. In this connection, blue symbolizes this sinister element of death, its very inexorableness.

In section four he dreams unthinking of what is to come, and sees old age beckoning him to death and his hoped-for reconciliation. The lotus as an Oriental symbol represents the ultimate spiritual reality.

In the last movement the two themes are combined: the first in the recognition of coming death symbolized by the wintry discontent of ice and snow, and by the setting sun; the second in the yearning for eternity—"Those blue death-mountains", blue symbolizing the attainment of the spiritual through death and thus combining the two motives. His desire for the final consummation has become so intense and so fully a part of his firm belief that he is grown impatient with destiny—"Perhaps I can go before my appointed time", he seems to say.

The symbolism of "The Blue Symphony" is the faded, remote symbolism of an Oriental pattern, used to suggest vaguely some of the meanings parallel to his mood or moods. The Oriental
symbolism decorates his mood, so to speak, by setting the stage for his sorrow. But the use of symbols that belong to a remote, traditional philosophy—effectively suggestive as they may be of vague relationships closely parallel to the author's moods—makes this poem communicable to a small group only, and hence places it on the borderline of functional poetry. As Kreyborg puts it, "It is hard to sift a meaning out of the sunken garden, autumnal leaves and sombre pools of the 'Blue Symphony'."* Until an adequate criticism enables the reading public to sensitize itself to the symbolic values of other literatures—a step which literary criticism should have taken long since—it is a question whether a poet should consciously employ remote symbolism of the kind here employed.
VII Pure Imagism

Pure Imagism is one kind of pure poetry.* It resembles pure music in its elimination of the idea element of art, and therefore cannot be interpretative; *like in any real sense, but at the most of only rarefied aspects of feeling, tone, mood, and so forth. For the same reason Pure Imagism may be said to resemble still life in painting (as in Picasso, for example). Reference has already been made in the chapter on the lyric to the danger of poetry becoming too much like music and too little like literature.

An interesting letter by D. H. Lawrence to Amy Lowell was written shortly after he had read her "Men, Women, and Ghosts", which he found, along with the poems of H. D., to so minimize the human and conceptual elements of poetry that they were almost lost:

Of course, it seems to me this is a real oul de sac of art. You can't get any further than

'Streaks of green & yellow iridescence
Silver shiftings
Rings veering out of rings
Silver--gold--
Grey-green opaqueness sliding down'

You see it is uttering pure sensation without concepts, which is what this futuristic art tries to do. One step further and it passes into mere noises, as the Italian futurismo poems have done, or mere jags and zig-zags, as the futuristic paintings. There it ceases to be art, and is pure accident, mindless.--But there is this to fulfill, this last and most primary state of our being, where we are shocked into form like crystals that take place from the fluid chaos. And it is this primary state of being which you carry into art, in

'Gold clusters
Flash in soft explosions
On the blue darkness
Suck back to a point
And disappear..."--for example. You might
have called your book 'Rockets and Sighs.' It would have been better than Men, Women & Ghosts.*

In other words, such poems tend to become mere compositions of images rather than ideas. Just as pure music has no meaning (in fact, no music has meaning in the same sense that poetry has meaning; only the treatment of music, as in program music, adds 'intention'), so pure imagism has not. It might, however, be possible to create a mood or convey a feeling by means of combining effects or values to resemble pure design. For instance, to take a fragment of pure imagism:

Floating blue moon...
Soft and yielding...
Moaning
Crying tremulously
Tong, ting, softly with myrrh and attar
Clang, yielding halo and nimbus and violet disc

Such combinations of images are like modernistic poems. They are meant to be non-intellectual in appealing only to the various senses through the arrangement of images. When images thus become symbols of sensory value, they are used as musical notes are used in music. In this abstract use of words their function as symbols of thought ceases. The pure imagist holds that images may thus be arranged to give the effect of beauty; the resultant pattern may combine images of various kinds--images of sound, sight, touch, etc. By arrangement, qualities of time, duration, pitch, tempo may be included--for example, the higher intensity of color obtained by the use of violet, after blue had already appeared in the first line. Relations between images can be created to show change of feeling or mood in kind or intensity.

*(9) 388
Dewey discusses the problem of this tendency in art in his remarks on the contentions of Roger Fry in painting. Dewey insists that the lines and colors of an objective scene crystallize in the harmony of the painter's artistic personality rather than in the harmony of the scene itself.

Were it possible for an artist to approach a scene with no interests and attitudes, no background of values, drawn from his prior experience, he might, theoretically, see lines and colors exclusively in terms of their relationships as lines and colors. But this is a condition impossible to fulfill. Moreover, in such a case there would be nothing for him to become passionate about. . . No matter how ardently the artist might desire it, he cannot divest himself, in his new perception, of meanings funded from his past intercourse with his surroundings, nor can he free himself from the influence they exert upon the substance and manner of his present seeing. If he could and did, there would be nothing left in the way of an object for him to see.

Generalize Mr. Fry's contention regarding painting by extension to drama or poetry and the latter cease to be.*

But this does not mean that art ceases to be expressive when lines and colors as such are used mainly for their abstract value. Abstract art may represent 'the qualities which all particular objects share, such as color, extensity, solidity, movement, rhythm, etc.' (Barnes in The Art in Painting)**

Pure Imagism recalls the extreme to which Mallarmé carried the use of sound alone. As Wilson remarks, "The Symbolists themselves, full of the idea of producing with poetry effects like those of music, tended to think of these images as possessing an abstract value like musical notes and chords. But the words of our speech are not musical notation, and what the symbols of Symbolism really were, were metaphors detached from their subjects--for one cannot, beyond a certain point, in

* (10) 87-90 **Quoted by Dewey, p. 93
poetry, merely enjoy color and sound for their own sake: one has to guess what the images are being applied to."** This statement is not true of every Symbolist poet, nor is it true of the modern poet using the symbol as a stimulation to a realization of truth. The Imagist does not recognize the subconscious meanings of symbols, and hence does not exercise any control from within—that is, any real discipline that can only come from a predetermined harmony based either on normal experience or on an artificial experience.***

Although the Imagist poet holds that words are never merely symbols for ideas or things, that they also have emotive and tonal meanings, he is not violating any truth; but to arbitrarily select for use in poetry only the emotive and tonal meanings of words is naturally to limit that art in a very serious manner. Interpretative poetry cannot interpret in the real sense of the word by an appeal to the senses alone. It can in that way only evoke and induce and color the feelings of the reader. Which makes poetry a one-dimensional art, with only one-third of its potential power or usefulness functioning.

