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FORM IN LITERATURE

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FORM IN LITERATURE

A Theory of Technique and Construction

by

HAROLD WESTON

AUTHOR OF
"THE BRIDE'S PROGRESS," "THE PATCHWORK MADONNA"
"BANQUET FOR FURIES," ETC.

With a Preface by

JOHN DRINKWATER

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To

E. H. W.

NESCIS, MI FILI, QUANTILLA PRUDENTIA MUNDUS REGATUR.

PREFACE

CRITICISM, roughly speaking, is of two kinds. The gossipy kind of criticism that fills so many columns in the journals is mostly an expression of the writer's likes and dislikes. It is interesting only when it discloses the preferences of an interesting mind, which is seldom. Even then it is as likely as not to misrepresent the work under analysis, but it is at least not pointless. The mere statement, on the other hand, that some entirely undistinguished person likes or does not like a given work of art gains nothing in importance by being put into print. Nine-tenths of this gossipy kind of criticism is in fact worthless. Among the other tenth we may here and there find the quality of a Charles Lamb or an A. B. Walkley.

The other kind is that which at its best is adorned by such names as Dryden, Shelley, Matthew Arnold, Robert Bridges and Lascelles Abercrombie. It is concerned very little with the expression of personal opinions. Its purpose is not to correct the artist, but to discover, from patient preoccupation with work that has been finely done by creative minds, general principles that have governed the highest impulses of man's thought and imagination. Its aim is not to instruct the artist, but to learn from art. The danger in criticism of this more serious kind is that it will become not trivial but arid. The philosopher is apt in time to isolate himself in his own doctrines from contact with the living art that was their origin. When a man in a spirit at once humble and fearless writes a book searching anew the scientific nature of art, and at the same time keeps his æsthetic perceptions fresh, an

event of genuine critical importance may be said to have taken place.

By this standard Mr Weston has clearly written a remarkable book. His discovery of a uniform structural design in the masterpieces of the world's literature is here demonstrated with the precision of a chemist working out his formulae. And yet nothing of beauty withers at his touch. There is never a note of pedantry in the scrupulous discipline of his mind. The diagrams by which he seeks to explain the origins of beauty have a beauty of their own.

The study of such criticism cannot create creative writers, but no creative writer can study it without enlarging his understanding of his own purposes.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

My obligations are too various and too subtle for me to specify them in detail. I have used, without hesitation, the work of men who have devoted their lives to the study of their particular aspects of literature, and I have quoted extensively from their books, in an endeavour to make clear the principles of literary technique.

I am indebted to Mr L. J. Ludovici, to Count Antony de Salis and to Mr G. Macdonald Brown, for a high degree of interest in the problems of Literary Form, and for some excellent suggestions. I am also indebted to those young pioneers who have studied the practical aspects of the subject with me, after the professors at their Universities had saturated their minds in the glories of English literature.

My debt is heavy to my wife for the research she has undertaken in tracing the floating traditions of construction, of which every author is aware—though in some cases, but dimly aware. I am indebted to her for an infinite amount of reading and classification, and for many trains of thought.

But my obligation to Mr H. W. Leggett is the most conscious, for in the spring of 1920, after I had spent many fruitless years in searching for the elementary principles of Literary Form, he illumined my mind with his most interesting deductions. During the years which followed, while we worked together, searching for the laws which every creative writer unconsciously follows, much interesting matter came to light—but all our knowledge was based upon facts which Mr Leggett, himself, had discovered, and which I had failed to find.

Later, he embodied his deductions in his book *The Idea in Fiction* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.). And, although we have diverged considerably in our opinions, the basis on which we have built is the same. Without Mr Leggett's discovery of *The Intention*, that motivating force for the hero's actions, without his principle of *The Ostensible Denouement*, that paradoxical occurrence in drama, where the most dramatic scene is built into the mind of the reader—but is not written, development would have been almost impossible.

For the rest, my reason for writing the book is that it may prevent other authors from wasting fruitless years in a search for authority in Literary Form, where authority, as yet, does not exist. It is written in the hope that others may become interested in this indispensable aspect of the literary art; others—and particularly that younger school, now leaving the universities with its inspiration urging it to expression. It is written in the hope that a body of tradition may develop, which will give the young author definite elementary laws to act as his scaffolding, so that he may serve his apprenticeship to letters in clarifying his inspiration, rather than in floundering—as so many of my own students have done—from one error of Form into another.

If the masters of critical discrimination finally accept *The Unit of Form* which I have outlined in the following pages, then it may not be too wild a hope that a Technique of Literature, truly in its embryonic state, may, perhaps, tentatively take its place amongst the techniques of other arts—of music, of sculpture and of painting.

H.W.

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Hampstead, N.W. 3.

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FORM IN LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

OUTLINE OF FORM

UNITY is achieved when the artist has imposed certain restrictions on his material. This is more obvious in the case of a Doric Temple than in the case of a play or a sonata, yet it is equally true of all. Without form there can be no unity. Where there is no unity, there can be no significance.

A restriction then, is to be placed on the artist's selection of his material that it may gain form and significance. The musical composer may not grasp haphazard at one musical phrase after another. The artist may not crowd his canvas with figures irrespective of the laws of composition. Each must labour under restrictions imposed by the technique of his craft.

The artist who uses words as his medium would alone appear to be free to select his ideas according to an intuition. Literature is still irresponsibly free from the trammels of a technique. It achieves its unities by means of a form sense rather than by a knowledge of laws underlying expression. Its significances, instead of being the outcome of conscious planning, are thus left to the chance results of inspiration.

But before we can seek for the principles which underlie the selection of literary material, which is the object of this book, we must define the present use of the word, literature.

It is to be understood as including only those writings which have for their purpose the telling of a story. A ballad is to be accepted as literature, no less than a Shakespearean play: the story of *Aladdin* no less than *Œdipus Rex*.

With this restriction of its meaning, we may postulate that if form and unity are so closely allied, to judge the one will be to criticize the other. It will follow that if we can discover those elementary principles in literature which unify it, we shall be in possession of the basic laws of a technique.

At first we shall find that this search beneath the surface of the story, beneath the emotional lures and æsthetic charms, will repulse us, for we shall be compelled to probe the madness of Lear, the passions of Clytemnestra and the agonies of Othello, and discarding the lure of the living body seek for the skeleton beneath. Technique is a science.

To suggest that the great writers of the world have been singularly disinterested in the technical principles of their craft, since at so late a day so little is known of its architectural laws, is merely to say that they have been more interested in the art than in the science of literature.

Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe might well rely on their creative imagination. The lesser artist might possibly be ill-advised to follow in their steps.

Professor Moulton writes: [1]

> Our main concern will be with that reduction of human experience to artistic form which is called plot; as a painter applies design to colours, as a musician brings sounds and rhythms into order and harmony, so a dramatist is an artist in human life, who can discover a pattern in a course of events. . . .

This discovery of the pattern in the course of events is part of the problem before us. The writer must select and use incidents as the architect uses stone and

[1] *The Ancient Classical Drama*: Clarendon Press.

brick. He must see life as orderly arranged incident. A great writer might be conceived as viewing life almost exclusively in terms of pattern, where the eyes of the non-artist saw only a series of chaotic occurrences. Somewhere between these extremes the body of our writers take their stand. Those who are able to see life as pattern will have little use for a technique. Spectacles are for the purblind.

A writer is presented with the innumerable incidents of existence, and from this heterogeneous mass of fact must make a selection which shall have unity and significance. If he views his world as a chaotic medley, in all probability his art will mirror his philosophy and the grotesque will distort his symmetries. A writer's form is influenced by his metaphysic.

But let us now glance at such a collection of incidents as might have been presented to the artist to rearrange into a symmetrical form.

Robert Burns, in a letter to Dr Moore, gives a *résumé* of his life. We will select from this sufficient for our purpose. The question of the authenticity of the letter does not concern us, as we are interested only in gathering material as a writer might gather it for his story, and in reshaping it into artistic form.

As closely as possible we will follow the words of the poet: [1]

Burns writes:

> What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's geographical grammars. . . . I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labour. . . .
>
> Another circumstance in my life, which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast . . . at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc., in which I made pretty good progress.
>
> I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged. . . . I had seen human nature in a new phasis. . . .

[1] *Burns' Poetical Works.* (Yardley and Hanscomb.)

He gives us information concerning the publication of his poems:

> I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public, and besides I pocketed —all expenses deducted—nearly twenty pounds. . . .

He tells us about Dr Blacklock and the Earl of Glencairn:

> I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia . . . when a letter from Dr Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.
>
> The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir, and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn.

He comments on the order in which his poems were published:

> The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my '*Holy Fair*' . . . it met with a roar of applause.
>
> '*Holy Willie's Prayer*' next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery. . . .

Of his proposed emigration to Jamaica he writes:

> I gave up my part of the farm to my brother . . . and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica.

