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employed." In Hollywood, when a new star is found, the experts in publicity are charged with the duty of finding her a winsome name. Over the years, a happy choice may mean a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in box office receipts. Here is where my theory enters. I propose that the experts proceed as follows:

I propose that they select some "poisonous" word—some one of the many repellent "four-letter words" that are socially forbidden, owing to one or another kind of unpleasantness they suggest. Then I would have the experts experiment with slight transformations of this word, until they had produced a structure in which the original repellent word was retained as a barely audible overtone, flickering about its edges. I submit that, to an auditor who did not know the genesis of this word, but who did know and dislike the word from which it had been derived, this new synthetic product would be "exceptionally beautiful."¹³

ON METHODOLOGY

A critic's perspective implicitly selects a set of questions that the critic considers to be key questions. We usually think of answers as the primary pointers of direction in a conceptual writer's work; actually however the point about

¹³ Phonetically, *m* is closely related to *p*, both being labials—and *k* is closely related to *ɾ*, both being gutturals (the guttural relationship being closer in French than in English *ɾ*). But *m* is smoother than *p*, and *ɾ* is smoother than *k*. "Molière," by this analysis, is seen as an acrostic of "Poquelin," with the nasal omitted. Molière's beautiful pseudonym is a revision of his original surname, in the direction of much greater musicality. "Poquelin," to be sure, is not an oath; but it is certainly unpleasant as compared with its phonetic revision—and the quality of Molière's mind, with the intense melancholy underlying his comic genius, gives us good ground to suspect that "Poquelin" was identified with an unliked aspect of himself. We should place him in a category of writers-at-cross-purposes with Flaubert, who flayed "Bovary" and "Bouvard," names surprisingly like acrostics of "Flaubert," when we recalled that *v* is but a voiced *f*.

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which the differences in critical schools pivot is not in answers, but in questions.

All questions are leading questions. For instance, suppose that you wanted to weaken a statesman's reputation in the most "scientific" manner. A very good method would be to found some bureau for the polling of public opinion, and to send forth investigators armed with questions that constantly harped upon the matter of the man's integrity. They would not have to be "leading questions" in the obvious sense. They would need no "weighting" other than the weighting implicit in the choice of topic itself. The man's integrity, which might otherwise have been taken for granted, becomes a "problem." Even those who come to his defense must, in this very act, themselves help to emphasize the element of doubtfulness. A dubious name is a name half ill, and "He that hath an ill name is half hanged."

Questions harping on the subject of personal integrity would have another "creative" function. They would automatically select the field of controversy—hence, they would automatically deflect the attention from other possible fields of controversy. Questions might have been asked, for instance, that bore wholly on the measures which the statesman advocated. And the whole tenor of the discussion would have changed accordingly. It is in this sense that an institute for the polling of public opinion could not avoid "leading questions" no matter how hard it tried (and I doubt whether such enterprises usually try very hard). Every question selects a field of battle, and in this selection it forms the nature of the answers.

In this sense, also, we could say that Marxist criticism in recent years "triumphed" over its most emphatic opponents.

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Even those critics who had previously been answering questions about "pure form" now began answering questions about "the relation between art and society," i. e., *Marxist* questions.

Implicit in a perspective there are two kinds of questions: (1) what to look for, and why; (2) how, when, and where to look for it. The first could be called ontological questions; the second, methodological. A critic eager to define his position should attempt to make his answers to these questions as explicit as possible, even at the risk of appearing to "lay down the law." After all, there are "laws" (or at least, rules of thumb) implicit in the critic's perspective—and the critic should do what he can to specify them as a way of defining that perspective. I am particularly prodded to this attempt because my procedures have been characterized as "intuitive" and "idiosyncratic," epithets that make me squirm. For I believe that a critic should seek to develop not only a method, but a methodology—and that this methodology should be formed, at every turn, by reference to the "collective revelation" of accumulated critical lore.

However, as a student of strategies, I realize that there is no sure remedy for my discomfort. What if one did succeed in proving, for anyone concerned, that his method is developed in cooperation with the work of other critics, and that he can *deduce* from his perspective a set of procedures for analyzing the structure of a work *inductively*? An opponent would then need but transubstantiate his epithets. And the charge that the critic is "too intuitive" or "idiosyncratic" in his methods could be happily revised into a charge that he is too "derivative" and is following an "overly mechanical routine." Our critical vocabulary is rich in such resourcefulness.

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So I shall now assemble in one spot some basic rules of thumb—with diffidence; and not in the forlorn hope of silencing anyone, but only in the hope of defining a perspective by stating the what's, how's, when's, where's, and why's that go with it. In other words, I am asking no one to "obey these rules" (or rather, these rules of thumb). I assemble them simply as a convenient way of crystallizing my ex-position. If we wanted to know "what is going on" in a work of art, in accordance with the notion of "symbolic action," how should we proceed? What kind of "leads" would we follow? I have touched upon this matter in passing, but should like now to discuss it focally.

First: We should watch for the dramatic alignment. What is vs. what. As per Odets: violin vs. prizefight. Or in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, where we found the discordant principle of parliament, with its many voices in dispersion, placed in dramatic or dialectic opposition to the one voice of Hitler. (The structure is described at length in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle,'" *The Southern Review*, Summer, 1939.) To fill out such a description, we must note, at the same time, the sets of "equations" that reinforce each of the opposing principles. I have given a long list of these in the Hitler analysis, and have previously in the present item suggested some of the main ones in the case of *Golden Boy*. We discover these inductively, obediently, by "statistical" inspection of the specific work to be analyzed. We should not "help the author out" here. Thus, if we want to say that one principle equals "light," and the other equals "darkness," we must be able to extract this interpretation by explicit quotation from the work itself. In Seaver's *Between the Hammer and the Anvil*, for instance (a novel inferior in literary merit to his earlier *The Company*, but written with

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such earnestness and simplicity that it provides an excellent example for illustrating basic ritualistic processes), a character who is being "converted" to a new attitude appropriately undergoes the change during a ferry ride (a "crossing"), while the turn from "darkness" to "light" is explicitly there, in the imagery of the events, as the boat on which the change of heart takes place begins its journey by moving from the shadows of the buildings into full sunlight.

We may, eventually, offer "generalizations atop generalizations" whereby different modes of concrete imagery may be classed together. That is, one book may give us "into the night" imagery; another "to the bottom of the sea" imagery; another the "apoplectic" imagery of Flaubert's *Légende de St. Julien, l'Hospitalier*—and we may propose some over-all category (such as "books that take us to the end of the line," or "books that would seek Nirvana by burning something out") that would justify us in classing all these works together on the basis of a common strategy despite differences in concrete imagery. But this procedure must be judged on its merits, when the time comes. The first step, the step we are concerned with at the moment, requires us to get our equations inductively, by tracing down the interrelationships as revealed by the objective structure of the book itself.