*(27) 698  **Kostyleff, Nicholas "Le Mécanisme Cérébrale de la Penseé"—See the discussion on Montesquieu for illustration of how artificial experiences can constitute a 'predetermined harmony.'
The emphasis which the Imagists placed on externality or externalization, on conveying the raw material out of which poetic experience may come, has its effect on poetry written today. Imagist poets are carrying the method of direct presentation farther than ever: witness the last Imagist Anthology. Other poets, not allied with Imagism as a school, show the effects of regarding literature not as art but as a literary version of life—life itself—"the real stuff." This tendency, which has had its greatest vogue among novelists like Hemingway, is the accepted technique of Robert Frost, who, from time to time, has said that he is putting into poetry a part of life as it is, and beyond that fact it has no meaning. In his own words, "Fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows."

Although too individualistic to affiliate himself with any school or group of writers, as his refusal to join the Imagists testifies, Frost has skillfully applied the Imagist idea of externalization. He tries to pass over a part of life in the objective manner with no internal interpretation. His poetry is dramatic and directly presentative rather than interpretative. "He rarely tells a story; he lets it tell itself. He does not tell; he shows. And his showmanship is related to the purest theatre—to the art of the Irish genius, John Synge.** This dramatic element is pertinently discussed in Frost's own preface to his one-act play, "A Way Out":

* (L8) 318
Everything written is as good as it is dramatic. It need not declare itself in form, but it is dramatic or nothing. At least lyric alone may have a hard time, but it can make a beginning, and lyric will be piled on lyric till all are easily heard as sung or spoken by a person in a scene—in character, in a setting. By whom, where and when is the question. By a dreamer of the better world out in a storm in autumn; by a lover under a window at night. It is the same with the essay. It may manage alone or it may take unto itself other essays for help, but it must make itself heard as by Stevenson on an island, or Lamb in London.

A dramatic necessity goes deep into the nature of the sentence. Sentences are not different enough to hold the attention unless they are dramatic. No ingenuity of varying structure will do. All that can save them is the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination. That is all that can save poetry from sing-song, all that can save prose from itself.

I have always come as near to the dramatic as I could this side of actually writing a play. Here for once I have written a play without (as I should like to believe) having gone very far from where I have spent my life.

It is clear from this introduction that Frost's consideration of the technical aspects of poetry is focussed on the dramatic tone of voice that is inherent in all language. In his Harvard lecture on The Vocal Image, this idea was elaborated. A poem is addressed to the mind's ear. "When I say a poem ... tone is the main thing." It is the dramatic, expressive tone heard in the vocal imagination that merges form and content, sometimes adding to the meaning, sometimes changing the meaning entirely. The tone, said Frost, seems "to come to me with the vividness of hallucination... sting the mind." When it comes, this "dramatic seizure is better than using the [visual] imagination." References to 'a visitation of style' must mean "a very hearing state and a great command of good concrete images of sound." This "play of the voice"
must involve a set of sounds, a set of sentences. The greatest satisfaction comes from weaving together these intonations to make a work of art.

He illustrated tonal values by quoting Shelley's lines "Come soon, soon!" (from TO NIGHT) as one of the "high spots in literature." (Interesting in comparison is the prominence of Frost's phrase "You come too" in TO PASTURE.) Frost also explained how while observing the white-tailed hornet swooping down at nailheads thinking them flies he heard himself saying internally "Those are just nailheads. Those are fastened down." These visitations of phrase were later incorporated into the written poem, "The White-tailed Hornet". The endeavor on the part of Frost as a creative artist is to conceive all his poetry in this way—as something said by someone in the tone in which it was said. In contrast to such a natural image is the bookish image, the tone of which is wrong, an example being Frost's "How like a fly, how very like a fly" occurring in the same poem.

The tone, then, is the most important part of a poem; it is closest to the form, especially at the beginning and ending of a poem. It is the objective hearing of the sounds of phrases which, according to Frost, constitutes inspiration. In this opinion he is not alone. Calling attention to the fact that "there is evidence that a slight degree of dissociation [of consciousness] may be useful, or at least harmless, for the purpose of certain kinds of creative thought", Graham Wallas remarks as follows:
One form of slight dissociation—the hallucination of "voices"—though it is very like the illusions produced by serious brain disease, yet has often occurred in the case of sane persons of strong imagination, and does not seem to be inconsistent with effective creative thought. Such "voices", indeed, may only represent an unusually vivid form of intimation and illumination. Many novelists and dramatists have described themselves as actually hearing the voices of the characters which they have created; and in the case of a person ignorant, as Joan of Arc and Socrates were, of modern psychology, it is easy for a perfectly rational opinion to be held that such voices have a supernatural origin.

The vocal or verbal image, Frost said, "is what I live for."

The reluctance which Frost exhibited to joining in with the Imagists during his first stay in England was undoubtedly due to the stress which they placed on the visual image to the neglect of the vocal image. As a dramatic poet, Frost has carried on the Browning tradition of dramatic externalization and objectification (poetry of extroversion). Kreymborg states that it was Browning who taught Frost the art of the dramatic lyric.** As with Browning, Frost has succeeded in catching a meaning that is psychorealistic. This, in spite of the absence of dialectic realism. By a skillful use of tone and rhythm Frost has achieved a selected folk speech related to the mood of the simple person who apprehends a trifle higher reality than that in which he finds himself. As will be evident later, his concentration on the dramatic quality of poetry causes Frost to lose sight of the lyric quality.

The technique of externalization employed by Frost fulfills Fletcher's and Amy Lowell's ideas on 'externality' as these are referred to by Professor Damon.*** In a lecture

*(28) 208-9 **(18) 318

***See page 39.
Amy Lowell defined 'externality' as "the attitude of being interested in things for themselves and not because of the effect they have upon oneself"..."with Synge came the 'new manner.' He says things in their relations to other factors than himself. He saw them externally. He wrote of them as he saw them with the clean edges which are so integral a part of modern verse. He wrote simply, directly, without inversions, and with a sparing use of adjectives...modern poetry of the new kind does not concern itself primarily with introspection." The new poetry also, she said, insisted on the poetry in un-poetic things, and tended in form toward the syntax of prose.*

Drama in poetry, as in the following passage, may center around trivial acts or gestures, meaningful by implication.

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,  
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back  
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.  
(The Death of the Hired Man, lines 121-3)

But, for the most part, the externalization in Frost takes the form of speech--usually dialogue--rather than action, thus attaining nearer to Frost's ideal as stated in his Preface. He realizes that the simple facts of a situation can be presented by "letting the story tell itself" without devices of literary art. Good illustrations of this dramatic method are well-known: The Death of the Hired Man, The Mountain, Home Burial, The Hill Wife, etc., and more recently has appeared "Build Soil--A Political Pastoral", a dialogue between poet-farmer Frost and a subsistence farmer.