These extracts, selected from the letter, not necessarily in their original order, give us a series of incidents direct from nature. If, as Professor Moulton tells us, a dramatist is one 'who can discover a pattern in a course of events,' we have here material ready to be shaped into artistic form.

But in what manner shall we group these incidents that they may yield the most symmetrical design? We may regard them biographically, as they are set down.

But they do not appear to have either unity or significance, and both are necessary. It would appear that the biographical method is insufficient. Indeed, Aristotle warns us against the casual presentation of incidents in chronological order: [1]

> Of all plots and actions the epeisodic are the worst. I call a plot 'epeisodic' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence.

If we read Burns' letter, searching for a factor which might control 'a probable or necessary sequence' of events in the poet's life, we shall find our thoughts hovering above his remarks on his 'poetic ambition.' This preoccupation with poetry and his wish to be recognized, thread themselves through the incidents. They represent the poet's *Intention.*

If we accept this *Intention* to succeed in the world of letters as a fundamental desire, we shall have discovered in the poet's life a line of direction and a goal. If, further, we group the incidents of the letter about this *Intention* in such a way that it shall direct them, we should be able to discern the faint outline of a form.

We know from experience that when we detach a desire from the world of imagination and set it to battle with the crude realities of other people's wills, it will meet with opposition, with barriers to its achievement.

Lacking the mantle of Prospero, intentions and desires have to be fought for. Burns in his quest for recognition is no exception to this rule. He tells us that his education was incomplete and that he attempted to rectify this lack, by poring over books while driving his cart or walking to labour. He realizes the Barrier to his Intention and tries to overcome it. Apparently he succeeds. He speaks with enthusiasm of the school on the smuggling coast where he made 'pretty good progress.'

If we re-state these incidents of our 'probable or

[1] *Poetics.* Translated by S. H. Butcher: Macmillan & Co. 1898.

necessary sequence' in the briefest manner possible, we shall see the *Intention* exercising its restrictive influence on the action:

Intention: Burns intends to be recognized as a poet.
Barrier to the Intention: His lack of education.
Reversal of the Barrier: Salmon's and Guthrie's grammars and the school on the smuggling coast.

The lack of education, which in the letter was a matter to be deplored for its own sake, becomes, when coupled with the *Intention*, a barrier to his desire to be recognized as a poet.

In any sequence of events directed toward the attainment of a desire, we shall find a tendency for one of the incidents to press closer to achievement than any of the others. This incident which brings an almost-success to the *Intention* we will call the *Crisis*.

It occurs in the development of the Burns' *Intention* when *Holy Fair* is published. 'It met with a roar of applause.'

Contrast, which the painter achieves by his light and shade, must have its place in literature, as in life. As there is an incident which brings almost-success, so there is one which brings almost-failure:

> "Reversal (or Recoil)," Aristotle tells us,[1] "is a change by which a train of action produces the opposite of the effect intended, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity."

This incident which brings almost-failure to the *Intention* we will call the *Catastrophe*. Later we shall see that its function is twofold.

It occurs when Burns is about to leave Scotland: "I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia," he tells us, "and had made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica." If we now add these movements to the others, the outline of a form is appreciably clearer:

[1] *Poetics*.

Intention: Burns intends to be recognized as a poet.
Barrier to the Intention: His lack of education.
Reversal of the Barrier: Salmon's and Guthrie's grammars and the school on the smuggling coast.
Crisis: Publication of *Holy Fair*.
Catastrophe: Burns makes preparations for leaving Scotland and his chances of recognition.

From the heterogeneous mass of incidents given in the letter, we have begun to shape a symmetrical form. It will be seen that each incident is dependent upon the *Intention*.

But there is still an hiatus in our sequence of events between the *Crisis* when *Holy Fair* appeared and the *Catastrophe* when Burns was about to leave Scotland. The one is obviously not a consequence of the other. *The Catastrophe* is neither ' probable nor necessary.' One does not hurry away from the country where one has achieved almost-success.

The Crisis which came when *Holy Fair* was published, gave place to a *Reversal of the Crisis*, brought about by a period of failure, which immediately followed it.

If we now add *The Denouement*, that point in the story when the *Intention* is achieved, our analysis of the incidents of the letter will be complete. It arrives with Burns' reception in Edinburgh, when he comes under the patronage of ' the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn.'

The incidents have now been marshalled into order by the restricting influence of the *Intention*. We can regard them, not as scattered episodes any longer, but as unified action having a symmetrical form (see p. 22).

The line AB with its point E thus corresponds to Aristotle's demand for a beginning, a middle, and an end.

As we progress with the study of literary form we shall find that this *diagrammatic* W *with the horizontal line above it* occurs with regularity in the literatures of the world.

It is essential that it should do so. *The Line of Intention* (the horizontal line) restricts by means of its *Intention*, *The Line of Action* (the W) by limiting the choice of incidents by which the latter is to be developed. In this development only three movements are possible: upward toward the *Line of Achievement*; downward, away from it; or parallel to it.

Weak characters may be halted at *The Barrier* and their tale is soon told. A Napoleon may be forced to desert his *Intention* at *Catastrophe*. Œdipus may arrive at a *Denouement*, which blinds him, yet his achievement of

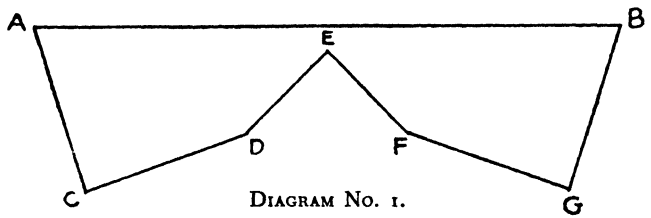


DIAGRAM NO. 1.

AB = The Line of Intention.
AC = The barrier to the Intention.
CD = The Reversal of the Barrier.
DE = The Crisis.
EF = The Reversal of the Crisis.
FG = The Catastrophe.
GB. = The Denouement.

Intention is irrefutable. Each is under the heel of an inexorable law condemning man and his *Intention* to hover eternally between success and failure.

Even where the *Negative Form* controls the story, and the leading character is a puppet in the hands of his destiny, as in the *Alcestis* of Euripides and Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, this W with variations is still the basis of the design. It even controls such unruly characters of *The Picaresque Form* as Tom Jones and Don Quixote.

But before we deal with the variations we must consider at length this *Positive Form*, and follow the *Intention* as it threads through a recognized work of literature. If we can close our eyes to the drama and poetry of *Hamlet* and seek only for its form, we shall

discover a pattern so simple that there is scarcely a trace of irrelevant matter to mar its outline.

Before, however, we attempt to disintegrate the form of the play, we should have convinced ourselves that symmetry of design is not something that is superimposed on the story, but is an expression of the action in terms of pattern. Professor Abercrombie writes: [1]

> That aspect of literature which symbolizes the substance of the originating experience we call its *diction*; the aspect which symbolizes the unity of the substance in a single act of comprehensive attention we call the *form* of a piece of literature. Form is not imposed on diction by some sort of external application; form arises out of diction, when the diction truly corresponds with its inspiration. Nevertheless form in literature is an aspect of it as distinguishable from diction as the meaning of language is distinguishable from its sound . . .

To disintegrate this unity of the substance, which is form, must now be our aim. For the moment we shall disregard the more subtle lines of symmetry and concentrate only upon obtaining a firm outline from those main incidents which we shall later call *Primary Incidents.*

We are introduced in *Hamlet* in the First Scene of the First Act to the guard before the castle at Elsinore, where we learn that the Ghost of the late King has been seen.

In the Second Scene Hamlet is advised by the new king, Claudius (his uncle, who has married his father's widow), not to dwell on his father's death. Horatio, Hamlet's friend, tells him that he has seen the Ghost of his father and Hamlet replies:

> My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
> I doubt some foul play: . . .

He decides to watch with the guard when night shall come.

Scene IV recalls us to the platform before the castle. And here we meet for the first time another influence

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism.* (Gollancz.)

which restricts the action and exercises a controlling force upon the form. This influence is called *The Theme* and is the most powerful factor in the development of the *Significance*. It is introduced by Hamlet:

> So, oft it chances in particular men,
> That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
> . . . . .
> By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
> Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
> Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
> The form of plausive manners, that these men,
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> . . . .
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault. . . .

As a considerable amount of space must later be given to the discussion of *Theme* and its influence on form, it will be enough at this point, to suggest that if the *Intention* limits the selection of literary matter to those incidents which will show its development, so *Theme* further limits the selection to those incidents which will illustrate and develop the significance of the story.

The *Theme* of *Hamlet* may be stated as:

Theme: One defect of character may corrupt the whole man.

This limitation on the choice of incident will operate by restricting the dramatist's choice of matter to those scenes which bear upon Hamlet's ' one defect of character.' He will be presented to us as battling with each problem under the liabilities of his vacillations, which will always be in danger of corrupting the whole man.