I think that there are both quantitative and qualitative considerations involved here. Thus, in her *Shakespeare's Imagery*, Caroline Spurgeon has shown, by *quantitative* test, that a certain image predominates in a given work. Might there not also be the *qualitative* importance of beginning, middle, and end? That is: should we not attach particular significance to the situations on which the work opens and closes, and the events by which the peripety, or reversal is contrived? Hence, along with the distinction between op-

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posing principles we should note the development from what through what to what. So we place great stress upon those qualitative points: the "laying of the cornerstone," the "watershed moment," and the "valedictory," or "funeral wreath."

On this basis, in looking for the equations underlying "The Ancient Mariner," I should tentatively lay emphasis upon the fact that the narrative takes place on the occasion of a marriage-feast, that the narrator throughout is defecting the wedding-guest from attending this ceremony, and that, at the very end, the Mariner explicitly states his values:

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

And I should expect to see this strand, latently if not patently, maintained at any intermediary points crucial to the development, as with the killing of the Albatross and the blessing of the snakes. The Albatross, we are told, came through the fog "As if it had been a Christian soul," and the Sun that avenges the murder is said to be "like God's own head." In "The Eolian Harp" we are told that Sarah, the poet's wife, who biddeth the poet walk humbly with his God, is a "Meek Daughter in the family of Christ." Sarah and the Albatross are thus seen to be in the same equational cluster. The drug, however, is in a different cluster. As he tells us in his letters, it is responsible for "barbarous neglect of my family." As for its affinity with pure or metaphysical evil, we have that explicitly in his letters: "I used to think St. James's Text: 'He who offendeth in one part of the Law, offendeth in all,' very harsh; but my own sad experience

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has taught me it's awful, dreadful Truth. What crime is there scarcely which has not been included in or followed from the one guilt of taking opium?" And when he suffered from its malign effects, we are told in the same letter, "An indefinite indescribable Terror as with a scourge of ever restless, ever coiling and uncoiling serpents, drove me on from behind" (as the Mariner's ship was driven). Its benign effects, on the other hand, are manic and integrative. When under its influence, Coleridge would pour forth vast encyclopaedic projects that encompassed the whole of experience. It had the unifying attribute of imagination, which (he tells us in *Table Talk*) would have as its excessive form "mania." While its benignity lasted, it gave the unitary effect that Coleridge celebrates in his communion with the universe ("The Eolian Harp"), a vision followed by his surprising apologies to Sarah. And we might introduce one last correlation: among Coleridge's notes taken when he was planning the poem that became "The Ancient Mariner," there is a note that punningly suggests a different kind of Christian: "Christian, the MUTINEER" (the capitalization is Coleridge's). Taking all these points together, do we not find good cause to line up, as one strand in the symbolic action of the poem, a sequence from marriage problem, through the murder of the Albatross as a synecdochic representative of Sarah, to the "blessing" of the snakes that synecdochically represented the drug and the impulsive premarital aesthetic (belonging in a contrary cluster) to an explicit statement of preference for church, prayer, and companionship over marriage (with the Mariner returning to shore under the aegis of the praying Hermit, and the poem itself ending on the prayerful, moralizing note that has annoyed many readers as a change in quality)?

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In many cases, of course, I should lack the citational bridges for linking the imagery within a poem to the poet's life outside the poem. But in the case of Coleridge this aspect of the symbolic act can be explicitly filled out by the use of attendant material, both from biographical and from poetic sources.

Please get me straight: I am *not* saying that we need know of Coleridge's marital troubles and sufferings from drug addiction in order to appreciate "The Ancient Mariner" and other poems wherein the same themes figure. I am saying that, in trying to understand the psychology of the poetic act, we may introduce such knowledge, where it is available, to give us material necessary for discussing the full nature of this act. Many of the things that a poet's work does for him are not things that the same work does for us (i. e., there is a difference in act between the poem as being-written and the poem as being-read). Some of them are, some of them are not. The critic may quite legitimately confine himself within any rules of discussion he prefers. He may, if he prefers, treat the poem structurally as though it had not been written by a private individual at all, but had been made merely by the tossing of alphabets into the air, said alphabets having happened to fall into a meaningful order.

But my position is this: That if we try to discover what the poem is doing for the poet, we may discover a set of generalizations as to what poems do for everybody. With these in mind, we have cues for analyzing the sort of eventfulness that the poem contains. And in analyzing this eventfulness, we shall make basic discoveries about the *structure* of the work itself.

There is an infinite number of things that can be said about a poem's structure. You can, for instance, chart the

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periodicity of the recurrence of the definite article. You can contrast the versification with that of any other poem known to man. You can compare its hero with the hero of some work three centuries ago, etc. What I am contending is that the mode of analysis I would advocate will give you ample insight into the purely structural features of a work, but that the kind of observations you will make about structure will deal with the *fundamentals* of structure, and will deal with them *in relation to one another*, as against the infinite number of possible disrelated objective notations that can be made.

I shall even go further: I shall grant to our current neo-Aristotelian school (by far the most admirable and exacting group a critic can possibly select as his opponent) that the focus of critical analysis must be upon the structure of the given work itself. Unless this requirement is fulfilled, and amply, the critic has slighted his primary obligation. It is my contention, however, that the proposed method of analysis is equally relevant, whether you would introduce correlations from outside the given poetic integer or confine yourself to the charting of correlations within the integer. And I contend that the kind of observation about structure is more relevant when you approach the work as the *functioning of a structure* (quite as you would make more relevant statements about the distribution of men and postures on a football field if you inspected this distribution from the standpoint of tactics for the attainment of the game's purposes) than if you did not know of the game's purposes). And I contend that some such description of the "symbolic act" as I am here proposing is best adapted for the disclosure of a poem's function.

The two main symbols for the charting of structural rela-

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tionships would be the sign for "equals" and some such sign as the arrow ("from — to —"). Thus, in a jotting like "the sunny mist, the luminous gloom of Plato," I should have "sunny mist" = "luminous gloom" = (i. e., is in the same cluster with) "Plato." If these equations are found to be reinforced at many other points in Coleridge's work, I should begin to take this "trial" equation seriously (testing it, for instance, by inquiring how it might serve in discussing the turn from Sun to Moon in "The Ancient Mariner," and inquiring how our application here might fit with his equations for Sun and Moon elsewhere, as in his religious tracts). Since literature is a progressive form, the matter of "equations" always verges on the matter of the arrow. That is: what we have is "sunny mist" to "luminous gloom" to "Plato." "Equations," we might say, cause us to collapse into a single chord a series of events that, by the nature of the literary medium, must be strung out in arpeggio. (In music we may strike *do, mi, sol, do* simultaneously, chordally, or sequentially, in arpeggio). But although there are many borderline cases where we might employ either the sign of equation or the sign of sequence (as a reference to murder, followed by a reference to night, might be designed either as "murder = night" or "murder → night"), for charting a narrative sequence, the most convenient design is obviously "event A → event B → event C," etc. The "chordal collapsing" of a writer's total work obviously requires the sign of equality, as "Sun (in one place) = parental duty (in another place) = religion (in another)," etc.