Frost's preoccupation with poetry from a dramatic point of view has, as intimated, seriously affected the poetic quality

*(9) 296-8
of his verse. A lack of "art" or "craft" in Frost has been pointed out by various critics. Fletcher, for instance, observes that "Frost has evolved a form peculiar to himself, and which even he does not always handle with equal success; the rambling quasi-narrative, conversational, blank-verse poem". And Mary M. Colum calls "Home Burial" and "The Death of the Hired Man" "literature of verse." R. P. Blackmur, in a review of Frost's latest book (A Further Range), discusses the same short-coming. "It is a weakness of craft, and it arises from a weakness, or an inadequacy, in the attitude of the poet toward the use and substance of poetry as an objective creation—-as something others may use on approximately the same level as the poet did."

For purposes of illustration I quote a few passages from The Mountain:

"That looks like a path. Is that the way to reach the top from here?—-not for this morning, but some other time: I must be getting back to breakfast now." "I don't advise your trying from this side. There is no proper path, but those that have been up, I understand, have climbed from Ladd's. That's five miles back. You can't mistake the place: They logged it there last winter some way up. I'd take you, but I'm bound the other way." (lines 34-43)

"I guess there's no doubt about its being there. I never saw it. It may not be right on the very top: It wouldn't have to be a long way down To have some head of water from above, And a good distance down might not be noticed By anyone who'd come a long way up. One time I asked a fellow climbing it to look and tell me later how it was." (lines 66-74)

That Frost's more recent work occasionally drops to the same level of prose-talk can be seen from these first lines of
"I'm done forever with potato crops
At thirty cents a bushel. Give me sheep.
I know wool's down to seven cents a pound.
But I don't calculate to sell my wool.
I didn't my potatoes. I consumed them.
I'll dress up in sheep's clothing and eat sheep.
The Muse takes care of you. You live by writing
Your poems on a farm and call that farming.
Oh I don't blame you. I say take life easy.
I should myself, only I don't know how.
But have some pity on us who have to work.
Why don't you use your talents as a writer
To advertise our farms to city buyers,
Or else write something to improve food prices.
Get in a poem toward the next election.

Such "go-as-you-please blank verse "* offers too much dirt
with the potato.** The rhythm, tone, and attitude are realistic enough, and thereby effective, but as with Robinson (though for a different reason) the necessary inner intensity is allowed to lag. By recording the talk of rustic characters with approximate (i.e. without dialect) fidelity to their diction and vocabulary and idiom, Frost runs into a conflict with the minimum demands of sound beauty. The diction is not artistic. The lapse in the author's sense of selectivity for poetic language is detrimental to the lyrical or musical element of poetry. In other words, poetry is attempting to function as

*(18) 321
**(26) 254 Untermeyer quotes Frost as having said: "There are two types of realist--the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to be the second kind... To me, the thing that art does for life is to clean it, to strip it to form."
such in the form of a loosely metrical prose vocabulary. The
diction of the cited lines is more or less consistent in tone,
dignity, and quality; but consistency on a low poetic level
is of no particular value ... in order to have art there must
be a stripping to form of more than the prosaic potato. The
colloquial, conversational phraseology is not original or
figurative. And of course it is remote from the hard, clear,
fresh quality of Imagist verse. Furthermore, the vocabulary
is very limited in range, and rare indeed is the use of words
for their connotative value. In these passages there is
neither symbolism nor delicacy of implication.

Reference has been made above to Frost's externalized
treatment of situation and idea, to his "letting the story
tell itself." This of course is both a cause and an outcome
of his emphasis on drama. Significant for a discussion of
poetic function is the absence of interpretation, whether ex-
pressed or implied. On several occasions Frost has insisted
that he did not mean this or that by such and such a poem—
that the poem in fact had no meaning; it merely pictured* life as he
saw life and thus was part of life, but neither had nor needed
any ulterior purpose or function. These statements from the
platform have usually been accompanied by some reference to
people who 'insist on reading into his poems' meanings of
various specific kinds.** Interpretations of such a nature
have been denied a place in his thinking on the platform, pre-
sumably as superfluous.

*Compare the neo-classical theory of art as a mirroring of life.
**Untermeyer is apparently one of these persons. In (23) 254
he writes of "Mending Wall": "Here, beneath the whimsical turns
and pungency of expression, we have the essence of nationalism
versus the internationalist: the struggle, though the poet would
be the last to prod the point, between blind responsibility
I know what the man wanted of Old King Cole. He wanted the heart out of his mystery. He was the friend who stands at the end of a poem ready in waiting to catch you by both hands with enthusiasm and drag you off your balance over the last punctuation mark into more than you meant to say. "I understand the poem all right, but please tell me what is behind it?" Such presumption needs to be twinkled at and baffled. The answer must be, "If I had wanted you to know, I should have told you in the poem."*

In conversations, however, Frost has been ready to admit a certain "intention" to a particular poem, not "in the poem."

Some of the poems in Frost's latest volume, A FURTHER RANGE, indicate a swing-back toward interpretation within the poem from the previous directness of presentation. In "The White-tailed Hornet" he has, in fact, gone so far in his desire to convey a specific thought that the last section of that poem is hardly more than a one-sided observation tacked on to the main incident concerning the hornet. In "Desert Places" the same artificial effect from mere addition by association of ideas has been pointed out by Blackmur. It may be that the trivial subjects about which Frost often writes--e.g. "The Old Barn at the Bottom of the Fogs"--require some superimposed thought to raise their value. But such is not the way of art. A seemingly unimportant detail or incident can only be raised to the level of artistic significance by means of intuitive insight into the transcendental truth that lies behind or beneath every fact of existence--as Emerson, Carlyle, and Zona Gale have maintained.

At times Frost has attained to such insight, though not to the extent Kreymborg, in his unqualified admiration, would and questioning iconoclasm."* Robinson, E.A. KING JASPER, Introduction by Frost, page xii
have us believe. [*In the finest sense, he is the most quotable of moderns: his single lines or pairs catch the essence of a truth and transcend the actual by an appeal to the imagination. The careless-looking lines contain double meanings.** It is only when a short folk-saying symbolizes an attitude toward life (e.g. "Good walls make good neighbors") that Frost's poetry benefits from internal (expressed) indirection.

Writing a poem, Frost has said, is like stepping across a field on stones, the stones being the series of ideas which enable him to make his way to where he wishes to get. Thoughts are merely something on which the experience can be conveyed to the reader. His failure to use these ideas for their own worth or to illuminate the values and truths which lie behind them as part of the total reality of life, means that Frost does not go beyond the stage of prelogical intuition.