The other limiting factor, *The Intention*, is stated in Act I, Scene V, where Hamlet speaks with his father's Ghost:

> HAMLET: Speak; I am bound to hear.
> GHOST: So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
> HAMLET: What?

GHOST: I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires.
. . . List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
HAMLET: O God!
GHOST: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
HAMLET: Murder!
GHOST: Murder most foul, . . . strange, and unnatural.
HAMLET: Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

So clearly has Shakespeare stated the *Intention* that comment is unnecessary:

Intention: Hamlet intends to avenge his father's death.

Already the direction and the goal are clear to us. Hamlet in his desire to avenge his father (*Intention*) will show us a vacillating mind and its consequences (*Theme*). But desire and vacillation can achieve nothing without action. So long as the *Intention* remains static in the mind of Hamlet, the *Theme* must abortively hover above an unwritten tale. Hamlet may visualize the moment when he will have slain his father's murderer, but until he brings the *Intention* from a world of Fantasy into a world of concrete reality by means of action, he is not a character in a story, but a shadow in a world of dream.

It is this problem which besets Hamlet from the onset.

A vacillator, difficulties do not stimulate him to action, but to thought. His mind, hovering between the worlds of Fantasy and actuality, he is lost to both. He desires to avenge his father's murder, but his 'one defect of character' fetters him and so the moments pass, his will atrophied, his *Intention* hovering between the will-to-do and the will to leave undone.

So Shakespeare gives us the barrier:

Barrier to the Intention: Hamlet's vacillations.

In Act II, Scene I, we are shown the Lord Chamberlain, Polonius, advising Reynaldo concerning the various methods he is to use when spying on Laertes, Polonius's son, who is now in France.

As this scene does not either directly or indirectly bear upon Hamlet's *Intention*, nor in any way illustrate the *Theme*, it is extraneous to the play. We will dismiss it as *Tertiary Incident*, concerning which we shall have much to say in a later chapter. *Tertiary Incident* is commented on by Aristotle in *The Poetics*:

> In composing the *Odyssey* he (Homer) did not include all the adventures of Odysseus . . . incidents between which there was no necessary or probable connexion: but he made the *Odyssey*, and likewise the *Iliad*, to centre round an action, that in our sense of the word is one . . . so the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed.

The scene between Polonius and Reynaldo could be removed without disjointing or disturbing the whole. It is a parasitic growth.

There is a scene between Polonius and his daughter, Ophelia, who tells him that Hamlet has been to see her again and that he was distraught. Polonius believes this to be due to Hamlet's love for his daughter. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern then make their appearance and are interviewed by the King, who tells them that he has sent for them concerning Hamlet's ' transformation.' He bids them watch him.

Then the Players arrive and Hamlet releases his pent-up emotions at last in action:

> I'll have these players
> Play something like the murder of my father
> Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks; . . .

Instructing the First Player to stage the *Murder of Gonzago*, he questions:

> You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

And so Hamlet's *Intention* is snatched from the world of Fantasy and made operative in a world of actuality. The *Murder of Gonzago* is produced before the court. It deals with the assassination of an Italian king who was poisoned in a similar manner to Hamlet's father. The hero explains the action to the court:

> He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

The *Intention* has produced action and the King is frightened:

> OPHELIA: The king rises.
> HAMLET: What, frighted with false fire!
> QUEEN: How fares my lord?
> POLONIUS: Give o'er the play.
> KING: Give me some light: away!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> HAMLET: O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Thus *The Barrier to the Intention* is reversed:

Reversal of the Barrier: Hamlet traps the King into a betrayal of his guilt.

Professor A. C. Bradley, commenting on the movement of the drama, writes: [1]

> Hamlet's cause reaches its zenith in the success of the play-scene (III. ii). Thereafter the reaction makes way, and he perishes through the plot of the King and Laertes.

But Professor Bradley is mistaken, Hamlet's cause (*Intention*) does not reach its zenith at this point. It reaches it at *Denouement* where he slays the King.

There is also another point in the action where Hamlet comes nearer to his zenith than he does in the play scene. We are to consider this point now. The King,

[1] *Shakespearean Tragedy*: Macmillan & Co.

unguarded, his nerves shaken by the 'play within a play' which has awakened memories, soliloquizes:

KING: O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
. . . O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; . . .

[*Retires and kneels*

Enter HAMLET.

HAMLET: Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
And so I am revenged. . . .

And then appears the shadow of the 'one defect': vacillation sets in and the organ-throb of the *Theme* is heard:

. . . and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. . . .

Of course it deceives no one but Hamlet, himself. With the King kneeling before him, with his rapier but a few inches from the body of his father's murderer, with the confirmation of the play-scene vivid in his mind, the moment has come for action. And Hamlet lets it pass in a shower of words.

The *Crisis* has come and gone. The *Reversal* has set in.

Crisis: Hamlet finds the King unguarded, kneeling in prayer.

Reversal of the Crisis: Vacillation atrophies his will.

Contrast now begins to make its appearance. Hamlet has had his moment of almost-success. He must now have his moment of almost-failure. It comes when he is sent to England with death peeping over his shoulder in the forms of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The King instructs them:

> Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
> Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:
> Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
> That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

And then, in soliloquy, recounts his design:

> And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—
> . . . thou mayst not coldly set
> Our sovereign process; which imports at full, . . .
> The present death of Hamlet. . . .

Catastrophe, that moment in the drama when the hero's schemes appear to have gone awry, when the *Intention* seems to have been finally thwarted, has arrived. Hamlet, in leaving Denmark with his father's murderer still alive, touches a point of almost-failure.

Catastrophe: Hamlet sails for England, his father's murder unavenged.

But the dramatist needs his hero in Denmark and there is a certain pirate ship wandering the high seas. Horatio receives a letter which tells of the *Reversal of the Catastrophe*:

> Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. . . .

Reversal of the Catastrophe: Hamlet boards a pirate ship and returns to Denmark.

And at this juncture we must digress to comment on a technical device which has appeared. The audience, knowing that Hamlet has been sent to England to his death, will naturally conclude that his *Intention* has been thwarted, until the *Reversal of the Catastrophe* has made itself known in the letter to Horatio. Foreseeing the hero's death on his arrival in England, the audience naturally seek for an end to the drama which shall exclude the doomed Hamlet. They look ahead to a Denmark ruled by Claudius, whose fratricide will have brought him a crown, made secure by the death of his nephew.

This act of misleading the audience is practised consciously or unconsciously by the majority of authors. When it is done with discretion and subtlety, it achieves its aim, which is to heighten the interest by means of surprise. When it is bungled, or the author lies to his audience, instead of misleading them through the *actions* of the characters, it fails in its aim, for the audience regarding themselves as having been deceived, lose faith in an author who, pretending to guide them to their destination, has deliberately lead them astray.

From the moment of departure, when the curtain rises, there is a tendency in the mind of the audience to peer ahead through the veils of the future, in an endeavour to decide what probability there may be of the hero achieving his *Intention.* Unless the final incidents of the drama are screened, the end can be ascertained with little difficulty.

This conclusion which the audience can foresee is frequently stressed by the author as part of the misleading mechanism. He is than at liberty, having focussed the attention upon a false or *Ostensible* end, to prepare for his *True* ending. The width of the angle between these two endings, the *Ostensible* and the *True*, will correspond with the intensity of the surprise.

As this technicality will be given greater elaboration

when the various instruments of form are each considered in its separate chapter, no further comment will be needed now.

The change from the *Ostensible End* (the death of Hamlet) to the *True End* is brought about by the intervention of the *deus ex machina*, the pirate ship.

With Hamlet's return the drama must collect its scattered threads. The King, thwarted in his attempt to rid himself of the dangerous presence of his nephew, must reconsider his position and invent new schemes. So the dramatist motions to Laertes. He reappears lusting for the blood of Hamlet, who, earlier in the action, has killed his father, Polonius.

A new plan is thus ready for fruition. The King utilises the passionate Laertes and grooves the channels for his anger to express itself:

KING: I will work him (Hamlet)
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

There is talk of rapiers and of the matching of Laertes against Hamlet in a friendly encounter:

KING: he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laertes eagerly agrees to the scheme. *He* will avenge *his* father's death untrammelled by vacillations:

LAERTES: I will do't:
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,

Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal; . . .

But the King, thwarted in his purpose by Hamlet's return to Denmark, will place the issue beyond risk:

KING: I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

And as the drama is drawing to its close, a time when each heightening of the emotions becomes a heightening of interest, the Queen enters to further enflame the passions of Laertes:

QUEEN: Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

With the promise of high drama before us the action enters upon its final stage.

The play is to culminate in the achievement of Hamlet's *Intention*. Before, however, we trace the incidents which achieve it, perhaps we should decide exactly what the *Denouement* of a story may logically be expected to realize.

Schlegel gives us excellent advice on the matter:[1]

> In the higher, proper signification, action is an activity dependent on the will of man. Its unity will consist in the direction towards a single end; and to its completeness belongs all that lies between the first determination and the execution of the deed.