The arrow is obviously required for noting an ambiguous dialectical operation whereby one event calls forth an event, not similar in quality, but compensatory. If we met a sequence, for instance, "murder to night to a vision of peace,"

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here "murder" and "night" might be consistent in quality ("murder = night") while the third event might be of opposite, or compensatory quality (which would require "night → peace"). Thus, pain and weeping are consistent in quality; pain and medicine are compensatory, the one being involved "dialectically" in the other. Again, of course, we come upon a borderline area here: there are occasions, for instance, where the weeping is itself a kind of medicine, as there are occasions when "the cure takes on the quality of the disease." Particularly in the case of a poet like Coleridge, whose favorite proverb was "Extremes meet," we often have trouble in drawing a sharp line between the consistent and the compensatory.

The confusion might be approached in another way: A total drama, as the agon, is analytically subdivided into competing principles, of protagonist and antagonist. Their competition sums up to one over-all cooperative act (as the rôle of Iago and Othello "dovetail" with each other to compose the total progression of the tragedy). Also, each of the "principles" possesses satellites, or adjuncts, some strongly identified with one or another of the principles (as Antony was unequivocally the adjunct of Caesar); whereas other characters shade off into a general overlapping background, as with the indeterminate shifting rôle of the mob which Brutus and Antony alternately swayed. Such a set of "mediating" characters is necessary, as a common ground of persons through which the coopération of the competing principles can take place. Hence, no matter which of the three the dramatist begins with (agon, protagonist, or antagonist) he cannot give us a full drama unless he imaginatively encompasses the other two. (The simpler forms of "proletarian" literature suffer from the fact that the poet, be-

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ginning with a strong attitude towards protagonist or antagonist, features this attitude throughout, hence does not bring his other two terms to imaginative maturity.)

But there is obviously a philosophic sense in which agon, protagonist, and antagonist can each be said to exist implicitly in the others. Hence, if we analyze a formally mature work closely enough, we are continually coming upon those points where the consistent and compensatory merge. If, in the case of *Othello*, we take sexual jealousy as the subject or idiom, we find it analytically (dialectically, dramatically) subdivided into opposed components: the "whispered at" and the "whisperer to." But "opposed components" is obviously an incongruity, even an oxymoron. And we isolate for study either their *opposition* or their *composition*. We are back, in secular guise, to the old problem of the logical triad, which may be italicized two ways: either as *three* in one, or as three in *one*. Where we would stress the compensatory relationship in equations, we could use "vs." instead of "equals"; and for designating a compensatory sequence, we could use the arrow with a slanting line (/) drawn across it.

It should be understandable by now why we consider synecdoche to be the basic process of representation, as approached from the standpoint of "equations" or "clusters of what goes with what." To say that one can substitute part for whole, whole for part, container for the thing contained, thing contained for the container, cause for effect, or effect for cause, is simply to say that both members of these pairs belong in the same associational cluster. The Hegelian formula that "everything is its other" can be applied here in two ways: We have the polar kind of otherness, as a certain kind of

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villainy is implicit in a certain kind of heroism, and vice versa. And we have synecdochic otherness, as the beloved's house may represent the beloved (or, as the ship on which the Mariner voyages represents the Mariner's own mental and bodily symptoms). Polar otherness unites things that are opposite to one another; synecdochic otherness unites things that are simply different from one another. The beloved's house is not opposite to the beloved, but merely different from the beloved. Under dialectical pressures, however (as in political alignments) any difference may come to be felt as an antithesis, as in Marxist theory the differences between the "bourgeois" and the "proletarian" become dramatized as an antithesis (a stylistic strategy that often throws the more naïve kind of Marxist into confusion when he comes upon areas of overlap between his dramatically antithesized principles).

Returning to the main line of our subject (considering leads that give us a "way in" to the discovery of the motivation, or situation, of the poetic strategy): we should watch for "critical points" within the work, as well as at beginnings and endings. There are often "watershed moments," changes of slope, where some new quality enters. Sometimes these are obvious, even so obvious as to threaten the integrity of the work. There is such a moment in *Murder in the Cathedral*, where the medium shifts from verse to prose (with critics divided as to whether the change is successful or a fault). In Louis Aragon's *Bells of Basle*, such a break occurs where Clara Zetkin enters—and here the change of personality is so great (as the author shifts from his "aesthetic" rôle, with its philandering attitude towards women, to a "political" rôle wherein the "woman as mother" is stressed) critics seem generally agreed that the form of the

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work is impaired, in too greatly violating the kind of expectations the poet had built up in his readers. Such a moment is the scene in "The Ancient Mariner," where the loathsome snakes become beautiful and blessed, an event that is acceptable to most critics but that greatly annoyed Irving Babbitt.

Above all, any weakness in motivation is revelatory in this connection. For instance, though the Albatross was, at Wordsworth's suggestion, introduced into "The Ancient Mariner" in order that the Mariner's slaying of it might motivate the Mariner's sense of guilt, what in turn motivates the slaying of the Albatross? And though the sinking of the ship motivates the Mariner's transference to the Pilot's boat, what motivates the sinking of the ship? And though the presence of a Pilot's boat motivates the presence of a Pilot's boy, what motivates the drastic fate that suddenly befell the boy, who was not introduced into the poem until this last fatal moment (as Juvenal says that the censorious Cato entered the theater simply that he might be able to leave it)?

However, it may be objected, such "critical points" seem most observable where the poet falters. Is there some equivalent "way in" to material that is unquestionably coordinated? I think so. For instance, in Robert Penn Warren's *Night Rider*, the fourth chapter ends thus: "He reached out and laid his hand paternally on Mr. Munn's shoulder. Then, as though embarrassed at betraying his own feelings, he removed it." Here, at a point where the novelist is obviously not at all concerned with the suggesting of religious parallels, we come upon the possibility that a kind of "ordination" is taking place, by "the laying on of hands." Maybe so, maybe not. In any event, it seems to me a good "hunch," worth putting down for possible testing in the light of sub-

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sequent developments, and when "all returns are in" as to the work's equational structure.