At least don't use your mind too hard,
But trust my instinct--I'm a bard.

the last two lines of TO A THINKER, classify Frost as a poet of romantic instinct, and proud of it. In his criticism of Frost, R. P. Blackmur distinguishes between a poet and a bard ("an easy-going versifier of all that comes to hand"). The poet must not only bring every resource of the mind to bear on the reality of an experience and its expression, "to transform what Mr. Frost means by instinct into poetry, but also to find his subject, to know it when he sees it among the false host of pseudo-subjects." Only by submitting the experiences

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of his social personality to the full travail of the poetic imagination is it possible for the craft of the poet, the whole act of the "rational imagination"* to reveal or illuminate the underlying actuality--not logic--of experience. Most of Frost's new book of verse is the product of mere instinct. "Build Soil--A Political Pastoral", for instance, is not poetry but an indifferent argument for a 'one-man revolution' turned into dull verse." Before the need of an attitude toward society can become poetry "it must be profoundly experienced not only in intention but in the actuality of words."**

Additional evidence of Frost's anti-intellectual approach to life is his poem "At Woodward's Gardens", which is about "A boy, presuming on his intellect," who used a burning glass on two little monkeys in a cage. After being disturbed for some time by the well-directed concentration of the sun's rays, one of the monkeys snatches the glass away from the boy. But unable to understand it, the monkeys finally hide it under a bedding of straw.

Who said it mattered
What monkeys did or didn't understand?
They might not understand a burning-glass.
They might not understand the sun itself.
It's knowing what to do with things that counts.

These last lines of the poem go farther than is customary with Frost in indicating the value or meaning of a situation or relationship, but unfortunately they also confirm previous expressions of a philosophic perspective based on a mystic, teleological trust in divine evolution.*** In "Build Soil" he

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*That is, intuition: intellect and imagination. See page
**Blackmur, R.P. "The Instincts of a Bard" in THE NATION, June 24, 1936, pages 817-819 (the source of all references to Blackmur's review in this chapter.)
***Frost once said 'the most interesting-exiting movement in nature is not progress, advance, but expansion and contraction, the opening and shutting of the eye, the hand, the heart, the mind.' (from article in Esquire, November, 1935, page 110.)
advocates placing some form of restriction on ingenuity, the
inventive faculty.

The thought I have, and my first impulse is
To take to market--I will turn it under.
The thought from that thought--I will turn it under.
And so on to the limit of my nature.

In so far as this is intended as a plea for more profound, more
matured thinking, it is good advice to effusive salesmen. But
one can hardly look upon curtailment of the intellectual acti-
vity, as suggested, without feeling that the point of attack
should be on control and management of results instead of on
production. Instead of integrating the disparity between
actual experience and rational logic (thought) by means of
higher, contemplative intuition, which takes place through a
free-play of the imagination, Frost is attempting to free him-
self from the trammels of thought—that is, to integrate ex-
perience and thinking—by a withdrawal into instinct. To the
degree in which this self-reliance is active, not passive,*
intuitive realization of truth takes place. But instinct is
is a passive reversion to a more primitive way of responding
to life, not subjectively dynamic through the intellective
activity and intensity of the imaginative intuition. Hence,
Frost places a mystic reliance on cosmic evolution; mortal man
is too trivial to do anything, has no right to meddle with life.
Life builds and destroys—'Let what will be be.'**

*"The student is to read history actively, not passively".
(Emerson, "History")
**(19) 331
Part III
CONCLUSION

Poetry, like any other human activity, has its ins and outs, its movements and its reactions. The two major tendencies, introversion and extroversion, have been alternately in favor with the auctorial public. Usually the popularity of one or the other has carried it well beyond the central range of poetic function into the outskirts of music or drama. Poetry was originally spoken, acted and sung—as with the Greeks—but the coming of printed literature made it possible to isolate somewhat each of the chief elements of poetry. The result has been, in one case, melody or musical sounds for their own sake, and in the other direction an overemphasis on drama or objective presentation.

The poetry of introversion is essentially lyrical, in the direction of music. The farther this tendency goes the less like literature it becomes: tonal meaning alone is given a value. How far can sound thus suppress thought? Poe, though a symbolist and an introvert poet, succeeded in integrating sound and thought in ULALUME, which is not, as some people still hold, merely a tone poem. The French Symbolists, however, in reaction to the Parnassians, carried their movement to the musical limits of poetry. Verlaine, for instance, carried the ideas of Poe on the use of sound and symbolism to such extremes that his Art Poétique read in part as follows: "Music first of all ... no Color, only the nuance! ... Shun Point, the murderer, cruel Wit, and Laughter the impure. ... Take eloquence
and wring its neck! .. Let your verse be the fortune teller's
riddle flung to the crisp morning wind that smells, as it
blows, of mint and thyme--and all the rest is literature."

But since words are symbols of meanings, of ideas, of
truths, as well as pleasant or unpleasant combinations of
sounds, to exalt sound alone is to deny poetry its proper
function as an art of words. The blind warbler of lyric
egoism does not see, however beautiful his song. In a sense,
because it is only melody that the pure lyric can convey, it
is not even music, for music as an art requires more than one
element: it must have harmony or counterpoint as well as
melody.

Any discussion of art tendencies should really begin
with an attempt to determine the underlying psychological
sources. In the case of introversion, it would then become
clear that the cause of its inadequacy is the nature and
functioning of the emotion behind the poem. For, as explained
in connection with Wordsworth's sonnet and Housman's lyrics,
this power must be transformed and transmitted by the dis-
cipline of the artist working with his artistic medium. When
the transmuting process is incomplete, the result is a
primitive (pre-logical) intensification of emotive meaning,
without the relationships that arise out of harmonious inter-
penetration of man and nature.

In Housman, however, the fault lies not in a failure
to raise the emotion into realization, but in the nature and
validity of the feeling. A stock response, usually unknown to
the poet, may easily creep in and dominate the reaction. When this happens, sentimentality in some form or other results.

These varieties of introversion (Aiken's, Wordsworth's, and Housman's) fail as poetry because they lack the sine qua non of poetic art: a sense of discovery. There must be a value discoverable by the process of intuitive individual interpretation. If the author's intention is immediately obvious, no such realization can take place. The poem holds no meaning or significance for the reader. Art that is truly creative must be creative for the appreciator as well as the artist. The appreciator must become artist in an aesthetic experience—he must psychodramatize the original experience behind the work of art. For this process to take place, to become a realized reality, perception in time is necessary. Mere recognition, the identification and labelling of the already familiar, is not enough. The discovery of truth that comes in a sudden flash of insight (Illumination) may seem to be a momentary, instantaneous recognition, but actually it is but the focal climax of a period of Preparation and Incubation, largely subconscious.* As Mallarme, quoted on page 9, said, for the author to state a fact or name something gives the reader no satisfaction, but the suggestion, the implication, the intimation that will stimulate a completing realization of meaning makes poetry an active and living experience for the appreciator. This process of gradually discovering a value is the way real art functions, as BORROWER conveniently illustrated.