With the *Denouement* we are to see Hamlet's will in action, for the moment has come for 'the execution of the deed.'

But we shall expect to see far more than this, for the end of *The Line of Action* is not only the end of the *Intention*, it is the point where the *Theme* must flower into *Significance*.

We have seen the development of the Hamlet story

[1] *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.* Translated by John Black.

from its inception to *The Reversal of the Catastrophe*, and we know that each of the incidents which develop it is restricted by both *Intention* and *Theme*, for a story has not only to picturize a complete action, it has to show the progress of the *Intention* and the general law of nature under which it progresses, which is the *Theme*.

Each incident must be not only an action, but an action which has as its aim the achievement of the *Intention*; it must further be an incident which illustrates this aim in such a manner that it impresses the *Theme* upon the mind of the audience.

Already we have seen this in Hamlet's vacillating attempts to avenge his father. The *Theme* has been made clear by the restriction of the action, simultaneously with the progress of the *Intention* and the development of the story. There is still work for the *Theme* to do.

It must aid in the development of the *Significance*. For a story without *Significance* is like a man without a soul. Professor Abercrombie enlightens us concerning its function: [1]

> When we have the form of the work as a whole in our minds, we have the unity of all the experience it has given us; and having the unity, we have our experience organized in perfect interrelationship; we have what the whole manner of the work has made us expect and desire: we have, on a greater or lesser scale, experience that is completely significant. This is the kind of experience we are always hoping for; but only in art do we get it: not merely a flashing accidental moment of unified experience, but a prolonged continuous series of moments securely and infallibly organizing their own perfect system of interrelationship, and thereby manifesting the only significance which is absolutely necessary to our minds — the revelation of law and order in things. . . .

This 'revelation of law and order in things' lies at the very core of *Hamlet*, and Shakespeare, master-

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism.* (Gollancz.)

craftsman, states his thesis early in the play when he tell us:

> that these men,
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> . . . . .
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault: . . .

So, while the action of the story is developing for the amazement of the groundlings, the progress of the *Intention* is entertaining the psychologically inclined, and the *Theme* is stamping the author's metaphysic on the minds of the audience, so that when the moment arrives for the materialization of the *Theme* into *Significance*, it shall come, not as a faint suggestive voice, but as an illumination.

And *Significance* is but the old moral in court robes.

Whether it takes the form of 'one defect of character corrupting the whole man,' or of 'little boys suffering internal pains from green and stolen apples,' it must stand forth as a *bas relief* against the background of action. Whether it is welded into the play and alone illustrated by the action, or tacked on to the end in the form of a statement by the author (after the manner of Æsop), it is an integral part of the story and as essential to the development of the action as is the leading character.

We will see how Shakespeare utilizes his *Denouement* to show the end of his *Line of Action*, which brings the death of the hero with it; the success of the *Intention*, which brings achievement to the vacillator; and the flowering of the *Theme* into *Significance*, which illuminates the mind of the audience with a 'revelation of law and order in things.'

The scheme of the King and Laertes is in progress:

> KING: Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
> You know the wager?

The duelling begins, and the author with his mind on his three-fold task of *Action*, *Intention* and *Significance*,

begins the heightening which is to lead to *Denouement.* The Queen drinks the poisoned wine, Laertes wounds Hamlet with the unction-anointed rapier, which by a stage trick changes hands and Laertes is wounded. But still the *Intention* in the mind of the doomed hero is static. Then the Queen falls and dies:

HAMLET: O villany! Ho! Let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.
LAERTES: It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

And so the vacillating Hamlet plunges the poisoned rapier into the heart of the King and achieves his *Intention,* which might have been achieved in the prayer-scene of Act III, Scene III, with the consequent saving of the lives of Ophelia, Laertes, Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the Queen.

Significance enough for the starkest of dramas, illumination sufficient for the baldest of *Themes,* revelation of that law and order in things which, telling us first that one defect of character may corrupt the whole man, shows us a stage littered with the bodies that his corruption has slain.

Hamlet, who could slay the hidden Polonius so long as the arras hung between him and his victim (and he could fantasy the living flesh as mere stuff of dream), has thrust his rapier in stark daylight into the living tissue, now that the pressure of actuality has forced him from his world of Fantasy.

Hamlet, shorn of its grandeur, robbed of its poetry, yields on a final analysis a simple outline of form which we shall find underlying the most trivial production of

the Restoration, the most sublime creation of the Renaissance. It is the formal design of *The Way of the World*: it is the formal design of *Lear*.

Before we begin the work of seeking for and testing the laws which govern form in general, and before we illustrate their universal application, we will glance at the unit of design, the W, and consider its claim to be the basic architectural pattern of Hamlet.

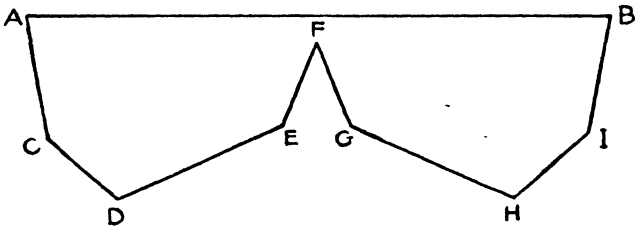


DIAGRAM NO. 2.

AB = *Line of Intention:*
Hamlet intends to avenge his father's death.

AC = *Barrier to the Intention:*
Hamlet's vacillations.

CD = *Secondary Incident:* [1]
The King commands the courtiers to spy on Hamlet.

DE = *Reversal of the Barrier:*
Hamlet tricks the King into betraying his guilt.

EF = *The Crisis:*
Hamlet discovers the King kneeling at prayer.

FG = *Reversal of the Crisis:*
Vacillation atrophies Hamlet's will.

GH = *The Catastrophe:*
Hamlet sails for England.

HI = *Reversal of the Catastrophe:* [2]
Hamlet boards the pirate ship.

IB = *The Denouement:*
Hamlet slays the King and achieves his *Intention.*

It will be seen that, in the development of the action, there has been introduced into *The Line of Action* an

[1] Inessential except where *Reversal of Catastrophe* is included.
[2] Occasionally included as a *Primary Incident.*

incident which had no parallel in the form of Burns' letter. This incident is called *The Reversal of the Catastrophe.* Occasionally an author uses such a reversal between *Catastrophe* and *Denouement,* but more frequently there is no necessity for its appearance. The action, passing directly from almost-failure to achievement, gains by contrast. When this movement is included in the form, it must be balanced by another incident immediately before *The Reversal of the Barrier.*

Such an incident Shakespeare gives us in Act II, Scene II, where the King commands Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy on Hamlet:

> so by your companies
> To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
> So much as from occasion you may glean,
> Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
> That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

With this final comment to end the first chapter we may now consider the simple form of the play (see p. 36).

Chapter Two

THE LINE OF INTENTION AND THE BARRIER

I

The form of *Hamlet* has been symbolized as a W with a horizontal line above it, representing *The Line of Intention.* As we have now to accommodate *The Theme Line,* it should be imagined as a second horizontal line running above and parallel to the first line.

We have also classified certain inessential incidents in the story as *Tertiary Incidents.* A few words of explanation will be needed to clarify this term, and also to define *Secondary Incidents.* The *Primary Incidents* are those which are included in the W of the simple form:

The Barrier.
The Reversal of the Barrier.
The Crisis.
The Reversal of the Crisis.
The Catastrophe.
The Reversal of the Catastrophe (occasionally).
The Denouement.

These *Primary Incidents* together with any secondary and tertiary matter constitute *The Line of Action.*

If the action ends at *Denouement,* the latter will not only be a main or *Primary Incident,* it will also be the point where the *Intention* is achieved and the *Theme Line* flowers into *Significance.*

If the action ends with the failure of the *Intention,* as in *Macbeth* (where the leading character, in an endeavour to make safe his succession, falls at the hands of Macduff),

the *Denouement* will not be reached, for the action will end at that point on *The Line of Action* farthest from success, *i.e. Catastrophe.* The second upward stroke of the W will thus be lacking.

Many occurrences will be needed to develop such a story as *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and we shall need a name for those incidents which, while assisting in the development of the story, are not *Primary Incidents.* There will be in most full-length stories several upward movements of *The Line of Action* but they will not, necessarily, all be *Crises.* There will probably be several downward movements, but they will not, necessarily, all be *Catastrophes.*

The incident which approaches nearer to *The Line of Intention* than any of the others, without actually touching it, will be *The Crisis.* The incident which touches a point farthest from *The Line of Intention* will be *The Catastrophe.*

Those incidents which assist the development of the story and are not *Primary Incidents* we shall now call *Secondary Incidents.* They may lead the action upward toward *Crisis* or downward toward *Catastrophe*, they may keep the line equidistant between *Crisis* and *Catastrophe.*

Tertiary Incidents are those which do not assist in the development of the story, and which have been inserted for other reasons than for the showing of the development of the *Intention.* Such reasons include the need for contrast, the need for humour, etc. In every case they are indefensible.