I think that, as it turns out, this particular "lead" can be corroborated. Examining the various equations implicit in the work, we find something like this: The paternal figure who laid his hands upon young Munn's shoulder was a Senator, Senator Tolliver. He was prominent in organizing a group of tobacco planters to counteract the low prices they were getting for their crops from the big corporations. It was a public organization, representative, as the book explicitly states, of a "day" self. Later, in order to enforce the requirements of this "day" organization, a secret, or "night" organization is formed. It is a kind of sinister holding company, managed by a restricted group of insiders. Tolliver is the personalization of the "day" organization, and hands down his rôle to Munn. When the "night" organization is formed, Tolliver drops out, leaving Munn, who enters the "night" organization, symbolically fatherless. At the end of the story, after the acts of the "night" organization have involved Munn in criminality, there is a scene in which Munn returns to shoot this vessel of his "day" or public self, and where Tolliver again explicitly states his close relationship to Munn. Munn departs without killing him, thus leaving the vessel of his "day" self living; but a few pages farther on, the "night" self commits suicide while being pursued by representatives of the law. The closing sentences of the book are:

Lying on the ground, he fired once more, almost spasmodically, without concern for direction. He tried to pull the trigger again, but could not. Lying there, while the solid ground lurched and heaved beneath him in a

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long swell, he drowsily heard the voices down the slope empty, like the voices of boys at a game in the dark.

So, all told, Tolliver's gesture, strategically placed at the end of a chapter, is a materialization of this relationship between himself and Munn. He is the paternal representative of Munn's "day" self—and the events of Munn's "night" self are enacted in disobedience to him.¹⁴

As another example of an incident where a "critical point" leading us into a glimpse of a dramatic organization involves no impairment of formal integrity, we might consider *The Grapes of Wrath*. Tom Joad, who is returning from prison with a land turtle, meets the ex-preacher, Casy—after which, he releases the turtle, whereat Casy says he is like the turtle (Tom had picked it up, on his way home from prison). I thus noted tentatively, for possible development, that the turtle might serve as a mediating material object for tying together Tom, Casy, and the plot, a kind of externalizing vessel, or "symbol" of such a function. Maybe, as Steinbeck had entitled an earlier work *Of Mice and Men*, this novel might, from our point of view, have been entitled *Of Land Turtles and Men*.

The whole thing works out quite neatly. The turtle's (explicitly stated) aimless wandering, over the dry soil, "fore-

¹⁴ It has been called to my attention that Munn does not commit suicide in the literal sense—and that, for the English edition of *Night Rider*, the novelist revised the ending so as to remove the possibility of such misinterpretation. The distinction does not greatly matter for present purposes, however. For though the ending is not literally suicidal, it is clearly suicidal in quality. Munn's shot, though not fired against himself, is sent aimlessly into the void, after which he languishes, sinking from the rôle of agent into a rôle of complete passivity. The state is not directly a slaying of volition, but invites the lapse of volition. As motive (i. e., that-which-sets-in-motion) it is neither an action (as of a driver) nor a passion (as of one driven) but is rather the suspension or transcendence of motion, an internalizing of flight, as with those organisms that, when attacked, protect themselves by sheer immobility. It probably comes closest to that abeyance of motive which psychologists call the "catatonic state."

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shadows" (or implicitly prophesies) the drought-pervaded trek with which Tom and Casy will be identified. Its wandering across the parched earth is "representative" of the migration in a stream of traffic on the dry highways. It contains implicitly, in "chordial collapse," a destiny that the narrative will unfold explicitly, in "arpeggio." We have Tom's homecoming, after prison, with this turtle in his pocket (i. e., "bearing the future plot with him," as a Belerophonitic letter); Tom's release of the turtle (which is proclaimed by Casy to be another Casy—thereby interweaving Casy and Tom); when Casy dies (with a variant of Christ's "Forgive them, for they know not what they do" as his last words), Tom establishes the consubstantiality of his cause with Casy's, first by avenging Casy, next by voicing his same philosophy of new political awareness ("God, I'm talking like Casy"), and lastly by being a fugitive from the same vessels of authority that had killed Casy.

Relating these events with the question of "from what to what," we find the whole work shaped into a *strategy for the redemption of crime*. The "pilgrim's progress" of Tom is from the rôle of a man who had left prison after slaying a man in a drunken brawl to that of a man who is a fugitive from the law for having slain a man in a "just" cause, since he had slain the slayer of Casy, the charismatic and sacrificial vessel of emancipation. It is a progress from an inferior kind of crime to a "transcendent" kind of crime (even orthodox criminologists usually putting political crime in a different category from kinds more private in their motivation—a reservation made necessary by the fact that the "criminal" philosophy of one era so often becomes the "normal" philosophy of a later era). Perhaps the most effective condensation of this philosophy, still "criminal," is in the sen-

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tence: "For here 'I lost my land' is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate—"We lost our land.'" The symbolic crime is thus expiated by socialization, because it is socialization.

We might consider the legend of Christopher, the "Christ-bearer," from this point of view. Christopher, carrying the stranger across the stream—and as he nears the other shore feeling his burden grow heavier and heavier, since it was Christ he was bearing, hence all the burdens of the world. The sense of burden is here a socialized one, the guilt having been purified, in that it is the burden of bearing the Cross-bearer, a burden that is an honor.

Also, since works embody an agon, we may be admonished to look for some underlying imagery (or groupings of imagery) through which the agonistic trial takes place, such as: ice, fire, rot, labyrinth, maze, hell, abyss, mountains and valleys, exile, migration, lostness, submergence, silence, sometimes with their antidote, sometimes simply "going to the end of the line." It is such over-all terms, I repeat, that make even the most concrete of imageries "symbolic" or "representative" of one class or another.

But we should always, in thus classifying, remember to introduce matters of *differentiae* when particularizing our description of a poet's strategy. Consider the many significant variants of pilgrimage, for instance: we may get a journey to the Holy Grail, the migration of a Crusade, a quest for the golden fleece, the touristic kind of pilgrimage that is in Chaucer or with the international traveler of Henry James, the vindictive hunt of *Moby Dick*, the vagabondage of Gorki, or some spiritualized journey of development, as with Wilhelm Meister, apprentice and journeyman, with the ideal end contained implicitly or "prophetically"

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in his surname. It is obvious that such distinctions also lead us quickly back into ingredients of social texture operating in the situation behind the writer's strategy, as when we contrast Henry James' kind of homelessness with that of Gorki.¹⁵

I have spoken of Robert Penn Warren's *Night Rider*. And I should now like to round out this section on methodology by a protracted illustrative consideration of the symbolic acts exemplified in this exceptionally fluent and intelligent novel (a work that was well received by the Guild, but does not seem to have got the general recognition it deserves).

