Literature/Philosophy

A GRAMMAR OF MOTIVES

"*A Grammar of Motives,* published in 1945, is the first volume of a gigantic trilogy, planned to include *A Rhetoric of Motives* and *A Symbolic of Motives,* which will be called something like *On Human Relations.* The aim of the whole series is no less than the comprehensive exploration of human motives and the forms of thought and expression built around them, and its ultimate object, expressed in the epigraph: *'ad bellum purificandum,'* is to eliminate the whole world of conflict that can be eliminated through understanding. The method or key metaphor for the study is 'drama' or 'dramatism,' and the basic terms of analysis are the dramatistic pentad: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. The *Grammar,* which Burke confesses in the Introduction grew from a prolegomena of a few hundred words to nearly 200,000, is a consideration of the purely internal relationship of these five terms, 'their possibilities of transformation, their range of permutations and combinations'. . ."

—Stanley Edgar Hyman, *The Armed Vision.*

About this book Mr. Burke contributes an introductory and summarizing remark, "What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it? An answer to that question is the subject of this book. The book is concerned with the basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives. These forms of thought can be embodied profoundly or trivially, truthfully or falsely. They are equally present in systematically elaborated metaphysical structures, in legal judgments, in poetry and fiction, in political and scientific works, in news and in bits of gossip offered at random."

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Kenneth BURKE

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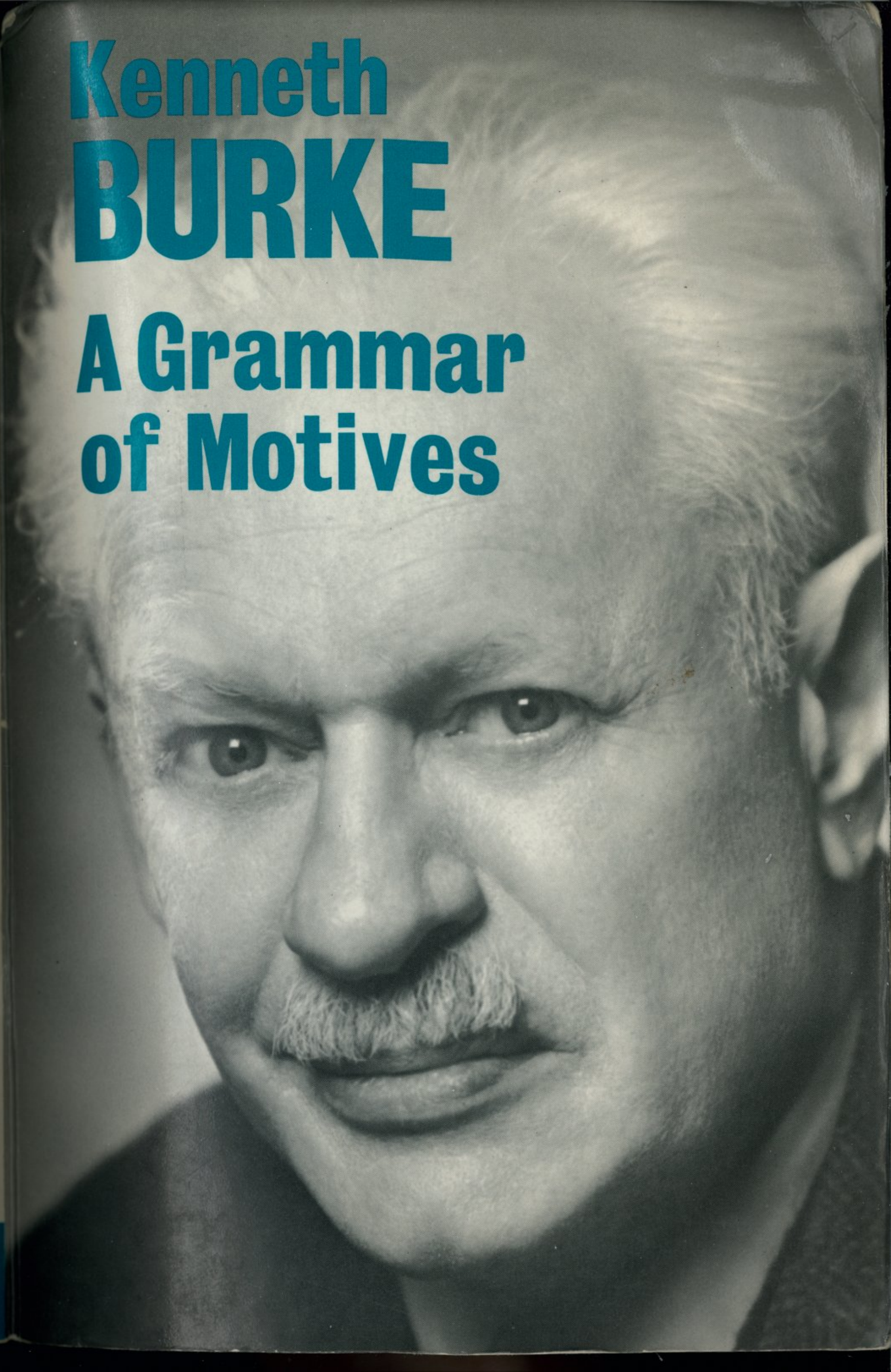

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by

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("having its end within itself") as synonym for "actuality." Since he classes growth as one species of motion, a being that attains its full development has attained its "end" (whereat one need not decide whether the "end" here is an *aim* or a mere *limit*). As for made things, *poiema* has the same ambiguity, in referring either to a "deed, doing, action, act" or to "anything made or done, a work, piece of workmanship, poetical work, poem"—so that we can look for the "perfection" of the work in the principles of its construction, as embodied in its actual form. The *generic* factor here resides in the fact that the aim is to give the work the form proper to its kind.

Before closing this chapter, let us note how the ratios look, in the light of our discussion. We originally said that the five terms allowed for ten ratios; but we also noted that the ratios could be reversed, as either a certain kind of scene may call for its corresponding kind of agent, or a certain agent may call for its corresponding kind of scene, etc. The list of possible combinations would thereby be expanded to twenty. And the members of each pair would then be related as potential to actual. Thus, a mode of thought in keeping with the scene-agent ratio would situate in the scene certain potentialities that were said to be actualized in the agent. And conversely, the agent-scene ratio would situate in the agent potentialities actualized in the scene. And so with the other ratios.

Otherwise stated: A ratio is a formula indicating a transition from one term to another. Such a relation necessarily possesses the ambiguities of the potential, in that the second term is a medium different from the first. For the nature of the mediated necessarily differs from the nature of the immediate, as a translation must differ from its original, the embodiment of an ideal must differ from the ideal, and a god incarnate would differ from that god as pure spirit.

Psychology of Action

Terms such as "action" and "passion" are, of course, hardly more than chapter-heads, still to be given specific content. Or they are gerundives, indicating that certain blanks on a questionnaire are "to be filled out" according to certain prescribed rules. As we have seen

in the case of Spinoza, for instance, "action" and "passion" are but names for bins into which one sorts various kinds of particulars, Spinoza's alignment of the "affections" differing somewhat from that to which any other philosopher would subscribe.