As we cannot expect to find the W of the simple form clearly stated in all stories (or there would be no contrast between story and story from a formal point of view), we will glance at the structure of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, which departs from the simple expression of the form, but not too greatly to baffle the reader.

In this novel the *Intention* of Jude to possess his cousin, Sue, far outweighs his desire for scholarship, which is

the apparent *Intention* of the book, for Jude will act under Sue's influence in a manner that he would never have acted under the influence of his desire for scholarship. Hardy comments on the *Intention* in these words:

> And when he (Jude) reached his lodging he found a note from her —a first note—one of those documents which, simple and commonplace in themselves, are seen retrospectively to have been pregnant with impassioned consequences. The very unconsciousness of a looming drama which is shown in such innocent first epistles from women to men, or *vice versa*, makes them, when such a drama follows, and they are read over by the purple or lurid light of it, all the more impressive, solemn, and in cases, terrible.
>
> (At Christminster. IV.)

So Hardy sees the relationship between the two as 'impressive,' 'solemn' and 'terrible.' He tells us that it is 'drama.' So we have only to trace back from this epistle to the *Intention*, and we shall be in possession of the shuttle which is to thread the action and restrict the form.

Let us first state the *Intention* clearly, which this tracing backward puts us in possession of:

Intention: Jude desires Sue.

An interesting deviation from formal simplicity is obtained in this novel by the author developing his *Barrier* to the *Intention* some considerable time before he states the *Intention*. If Sue had met her cousin, Jude, before his marriage with Arabella, in all probability there would have been a very different development to the story. Arabella traps Jude into marriage with her and erects the *Barrier* to the unstated *Intention*:

> "As he is a romancing, straightforward, honest chap, he's to be had, and as a husband, if you set about catching him in the right way."
>
> Arabella remained thinking awhile. "What med be the right way?" she asked.
>
> . . . Then one went up close to Arabella, and, although nobody was near, imparted some information in a low tone. . . .

Arabella pursued her way in silent thought. "I'll try it!" she whispered; but not to them. (At Marygreen. VII.)

As her friend has suggested she plays upon Jude's inexperience:

"How do you know it's not too late?" she said. "That's all very well to say! I haven't told you yet!" and she looked into his face with streaming eyes.
"What?" he asked, turning pale. "Not . . .?"
"Yes! And what shall I do if you desert me?"
(At Marygreen. IX.)

The *Barrier to the Intention* having been erected by Jude's enforced marriage with Arabella, the author introduces Jude's cousin, Sue.

Barrier to the Intention: Jude is married to Arabella.

But the *Barrier* is flung aside by Sue herself, who, although engaged to the schoolmaster, Phillotson, writes to Jude: "If you want to love me, Jude, you may. . . ." In spite of this, Sue's marriage with Jude's rival is hurried through, and Jude finds himself in the position of giving away the woman he desires himself. Now, this is obviously a *Catastrophe*, a point on the *Line of Action* farthest away from *The Line of Intention*, and we note that it has occurred in this story before the appearance of *The Crisis*.

Catastrophe: Sue marries Phillotson.

But the love story of Jude and Sue is not so easily ended. Her marriage is unsatisfying, and Jude is always in the background of her mind:

Jude seized her hand and kissed it. "There is a stronger one left!" he said. "I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more! Let them go! Let me help you, even if I do love you, and even if you . . ."
"Don't say it!—I know what you mean; but I can't admit so much as that. There! Guess what you like, but don't press me to answer questions!" (At Shaston. II.)

Reversal of Catastrophe: Sue infers that she loves Jude.

The movement from this scene onward can be anticipated to some extent and the reader begins to look for the *Crisis*. It arrives when Sue and her husband agree to part, with the understanding that Sue is to join Jude and live openly with him as his wife. She writes to Jude on the eve of her departure from Phillotson:

"It is as I told you; I am leaving to-morrow evening. . . . He has been so *very* kind to me through it all! Now to our meeting."

Crisis: Sue writes that she is coming to Jude, and meets him.

But scruples awaken in the capricious mind of Sue. By a process of tangled reasoning she considers herself still to be the schoolmaster's wife, although she has been divorced from him:

"Well—I want to tell you something else, Jude. You won't be angry, will you? I have thought of it a good deal since my babies died. I don't think I ought to be your wife—or as your wife—any longer."

A modification in the *Intention* has occurred. Jude in gaining Sue has achieved his *Intention*; it now becomes a desire to keep her with him. But a second *Catastrophe* is looming on the horizon. The scruples attain to vast proportions and finally Sue says:

"I want to tell you," she presently said, her voice now quick, now slow, "so that you may not hear it by chance. I am going back to Richard. He has—so magnanimously—agreed to forgive all."

So the tormented mind of Sue takes her back to her schoolmaster, and in a final *Catastrophe* the story ends with Jude's death:

"How beautiful he is!" said she.
"Yes. He's a 'andsome corpse," said Arabella.

And the story of Jude's *Intention* is told.

Such are the incidents which outline the development of the *Intention*, but we must delve a little deeper into the

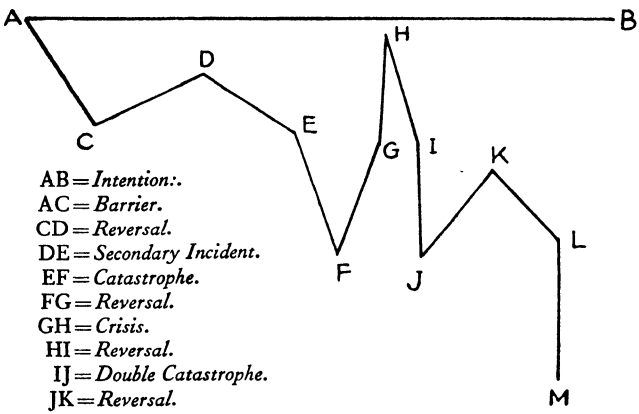
ındercurrents of the action, before we have all the 'acts which will constitute *The Simple Form.* We must et down every movement which alters the direction of he *Intention.* The result of an analysis of this kind will)roduce the following list of incidents:

Intention: Jude desires Sue.
Barrier: (*a*) Jude is married to Arabella.
(*b*) Sue becomes engaged to Phillotson.
Reversal of the Barrier: Sue tells Jude he may love her.
Secondary Incident: The marriage between Sue and Phillotson is to be accelerated.
(I) *Catastrophe*: Jude gives Sue away to Phillotson in the church.
Reversal of Catastrophe: Sue confesses that she loves Jude.
Crisis: Sue comes to live with Jude with her husband's consent.
Reversal of Crisis: Sue's scruples awaken. She considers herself to be Phillotson's wife.
(II) *Catastrophe*: Sue returns to Phillotson.
(III) *Catastrophe*: Arabella lures Jude again into a marriage with her. (They have been divorced.)
Reversal of Catastrophe: Jude sees Sue again.
Secondary Incident: Jude falls sick.
(IV) *Catastrophe*: Jude dies.

The *Intention* is finally thwarted by his death. He has)een unable to hold Sue beside him.

If we consider the incidents arranged in their chrono-)gical order we shall find that *The Simple Form* has ındergone a transformation. No longer do *The Primary 'ncidents* follow each other in the way that they were irst presented, but appear to thrust themselves forward ıs occasion may demand. This is the way with *Primary* ncidents. We shall find that stories are told in a series)f *Crises,* in a series of *Catastrophes,* in any way that the ncidents may be needed to develop the *Intention.* But

before we pass on to other considerations, let us glance at *The Simple Form* of the story, remembering that when two *Catastrophes* occur, one immediately after the other, they are treated as a double *Catastrophe* from the point of view of Form, unless we can be sure that one has greater weight than the other, in which case the one with the greater weight will be the real *Catastrophe.*



AB = *Intention:.*
AC = *Barrier.*
CD = *Reversal.*
DE = *Secondary Incident.*
EF = *Catastrophe.*
FG = *Reversal.*
GH = *Crisis.*
HI = *Reversal.*
IJ = *Double Catastrophe.*
JK = *Reversal.*
KL = *Secondary Incident.*
LM = *Catastrophe.*

DIAGRAM No. 3.

If this diagram is compared with the diagrams in Chapter One, it will be seen how the alteration in the appearance of the *Primary Incidents* affects the *Simple Form.* At this point we will make no comment on the symmetry of the form of *Jude the Obscure,* as the main point we wish to stress at the moment, is, that as the incidents of a story appear in various orders, so will the form change to meet the requirements of such incidents.

Before we pass on, it may be as well to glance at a letter which Sue sent to Jude early in the story. She is already engaged to Phillotson. Then come tidings, the author tells us, which pass across Jude like ' a withering blast ' :

" My dear Jude,—I have something to tell you which perhaps you will be surprised to hear, though certainly it may strike you as being accelerated (as the railway companies say of their trains). Mr Phillotson and I are to be married quite soon—in three or four weeks. . . ." (At Melchester. VII.)