First, it seems to me an unusually beautiful novel written in what I would call the "to the end of the line" mode. At one point, for instance, the process of maturing is metaphorically described as the peeling away of the successive layers of an onion, which would perfectly suggest such development by introversion, by inturning towards a non-existent core, as I would consider typical of the "to the end of the line" kind of plot. Carrying out the search for equations, we find the following structure:

The "night" self has attained symbolic self-destruction, as a kind of will-lessness. Senator Tolliver, representative of the "day" self, in the rôle of father has been left alive. Is he, then, a "vessel of futurity"? Examining the work further, for equational filling-out, we find him explicitly described,

¹⁵ The imagery of the trek in *The Grapes of Wrath* has an interesting effect, from the functional point of view. Thus, I heard a critic say that the book "had movement" up to the point where the Joads reach California, but from that time on, it wandered, "lacked movement." It occurred to me that the observation applied in the most literal sense: until they reached California, the Joads were moving in a definite direction; after they arrive, their destination becomes as vague as the land turtle's.

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with Munn concurring, as "talking to people all his life; crowds, never being anything except when his voice was talking to crowds; if he had anything in him, any life, sucking it out of crowds, talking. Crowds and women. Never being anything except when he thought somebody else thought he was something. Just—" The day self is thus a kind of social shell—so, if it is left, as a "vessel of futurity," it is presented under very bad auspices.

There is another possibility. Munn has broken with his wife, but she bears him a child after leaving him. However, the identity of this child also is presented under bad auspices. Munn does not even know its name. Furthermore, in his adolescence Munn had lived with an eccentric, scatter-brained aunt in Philadelphia, to whom he read the scattered news. Also, when living there, he had gone to a museum, where he saw foetuses pickled in jars. And now, when he thinks of his child, this period of his life and the pickled foetuses recur to him.

There is one more possibility. Towards the end of the novel, there is a superb chapter of recapitulation, where Munn has gone into hiding with a certain Proudfit, and this man tells him the story of his life. It is a story in the Phoenix-out-of-the-ashes category: of a man who burns cruelly out of himself by an excess of cruelty; purification by excess, the "Blake strategy." After the excesses he falls ill, and in his fever he dreams of coming down a hill, to green, and shade, and coolness, and water, and a little church, with a girl sitting by it. It signals a change; he recovers, returns home, where he finds the spot he had dreamed of, and marries the girl that had been sitting under the tree by the church.

This episode is engrossingly written; good in itself, it

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also serves an excellent functional purpose. For, in a new individuation, it recapitulates the pattern of the novel itself, up to this point, yet supplies a very effective pause, preparatory to the final drive of the plot. Now, since Munn has gone to hide with this man, I take it that Munn is "under the aegis" of Proudfit. As the astrologers would say, Munn is now "in the sign of" Proudfit. Hence, Proudfit's story is Munn's story. Munn, however, leaves Proudfit, and returns to complete his destruction. So even this, as a "vessel of futurity," is not good-omened, in the light of the plot's further development. And whereas Proudfit, in coming down the hill into the valley, had been on his way to cure, Munn dies as he hears his pursuers "down the slope calling emphatically." The parallelism ends in a contrast. Proudfit's final state of rest, we might say, but serves as technical contrast to heighten our appreciation of Munn's failure.

There is "futurity," however, in a less literal sense: in the intelligence and suavity of the workmanship itself. How much weight we are to place upon this factor alone (i. e., a kind of "spirituality without embodiment in dogma") I am not prepared to say. What we can say is that the book is fascinating, and that we find here, as in much of the best in modern writing, an artistic scrupulousness that leads to a *stricter* kind of beauty, where a hack could be more "wholesome" in his concocting of poetic recipes by a mechanical insertion of an "upturning" theme.

In any event, we do note an ironic development when a critic of Marxist cast examines the work of the agrarians. For these men (a) frequently write in the "to the end of the line" mode, and (b) seek to recommend their region by the use of "local color." Whereupon the Marxist, rudely jamming these two tendencies together, can say: "In associating

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his region with so sinister a kind of plot, does not the regionalist thereby *indict* his region?" I am not trying to start a quarrel, either between camps or within one camp. I am interested in this matter because, although I incline to the Marxist interpretation here, I feel that there may be some important factor in the issue that is being overlooked.¹⁶

In Warren's case, I feel that the connotations surrounding Tolliver, as the vessel of the social or political self, are not the ones that need surround this rôle, if it is linked with a sufficiently rational and well-developed political philosophy. Yet I am also aware that our rôle in a group activity is not a perfect fit with our rôle as an individual; that salvation, no matter how collectively oriented, is still an individual matter; and that poems, as rituals of redemption, are a kind of "private mass" (made public in so far as others can par-

¹⁶ *The Grapes of Wrath* opens itself to a corresponding embarrassment, as was revealed by Heywood Broun's objections in *The New Republic*, and the many letters by wrathful liberals that Broun's remarks called forth. The book is in the "emancipation" line, and there is no principle of control natural to the "emancipation" line. Any attempt to halt a trend is "reactionary." Hence, if the public has become used to a certain amount of obscenity this year, "progress" requires the use of still more obscenity next year. Obviously, you must call a halt somewhere—but no matter at what point you call it, you are proposing a "reaction." Now, I do not think that *The Grapes of Wrath* contains much that could by any reader familiar with modern styles be called "obscene." However, as Botkin has pointed out, its dialogue is written in the "hard-boiled" style rather than a "folk" style. It is not realistic, but naturalistic. The general result is an encumbrance from the propagandist point of view, since the "good" cause is identified with a *suspect* trend that must itself continually be *defended*. The political cause has to be defended; and if in the course of your defense you identify it with an aesthetic cause that equally requires defense, you are as a propagandist simply taking on two burdens in place of one. The ideal act of propaganda consists in imaginatively identifying your cause with values that are unquestioned. The point may be grasped when we contrast *The Grapes of Wrath* with Elizabeth Madox Roberts' *The Time of Man*, where characters in a situation very similar to that of *The Grapes of Wrath* are identified with speech and acts more realistic than naturalistic (though the realism is too " quaint" and local for broader aspects of the contemporary scene). And something of the embarrassment implicit in Steinbeck's mode may be grasped when we recall an earlier period where the rôles were reversed, as with the writers of the Restoration, whose cult of obscenity was itself an aspect of "reaction." As it turned out, this "entangling alliance" helped to organize the resistance to the political stand they aesthetically represented.

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ticipate in them), communion services developed perhaps by "private enterprise" in keeping with the similar economic modes.

We should also note a "serial" quality in the "to the end of the line" mode—a kind of "withiness of withinness," as the "night" company within the "day" company (paralleling the similar development, in the economic sphere, from operating companies to holding companies, controlled by "insiders"). One may get the pattern in Coleridge's line, "Snow-drop on a tuft of snow." And in *Moby Dick* there is an especially "efficient" passage of this sort, prophetically announcing the quality of Ishmael's voyage: after walking through "blocks of blackness," he enters a door where he stumbles over an ash box; going on, he finds that he is in a Negro church, and "the preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness."