But just as there are relationships among individuals within a State, so there are relationships among States; and similarly, the Grammatical forms can be considered in their relations to one another, over and above the relations prevailing among the many different particulars that may be subsumed under them. A dramatist, for instance, might select any two ethical motives (say: fear and honor), and enact them in the image of particular characters under particular conditions. But the form of the enactment in its *total development* could be *summed up* as the interrelations and transformation of active and passive principles.

A character in a play will not often specifically use the dramatist Grammar. St. Thomas in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* is an exception, owing to Eliot's interest in Dante and theology. Thomas specifically meditates upon human motives in terms of "action" and "passion." [11] Similarly, in *The Dry Salvages,* Eliot specifically considers the action-motion relation, when contrasting supernatural motivation with a state of affairs

[11] The design of the turning wheel that forever turns and is forever still, which Eliot takes as the image for his equating of action and passion, may recall our remarks on "inevitability." If the "dead centre" of the turning wheel were the unchanging substance of the self, then we could explain how the wheel could forever turn and be forever still, since the transformations would all partake of one underlying quality. They would possess what Emerson calls the "tyrannizing unity" of man's "constitution," the principle which man seeks in nature and attains in art. Emerson celebrates it zestfully in the same essay (on *Nature*) in which he wrote:

> Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature—the unity in variety—which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old age, that, looking where he would, all things hastened back to Unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms.

The full discussion of the subject belongs rather in the study of symbolic, but since we are trying to indicate, where the opportunity offers, how the different fields overlap, we may note here how "high orders of abstraction," when *personalized,* can become replicas of the "unchanging self," hence a delight insofar as one is pleased with oneself, and a bondage insofar as one would be reborn.

Where action were otherwise movement
Of that which is only moved
And has in it no source of movement—
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers,

though the motion here does not remain the neutral kind considered by science, but becomes rather a kind of sinister passion. Usually, the Grammar is left implicit, as when Lear calls himself "more sinned against than sinning," a complex bit of grammar indeed, particularly when we consider the ingredients of passion in the concept of "sinning," that here has the active form.

The Japanese propagandists explicitly used the action-passion grammar when explaining to their people the steady American advances in the Pacific. The Japanese were told they were not to think of the Japanese forces as passively suffering attack, but as actively drawing the enemy closer, so that the eventual counterblow might be more effective. On reading this, one immediately saw the grammatical principle at the basis of German propaganda under conditions of defeat. When they were being pursued across North Africa from the East, for instance, it was explained that their armies were rapidly "advancing Westward." And their retreats in Russia were described as the use of "space as a weapon." Here, on the Rhetorical level, we find the underlying Grammar of the situation implicitly recognized in its explicit stylistic denial.

The examination of the particular way in which any particular writer of imaginative literature exemplifies the grammatical principles would require individual analysis on the Symbolic level. The purposes of this present book, however, require us rather to consider the dialectical resources of terms at a high level of abstraction, such resources as one utilizes when pitting a term like "action in general" against a term like "passion in general."

In discussing the *poiema, pathema, mathema* series, we have noted how you can draw out the grammar into a temporal succession: The action organizes the resistant factors, which call forth the passion; and the moment of transcendence arises when the sufferer (who had originally seen things in unenlightened terms) is enabled to see in more comprehensive terms, modified by his suffering.

Or action and passion may be made simultaneous equivalents, as with the theory of Christian martyrdom, wherein the act of self-sacrifice is identical with the sufferance. In *Murder in the Cathedral,* Eliot shows us this identification arising as a result of the *mathema.* Or rather, the Saint has first suffered temptation *(pathema);* he has detected and resisted this temptation *(poiema);* and the understanding *(mathema)* derived from the trial equips him for martyrdom (which is a new level of action-passion in one). Similarly, we have seen in Spinoza how *mathema* ("adequate ideas") can transform passion into action.

And we should recall here how the Gods, considered as motives, are *par excellence* instances of the dramatist grammar, since they are an active vocabulary for the naming of mental processes and "mechanisms." In proportion as men's sense of *tribal* identity is uppermost, a supernatural vocabulary of motives (either divine or Satanic) is felt adequate. Guilt is a tribal judgment; hence one is being quite "realistic" in attributing remorse to the action of Furies. For they are gods, which is to say, they are tribal motives. And they have external existence (in contrast, for instance, with an individual's sensations). But in proportion as the sense of tribal identity gives way to the sense of individual identity, this "realistic" vocabulary of motives becomes tautological. The sense of guilt is located in the individual; and in explaining it as caused by the Furies one is duplicating the motive. Both "guilt" and "pursuit by the Furies" designate the same condition.

After several centuries of individualism, this development is reversed, as psychologists idealistically begin with the "ego" and treat the tribal motives in terms of a "super-ego." The tribal element is thus reaffirmed (as likewise with Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious"), though the resultant view of psychological mechanisms has necessarily dropped the sense of the human mind as a battleground of supernatural powers. But whereas the grammar of action becomes modified, it remains with us, partly as a mere survival from earlier vocabularies, partly as evidence of man's essential dramatism.

The concept of the "ruling passion" is an instance of a dramatist motivation not directly theological though it was strongly ethical, and showed many vestiges of the Christian pattern. It is at bottom almost

an oxymoron, or at least a conceit, as were we to speak of someone's "dominant subjection," or his "sovereign bondage," or his "most commanding weakness."

In *One Mighty Torrent, the Drama of Biography,* Edgar Johnson reviews and discusses this "fascinating theory of the 'ruling passion'" in seventeenth-century biography, a theory that he derives particularly from Tacitus and Theophrastus. Such biographies, he says, were constructed

> upon a deductive scheme of what was consistent for such and such a type to be like, rather than upon detailed observation of what a man was in fact like. Each person, so ran the theory, had one ruling passion, with all the others grouped like vassals round and swaying to its imperious motions.

In *Every Man out of his Humour,* Ben Jonson had already given the term "humour" a similar application. First he observes that the word was originally scenic, referring to a liquid. Next, that there are liquids in the body ("choler, melancholy, phlegm and blood") which are called humours. Here too the usage would fall within our concept of the scenic. Next he explains that the word is metaphorically extended to designate states of mind corresponding to the disposition of the four liquids in the body:

> It may, by metaphor, apply itself
> Unto the general disposition;
> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
> All his effects, his spirits and his powers,
> In their confluxion all to run one way,—
> This may be truly said to be a humour.

One might choose to see in the passage an adumbration of behaviorism, though only if, at the same time, one recognizes that Jonson's interests are in the opposite direction. He would translate the concept from a materialistic to a dramatist significance. For Jonson's notion of the humour involves a particular kind of dramatic form. The prologue to *Every Man in his Humour* said that comedy deals "with human follies, not with crimes." The dedication of *Volpone* says that "the office of a comic poet" is "to imitate justice." And Jon-

son carries out the pattern by showing human passions (in this case, "human follies") as inner motives leading to outer actions that in turn lead to the suffering of punishment, a form of plot that Volpone sums up by saying:

> What a rare punishment
> Is avarice to itself!

We have already considered Hegel's variant, in his *Philosophy of History,* where Absolute Spirit is said to *act* by using the blind *passions* of individual men as its medium (a "world-historical individual" thus being one who, in consciously following the lead of merely personal interests and ambitions, unconsciously furthers the designs of the Universal Dialectic).