Dramatically this letter is on a very high level. The author, himself, considers it to be so by his few words of preface to the occurrence. It would naturally be expected that it would occupy a prominent position in the incidents which shape *The Simple Form*, and yet we find it called a *Secondary Incident*. At first sight it would seem to be a *Catastrophe*. That it is not so, is due to the intensity of the drama. No doubt in a story where the contrasts were less pronounced, such an incident would stand out as catastrophic. A minor incident in *Lear* would probably become a *Primary Incident* in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The value of the incident depends upon the value of the incidents with which it is grouped. If this letter had carried a higher dramatic tension with regard to the *Intention* than any of the *Catastrophes* we have selected, it would have forced them out of their dominating position and have become the sole *Catastrophe* of the story.

Failing to reach the dramatic intensity of the other *Catastrophes*, it is relegated to a secondary position, for our definition of the word, *Catastrophe* is that incident in a story where the failure of the *Intention* is or seems to be most imminent.

But there can be no failure nor success to the *Intention* until it is brought into contact with actuality.

If we imagine the hero looking along the diagrammatic line AB, the *Line of Intention*, he will be looking toward the point B which when touched by *The Line of Action* becomes the *Denouement*. Before he sets out on his undertaking he will look long at this point of achievement, to assure himself that his project has a reasonable chance of success. In other words he will first view his

Intention as having been achieved, and in so doing he will impress the reader with the knowledge of what may be achieved by his actions. He will be living for the moment on a plane of *Fantasy*.

Now it is very important that the *Intention* should leave this plane of *Fantasy* at the earliest possible moment, and sever its connexion with it for the rest of the story. The hero is a person belonging to the plane of *Actuality* who will have to battle for his *Intention* in a world where practical barriers must be overcome. It is also important that the reader should know immediately that the hero *is* severing his connexion with this plane, on which dwell the fairies, the Aladdins, the Mephistopheles, and the giants of the fairy tales. For unless the reader knows this, he will not know in what convention the author is working.

Hans Anderson is at liberty to use what creatures he will from the plane of *Fantasy*, for the reader accepts the fact that the hero is in touch with that plane of being. Cervantes has no such liberty. He makes it clear that he is dealing with the facts of a plane of *Actuality*.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream has a different convention from *Othello*. The fairies of the former would seem a little incongruous in the setting of the latter, for one belongs to a plane of *Fantasy* and the other to a plane of *Actuality*. In *Hamlet*, where the conventions are mixed, Shakespeare hurries to introduce his Ghost so that the audience may be aware of the particular convention of the story.

Intention, we have seen, is the motivating factor in the story; it gives the hero and his audience their sense of direction. It is born on a plane of *Fantasy*, where all desires, wishes and *Intentions* are born, as abstractions of the mind. Hamlet may view his enemy, Claudius, dead at his feet on this plane of unreality, but until the spectre of the plane of *Fantasy* becomes the corporeal body of the plane of *Actuality*, the story will belong to a world

of illusions, a place of dream pictures, where the rubbing of lamps and the waving of wands produce the heart's desire with none of the heart's pain.

The *Intention*, the shuttle which first operates on a plane of *Fantasy*, must be diverted to the plane of *Actuality* so that it may drive events forward from *Barrier* to *Denouement*. How is this to be achieved?

When the *Intention* awakens first in the mind of the hero he will view his project on a plane of *Fantasy*, where to think is to achieve; if the *Intention* is weak, as in *Hamlet*, it may possibly be delayed on this plane; if it is weaker still and the *Barrier* exceptionally difficult to overcome, the *Intention* may wither before it is put into action. Or it may live vicariously on the plane of *Fantasy*, or hover between *Fantasy* and *Actuality*. The story of Aladdin will illustrate this tendency to hover.

Either the hero must face his difficulties by renouncing the world of dream and by overcoming *The Barrier*, or he must be debarred from full citizenship of the plane of *Actuality* with its *Line of Action*.

Literature, awakening in this unreal world and looking back to it as its source, must always be in danger of the desire to retreat, when the problems of form are presented to it. To free it from the fetid atmosphere of tropical and unhealthy growth, where beanstalks grew to amazing proportions, was the work of the earlier scribes.

We can see this work in progress in the story of *The Two Brothers*,[1] which is dated around 1400 B.C. The *Intention* which dominates the earlier part of the action is in the mind of the wife of the elder brother, who desires to seduce the younger—a variation of the Potiphar's Wife story. *The Barrier* is the younger brother's unwillingness. At this point the wife's *Intention* modifies, and she desires to be revenged on the young man for his slight. The elder brother then lies in wait for the younger, and at this point the plane of *Fantasy* becomes entangled

[1] *Egyptian Tales*. Translated by Flinders Petrie.

with the plane of *Actuality*. A god intervenes and helps the younger brother to escape.

But this is not the end of the story. As soon as the first section is told, a second section begins in the form of a completely new story written around the younger brother.

The gods make for his delight a perfect wife. A lock of her hair is carried to the seashore and finds its way to the place of the fullers of Pharaoh's linen. Pharaoh hears of the incident and desires to possess the owner of the hair, but the younger brother kills all who come to take her from him, except one who is clever enough to escape and carry back a report. Pharaoh in the end captures the woman.

From this point *Fantasy* runs riot.

The woman tells Pharaoh to cut down an acacia tree, for her husband's soul is imprisoned in it. This is at once done and the husband dies. By magical practices the elder brother restores the younger to life, who now takes the form of a bull and confronts the wife, telling her who he is. She asks Pharaoh to slay the bull and he gives the order. Two persea trees grow from two drops of the blood of the beast. The wife then orders the two trees to be cut down, and when the order is carried out, a chip from one of the trees enters her mouth and a son is born to her . . . who is her husband, the younger brother. He then judges his errant wife.

Such, in brief, is the outline of the story . . . or stories.

The first story is for the most part action in a world of *Actuality* and as vivid as such tales are, which deal with fundamental problems. It is simple, straightforward action concerning a woman, her husband and his brother, and it is, perhaps, the earliest recorded instance of the so-called triangle story. The *Intention* in the mind of the woman is checked by *The Barrier* of the younger brother's will, and action is the result.

But no sooner is the plot laid down and the pattern

beginning to form, than the scribe, possibly foreseeing the difficulties of construction, retreats to his *Line of Fantasy* and by the end of the tale has entirely bartered the wills of his characters for the magical wands and stage appurtenances of the wizard.

It is an axiom that if the real is abandoned, the unreal will take possession. If *The Line of Action* becomes entangled with movements on the plane of *Fantasy*, it will destroy the cause-and-effect principle on which is built the *Form* and the *Significance* of the story.

Present Sisyphus with Aladdin's lamp and he will become a symbol of achievement.

This, of course, should not be considered as a condemnation of fairy stories as a class. *The Shepherdess and the Sweep* and *Cinderella* have their places in Literature. No one would be so churlish as to attempt to shoulder aside such masterpieces as are contained in *The Arabian Nights*, on account of a little misunderstanding between dream and reality. It is all a matter of convention. If the reader is clearly given to understand that his author is dealing with one world or the other or a mixture of the two, who is there to challenge his authority? The only stipulation is that the author shall decide at the outset what his convention is, and keep to it. *Hamlet* includes the Ghost. Greek drama, the Gods.

If a story is obviously conventionalized on a plane of *Actuality*, then it will naturally follow that the story should unravel itself according to the recognized laws of life.

Fantasy belongs to the plane which hovers above *The Line of Action*. It has no place in a world of material barriers. Once the *Intention* has found an outlet in action, its work is then to drive the incidents toward achievement. If the cause and effect principle is disturbed, the verisimilitude will be weakened and the reader's interest in the story correspondingly lowered. This is the reason for stating in the clearest possible manner the author's

convention, if he intends to depart from the world of *Actuality*.

But how are we to discover this *Intention* which dominates a story and restricts its incidents, if the *Intention* is hidden in the mind of one of the characters? In the mind of which character are we to make search for this directive principle? There is, or should be, no outward sign to differentiate the character which harbours the *Intention* from the characters which do not. Wherein lies the difference between Brutus and Cassius; Antony and Octavius? What is the hall-mark of a character who is dominated by an *Intention*?

All that we have to aid us in searching for this elusive factor, is the knowledge that it is hidden in one of the minds of the players, and should we be mistaken in allocating it to the wrong player, the form of the story will appear in a distorted design. The character for whom we search will in all likelihood guard this inner urge from his fellow-characters. He will not wear his heart upon his sleeve. How may the reader assure himself that he is not following the fortunes of a sub-ordinate character, when he imagines that he is following the development of a main *Intention*.

In varying forms we shall be confronted by this problem throughout our survey of technical constructions, but for the moment we will consider only that aspect of the matter which bears directly on the plane of *Fantasy* and the *Barrier*.