Borrowing a hint from Borgese, we might suggest a distinction between "revolution" and "involution," with books in the "to the end of the line" mode exemplifying the serial, or "involute" method. I am embarrassed, however, in that Borgese applies the term to characterize "the fascist involution," in contrast with its "revolutionary" pretenses. And I do not want to be in the position of gratuitously calling any man a fascist, and least of all a writer for whom I have great respect. Why not handle the matter this way: It is the fascist involution which Warren has embodied and ritualistically slain. So much has been symbolically removed, hence "prophetically" removed. The social, public self has been ritualistically spared—and this vessel, Senator Tolliver, is a *parliamentary* self. This self, however, is left with an incomplete identity—and quite accurately so, since in our present structure of conflicts the parliamentary rôle is in-

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deed vague and confused, usually being related to no such fundamental concepts of social purpose as might successfully merge individual and public integrity.

'FORM' AND 'CONTENT'

I do not contend that the mode of analysis here proposed is automatically free of subjective interpretations. I do contend that an undiscussable dictionary is avoided (as were one to have a set of absolute meanings for every kind of symbol, and to simply "translate" a book from its esoteric idiom into the corresponding esoteric one). To know what "shoe, or house, or bridge" means, you don't begin with a "symbolist dictionary" already written in advance. You must, by inductive inspection of a given work, discover the particular contexts in which the shoe, house, or bridge occurs. You cannot, in advance, know in what equational structure it will have membership.

By inspection of the work, you propose your description of this equational structure. Your propositions are open to discussion, as you offer your evidence for them and show how much of the plot's development your description would account for. "Closer approximations" are possible, accounting for more. The method, in brief, can be built upon, in contrast with essentializing strategies of motivation that all begin anew.

The general approach to the poem might be called "pragmatic" in this sense: It assumes that a poem's structure is to be described most accurately by thinking always of the poem's function. It assumes that the poem is designed to "do something" for the poet and his readers, and that we can make the most relevant observations about its design by considering the poem as the embodiment of this act.

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In the poet, we might say, the poetizing existed as a physiological function. The poem is its corresponding anatomic structure. And the reader, in participating in the poem, breathes into this anatomic structure a new physiological vitality that resembles, though with a difference, the act of its maker, the resemblance being in the overlap between writer's and reader's situation, the difference being in the fact that these two situations are far from identical.

The justification for this pragmatic view of the poem resides in the kind of observation that a functional perspective leads us to select, from among an infinite number of possible observations about poetic structure.

Such an approach through the emphasis upon the act promptly integrates considerations of "form" and "content." I recall, for instance, talking with the painter Henry Billings about a series of paintings he was doing. It was a series of "Arrests": called "Arrest No. 1," "Arrest No. 2," etc. I was enthusiastic about the idea, for I felt that here the artist had "struck a vein." Everyone, I felt, has shared in the "There but for the grace of God go I" attitude towards the criminal. And when an artist hits upon some such basic situation, he can reindividuate it in many different concrete embodiments, with a strong predisposing factor of appeal already there before he begins. Similarly, one strong factor of appeal in Steinbeck's novel is in the underlying situation that he exploits: a huntedness, that may be reannounced from chapter to chapter, with our own financial uneasiness always there to help us "meet it halfway."¹⁷

¹⁷ In fact, paradoxically, the strong factor of appeal in this situation *per se* may in the case of the Steinbeck book have been responsible for its not being a still better book. Had the situation been less alluring in itself, he could not have relied so greatly upon it for his appeal, and might have done more, to win us, by

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However, though I had such thoughts in mind, when thinking of a "vein," I discovered that Billings was taking my remarks in a totally different way, purely from the standpoint of his technical problems as a painter. The "opportunity for exploitation" he saw in the theme arose from the fact that an arrest spontaneously organized all spectators about a point of focus. Whenever an arrest occurs, all onlookers "take a position" with reference to it, quite as do the victim and the men that seize him.

I was thinking of the matter from the standpoint of pure "content." I saw the possibility, for instance, of even working out a "class structure" of arrests—for, when looking at his picture of a miserable sneak thief caught, I remembered seeing a photograph of Richard Whitney on his way to prison after conviction; and I had been struck by his bearing, as he walked boldly and with dignity, while it was the officers accompanying him that seemed shrunken and apologetic. There was something *assertive* about his conviction, as though he had *willed* it. While I was thinking thus of "content," Billings had been thinking of the same subject from the standpoint of "form."¹⁸

The development of character. As it is, most of the characters derive their rôle, which is to say their personality, purely from their relationship to the basic situation. They can but "be"; they cannot *do*. They are flotsam on a stream of traffic, the highways of "America on Wheels." Thus, it is generally agreed that "Ma" is the most fully developed character; and it is no accident in this respect that she is also the character who makes up her mind. Casey comes next; he has a certain vocal articulation. But all the rest are hardly even distinct as "types," as with the usual Broadway drama. Grampa's troubles with the buttons on his pants are "characteristic" in the sense in which some farce character that always sneezed or stuttered or stumbled could be said to have characteristics. Even Tom, who is as important as the turtle in integrating the plot, is vague as a person.

¹⁸ I recall another painter, engaged in doing the portrait of a family, whose predicament throws light upon the same issue. He was having great difficulty, he complained, in finding some act about which the family group could be organized. For the various members of the family seemed to do nothing together as a family. In fact, since one or another of them usually had his meals in his room, they did not, as a family, even eat together.

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The motivation here could be divided for convenience into five main strands: the aesthetic problem, the marital problem, the political problem, the drug problem, the meta-physical problem. To consider them briefly, in this order:

(1) The aesthetic problem. Illustrated *par excellence* in "The Eolian Harp." The merger of subject and object, exemplified in his vision of perfect communion between the individual and the universe. The unity of the player, the playing, and the being-played-upon. The poet here exemplifies a thoroughly "impulsive" aesthetic: the giving-forth is one with a being-given. Necessity and will are one. Yet the aesthetic is presented in terms of "temptation"—and the poem closes with apologies to his wife, as the poet promises to reform, which is surprising indeed, in view of the fact that the poet has celebrated a state of ideal exaltation. The progression is: from "My pensive Sara! Thy soft cheek reclined/ Thus on mine arm . . ." to

And that simplest Lute,
Placed lengthwise in the clasp
How by the desultory breeze
Like some coy maid half yielding
It pours such sweet upbraiding
Tempt to repeat the wrongs!

to the vision of communion,

O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere—
to changing of scene (from evening twilight to noon),

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Yet, as seen from the standpoint of symbolic action, we do not have to choose between the artist's mode of consideration and my own. He was concerned with a unifying act, and so was I. I am merely suggesting that, when you begin to consider the situations behind the tactics of expression, you will find tactics that organize a work technically *because* they organize it emotionally. The two aspects, we might say Spinozistically, are but modes of the same substance. Hence, if you look for a man's burden, you will find the principle that reveals the structure of his unburdening; or, in attenuated form, if you look for his problem, you will find the lead that explains the structure of his solution. His answer gets its form by relation to the questions he is answering.