Much of the action-passion grammar is to be spotted, in liberal writings, beneath references to "freedom" and its opposite. When Aristotle speaks of metaphysics as a liberal art, he conceives of its liberality in contrast with the usefulness or serviceableness of a slave. "As the man is free, we say, who exists for his own sake and not for another's, so we pursue this as the only free science, for it alone exists for its own sake." (I, 2.) And in Book III, Chapter 2, he celebrates it as the "most architectonic and authoritative" science, so authoritative that "the other sciences, like slave-women, may not even contradict it."

"Freedom," as a dialectical term, may be conceived in opposition to *slavery.* Or it may be conceived rather in opposition to *authority.* There is an important psychological distinction between them. Aristotle, in here speaking of freedom, speaks in the role of one who considers himself in the class of free men, in contrast with the class of slaves. He does not conceive of freedom in dialectical opposition to authority; his attitude rather is that of a participant in the authoritative structure. His trade was that of the intellect, in which resided the powers of human action and virtue (through control over the enslaving passions). Aristotle's freedom was not that of protest. It was not negativistic or revolutionary.

But modern freedom, as the slogan of an upstart middle class, was polemic, propagandistic, a doctrine of partial slaves in partial revolt, as with its stress upon service and utility. In proportion as the social values of this rising class became the norm, the original upstart aspect of

modern libertarianism was transferred to socialism and anarchism. The propagandistic ingredient in works like *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* (and in general, the novel of middle class *sentiment*) could be dropped. For the development of business had so circumscribed the concepts of practical or moral utility within monetary limits, that the original religious and moralistic vocabulary of bourgeois apologetics became more and more like a sheer Rhetorical evasion of the Grammatical realities. Art now became "useless," a "free play of the imagination," as per the Bourgeois-Bohemian dichotomy. Except among social reformers and revolutionaries, propaganda art was *categorically* decried, for the liberal critic usually insisted that he was against not just "Leftist" propaganda, but *all* propaganda. He was able to hold this position until the recent war against Fascism, when one by one the "pure" artists came forth with some kind of work in which an anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist position was consciously embedded in the very form and style. For it had become too undeniably obvious that political actions and passions are a major aspect of "reality" as now constituted. Where motives are vigorously actual, there are the themes of art.

One can readily become so involved in such controversies on their own terms, that one neglects to place them in terms of their underlying grammatical principles. What is needed is not that we place ourselves "above" the controversies. Rather, we should place ourselves *within* them, by an understanding of their essential grammar. And this result can be attained, according to the present theory, by seeking for vestiges of the dramatistic in modern liberal terminologies that do not directly abide by this Grammar, *concealed beneath synonyms.* Originally, as we saw in Spinoza, the synonyms were explicit. Later, the Grammatical side of the equations is dropped or slighted—and we may thereupon be led to think that modern theories of motives are operating on principles different from those of the earlier Grammar, whereas they are merely different ways of exploiting the same dialectical resources. But for purposes of classification, one must have categories that include all kinds of motivational doctrines. And if such ways of classification are to be substantial, they must name generative principles which the various species have in common. For this reason we would cling as long as possible to the traces of the action-passion

alignment; and at the point where we must relinquish it, we would deal with the shift in terms of the action-motion disproportion.

Thus, when considering the vocabulary of that essentially liberal psychology, psychoanalysis, we would look for the common underlying Grammar by classing "frustration," "fixation," "complex," and the like as species of passion; and "adjustment," or "normality" as equivalents of action. "Sublimation" would equal transcendence, and "repression" or "inhibition" would represent a new dialectic of "reason" as the *hegemonikon,* stated in quizzical terms whereas formerly it was stated in terms unambiguously favorable. We do not thereby ask that modern psychology abandon its terms for terms more apparently "Grammatical." Rather, we should ourselves apply such exegesis. For only in this way can we see the true significance of whatever changes may have been introduced into the newer terminologies of motives. It is by such forms designed for bringing out continuities in psychological terminology that we can best locate the *discontinuities,* and thereby be able to know just how religions and secular, ancient and modern, psychologies do square with one another.

As regards normal psychology, McDougall's stress upon the "sentiments" would seem, from this point of view, to require broad placement as another study of "incipient action." For this reason it merits more attention, at least *in principle,* than it now usually gets (having been displaced by psychologies more exclusively scientist in their concerns, as with experiments in perception and learning).

On the other hand, most modern works have departed far from a direct relation to the dramatist grammar. One can see "action" readily enough behind a word like "freedom"; it is more attenuated when we come to "adjustment" (in fact, as we have observed, this term can signify passivity, or sheer motion); we can discern the lineaments of potentiality, or incipient action, in attitudes, images, and sentiments. But often one does best to begin one's analysis the other way round, simply looking for the key terms in a work, inquiring how they are related to one another, and waiting for the dramatist forms to force themselves upon the attention, letting the matter lie in abeyance while one charts the given terms just as they are, on their face. Summarization, characterization, and placement is the general aim. The "tendency" is to summarize, characterize, and place in dramatist terms. But

the search for such underlying forms must not lead to a neglect of terminological tactics peculiar to the given work. A particular poem, for instance, might be organized about a single image, variously ramified, as theme with variations. It would be enough to discern these developments in themselves, without regard for the possible significance of the image as "incipient action" or "incipient passion." And only when examining the images of the writer's work in its entirety might we come to see the full significance of this image as a symbolic act. (The subject has been considered at some length in our *Philosophy of Literary Form*. We also intend to consider many other aspects of it in our volume on the Symbolic of Motives.)

Considered solely in terms of political power, an "act" would be possible only to a ruler, or to a ruling class. Or, as applied by analogy to the psychology of the individual, an act would be possible only to the part of the soul that enjoyed a corresponding status of authority. At least, that seems to be the ratio at the basis of that *hegemonikon* which the Stoics located in the reason, thus linking the idea of private rule with the idea of public rule by equating reason with authority. Recalling what we have previously said about the nature of modern liberalism, we can grasp the significance of the Stoic's reason-authority equation by comparing it with the partial shattering of that equation in Rousseau.

Rousseau proposed to ground Emile's education in a respect for the "necessity in things" rather than deference to the "caprices" and "authority" of other men. Dependence on things, he said, is the "work of nature." But dependence on men is the "work of society." Dependence on things, "being non-moral, does no injury to liberty." But dependence on men "gives rise to every kind of vice," as "master and slave corrupt each other." It is obvious now how Rousseau's partial dissociating of reason and authority pointed towards the French Revolution. And looking further back, in the light of Rousseau's naturalism, and still on the Rhetorical level, can we not discern the anti-authoritarian implications in Spinoza's naturalism? It was not merely a position to be considered in itself. It was a *counter*-position (as Spinoza, of course, himself made explicit in his political views disagreeing with Hobbes).[12]

[12] In studying the nature of linguistic action, one must always be on guard for evidence of Rhetorical action embedded in Grammar. A pure scenic approach errs in stressing this relation at the expense of formal analysis. But one must watch lest the scenic excess lead to the opposite excess, that would eliminate extrinsic reference entirely. Let's remember that, in the long conversation of history, few statements are made simply "in themselves." They are *answers* to other statements. And this function is a part of their intrinsic form. Recently, reading the autobiography of St. Teresa, I was struck by her account of her efforts to establish a complete distrust of herself. Recalling pious exhortations to "put one's faith in God," I suddenly realized that this had been a *dialectical* injunction, as opposition to those who put their faith in *any* human being. In other words, the injunction had not originally meant simply that one should rely upon God; it implied also whom one should *not* rely on. Of a sudden, then, I saw Rousseau's statement in a line of transformations, having St. Teresa's position at one end, and Emerson's cult of "self-reliance" at the other.