* See (28) Chapter IV
Subjective obscurantism complicates, if it does not entirely prevent, this process of discovery. The relationships and implications felt by the author may be valid and authentic, but they are not communicated—that is, suggested by some means of indirection whose terms are understandable. As long as the symbolism remains a secret and variable code, the reader cannot interpret without the aid of a detective bureau of psychoanalysts. It is the author's responsibility to select symbols that have established relationships, or to reveal the meaning of a symbol in the poem (see DEAD LEAF IN MAY), or possibly to show a symbol in the process of being created (see Amy Lowell's Lilacs).

A more extended problem than those of lyric introversion or symbolic obscurantism is that of objectivism in art. The boundaries here are less definite because as an art of words poetry and prose fiction (the short-story, the novel, etc.) and drama all constitute types of literature. They do not, as with music and poetry, represent arts of wholly different media.

Ever since the French naturalists began to focus their searchlights on the darker corners of the human mind, realism in art has been associated with pernicious influences. This is especially true of Naturalism as a technique in prose fiction. Poetry was more or less immune to the contagious germs of the naturalistic novel until the Imagists appeared with their inordinate interest in external fact and their seeking for freshness of detail and expression. Either because of this group movement and the strong impetus given to its ideas by Hulme, Pound, and Amy Lowell, or because of the general
trend toward realistic fact in art, or both, poetry extended the boundaries of its subject-matter, as well as its form and style. The result of such influences have already been noted in the poetry of Robert Frost and the Imagists. A glance at the last Imagist Anthology will show that the problem of what poetry should deal with, and how it should deal with it, is as much of an issue as that created by naturalism in fiction.

Allowing the datum to dominate in the art process has resulted in literature of Classicism, Rationalism, Imagism, Extroversion. But whereas in rational art the poet rearranges the movable parts of his material to suit his purpose, in sheer objectivism or Imagism the external fact—however arbitrarily selected—is allowed to remain in its original (raw) form. When the surface aspects of life thus become the subject-matter, without change or transmutation or interpretation, literature becomes the direct presentation of life, in so far as it can be that. The Imagists insisted on the absolute free choice of subject for poetic presentation; at the same time they recognized the inappropriateness of some objects, an aeroplane of the year 1911 for instance. In fact, as Hulme's reference to "the vivid patches of life" implies,* the Imagists intended to select only that which was fresh, and clear, and vivid with a visual objectiveness. They were forced to select according to the standard of sensory appeal, having chosen not to seek any meaning in experience. Therefore, in making themselves dependent upon those aspects of life which could make a striking impression upon the sense§, especially the visual sense, they limited their freedom in the

*See page (17) 21
choice of subject-matter. Such an arbitrary, superficial, and external standard of selectivity is the unavoidable concomitant of any attempt to present but not to interpret life. For the dullness and the drabness and the everyday routine of ordinary living could not have as such, without meaning and implication, any value; it would not do anything for us and hence would not be art as a functional activity.

A poem should not mean
But be.

If such a point of view is the basis of poetic art, it stands to reason that poetry must become a display of images. Sheer Imagism depends upon sensory stimuli, unrelated to human values, to stimulate in the reader a surface response, a sensation, which is like that felt by the poet. Things must be seen as detached objects, Fletcher maintained. Observed as such, without being related to human purpose or need, the environment calls forth no emotion. Nothing really matters. "This is life", says the objectivist and lets it go at that. The most we can go is to find ourselves with an attitude of indifference toward life, which is but a short distance from cynicism.

To heighten sense-impressions, therefore, has been the intention of the Imagist poet. H.D. has done this with a hummingbird fixation upon the object. Concentrating upon an image with a statically held intensity, she sketches its outlines in brief, nervous strokes. Her pictures are always clear-cut and sharp, not brilliant and flashy like those of Fletcher. In "Sea Poppies" the thought element is entirely
missing (the question at the end is merely rhetorical), and there is little, if anything, that can be called melody or drama. This poem, representative of Static Imagism, has gone beyond the authentic function of poetry into what is no more than a quivering pictorial presentation of an isolated, unrepresentative element of nature; in contrast to this limitation of poetry is H.D.'s OREAD, where a direct relation to "us" and a use of symbolism, adds meaning and feeling.

Another device of the Imagist poet for attracting attention has given rise to Dramatic Imagism, which strives for metaphorical originality. In many instances, novelty has been mistaken for originality, to the detriment of both the image and the phrase. In Miss Moore's poems, a striving for original expression and dramatic presentation has raised havoc with artistic diction, technical adaptation to artistic purpose, rhythm, and poetic attitude. A poem like A GRAVE has no musical or sound values, and therefore cannot satisfy the reader's (or the artist's) need for sound harmony, a vital part of the total esthetic impression or experience. Moreover, hypnotic dissociation through sound and rhythm is impossible; the style induces no distended free-play of emotion on an esthetic level.

A similar violation of poetic function is exemplified in Kreymborg's poem, where the dramatic image turns nearly melodramatic in kicking over the traces of artistic control. Although the poem is saved from meaningless exhibitionism by the use of condensed symbols, it is nevertheless exhibitionistic rather than artistic, calling attention to its technique for
its own sake.

The Impressionism of Fletcher, as found in IRRADIATIONS, lets the object speak for itself in all its brilliance and color. Here are 'the vivid patches of life' ingeniously selected and arranged with kaleidoscopic skill. As the colors and light effects are shifted into a new pattern, a new mood is created or induced. The rapid change of attitude from irradiation to irradiation does not permit any depth of feeling; on the contrary, the reader is given one glimpse after another which he is expected to harmonize into a unified whole. Or possibly no compact singleness of effect is intended. In any case, the reader of IRRADIATIONS, like the appreciator of Impressionistic paintings, must blend the splashes of color and line. Whether the resulting impression will be more than two-dimensional, however, is extremely doubtful. In IRRADIATIONS we have enough of melody and movement, but no ideas. This poetry too is unrelated to human interests. Its appeal is a light, fluctuating, sensory appeal that flits from one mood to the next. Only when symbolism of some form is added, as in THE BLUE SYMPHONY, does one get the impression of a single, dominant mood, and any conscious concern with human values.

The technique of Fletcher's externalization is carried one step farther in Pure Imagism. In Pure Imagism the sensory qualities are detached from even their objects as parts of a scene. The effect of thus carrying out to its logical conclusion the focussing upon objective fact is a one-dimensional
abstract art. Such a dissociation of sense-relations from the rest of life is in the direction of Art for Art's sake. Professor Damon sums up the limitations of Pure Imagism in leading up to the dramatic quality of Amy Lowell's poetry.