I should thus take evidences of guilt, with corresponding modes of purification, as the major cue leading us into the tactics of poetic socialization. And as regards the tactics of work written in our particular social structure, with the long and arduous period of adolescent celibacy (or socially distrusted flouting of it) that goes with our particular social structure, I should expect to see a sexual problem assuming a major rôle in our typical expiatory strategies. A major rôle, but by no means an exclusive rôle: it is merely one strong ingredient in the total recipe—and the critic must always be prepared to go beyond it, noting the ways in which it becomes interwoven with a much wider texture of motives.

Perhaps as the best way of indicating just how the notion of the "burden" or "problem" underlying the tactics of a symbolic act would be charted, I should offer an explicit example of "proportional" motivation, using the case of Coleridge, and summing up the exegesis scattered through the foregoing pages.

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And thus, my Love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,

to restatement of communion,

And what if all of animated nature

Be but organic Harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of All?

to the apology,

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holly dispraised
These shapings of the unregen'rate mind; . . .

This leads us into

(2) The marital problem. Already, we can begin to draw upon "imagistic bridging." We note that the poet's apologies to the wife, for instance, are offered under the aegis of noon. We have the deflection from the marriage-feast in "The Ancient Mariner," and the record of punishments inflicted upon the Mariner at high noon. We also discover, from references elsewhere, that Sun equals religion and parental duty. This leads us back into "The Eolian Harp" for further corroboration, in that the poet's apologies to his wife are explicitly stated to arise from his feeling that his exalted vision was un-Christian, and that she represents his Chris-

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tian duties. We note a similar function of noon, as related to marriage, elsewhere in his works (notably in other ballads written at the same time). Such would be observable, from the poetic material alone; we also have, as I have said, plenty of biographical material bearing upon the marital problem. But to illustrate the way in which imagistic interrelationships are traced, I might say that, as soon as we center upon one image, such as the noon, we find other images repeatedly clustering about it. For instance, we find that the Sun in "The Ancient Mariner" breeds rot. At the end we find the Hermit (under whose aegis the Mariner is absolved) praying on a seat of moss covering a rotted old oak stump. With this new baggage added, we go back and find elsewhere an ill-fated marriage procession (in "The Three Graves") advancing over a mossy track. We find the hermit's prayer-above-moss-hiding-rot backed by the course of "The Ancient Mariner" itself, with the preference for a religiosity-without-marriage explicitly stated, while the poem ends on a sermonizing note that has with many readers been felt as a faulty change in quality. I am not trying here to establish the various interrelationships convincingly (that would require much quotation, and I plan to do this at length in a monograph on "The Particular Strategy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge" on which I am now engaged). I wish simply to indicate the way in which the tracking down of interrelationships should proceed. As the Hermit praying by the oak stump figures in "The Ancient Mariner," for instance, so we find that Christabel is a Hermitess praying by the oak, which would "tie in" that poem with the other. Or the rôle played by the fascinating eye in various poems of Coleridge would have to be tracked down, with relation to the natural and narrative imagery surrounding it. For, as Lane

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Cooper has pointed out, not only do persons in Coleridge's poem have this glittering magnetic eye, but we find it in the Sun and in serpents (whereat we may recall the snakes that thrive in the rot of the Sun).

(3) Political problem. By now we have enough established to note how various ingredients of motivation interweave. In his years just prior to marriage, for instance, Coleridge was much exalted by his "Pantisocracy" project, a Utopian plan for a communistic colony in America. His notion was that in this colony, given an adequate property structure, virtue would be inevitable (which moves us back into the impulsive aesthetic of "The Eolian Harp" and into the impulsive blessing of the snakes in "The Ancient Mariner"). He was engineered into marriage because it was agreed that each of the colonists should be married. The project fell through soon after his marriage, so that the focal reason for his marrying Sarah at all was removed. His disappointment with the collapse of this project was extreme. Moving back again into the aesthetic problem, Pantisocracy perfectly exemplified his ideal of imaginative unification; and we find him in later life, having turned from libertarian to Tory, working out this project in a Tory revision, now by transcendently conceiving the structure of contemporary British society from such an integrative point of view (by which the imperfect conditions of historical actuality become transubstantiated, in terms of the principles or ideals they were said to embody).

(4) The drug problem. By charting the imagery in his poems with relation to the imagery he employs in his letters when describing his drug, we can disclose the ways in which "The Ancient Mariner" is a ritual for the redemption of his drug. We find the dramatic transubstantiation of the

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drug, effected by the alchemic change that takes place when the snakes are transformed from malign to benign creatures. Here the snakes are found to be synecdochic representatives of the drug (as part of the same "psychic economy," as revealed by the imagistic charting of equations). We then find the rôle of the drug played in "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," *Remorse*, "Ode to the Departing Year." We can note the gradual change from the benign, "honeymoon stage" of addiction to the malign, "let-down" stage, depicted in "Dejection" and "The Pains of Sleep," a change that can be traced quite neatly through the differing qualities of sound said to be given forth by the harp, or lute, in various poems written along this graded series. I think that one can account for a great many important features in the form of Coleridge's poems by noting their tactical function with reference to the drug. In "The Ancient Mariner," for instance, we get a change from benign to malign. In *Remorse* the benign and malign principles are dramatically dissociated, they compete, and the benign triumphs. In "Kubla Khan" (written automatically, when the favorable aspects of the drug were in the ascendant) we find almost wholly the "manic" stage, with the "dialectical opposite" but flickering about the edges, and the barest hint of the serpentine observable, perhaps in the "mazy motion" of the river, or in the suggestion of Medusa locks in the "floating hair" that made the poet cry "Beware! Beware!" (In an earlier poem, "Religious Musings," there is a "pontificating" line useful for our purposes: "Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge. . . .") In "Christabel," unfinished, we find the two aspects suspended at the moment of indecision, poised hesitantly at the indeterminate "watershed moment," the constancy of both the good and the bad effects of the