As the reason acts, and the body moves, so authorities could act by adopting policies to be carried out by others (who moved as slaves, servants, or assistants). Thus, eventually a "ruling class" (in accordance with the properties of its status) could become transformed from a class that "does" to a class that "does not." It is the development we considered earlier with relation to the actus-status pair. Acts require properties of status; and the "substantiality" of such properties can be inherited independently of the act which was originally their generating principle.

We have already seen how Stoicism led into the Christian paradox, the "revolutionary" transvaluation whereby suffering (the passive) could be treated as an *act* (accounts of martyrdom, for instance, being termed either "passionals" or "acts"). We find this change emerging in Stoicism, with its emphasis upon the moral value of sufferance, and its great humanitarian sympathy with slavery—indeed, its tendency to dwell upon the ways in which all men are slaves and servants (to their appetites, emotions, errors, or to natural or political necessities). Christianity offered a doctrine whereby the subjects were persons, and in their passion were capable not merely of motion, but of action. It permitted one in a way to "will" his subjection—and in so doing it gave him a "substantial" freedom, a "pure" freedom. By the ambiguity of substance, or the paradox of purity, it could call a man free precisely because he was enslaved. And in calling him "substantially" free, in effect it invited him to make himself so in actuality (inviting him to translate his "essential" freedom into its "existential" counterpart, or to proceed from the "form" of freedom to its "materialization"). And by ***universalizing*** the concept of servitude (so that all

men "served," all men "obeyed," all were "patient," as Christians doing the work of the Lord), it could also include the realistic, Aristotelian concept of the free person. For if *all* men are slaves, or better, *servants,* it would be as true to say that *no* men are slaves, "substantially." Hence all would merit a respect for themselves as persons; and it would be wrong to treat men merely as objects of use. Men's servitude to God, law, and other men would be dependent upon a *voluntary* submission to their divinely appointed status. Such a way would make of submission an act and not a mere sufferance. Or better, it made submission an act because sufferance itself was considered an act.

In proportion as the servitude took the form of private enterprise, it endowed the "servants" with material powers. The "passivity" thus did, in the most obvious sense, become active, since ambitions netted results. The "freedom" of universal Christian "servitude," thus in time became transformed into a condition of action, even revolutionary action, particularly since the ideals of *private* wealth could be Rhetorically stated as the ideal of a Christlike *poor* Church.

All told we have, as motivational patterns which psychologies more or less patently realistic might exemplify: the action-passion and actus-status pairs, the action-motion ambiguity, and the potential. These can be variously *individuated* in specific terminologies (as with different schools of psychology, religious or secular, or in the one-time motivational structures of particular biographies, histories, reports, poems, plays, and narrative fictions). Obviously the Grammatical principles here considered can merely suggest the broad categories by reference to which any particular vocabulary of motives would be classed. Such realistic reclamation would enable us to class "ethical" and "scientifically neutral" psychologies together with terms that can be applied to all such terminologies of motives. In brief, all psychologies can, without violence to their subject matter, be approached dramatistically, as vocabularies concerned with the kinds and conditions of action and passion.

Even the most extreme behaviorism would belong here. We refer not only to its dramatistic placement in terms of a narrowed circumference that reduces action to motion. We refer also to the behaviorist concept of "transference." According to this concept, the conditioned response to an object or situation of a certain quality may be transferred to other objects or situations felt to be of the same quality. But this process involves the interpretation and *classification* of signs; and when this is capable of modification by purely linguistic means, as with human beings, it opens up a field of investigation that takes one far beyond the "conditioned reflex" in its simplicity. But though it involves kinds of transcendence and symbolic action that could not be treated in such terms, the need of richer terms can be shown to exist simply by a strict analysis of the elements subsumed under the concept of "transference" itself. For it introduces problems of classification and reclassification that could readily lead to the equating of "adequate" classifications with "action" and the equating of "inadequate" classifications with "passion" (though the two be concealed beneath terms like "adjustment" and "maladjustment").

But one other Grammatical resource of action need be considered briefly, and we can turn to our remaining terms, Purpose and Agency.

In Book I, Chapters 6 and 7 of his *Physics,* we find Aristotle trying to decide "whether the basic principles of nature are two or three or some greater number." As we read on, we see that the matter is purely dialectical, involving the question whether we should reduce nature to a pair of opposites, related as hot and cold, increase and decrease, active and passive, or should postulate a "third something underlying them." He does not make a final choice, being content to observe that, from one point of view, a third term is needed, to serve as the mediating ground of the opposites. But from another point of view, only two are needed, since we can account for change by considering one of the opposites as present or absent; and in this case we should need only it and the underlying principle. As for the underlying substratum itself, we can understand it by analogy:

> It is to any particular and existent substance what bronze is to a completed statue, wood to a bed, and still unformed materials to the objects fashioned from them.

In brief, it is the principle of potentiality which we have already considered.

Looking at this issue from the standpoint of the Grammatical voices, we see Aristotle here asking whether the *active* and *passive* are enough, or whether we may also require a *middle* voice in our Grammar of motives. As a matter of fact, in the Indo-European family of lan-

guages, the passive voice is a late development. Originally there were but the active and middle (or reflexive) forms, and the passive developed out of the middle. (In Greek, the conjugations of middle and passive are alike in many tenses.) Prior to its development, passive ideas were expressed actively, but reflexively, in treating the action as directed by the self upon the self. Passive forms probably indicate a high degree of development from actus to status, with a corresponding increase in the sense of mental states.

Once such a development has taken place, however, as it did with the complex vocabulary of sensibility and scruples accumulated by Christianity, the scene is set for "post-passive" kinds of active and reflexive. Writers like Caldwell and Hemingway, for instance, can be sparse in their recital, contenting themselves largely with purely behavioristic narrative, precisely because readers can be relied upon to supply the scruples of themselves. The apparent harshness is thus but a sophisticated variant of sensitivity, perhaps even sentimentality, for the expression of emotions is sentimental in proportion as it is inexact.

But the reflexive, as a mediate relationship, moves us rather in the direction of means; accordingly, it will be considered again when we look at the term, Agency. We have now considered the big three, scene, agent, and act. We shall now consider the remaining two, Agency and Purpose, that draw together in the means-ends relationship. And following that, we shall consider our category of categories, dialectic.

IV

AGENCY AND PURPOSE

The Philosophy of Means

UNDER Pragmatism, in the Baldwin dictionary, we read: "This term is applied by Kant to the species of hypothetical imperative . . . which prescribes the means necessary to the attainment of happiness." In accordance with our thesis, we here seize upon the reference to *means,* since we hold that Pragmatist philosophies are generated by the featuring of the term, Agency. We can discern this genius most readily in the very title, *Instrumentalism,* which John Dewey chooses to characterize his variant of the pragmatist doctrine. Similarly William James explicitly asserts that Pragmatism is "a method only." And adapting Peirce's notion that beliefs are rules for action, he says that "theories thus become instruments," thereby stressing the practical nature of theory, whereas Aristotle had come close to putting theory and practice in dialectical opposition to each other. James classed his pragmatism with nominalism in its appeal to particulars, with utilitarianism in its emphasis upon the practical, and with positivism in its "disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions."