The *Intention* in *Hamlet* was quite a simple matter to discover, as the hero and his mission are presented with an unqualified directness, and the *Intention* dominates the action without any kind of modification from the opening of the story to the close. But this is not always the case.

In *Julius Cæsar* the *Intention* is to kill Cæsar, and this desire awakens first in the mind of Cassius, who then passes on the desire to Brutus. This could be stated in other words: Cassius desires to awaken Brutus to an

Intention to kill Cæsar. In this latter case the *Intention* of Cassius would reach its *Denouement* the moment Brutus was impregnated with the desire. In the former case the *Intention* to kill Cæsar, forming in the mind of Cassius, is passed on to Brutus as an intermediary movement and reaches its *Denouement* in the murder of Cæsar. So it will be seen that it makes a very great difference in what way the *Intention* is stated. In the former case there is only one *Intention* necessary up to the killing of Cæsar. In the latter case two would be needed, first the *Intention* of Cassius, then the *Intention* of Brutus.

In the following quotation from the play it will be seen how the mind of Cassius is concentrated upon the murder of Cæsar, at the same time that he saturates the mind of Brutus with the idea; thus making the latter a pawn in his greater *Intention* of Cæsar-murder:

CASSIUS: Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is dispos'd:

. . . . .

I will this night,
In several hands, in at his windows throw,
As if they came from several citizens
Writing all tending to the great opinion
That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely
Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at. . . .
(Act I, Scene II.)

The *Intention* to kill Cæsar is awakened in the mind of Brutus:

BRUTUS: It must be by his death: and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.

. . . . .

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischevious,
And kill him in the shell. (Act II, Scene I.)

The *Intention* in *Julius Cæsar* is thus passed from one character to another, the first character retaining his *Intention*, while he shares it with a second character. Thus the *Intention* needs no modification. It is obviously to murder Cæsar, and until it has reached a point of achievement, this must be the dominating influence of the play. Only by a careful reading of the entire play, noting possible *Crises*, *Catastrophes* and *Denouements* to each possible *Intention*, can we be sure that the *Main Intention* has been found.

And at this point a complication occurs.

If the structure of the story depends upon the *Intention*, then it will follow that when this has either been achieved or has definitely failed, the story will be at an end. The *Denouement* and the *Catastrophe*, those signal-posts of finality, refer only to the hero's *Intention* and not to the hero as man.

This being the case, logically the play of *Julius Cæsar* should end with the end of the *Intention* in Act Three, Scene One, where Cæsar is slain. It undoubtedly should end here, if the *Intention* was as static as it might appear to be. But it is not. *The Line of Action* is in a state of flux on account of the various incidents of which it is composed: *The Theme Line* develops by means of its selective control of the incidents moving toward *Significance*. It would indeed be strange if alone in this surge of development, the *Intention* should remain static, of necessity.

It *may* remain static as in *Hamlet*, or it may change frequently as in *The Two Brothers*, which we have commented on. In the latter the desire of the woman for the younger brother forms the original *Intention*. When she fails to obtain her desire, this *Intention* changes into a desire for revenge.

In *Julius Cæsar* the principle is the same. When Brutus and Cassius have achieved their will and Cæsar lies slain, the *Intention* then becomes the controlling of

the destinies of the Roman Empire. Having slain the man, they desire his possessions.

There is thus no obligation for the *Intention*, which was the dominating factor at the opening of the story, to remain the dominating factor until the close. It would be as unreasonable to insist on such stagnation, as it would to demand that the desires of an adolescent should remain unchanged until his old age. But though the *Intention* may alter during the development of the story, thus complicating the plot, it should not be assumed that it may alter unreservedly.

A woman's love may, under certain circumstances, change to hate. A man's *Intention* must change when it has been achieved, if the play or story is to continue. But where one desire or *Intention* gives place to another, the second should grow out of the first as effect from cause: the second *Intention* must be a consequential sequence of the first. Unless it is so, there will be a check to the cause-and-effect principle, an hiatus, which will lessen the reader's interest while he considers the probability of the new *Intention* springing up where the old has died.

This *Modification of the Intention* is one of the pit-falls of hurried analysis, for one may discover that the *Catastrophe* of the story is relative to a different *Intention*, from the one which dominated the *Crisis*. A careful reading of the text, however, is the guarantee against this, and if the story is then traced backward from *Denouement* to *Barrier*, each *Modification of the Intention* will be apparent.

This alteration of the original *Intention* should be noted in the diagram of form in the following manner:

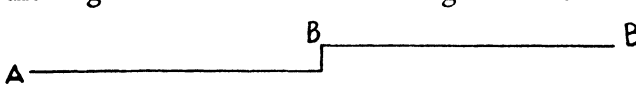


DIAGRAM NO. 4.

AB = The Line of Intention (Primary).
BB' = First Modification of the Line of Intention.

The *Hippolytus* of Euripides will illustrate this principle. The story deals with Phædra, the wife of Theseus, who desires the love of her husband's illegitimate son, Hippolytus. *The Barrier* to the *Intention* is the indifference of Hippolytus, and Phædra's honour prevents her from showing her love. *The Barrier* finds its *Reversal* through Phædra's nurse, who wins her mistress' confidence, and the *Crisis* is reached where she betrays it to Hippolytus. Phædra, hearing that he is horrified by the knowledge (*Reversal of Crisis*), and dreading that he will tell her husband, decides to save her honour by accusing the young man of an attack upon her virtue. She hangs herself, leaving a tablet accusing him.

It will be seen that the line AB dominates the *Intention* to the point where Phædra learns of Hippolytus's attitude toward her love for him. The *Intention* then changes to a desire to save her reputation and to be revenged:

> Yet, dying, shall I die another's bane!
> He shall not stand so proud where I have lain
> Bent in the dust! [1]

It is obvious from this that Euripides was aware that the *Intention* could dominate the story directly and not only through a character, for Phædra having killed herself to achieve her modified desire, leaves the disembodied *Intention* to direct the incidents of the remainder of the story.

But *The Barrier* is not only the first of *The Primary Incidents,* it is that point on *The Line of Action* where the author is given his first opportunity of showing his hero in conflict with the world of *Actuality. How* does the hero accept this first check in his progress toward achievement; *how* does he acquit himself? In the reply to these questions the reader may assure himself of the hero's chances of a successful end to his activities. It is an indirect statement concerning his character.

[1] *The Hippolytus of Euripides.* Translated by Gilbert Murray: Longmans Green & Co., New York.

Sometimes, as in life, circumstances will obtrude and overcome *The Barrier* for the hero, thus avoiding a statement of the hero's potentiality. But circumstance is a dangerous ally, for it has, hidden under its cloak, that long arm of coincidence, which no self-respecting reader will allow himself to be nudged by, unless it is achieved with a subtlety that is rare. Swinburne uses the device to reverse *The Barrier* in *Les Noyades*. The hero is introduced as:

> One rough with labour and red with fight,

The heroine is presented as:

> . . . a lady noble by name and face,
> Faultless, a maiden, wonderful, white.

Intention is stated as definitely as a poem may state:

> I have loved this woman my whole life long,
> And even for love's sake when have I said
> "I love you?" when have I done you wrong,
> Living?

The Barrier to the hero's lifelong adoration was the difference in their social status. *The Reversal of the Barrier*, which takes place, not by an act of the hero's, but by an act of circumstance, is as follows:

> She knew not, being for shame's sake blind,
> If his eyes were hot on her face hard by.
> And the judge bade strip and ship them, and bind
> Bosom to bosom to drown and die.
>
> . . . . .
>
> For never a man, being mean like me,
> Shall die like me till the whole world dies.
> I shall drown with her, laughing for love; and she
> Mix with me, touching me, lips and eyes.

It will later be seen that the author who allows circumstance to reverse *The Barrier* for the hero, is in danger of permitting him to slip into the negative aspect of the form we are now considering. The character who is

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destiny-driven will be of a different type from the positive character who drives destiny. We shall see this type in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, in Boccaccio's story of *Patient Griselda* and elsewhere. For the moment it is sufficient to comment on the difference between the character who controls his *Line of Action* and the character who is controlled by his *Line of Action*.

Unless the *Intention* is riveted firmly in the mind of the hero, he will not be able to express it by his actions, to the reader. If it is firmly fixed, then it will be passed sub-consciously to the reader, who will be able to decide upon the direction of the story, and decide also what he may, with justice, demand of the hero. Further, it will enable the formalist to decide whether the author is dealing with one organic whole, or whether he has joined together separate organic wholes and is attempting to pass them off basely as one complete story. The latter is the case with *The Two Brothers*. The former is the case with *Julius Cæsar*.

Now that we have satisfied ourselves concerning the plane of *Fantasy* which hovers above *The Line of Action*, and have seen the *Intention* pass from the one to the other, we must assure ourselves that *The Line of Action* is no isolated phenomenon in the world of *Form*, but is, on the contrary, the unit of all movement in the world of story. The W is as necessary as a basis for each *incident*, as it is as a basis of the story seen as a whole.