The Imagists preached Art for Art's Sake. Reacting against bad technique, they made technique an end in itself; reacting against undue reliance on substance, they virtually eliminated substance. Pound was fond of quoting Whistler: 'You are interested in a certain painting because it is an arrangement of lines and colours'; also Pater: 'All arts approach the condition of music. 'Now music is the very voice of the human will, but it is so close to the inmost reality that it seems only rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre. It does not name things; or see, touch, smell, or taste things; tell stories; demonstrate ideas; define morals. It is patterned emotion, pure and profound.

Imagistic poetry approached this state as an ideal, but in so doing, eliminated most of the fields of human endeavor from its work. Afraid of moral tags, 'human interest', platitudes, the Imagists eliminated ethics, narrative, ideas. Even emotions were not presented directly; they were suggested through the contrast of images and the rhythm of cadence. The result was a highly wrought music, excellent in technique but limited in its effect and consequently narrow in its appeal. Consider Aldington's 'Choricos,' R.D. 's 'Oread,' Pound's 'Return'; they are lyrics, harmonic rather than melodic, rich, restrained, brief, and perfect; but they are only one effect in the whole gamut of the possibilities of poetry.

She Amy Lowell believed that poetry was a spoken art—was communicative and not merely self-expressive—that no poem was complete until it had functioned in the mind of the audience. This belief not only saved her from the vitiating precious of 'Art for Art's sake,' but caused her to build her poems of genuine human material in an emotional, or dramatic, structure.*

Amy Lowell's earlier poetry was more objectively brilliant, coloristic, pointillistic than her later work referred to by Professor Damon in these paragraphs. Furthermore, it is not quite right to say that every Imagist lyric was static—"The Imagist lyrics are static in mood from the first line to the last.."—although the earlier Imagists sought to uncover

* (9) 254-5 Italics not in original.
a static beauty in a series of successive static impressions, showing the results of change rather than change taking place. Fletcher's poems convey more of a changing mood as reflected in external motion, but he too does not go far into the kinetic quality of art. Amy Lowell did. Her PATTERNS and LILACS are remarkable examples of the use of poetry to dramatize meaning in the process of becoming. She has succeeded in stimulating the feeling of a developing truth by means of dramatic symbolism as well as imagism. These poems are far from being merely 'life, not literature' or 'raw realism'; they are focussed, functional, interpretative poetry. This is Imagism in a broader sense than excellent technique, patterned emotion, pure music, or colorism; it is poetry functioning on a high level of significance very near the central range of poetic function, because it combines superb drama, meaningful ideas, and as much music as its dramatic form will allow. In short, a poem like PATTERNS or LILACS is the work of genius, not the product of mere ingenuity.
If Imagism, as a technique of externalization unassisted by symbolism or any other form of indirection and internal interpretation, leads naturally into pure poetry and Pure Imagism, what happens in the case of sheer objectivism? This other form of externalization is found in much of the poetry of Robert Frost, and differs materially from Imagism. Frost is not so much preoccupied with the vivid patches of life as he is with the dramatic quality of poetry. The objective scene itself may or may not be strikingly clear or important in its own right, as evidenced by poems like THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN, THE MOUNTAIN, and THE BARN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FOGS. Indeed, in poems such as these the incidents are apparently trivial and insignificant. When trivia suggest, imply, or symbolize a meaning, they of course take on artistic value. But although a good deal of Frost's poetry seems to be based on dramatic implication and symbolism, he does not often consciously use symbolism and suggestion, if one is to believe what he has written and lectured from time to time on the use of poetry. "If I had wanted you to know, I should have told you in the poem." (See page 108)

The non-symbolic use in sheer objectivism of details of slight and ordinary importance is largely the outcome of that point of view in literature which regards art as non-interpretative. This brings up again the question of realism and naturalism in literature—whether or not art can and should deal with any part of life.
As far as the novel is concerned, Krutch finds that it has "had far too much of what is commonly called Life." Sherwood Anderson echoes this opinion in his note on Realism. Pointing out that the desire for more realistic fiction is not wholly a good sign, he observes that "what never seems to come quite clear is the simple fact that art is art. It is not life. ..The life of the imagination will always remain separated from the life of reality. It feeds upon the life of reality, but it is not that life--cannot be. ..Life is never dull except to the dull."**

In a lecture Amy Lowell made much the same comment on 'Look! We Have Come Through!' (by D.H.Lawrence). "As a book, the volume is a masterpiece; as poetry, perhaps it is not quite that. Art is not raw fact. Poetry cannot rise into its rightful being as the highest of all arts if it be tied down to the coarse material of bald, even if impassioned, truth. Truth has its own beauty, but it is not the beauty of poetry." Truth and beauty must go hand in hand.*** (Amy Lowell, it should be remembered, was no narrow-minded moralist; her appreciation of D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce is proof enough of her esthetic integrity.)

Modern art, however, does not set conscious limitations upon its subject-matter. "One of the functions of art is precisely to sap the moralistic timidity that causes the mind to shy away from some materials and refuse to admit them into the clear and purifying light of perceptive consciousness... Whatever narrows the boundaries of the material fit to be used

**Krutch, Joseph Wood "But Is It Art?" in DESIGNED FOR READING (Macmillan N.Y. 1934)
***(9) 446 **(5)
in art hems in also the artistic sincerity of the individual artist."** "Art is the imaginative interpretation of the life of a people, whatever that life may be."--is the view of Zona Gale. Walt Whitman said as much years ago:

Whatever may have been the case in years gone by, the true use for the imaginative faculty of modern times is to give ultimate vivification to facts, to science, and to common lives, endowing them with the glows and glories and final illustrousness which belong to every real thing, and to real things only.**

If, then, the modern artist has taken as his range all of life even to the point of including "life's sheer deadly death-dealing routine"*** and yet art is not raw fact, not life itself (Frost and the Imagist to the contrary in theory), what is it that distinguishes life and art?

Emerson wrote as follows of the poet: "Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon." (from Idealism) "Since every thing in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is because the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active." (The Poet) The discussion on Imagism showed that the tendency toward externalization makes the external reality the dominant factor by subduing feeling and personal reaction.

True art, on the other hand, seeks a harmonious interaction of thoughts and things by referring the thing or fact to the predetermined harmony of artist or appreciator. It is this  
*(10) 189-190  **(19) 65  ***(14) 135
necessity of Promethean integration which keeps a large body of scientific fact from being successfully realized into art. Before science and the results of scientific discovery, invention, and production have become integrated with other elements of life, science can hardly be fully and esthetically realized in art.

Scientific method as now practiced is too new to be naturalized in experience. It will be a long time before it so sinks into the subsoil of the mind as to become an integral part of corporate belief and attitude.

...before didactic matter can become anything more than versified prose, it has to be incarnated from the prose tissue in which all such matter takes birth, and then incarnated anew in the spiritualized tissue of which the poetic body is and must always be composed.