In one sense, there must be as many "pragmatisms" as there are philosophies. That is, each philosophy announces some view of human ends, and will require a corresponding doctrine of means. In this sense, we might ask wherein "Stoic pragmatism" would differ from "Epicurean," "Platonist," or "Kantian" pragmatisms, etc. But modern science is *par excellence* an accumulation of new agencies (means, instruments, methods). And this locus of new power, in striking men's fancy, has called forth "philosophies of science" that would raise agency to first place among our five terms.

William James, in his book on *Pragmatism,* quotes Papini, who likens the pragmatist stress to the corridor in a hotel. Each room of the hotel may house a guest whose personal interests and philosophic views

One noticeable difference between the later selection and the earlier one is omission of poems on method. In *Selected Poems* there were a great many such. I think for instance of: "Poetry," containing her ingenious conceit, "imaginary gardens with real toads in them"; "Critics and Connoisseurs"; "The Monkeys"; "In the Days of Prismatic Colour"; "Picking and Choosing"; "When I Buy Pictures"; "Novices" (on action in language, and developed in imagery of the sea); "The Past is the Present" ("ecstasy affords / the occasion and expediency determines the form"); and one which propounds a doctrine as its title: "In This Age of Hard Trying, Nonchalance is Good and."

But though methodological pronouncements of this sort have dropped away, in the closing poem on "The Paper Nautilus," the theme does reappear. Yet in an almost startlingly deepened transformation. Here, proclaiming the poet's attachment to the poem, there are likenesses to the maternal attachment to the young. And the themes of bondage and freedom (as with one "hindered to succeed") are fiercely and flashingly merged.

D

FOUR MASTER TROPES

I REFER to metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. And my primary concern with them here will be not with their purely figurative usage, but with their rôle in the discovery and description of "the truth." It is an evanescent moment that we shall deal with—for not only does the dividing line between the figurative and literal usages shift, but also the four tropes shade into one another. Give a man but one of them, tell him to exploit its possibilities, and if he is thorough in doing so, he will come upon the other three.

The "literal" or "realistic" applications of the four tropes usually go by a different set of names. Thus:

For *metaphor* we could substitute *perspective;*
For *metonymy* we could substitute *reduction;*
For *synecdoche* we could substitute *representation;*
For *irony* we could substitute *dialectic.*[1]

We must subsequently try to make it clear in what respects we think these substitutions are justifiable. It should, however, be apparent at a glance that, regardless of whether our proposed substitutions are justifiable, considered in themselves they do shade into another, as we have said that the four tropes do. A dialectic, for instance, aims to give us a representation by the use of mutually related or interacting perspectives—and this resultant perspective of perspectives will necessarily be a reduction in the sense that a chart drawn to scale is a reduction of the area charted.

Metaphor is a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else. It brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this. If we employ the word "character" as a general term for whatever can be thought of as distinct (any thing, pattern, situation, structure, nature, person, object, act, rôle, process, event, etc.,) then we could say that metaphor tells us something about one character as considered from

[1] "Dialectic" is here used in the restricted sense. In a broader sense, all the transformations considered in this essay are dialectical.

the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a *perspective* upon A.

It is customary to think that objective reality is dissolved by such relativity of terms as we get through the shifting of perspectives (the perception of one character in terms of many diverse characters). But on the contrary, it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality. If we are in doubt as to what an object is, for instance, we deliberately try to consider it in as many different terms as its nature permits: lifting, smelling, tasting, tapping, holding in different lights, subjecting to different pressures, dividing, matching, contrasting, etc.

Indeed, in keeping with the older theory of realism (what we might call "poetic realism," in contrast with modern "scientific realism") we could say that characters possess *degrees of being* in proportion to the variety of perspectives from which they can with justice be perceived. Thus we could say that plants have "more being" than minerals, animals have more being than plants, and men have more being than animals, because each higher order admits and requires a new dimension of terms not literally relevant to the lower orders.

By deliberate coaching and criticism of the perspective process, characters can be considered tentatively, in terms of other characters, for experimental or heuristic purposes. Examples may be offered at random: for instance, human motivation may, with varying degrees of relevance and reward, be considered in terms of conditioned reflexes, or chemicals, or the class struggles, or the love of God, or neurosis, or pilgrimage, or power, or movements of the planets, or geography, or sun spots, etc. Various kinds of scientific specialists now carry out the implications of one or another of such perspectives with much more perseverance than that with which a 17th Century poet might in one poem pursue the exploitation of a "conceit."

In *Permanence and Change* I have developed at some length the relationship between metaphor and perspective. I there dealt with such perspectives as an "incongruity," because the seeing of something in terms of something else involves the "carrying-over" of a term from one realm into another, a process that necessarily involves varying degrees of incongruity in that the two realms are never identical. But besides the mere desire not to restate this earlier material, there is another reason why we can hurry on to our next pair (metonymy and reduction). For since the four pairs overlap upon one another, we shall be carrying the first pair with us as we proceed.

II

Science, concerned with processes and "processing," is not properly concerned with substance (that is, it is not concerned with "being," as "poetic realism" is). Hence, it need not be concerned with motivation. All it need know is correlation. The limits of science, *qua* science, do not go beyond the statement that, when certain conditions are met, certain new conditions may be expected to follow. It is true that, in the history of the actual development of science, the discovery of such correlations has been regularly guided by philosophies of causation ("substantial" philosophies that were subsequently "discredited" or were so radically redefined as to become in effect totally different philosophies). And it is equally true that the discovery of correlations has been guided by ideational forms developed through theology and governmental law. Such "impurities" will always be detectible *behind* science as the act of given scientists; but science *qua* science is abstracted from them.

Be the world "mind," or "matter," or "both," or "several," you will follow the same procedure in striking a match. It is in this sense that science, *qua* science, is concerned with operations rather than with substances, even though the many inventions to do with the chemistry of a match can be traced back to a source in very explicit beliefs about substances and motivations of nature—and even of the supernatural.

However, as soon as you move into the social realm, involving the relation of man to man, mere *correlation* is not enough. Human relationships must be *substantial,* related by the copulative, the "is" of "being." In contrast with "scientific realism," "poetic realism" is centered in this emphasis. It seeks (except insofar as it is affected by the norms of "scientific realism") to place the motives of action, as with the relation between the seminal (potential) and the growing (actualized). Again and again, there have been attempts to give us a "science of human relations" after the analogy of the natural sciences. But there is a strategic or crucial respect in which this is impossible; namely: there

can be no "science" of substance, except insofar as one is willing to call philosophy, metaphysics, or theology "sciences" (and they are not sciences in the sense of the positive scientific departments).

Hence, any attempt to deal with human relationships after the analogy of naturalistic correlations becomes necessarily the *reduction* of some higher or more complex realm of being to the terms of a lower or less complex realm of being. And, recalling that we propose to treat *metonymy* and *reduction* as substitutes for each other, one may realize why we thought it necessary thus to introduce the subject of metonymy.