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drug being expressed by the tenuous interchanging of rôle, as the pious Christabel at times takes on the traits of the ominous Geraldine (on the occasions of her snakelike hissing), while the good Bard Bracy dreams of the relation between them as that of dove and serpent, with the serpent entwined about the dove's neck, swelling each time the dove swelled. (Of all poems, "Christabel" is the one that would have the best grounds for being left unfinished. For it deals precisely with that state of indeterminacy wherein two conflicting principles are exactly balanced. No ending would be possible without violating the present structure of the poem's motivation.) I think it can even be shown that Coleridge's "Ode to the Departing Year," explicitly dealing with a political prophecy, takes on resonance by drawing upon imagery related to misgivings about the drug, and so is prophecy on two levels, ostensibly about political trends, implicitly about the course of internal psychological events that culminate in "Dejection."¹⁹ We may tie up the drug problem with the aesthetic, by noting that, in its euphoric stages, it provides the same kind of impulsive oneness that the aesthetic of "The Eolian Harp" proclaims. Also, in his letters, Coleridge explicitly presents it as a treachery to his wife. Its interweaving with his famous distinction between imagination and fancy is to be disclosed in his suggestion that the extreme of imagination would be mania and the extreme of fancy would be delirium, which are precisely the two terms for distinguishing between the effects of the drug

¹⁹ You could state it this way: The poet would convey a sense of political foreboding. To do so effectively, he draws upon his own deepest experiences with the sense of foreboding. Prominent among such experiences, are his forebodings engendered by the nature of his drug. Hence, in prophesying about trends without, he prophesies about trends within.

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in its euphoric stage and the stage of "falling abroad" (his term) that goes with the withdrawal symptoms.

(5) The metaphysical problem. Coleridge has called poetry "a dim analogue of creation." In human activity, however, this process of creation involves not merely a *making*, but a *remaking*. Consider, for instance, the problem of ancestral substance. Coleridge, in his cosmogony of good and evil (in "Religious Musings"), gives us a lineage that draws good out of evil. Hence, by the "like father like son" formula of causal ancestry, good threatens to become consubstantial with evil, as its lineal descendant. Hence, the need of transubstantiation, of transcendence, of a radical change in quality.

In keeping with our chord-arpeggio distinction, the metaphysical problem could be stated thus: In the arpeggio of biological, or temporal, growth, good *does* come of evil (as we improve ourselves by revising our excesses, the excesses thus being a necessary agent in the drama, or dialectic, of improvement: they are the "villain" who "competitively coöperates" as "criminal Christ" in the process of redemption). But when you collapse the arpeggio of development by the nontemporal, nonhistorical forms of logic, you get simultaneous "polarity," which adds up to good and evil as consubstantial. Now if one introduces into a chord a note alien to the perfect harmony, the result is a discord. But if you stretch out this same chord into an arpeggio having the same components, the discordant ingredient you have introduced may become but a "passing note." "Transcendence" is the solving of the logical problem by stretching it out into a narrative arpeggio, whereby a conflicting element can be introduced as a "passing note," hence not felt as

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"discord." A logic is "flat," simultaneous, "chordal"; ideally, it is all done before you begin.²⁰ Thus, Hegel's "dialectic of history" attempted the union of contradictory aims, in trying to make the passing note of an arpeggio fit as concord in a simultaneity. A logic being ideally all done before you begin, anti-Hegelians get their opportunity to object that his logic of development, if true, would make development impossible. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis would all exist simultaneously and in equal force. But by stretching them out into a temporal arpeggio, he can depict the thesis as prevailing in greater percentage at one time, the antithesis at another, and the synthesis as an act of transcendence at still another.²¹

This is no place for me to offer all the material evidence

²⁰ Think of a work so dualistic in nature as to deserve the title, "Yes—and No." One might, putting "yes" and "no" together, into a simultaneity, collapse them into the title, "Maybe." Now, suppose that one had started with "Maybe," which is not very dramatic, and which he would expand into a narrative or dramatic arpeggio. We could imagine a division into two slopes, the first emphatically asserting "Yes," whereupon, after a transubstantiating peripety, the second slope could just as emphatically assert "No." Thus, though this total form, as collapsed into a "simultaneity," still gives you the quality of "Maybe," as drawn out it gives you a transcendence, from quality "Yes" to quality "No."

²¹ You might phrase this in another way: A "logic" of history would be a set of universal statements about history. And these statements would be at such a "high level of generalization" that they would apply to *all* historical development. In short, the "laws" of movement cannot themselves move, if they are correctly stated. The "laws" of movement are a kind of "unmoved mover." Hence, in so far as a "logic" of movement was correct, you would get not movement, but the motionless. And "generalizations about movement" is but a contemporary stylization of "laws of movement." (This observation would suggest that the *function* of unmoved move is ingrained in the very nature of language; and that John Dewey's program, as in *The Quest for Certainty*, for removing it by a verbal philosophy would be a contradiction in terms.)

The point is worth noting since it has bearing upon the disputes as to whether "human nature can change." If your discussion is on a low level of generalization, human nature can constantly change. For instance, people in some places wear rings in their noses and in other places don't. But if your discussion is on a high level of generalization, human nature can't change. A savage acts one way, for instance; a child another; a priest another; a doctor another; a mechanic another. But if I say "people must act," I have made a universal statement about people in history—and with regard to this statement "human nature can't change."

Similarly with the altercations about capitalist enterprise. If you say, on a high

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with which I should try to fill out Coleridge's five problems. I offer them simply to indicate how one might, by the charting of equations, avoid reduction to one "cause." Thus, even if one were to begin his analysis by isolating an explicit sexual burden (such as the marital problem or the possibility that the unitary aesthetic, which proclaimed a completeness of identity with the wife omitted, might thereby reveal a kinship with adolescent patterns, a mental economy formed prior to the inclusion of the wife)—the chart of interrelationships, as ultimately developed, would by no means vow one to some such simple picture of the author as writing works "caused" by this specific sexual problem.

One would not have to consider the matter of "causation" at all. The main point is to note what the poem's equational structure is. This is a statement about its form. But to guide our observations about the form itself, we seek to discover the functions which the structure serves. This takes us into a discussion of purpose, strategy, the symbolic act. When one notes, for instance, that the Pilot's boy in "The Ancient Mariner" acts as the vessel that takes upon itself the most malign features of a cure effected under the aegis of moonlight (i. e., the worst features of the lunacy affecting the "greybeard loon"), one discerns his formal function in the drama—and, going further back, we may discern the formal function, as foreshadowing, of the "silly" buckets that are filled when the cure first begins to take effect. (A remarkably

level of generalization, that "people must forever compete with one another," I believe you have made a sound universal statement about mankind, that will apply in all historical periods, and so "prove men incapable of change." But if you would select a less comprehensive level of generalization, you have plenty of possible changes. People may compete in religious piety, in ritual dancing, in philosophy, in business enterprise, even in a kind of "competitive conformity." At this level of generalization, people can change enormously, as per the vast difference between the things the Westerner and the Polynesian boast about.

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

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

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

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

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RITUAL DRAMA AS "HUB"

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

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

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

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