One could quote almost endlessly from the essays of Emerson the intuitive realization of fact into artist significance, but let the following passages suffice on a point which has been overlooked too often in criticism:

The poorest experience is rich enough for all the purposes of expressing thought. ...We are far from having exhausted the significance of the few symbols we use. We can come to use them yet with a terrible simplicity.

Readers of poetry see the factory-village and the railway, and fancy that the poetry of the landscape is broken up by these; for these works of art are not yet consecrated in their reading; but the poet sees them fall within the great Order not less than the beehive or the spider's geometrical web.

(The Poet)

The test or measure of poetic genius is the power to read the poetry of affairs,—to fuse the circumstance of to-day; not to use Scott's antique superstitions, or Shakspeare's, but to convert those of the nineteenth century and of the existing nations into universal symbols. ...to convert the vivid energies acting at this hour in New York and Chicago and San Francisco, into universal symbols, requires a subtile and commanding thought.

The test of the poet is the power to take the passing day, with its news, its cares, its fears, as he shares them and hold
it up to a divine reason, till he sees it to have a purpose and beauty, and to be related to astronomy and history and the eternal order of the world. (Poetry and Imagination)

To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. (Nature)

Poetry lifts the fact of nature from the level of sense-perception to the level of spirit or value; this is accomplished by the Intellect (intuition).

In his essay on biography, Carlyle also signified the transcendental value of experience, even to "some slight, perhaps mean and even ugly incident."

Transcendentalism in art has found a new champion in the person of Zona Gale, whose allotropic realism is an extension of Emerson's transcendentalism to the present day.

...behind the ordinary aspect of quite ordinary things and ordinary folk, ordinary reactions, there is visible a new pattern of the old spiritual treasure.*

By a rearrangement of the ordinary molecules of experience, we are able to observe the spiritual allotropic reality.

Not all of us is incarnate. Some of us spirit. And it is required of us that we see ourselves both in flesh and in spirituallathe time.

Art should interpret the human spirit, should, as Shelley said, strip the veil of familiarity from the hidden beauty of the world, thus revealing the spirit behind the fact. The familiar must be permeated by the unfamiliar and the unknown; the routine must be transmuted into the tenderer substance of the spirit.

"The fiction of the future will realize angels in the commonplace."

Such beauty cannot be caught by merely looking at it; it must be evoked by the integrating power which comes only in flashes.

*(14) 188 Other quotations here from same source.
of insight. Zona Gale illustrates this power of realizing allotropic reality by several incidents, one of which I quote:

You hear a middle-aged woman playing at the piano an air which she has practiced to surprise her family. You hear her husband ask her if she would mind not playing. And you see her bright look as, misunderstanding him, she asks: "Did you say: 'Play it again'?" A dainty tragedy. And beauty. It is not only vast failures to co-ordinate which hold beauty and the tragic. (173)

It is the province of art to evoke the beauty existing on the higher, transcendental plane by a transmutation of actual fact. Shelley expresses a similar thought when he says that poetry "transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes." This can be done, according to Zona Gale, "by writing of those who have transcended chaos," in whom there is an "unconscious fineness." The American novel of the future will "uncover the beauty of our essential commonplace living," not by shunning or denying ugliness but "first by accepting all of life;...and then by a new selectiveness." Up to the present the modern realistic novel "has chosen to affirm the commonplace, the sordid, the ugly, because that is most obvious" and "far easier to record," and a natural reaction to sentimentality, hypocrisy and smugness. (152-3)

The "new selectivity" is not as new as it might seem. The imaginative reconstruction of experience by interpolation of facts is, at least, not new in theory. Carlyle was well aware of the co-operation necessary between imagination and understanding, and when Emerson spoke of seeing "trifles
animated by a tendency" he was referring to the same technique.

In her chapter on "Implications" Zona Gale explains how an interpretative literary form can enrich life by revealing the inner significance of daily human living. A mere recording of what goes on results in no more than surface realism, for the most part superficial. It is only by interpretation (interpolation) that facts can be made to reveal their secret relationships; the transcendental meaning beneath the surface of fact is thus set forth by the implications that go with experience.

But this technique--"the isolating and the interpreting of the material between the lines"--presupposes a belief in the imaginative experience as a function of the understanding of life. "Only insofar as imagination, were it but momentarily, is believed, can there be any use or meaning in it, any enjoyment of it."* In short, a belief in life is a prerequisite to an interpretation of life through art.

Furthermore, in order to read between the lines of life or of books creative reading is necessary. And as creative reading and creative inspiration are dependent on intuitive insight, once more we find that it is only intuition which can save art from being coarse or commonplace. It is only by allowing truth to emerge from the subconscious depths of the being that fact can reveal its transcendental value. "I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts", wrote Emerson. The spiritual meaning necessary for artistic

*Carlyle in "Biography"
significance evolves out of this relationship between environment and predetermined harmony of the artist. It is only so that each man can be said to be a symbol of life, an epitome of the Infinite.

The poet who strives for sheer objectivism denies or ignores this necessary relationship between fact and spirit, object and artist. Since he cannot copy life as it appears on the surface and get more than a drab picture of hum-drum existence, by cutting short interaction with his material—that is, by allowing the "outer vision" to subdue the "inner vision"—he is forced to select "only the vivid patches of life", as Hulme said. This artificial conscious selectiveness determined by sense-stimulation alone, deprives existence of its symbolic value. Every mud puddle can no longer reflect the blue sky above,* nor sensory fact have any transcendental meaning. For this reason, too, the poet of extroversion, having little or no interest in meaning and truth, sees no artistic need for symbolism. If any creative interpretation is to be done, some form of implication or indirection is necessary. Impressionism is one form of suggestion, but when used by itself and in brief though flashing patches of color, its brilliance is given a value all out of proportion to its proper artistic function of stimulating a realization of some meaningful relationship.

In Frost's poetry there is a noticeable attempt to convey experience that has more than incidental value. As an artist he makes a special effort to allow experiences to speak for

*See Hawthorne's entry in his Notebook for August 7, 1842
themselves, for ideas ideas or impressions to come spontaneously out of his subconscious; and because he is conscious of this as an effective method of inspiration he calls himself a bard, trusting to his instinct. Indications are, however, that this instinct is not ripened as much as he would have us think by his references to 'turning under' his thoughts. A passive attitude toward life* and art, and a reliance on instinct keep his inspiration from taking flight into the superconscious domain of the truly creative, intuitive artist. To borrow Housman's metaphor, Frost's inspiration is more like a secretion than elevation. Occasionally it crystallizes into a pearl. When it does, it has a higher value, a transcendental meaning, however lowly its origin. A good part of Frost's poetry, however, has not taken shape; the material has not been transmuted or transformed into allotropic spirituality. Much that is sordid remains sordid; still more that is commonplace remains unrefined and unlifted.