The basic "strategy" in metonymy is this: to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible. E.g., to speak of "the heart" rather than "the emotions." If you trail language back far enough, of course, you will find that all our terms for "spiritual" states were metonymic in origin. We think of "the emotions," for instance, as applying solely to the realm of consciousness, yet obviously the word is rooted in the most "materialistic" term of all, "motion" (a key strategy in Western materialism has been the reduction of "consciousness" to "motion"). In his *Principles of Literary Criticism,* Richards is being quite "metonymic" in proposing that we speak not of the "emotions" aroused in the reader by the work of art, but the "commotions."

Language develops by metaphorical extension, in borrowing words from the realm of the corporeal, visible, tangible and applying them by analogy to the realm of the incorporeal, invisible, intangible; then in the course of time, the original corporeal reference is forgotten, and only the incorporeal, metaphorical extension survives (often because the very conditions of living that reminded one of the corporeal reference have so altered that the cross reference no longer exists with near the same degree of apparentness in the "objective situation" itself); and finally, poets regain the original relation, in reverse, by a "metaphorical extension" back from the intangible into a tangible equivalent (the first "carrying-over" from the material to the spiritual being compensated by a second "carrying-over" from the spiritual back into the material); and this "archaicizing" device we call "metonymy."

"Metonymy" is a device of "poetic realism"—but its partner, "reduction," is a device of "scientific realism." Here "poetry" and "behaviorism" meet. For the poet spontaneously knows that "beauty *is* as beauty *does"* (that the "state" must be "embodied" in an actualization). He knows that human relations require actions, which are *dramatizations,* and that the essential medium of drama is the posturing, tonalizing body placed in a material scene. He knows that "shame," for instance, is not merely a "state," but a movement of the eye, a color of the cheek, a certain quality of voice and set of the muscles; he knows this as "behavioristically" as the formal scientific behaviorist who would "reduce" the state itself to these corresponding bodily equivalents.

He also knows, however, that these bodily equivalents are but part of the *idiom of expression* involved in the act. They are "figures." They are hardly other than "symbolizations." Hence, for all his "archaicizing" usage here, he is not offering his metonymy as a *substantial* reduction. For in "poetic realism," states of mind as the motives of action are not reducible to materialistic terms. Thus, though there is a sense in which both the poetic behaviorist and the scientific behaviorist are exemplifying the strategy of metonymy (as the poet translates the spiritual into an idiom of material equivalents, and may even select for attention the same bodily responses that the scientist may later seek to measure), the first is using metonymy as a *terminological* reduction whereas the scientific behaviorist offers his reduction as a "real" reduction. (However, he does not do this *qua* scientist, but only by reason of the materialist metaphysics, with its assumptions about substance and motive, that is implicit in his system.)

III

Now, note that a reduction is a *representation.* If I reduce the contours of the United States, for instance, to the terms of a relief map, I have within these limits "represented" the United States. As a mental state is the "representation" of certain material conditions, so we could —reversing the process—say that the material conditions are "representative" of the mental state. That is, if there is some kind of correspondence between what we call the act of perception and what we call the thing perceived, then either of these equivalents can be taken as "representative" of the other. Thus, as reduction (metonymy) overlaps upon metaphor (perspective) so likewise it overlaps upon synecdoche (representation).

For this purpose we consider synecdoche in the usual range of dictionary sense, with such meanings as: part for the whole, whole for the part, container for the contained, sign for the thing signified, mate-

rial for the thing made (which brings us nearer to metonymy), cause for effect, effect for cause, genus for species, species for genus, etc. All such conversions imply an integral relationship, a relationship of convertibility, between the two terms.

The "noblest synecdoche," the perfect paradigm or prototype for all lesser usages, is found in metaphysical doctrines proclaiming the identity of "microcosm" and "macrocosm." In such doctrines, where the individual is treated as a replica of the universe, and vice versa, we have the ideal synecdoche, since microcosm is related to macrocosm as part to whole, and either the whole can represent the part or the part can represent the whole. (For "represent" here we could substitute "be identified with.") One could thus look through the remotest astronomical distances to the "truth within," or could look within to learn the "truth in all the universe without." Leibniz's monadology is a good instance of the synecdochic on this grand scale. (And "representation" is his word for this synecdochic relationship.)

A similar synecdochic form is present in all theories of political representation, where some part of the social body (either traditionally established, or elected, or coming into authority by revolution) is held to be "representative" of the society as a whole. The pattern is essential to Rousseau's theory of the *volonté générale,* for instance. And though there are many disagreements within a society as to what part should represent the whole and how this representation should be accomplished, in a complex civilization any act of representation automatically implies a synecdochic relationship (insofar as the act is, or is held to be, "truly representative").

Sensory representation is, of course, synecdochic in that the senses abstract certain qualities from some bundle of electro-chemical activities we call, say, a tree, and these qualities (such as size, shape, color, texture, weight, etc.) can be said "truly to represent" a tree. Similarly, artistic representation is synecdochic, in that certain relations within the medium "stand for" corresponding relations outside it. There is also a sense in which the well-formed work of art is internally synecdochic, as the beginning of a drama contains its close or the close sums up the beginning, the parts all thus being consubstantially related. Indeed, one may think what he will of microcosm-macrocosm relationships as they are applied to "society" or "the universe," the fact remains that, as regards such a "universe" as we get in a well-organized work of art, at

every point the paradoxes of the synecdochic present themselves to the critic for analysis. Similarly, the realm of psychology (and particularly the psychology of art) requires the use of the synecdochic reversals. Indeed, I would want deliberately to "coach" the concept of the synecdochic by extending it to cover such relations (and their reversals) as: before for after, implicit for explicit, temporal sequence for logical sequence, name for narrative, disease for cure, hero for villain, active for passive. At the opening of *The Ancient Mariner,* for instance, the Albatross is a *gerundive:* its nature when introduced is that of something *to be* murdered, and it implicitly contains the future that is to become explicit. In *Moby Dick,* Ahab as pursuer is pursued; his action is a passion.

Metonymy may be treated as a special application of synecdoche. If, for instance, after the analogy of a correlation between "mind and body" or "consciousness and matter (or motion)" we selected quality and quantity as a "synecdochically related pair," then we might propose to treat as synecdoche the substitution of either quantity for quality or quality for quantity (since either side could be considered as the sign, or symptom, of the other). But only *one* of these, the substitution of quantity for quality, would be a metonymy. We might say that representation (synecdoche) stresses a *relationship* or *connectedness* between two sides of an equation, a connectedness that, like a road, extends in either direction, from quantity to quality or from quality to quantity; but reduction follows along this road in only *one* direction, from quality to quantity.[2]

Now "poetic realism," in contrast with "scientific realism," cannot confine itself to representation in this metonymic, one-direction sense. True, every art, in its nature as a medium, reduces a state of consciousness to a "corresponding" sensory body (so material that it can be reproduced, bought and sold). But the aim of such *embodiment* is to produce in the observer a corresponding state of *consciousness* (that is,

[2] Unfortunately, we must modify this remark somewhat. Reduction, *as per scientific realism,* would be confined to but one direction. Reduction, that is, as the word is now generally used. But originally, "reduction" was used in ways that make it closer rather to the margin of its overlap upon "perspective," as anything considered in terms of anything else could be said to be "reduced"—or "brought back" ("referred")—to it, so that the consideration of art in terms of morality, politics, or religion could have been called "the reduction" of art to morality, or politics, or religion.

the artist proceeds from "mind" to "body" that his representative reduction may induce the audience to proceed from "body" to "mind"). But there is an important difference between representing the quality of an experience thus and reducing the quality to a quantity. One might even "represent" the human body in the latter, reductive sense, by reducing it to ashes and offering a formula for the resultant chemicals. Otto Neurath's "isotypes" (see his *Modern Man in the Making*, or our review of it, "Quantity and Quality," in the appendix of *The Philosophy of Literary Form*) are representations in the latter, reductive sense, in contrast with the kind of representation we get in realistic portrait-painting.

Our point in going over this old ground is to use it as a way of revealing a tactical error in the attempt to treat of *social* motivations. We refer to the widespread belief that the mathematico-quantitative ideal of the physical sciences can and should serve as the ideal of the "social sciences," a belief that has led, for instance, to the almost fabulous amassing of statistical surveys in the name of "sociology." Or, if one insisted upon the right to build "sciences" after this model (since no one could deny that statistics are often revealing) our claim would be that science in this restricted sense (that explains higher orders by reduction to lower orders, organic complexities by reduction to atomistic simplicities, being by reduction to motion, or quality by reduction to number, etc.) could not *take the place* of metaphysics or religion, but would have to return to the role of "handmaiden."

Let us get at the point thus: *A terminology of conceptual analysis, if it is not to lead to misrepresentation, must be constructed in conformity with a representative anecdote—whereas anecdotes "scientifically" selected for reductive purposes are not representative.* E.g., think of the scientist who, in seeking an entrance into the analysis of human motivations, selects as his "informative anecdote" for this purpose some laboratory experiment having to do with the responses of animals. Obviously, such an anecdote has its peculiarly simplificatory ("reductive") character, or genius—and the scientist who develops his analytic terminology about this anecdote as his informative case must be expected to have, as a result, a terminology whose character or genius is restricted by the character or genius of the model for the description of which it is formed. He next proceeds to transfer (to "metaphor") this terminology to the interpretation of a different order of cases, turning

for instance from animals to infants and from infants to the acts of fully developed adults. And when he has made these steps, applying his terminology to a kind of anecdote so different from the kind about which it was formed, this misapplication of his terminology would not give him a representative interpretation at all, but a mere "debunking." Only insofar as the analyst had not lived up to his claims, only insofar as his terminology for the analysis of a higher order of cases was *not* restricted to the limits proper to the analysis of a lower order of cases, could he hope to discuss the higher order of cases in an adequate set of terms. Otherwise, the genius of his restricted terminology must "drag the interpretation down to their level."

This observation goes for any terminological approach to the analysis of human acts or relationships that is shaped in conformity with an unrepresentative case (or that selects as the "way in" to one's subject an "informative anecdote" belonging in some other order than the case to be considered). For instance, insofar as Alfred Korzybski really does form his terminology for the analysis of meaning in conformity with that contraption of string, plugs, and tin he calls the "Structural Differential," his analysis of meaning is "predestined" to misrepresentation, since the genius of the contraption itself is not a representative example of meaning. It is a "reduction" of meaning, a reduction in the restricted sense of the term, as Thurman Arnold's reduction of social relations into terms of the psychiatric metaphor is reductive.

What then, it may be asked, would be a "representative anecdote?" But that takes us into the fourth pair: irony and dialectic.

IV

A treatment of the irony-dialectic pair will be much easier to follow if we first delay long enough to consider the equatability of "dialectic" with "dramatic."

A human rôle (such as we get in drama) may be summed up in certain slogans, or formulae, or epigrams, or "ideas" that characterize the agent's situation or strategy. The rôle involves properties both intrinsic to the agent and developed with relation to the scene and to other agents. And the "summings-up" ("ideas") similarly possess properties derived both from the agent and from the various factors

with which the agent is in relationship. Where the ideas are in action, we have drama; where the agents are in ideation, we have dialectic.

Obviously, there are elements of "dramatic personality" in dialectic ideation, and elements of dialectic in the mutual influence of dramatic agents in contributing to one another's ideational development. You might state all this another way by saying that you cannot have ideas without persons or persons without ideas. Thus, one might speak of "Socratic irony" as "dramatic," and of "dramatic irony" as "Socratic."

Relativism is got by the fragmentation of either drama or dialectic. That is, if you isolate any one agent in a drama, or any one advocate in a dialogue, and see the whole in terms of his position alone, you have the purely relativistic. And in relativism there is no irony. (Indeed, as Cleanth Brooks might say, it is the very absence if irony in relativism that makes it so susceptible to irony. For relativism sees everything in but one set of terms—and since there are endless other terms in which things could be seen, the irony of the monologue that makes everything in its image would be in this ratio: the greater the *absolutism* of the statements, the greater the *subjectivity* and *relativity* in the position of the agent making the statements.)

Irony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a *development* which uses all the terms. Hence, from the standpoint of this total form (this "perspective of perspectives"), none of the participating "sub-perspectives" can be treated as either precisely right or precisely wrong. They are all voices, or personalities, or positions, integrally affecting one another. When the dialectic is properly formed, they are the number of characters needed to produce the total development. Hence, reverting to our suggestion that we might extend the synecdochic pattern to include such reversible pairs as disease-cure, hero-villain, active-passive, we should "ironically" note the function of the disease in "perfecting" the cure, or the function of the cure in "perpetuating" the influences of the disease. Or we should note that only through an internal and external experiencing of folly could we possess (in our intelligence or imagination) sufficient "characters" for some measure of development beyond folly.

People usually confuse the dialectic with the relativistic. Noting that the dialectic (or dramatic) explicitly attempts to establish a distinct set of characters, all of which protest variously at odds or on the bias with one another, they think no further. It is certainly relativistic,

for instance, to state that any term (as per metaphor-perspective) can be seen from the point of view of any other term. But insofar as terms are thus encouraged to participate in an orderly parliamentary development, the dialectic of this participation produces (in the observer who considers the whole from the standpoint of the participation of all the terms rather than from the standpoint of any one participant) a "resultant certainty" of a different quality, necessarily ironic, since it requires that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true nor false, but *contributory* (as were we to think of the resultant certainty or "perspective of perspectives" as a noun, and to think of all the contributory voices as necessary modifiers of that noun).

To be sure, relativism is the constant *temptation* of either dialectic or drama (consider how often, for instance, Shakespeare is called a relativist). And historians for the most part *are relativistic.* But where one considers different historical characters from the standpoint of a total development, one could encourage each character to comment upon the others without thereby sacrificing a perspective upon the lot. This could be got particularly, I think, if historical characters themselves (i.e., periods or cultures treated as "individual persons") were considered never to begin or end, but rather to change in intensity or poignancy. History, in this sense, would be a dialectic of characters in which, for instance, we should never expect to see "feudalism" overthrown by "capitalism" and "capitalism" succeeded by some manner of national or international or non-national or neo-national or post-national socialism—but rather should note elements of all such positions (or "voices") existing always, but attaining greater clarity of expression or imperiousness of proportion of one period than another.

Irony is never Pharisaic, but there is a Pharisaic temptation in irony. To illustrate the point, I should like to cite a passage from a poet and critic who knows a good deal about irony, and who is discussing a poet who knows a good deal about irony—but in this particular instance, I submit, he is wrong. I refer to a passage in which Allen Tate characterizes the seduction scene in *The Waste Land* as "ironic" and the poet's attitude as that of "humility." (I agree that "humility" is the proper partner of irony—but I question whether the passage is ironic enough to embody humility.)