In order to synthesize in art the objective and the subjective, it is not enough to withdraw into oneself, to retire into the self, as Frost advises in his remarks on 'turning under' one's thoughts. Art, on the contrary, is a superconscious process of realization which emerges out of the subconscious continuum by means of the creative imagination. Instead of pushing suggestions back into the subconscious, the poet must be on the watch for Intimations, on the fringe of consciousness, of Illuminations or flashes of insight. Though, to be sure, intuitive realizations cannot be forced

*See page 40 for statement of Frost's disbelief in progress.
out--abortive interference leads to poems like DESERT PLACES--they can be induced and evoked by letting the imagination play freely with the central idea or intention under the driving power of the emotion. The unity and intensity necessary to poetry come from the ability of the poet to recapture in great measure the feeling of the original experience by re-establishing during the poetic experience a vitalizing contact with the original sensory stimulus in and and by means of the imagination.

Poetry written under such a discipline of technique, imagination, and feeling will not, if the author's predetermined harmony is the result of vigilant interaction between environment and artistic sensibility, exalt either object or organism, but will realize values and meanings by a progressive, cumulative, rhythmic interplay of energies. This esthetic contemplation or intuition, according to Bergson, is 'instinct become disinterested'.

...by sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of living, by the expansion of our consciousness which it brings about, it intuition introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration; endlessly continued creation. But though it thereby transcends intelligence, it is from intelligence that has come the push that has made it rise to the point it has reached. Without intelligence it would have remained in the form of instinct, riveted to the special object of its practical interest and turned outward by its movements of locomotion.*

When the artist fails to free himself from instinct by means of thought or intellect (as in Frost) or fails to free himself from intellect or logic by a "flowering of the imagination," (as in Robinson and Eliot), he is not in a position to create.

*Quoted in (15) from Bergson's CREATIVE EVOLUTION, pp.177-8
His faculties may be set to respond on the Romantic or the Rational levels but not on the Intuitive or Modern level. The result is some form of Introversion or Extroversion. And the subject-matter or object can be merely copied, or worshiped, or manipulated; it is not fused with the subjective element so that both as such disappear. This fusing process is only possible in an active interpenetration of man and environment according to "the great principle of Undulation in nature" which is ordered change or rhythm. Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. ** Reality is not static; it is flux and in process of becoming. An experience requires time for consummation, for becoming; when it ceases to become, it is no longer. To arrest the dynamic flow which constitutes life and experience is to change its very nature. It is like examining fireworks on the fifth of July to discover what fireworks are like, as Oliver Wendell Holmes used to say to his class in microscopy. This insistence of modernism on life in process is, of course, radically different from the anaesthetization of life which traditionalism in art practices and preaches. It may be that 'Architecture is frozen music;' certainly poetry is not. As an intuitive experience poetry cannot escape the fact that "soul is becoming."

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*Emerson: The American Scholar **Emerson: Nature
DIGEST

That poetry is in dire need of a sound basis of criticism is all too apparent from the 'Critical Fog' which beclouds the wonderland of literature; from the prejudices and animosities of critics; from the limited approach to art in laboratory esthetics; and from the factual teaching going on in universities. Of recent contributions to literary criticism, those of I.A. Richards have been the most significant; here attention is called to his four meanings (functions) of poetry.

As an art form poetry is subject to the tendency of the individual artist to preoccupy himself either with his own innermost thoughts and feelings or with the conditions which constitute his environment. These tendencies in art are here called introversion and extroversion, and correspond to Dewey's 'undergoing' and 'doing'. Although some degree of interaction must always take place, poetry can become too internal a process --as was the case in Romanticism and Symbolism; or it can become too external, rational, and intellectual--as happened in the neo-classical age. The harmonious interaction of man and nature, of undergoing and doing, is Promethean integration, or intuitivism, since by means of his intuitive insight the real artist balances or fuses or harmonizes the two factors or tendencies.

The study of the range of poetic function in practice has been made with reference to those types of poetry which seem to be near the borderlines between poetry and music, and between poetry and drama. The lyric may easily become pure
lyricism (as in Aiken) or sentimentalism (as in Housman) without conveying any sense of discovery, the sine qua non of poetry. "Borrower", on the other hand, illustrates how a lyric can attain to the epic level of art.

Obscurantism in poetry is sometimes due to incompetent (incomplete) interpretation. But serious obscurantism may be caused by fixations in the poet that lead to private and obsessive symbolism (as in Verhaeren) and to dream symbolism (as in Aiken). Quite different is the intentional obscurantism in Eliot's poetry, where interpretation is rendered doubly difficult by the clash and confusion of symbols taken from different cultures and periods.

In Robinson's "King Jasper" poetry as narrative encroaches upon the domain of prose. The inadequacy of a traditional, merely intellectual treatment is evident in the lack of emotional intensity and unity and suspense, the melodramatic climax and resolution, the static symbolism, the prolixity, and the lapses in artistic diction.

The Imagists, as poets of extroverssion, sought to present life as they literally saw it. Concentration on externals resulted in static, pictorial impressions of great vividness (as in H.D.) to the neglect of values and meanings and life in flux. Dramatic Imagism, however, seeks to dramatize the kinetic reality, but in reaching for the 'new bowl of metaphor' some poets, Marian Moore for instance, have fallen into prosaic statement; and in striving for fresh and dramatic images others like Kreymborg have stooped to novelty
The two-dimensional kaleidoscopic impressionism of John Gould Fletcher rearranges its lights and colors and lines in brilliant irradiations to symbolize variable moods, but not to interpret more than striking sensory surface responses. When remote symbols of an Oriental tradition are added to convey meanings, poetry becomes more significant but also more obscure. Pure Imagism carries Imagism to its illogical conclusion in an abstract art that loses sight of even objects as parts of the human environment; instead there are only sensory images, which may possibly be patterned to represent significant changes of mood and feeling.

As sheer objectivism, the dramatic poetry of Robert Frost also denies any meaningful interpenetration of organism and environment. His is an attempt to hand the reader a part of life in its raw state, 'stripped to form', to the detriment of the lyrical quality of poetry and to art as a functional activity. This objective emphasis by Frost raises anew the question of realism in art. If art is to do anything with or for life, it cannot merely copy or mirror life—any impossibility anyway; art must discover, disclose, clarify, interpret, or intensify the meaning and value of experience. To function thus as art poetry must transform and transmute the commonplace into allotropic spirituality. This the literary artist can do through an intuitive realization of transcendental values, not—as Frost has tried to do—by a reliance on instinct (prelogical intuition). Hence poetry's only authentic
Function is an intuitive integration of self and environment, realized through some form of indirection, especially in the use of symbolism as an artistic device for transcending social self and sensory fact.
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