Mr. Tate characterizes irony as "that arrangement of experience, either premeditated by art or accidentally appearing in the affairs of

men, which permits to the spectator an insight superior to that of the actor." And he continues:

> The seduction scene is the picture of modern and dominating man. The arrogance and pride of conquest of the "small house agent's clerk" are the badge of science, bumptious practicality, overweening secular faith. The very success of this conquest witnesses its aimless character; it succeeds as a wheel succeeds in turning; he can only conquer again.
>
> His own failure to understand his position is irony, and the poet's insight into it is humility. But for the grace of God, says the poet in effect, there go I. There is essentially the poetic attitude, an attitude that Eliot has been approaching with increasing purity.

We need not try to decide whether or not the poet was justified in feeling "superior" to the clerk. But we may ask how one could *possibly* exemplify an attitude of "humility" by feeling "superior"? There is, to be sure, a brand of irony, called "romantic irony," that might fit in with such a pattern—the kind of irony that did, as a matter of fact, arise as an aesthetic opposition to cultural philistinism, and in which the artist considered himself *outside of* and *superior to* the rôle he was rejecting. And though not "essentially *the* poetic attitude," it is essentially *a* poetic attitude, an attitude exemplified by much romantic art (a sort of pamphleteering, or external, attitude towards "the enemy").

True irony, however, irony that really does justify the attribute of "humility," is not "superior" to the enemy. (I might even here rephrase my discussion of Eliot in *Attitudes Toward History* by saying that Eliot's problem in religion has resided precisely in his attempt to convert romantic irony into classic irony, really to replace a state of "superiority" by a state of "humility"—and *Murder in the Cathedral* is a ritual aimed at precisely such purification of motives.) True irony, humble irony, is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within,* being consubstantial with him. This is the irony of Flaubert, when he recognizes that Madame Bovary is himself. One sees it in Thomas Mann—and in what he once called, when applying the term to another, "Judas psychology." And there was, if not the humility of strength, at least a humility of gentle surrender, in Anatole France.

In *The Waste Land,* the poet is not saying "there but for the grace of God go I." On the contrary, he is, if not thanking God, at least congratulating himself, that he is not like other men, such other men as this petty clerk. If this was "humility," then the Pharisee is Humble Citizen No. 1. With Newton, on the other hand, there was no "superiority" in his exclamation as he observed the criminal. He did not mean that that man was a criminal but he, Newton, thank God, was not; he meant that *he too was a criminal, but that the other man was going to prison for him.* Here was true irony-and-humility, since Newton was simultaneously both outside the criminal and within him.

"Superiority" in the dialectic can arise only in the sense that one may feel the need of *more characters* than the particular foolish characters under consideration. But in one sense he can *never* be superior, for he must realize that he also *needs this particular foolish character as one of the necessary modifiers.* Dialectic irony (or humility) here, we might even say, provides us with a kind of "technical equivalent for the doctrine of original sin." Folly and villainy are integral motives, necessary to wisdom or virtue.[3]

[3] I would consider Falstaff a gloriously ironic conception because we are so at one with him in his vices, while he himself embodies his vices in a mode of identification or brotherhood that is all but religious. Falstaff would not simply rob a man, from without. He *identifies himself* with the victim of a theft; he *represents* the victim. He would not crudely steal a purse; rather, he *joins forces* with the owner of the purse—and it is only when the harsh realities of this imperfect world have imposed a brutally divisive clarity upon the situation, that Falstaff is left holding the purse. He produces a new quality, a state of synthesis or merger—and it so happens that, when this synthesis is finally dissociated again into its analytic components (the crudities of the realm of practical property relationships having reduced this state of qualitative merger to a state of quantitative division), the issue as so simplified sums up to the fact that the purse has changed hands. *He* converts "thine" into "ours"—and it is "circumstances over which he has no control" that go to convert this "ours" into a "mine." A mere thief would have directly converted "thine" into "mine." It is the addition of these intermediate steps that makes the vital difference between a mere thief and Falstaff; for it is precisely these intermediate steps that mark him with a convivial-ity, a sociality, essentially religious—and in this *sympathetic* distortion of religious values resides the irony of his conception.

We might bring out the point sharply by contrasting Falstaff with Tartuffe. Tartuffe, like Falstaff, exploits the coöperative values for competitive ends. He too would convert "thine" into "mine" by putting it through the social alembic of "ours." But the conception of Tartuffe is not ironic, since he is pure hypocrite. He uses the religious values simply as a swindler. Tartuffe's piety, which he uses to gain the confidence of his victims, is a mere deception. Whereas Tartuffe is all competition and merely *simulates* the sentiments of coöperation, Falstaff is

A third temptation of irony is its tendency towards the simplification of literalness. That is: although *all* the characters in a dramatic or dialectic development are necessary qualifiers of the definition, there is usually some one character that enjoys the rôle of *primus inter pares*. For whereas any of the characters may be viewed in terms of any other, this one character may be taken as the summarizing vessel, or synecdochic representative, of the development as a whole. This is the rôle of Socrates in the Platonic dialogue, for instance—and we could similarly call the proletariat the Socrates of the Marxist Symposium of History, as they are not merely equal participants along with the other characters, but also represent the *end* or *logic* of the development as a whole.

This "most representative" character thus has a dual function: one we might call "adjectival" and the other "substantial." The character is "adjectival," as embodying one of the qualifications necessary to the total definition, but is "substantial" as embodying the conclusions of the development as a whole. Irony is sacrificed to "the simplification of literalness" when this duality of rôle is neglected (as it may be neglected by either the reader, the writer, or both). In Marxism as a literally libertarian philosophy, for instance, slavery is "bad," and is so treated in the rhetoric of proletarian emancipation (e.g., "wage slavery"). Yet from the standpoint of the development as a whole, slavery must be treated ironically, as with Engel's formula: "Without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism." Utilization of the vanquished by enslavement, he notes, was a great cultural advance over the wasteful practice of slaying the vanquished.

V

Irony, as approached through either drama or dialectic, moves us into the area of "law" and "justice" (the "necessity" or "inevitability" of the *lex talionis*) that involves matters of form in art (as form affects anticipation and fulfilment) and matters of prophecy and prediction in history. There is a level of generalization at which predictions about "inevitable" developments in history are quite justified. We may state

genuinely coöperative, sympathetic, a synecdochic part of his victim—but along with such rich gifts of identification, what is to prevent a purse from changing hands?

with confidence, for instance, that what arose in time must fall in time (hence, that any given structure of society must "inevitably" perish). We may make such prophecy more precise, with the help of irony, in saying that the developments that led to the rise will, by the further course of their development, "inevitably" lead to the fall (true irony always, we hold, thus involving an "internal fatality," a principle operating from within, though its logic may also be grounded in the nature of the extrinsic scene, whose properties contribute to the same development).

The point at which different casuistries appear (for fitting these "general laws of inevitability" to the unique cases of history) is the point where one tries to decide exactly what new characters, born of a given prior character, will be the "inevitable" vessels of the prior character's deposition. As an over-all ironic formula here, and one that has the quality of "inevitability," we could lay it down that "what goes forth as A returns as non-A." This is the basic pattern that places the essence of drama and dialectic in the irony of the "peripety," the strategic moment of reversal.