Story, sub-story, incident, character (seen as movement through form), need the simple W to show their design, to illustrate their action. The King in *Hamlet* isolated from the other characters, may be followed through the story by means of his *Intention* to be free of his too insistent nephew. *Crisis*, *Catastrophe* and *Reversals* will occur in his personal *Line of Action*, irrespective of the main *Line of Action*, which is dominated by the Hamlet *Intention*. This will be true of any character in any story to the extent that the character has been developed by the author.

To illustrate the fact that not only will the main story be based upon the unit of form, but also the sub-stories, out of which incidents are fashioned to build up the main story, we will glance at the various stories which together build up Goethe's *Faust*.[1]

It will be seen that an incident which acts as *Crisis* or *Catastrophe* to the main story, may be a complete story in itself, having its full complement of *Primary Incidents*, its *Line of Intention* and its *Theme Line*. The microcosm will duplicate the macrocosm.

As yet we are only considering Form in its simplest manifestation of *Primary Incidents*, and those necessary *Secondary Incidents* which link primaries, where gaps have been made, through alteration in the order of primaries, or the omission of them.

We will first analyse the main story of *Faust*, the macrocosm as it were, later analysing the separate stories which stand in relation to it as microcosms to the macrocosm.

II

The statement of the *Intention* is in Faust's words early in the first part:

> I've studied now Philosophy
> And Jurisprudence, Medicine,—
> And even, alas! Theology,—
> From end to end, with labour keen;
> And here, poor fool! with all my lore
> I stand, no wiser than before:
>
> . . . . .
>
> Wherefore, from Magic I seek assistance,
>
> . . . . .
>
> That I may detect the inmost force
> Which binds the world, and guides its course;
> Its germs, productive powers explore,
> And rummage in empty words no more!
>
> (Part One. Scene I.)

[1] *Faust*. A Tragedy in Two Parts by J. W. von Goethe. Translated by Bayard Taylor: Oxford University Press.

Intention: Faust desires satisfaction through knowledge.

But the kind of knowledge to which he aspires is not to be found in books:

Nature retains her veil, despite our clamours:
That which she doth not willingly display
Cannot be wrenched from her with levers, screws, and hammers.
(Part One. Scene I.)

Barrier: Faust has studied but has been unable to learn of 'the inmost force.' The mysteries of life are impenetrable.

However Mephistopheles, with his suggestion of the plane of *Fantasy* and its easy victories, is near:

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Here,* an unwearied slave, I'll wear thy tether,
And to thine every nod obedient be:
When *There* again we come together,
Then shalt thou do the same for me.
FAUST: The *There* my scruples naught increases.
When thou hast dashed this world to pieces,
The other, then, its place may fill.
(Part One. Scene IV.)

So Faust signs a document with the devil who will give him all the experience he needs to lead him to wisdom.

Reversal of the Barrier: Mephistopheles will be Faust's guide to knowledge.

The *Crisis* will be reached when Mephistopheles is able to give Faust the experiences he needs in his search for knowledge. First comes the Margaret experience, second the experience with the Mothers, concerning which much is left to the reader's imagination:

MEPHISTOPHELES: . . . Goddesses, unknown to ye,
The Mortals,—named by us unwittingly.
Delve in the deepest depths must thou, to reach them. . . .
(Part Two. Act I, Scene V.)

HOMONCULUS: Who to the Mothers found his way,
Has nothing more to undergo.
(Part Two. Act II, Scene III.)

And finally, as concluding *Crisis*, comes Faust's experience with Helena.

These three incidents are grouped together, for it would tax the ingenuity of a Dante commentator to decide which of these incidents comes nearest to *The Line of Intention*, and so forms the sole *Crisis*. Their value to Faust as experience, is our touchstone when considering their claims to be ranked one above the other, and it would seem impossible to decide which was the greater experience and thus the true *Crisis*. We accept them as combined incidents forming *Crisis*.

We shall later see that there is no limit to the number of *Crises* in any single story, or to the number of *Catastrophes*, provided that each incident so named, has the same value in relation to the *Intention*.

Now that Faust has had great experiences which have illuminated his mind but not satisfied it, old age begins to creep upon him, and an end to experience is in sight:

FAUST: Collect a crowd of men with vigour,
Spur by indulgence, praise, or rigour,—
Reward, allure, conscript, compel!
Each day report me, and correctly note
How grows in length the undertaken moat.
MEPHISTOPHELES: (*half-aloud*) When they to me the information gave,
They spake not of a moat, but of—a *grave*.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene VI.)

Reversal of the Crisis: Death, the end of experience, is near.

Faust at last sinks back and the Lemures take him and lay him on the ground:

MEPHISTOPHELES: The Body lies, and if the Spirit flee,
I'll show it speedily my blood-signed title.—
(Part Two. Act V, Scene VI.)

Catastrophe: Faust dies with his soul pledged to Mephistopheles.

But where there is a question of a man's soul, it would seem that material contracts are apt to be ignored, a point which Mephistopheles seems to have overlooked. The Heavenly Powers appear to have a voice in the matter, for a chorus of angels comes:

ANGELS: The noble Spirit now is free,
And saved from evil scheming:
Whoe'er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redeeming.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene VII.)

Which would suggest a partiality which ignores the labours of Mephistopheles:

Reversal of the Catastrophe: The angels snatch Faust from the hands of Mephistopheles.

And Faust has a final experience in a reunion with Margaret:

MARGARET: Incline, O Maiden,
With Mercy laden,
In light unfading,
Thy gracious countenance upon my bliss!
My loved, my lover,
His trials over
In yonder world, returns to me in this!
(Part Two. Act V, Scene VII.)

Such then is the *Simple Form* of the main story of *Faust*. It stands, a mighty structure of imagined experience when stripped of its ornamentation. Just how much of the ornate, which critics maintain disfigures the splendour of the whole, should have been permitted to remain, when Goethe's critical eye surveyed the final draft, is not our business to comment on. There is much that we must cast aside as *Tertiary Incident*, much which is of doubtful value to the development of the

action, but what remains is of so gigantic a stature that criticism is disarmed.

Before we turn to the sub-stories, which we shall later learn to know as *Parallel Stories*, it will be as well to glance at the simple outline of the main story of *Faust* in diagrammatic form, that we may see how closely it follows the outline of the W.

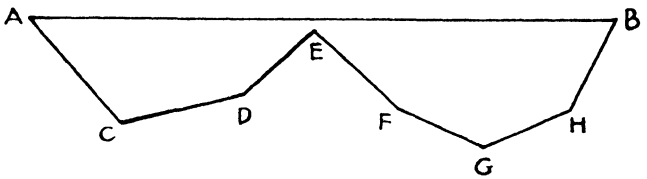

DIAGRAM NO. 5.

AB = *Intention*: Faust desires satisfaction through knowledge.
AC = *Barrier*: Faust is baffled by the mysteries of nature.
CD = *Reversal*: Mephistopheles will guide Faust.
DE = *Crisis*: (1) The Margaret experience.
(2) The Mothers experience.
(3) The Helena experience.
EF = *Reversal*: Death, an end to experience, is near.
FG = *Catastrophe*: Faust dies, his soul pledged to Mephistopheles.
GH = *Reversal*: Angels snatch Faust from the hands of Mephistopheles.
HB = *Denouement*: Final experience in the reunion with Margaret.

It will be seen that the *Secondary Incident* which should have been inserted before the *Reversal of the Barrier* is lacking, and that the *Reversal of the Catastrophe* has not a parallel movement to balance it. This is due to the somewhat hurried appearance of Mephistopheles into Faust's life. One or two minor incidents might have been selected to balance the *Reversal of the Catastrophe*, but they seemed to be too trivial in so grand a scheme. This lack of a *Secondary Incident* worthy of a place in the simple form of the main story of *Faust* produces a lack of balance and destroys what would otherwise have been perfect symmetry.

Let us turn now to the Margaret story which helped

to form the *Crisis* to the main story. This, we shall see, is a complete tale in itself:

Intention: Faust desires to possess Margaret:

Hear, of that girl I'd have possession.

(Part I, Scene VII.)

Barrier: Mephistopheles's power is limited:

I have no power o'er souls so green.

(Part I, Scene VII.)

Reversal: Mephistopheles will help by finding an 'opportune occasion':

We must make use of strategy.

. . . . .

I'll find her room to-day, and take you in it.

(Part I, Scene VII.)

Crisis: Margaret receives Faust in her room, after drugging her mother:

FAUST: Ah, shall there never be
A quiet hour, to see us fondly plighted,
With breast to breast, and soul to soul united?
MARGARET: Ah, if only I slept alone!
I'd draw the bolts to-night, for thy desire;
But mother's sleep so light has grown . . .

. . . . .

FAUST: Here is a phial: in her drink
But three drops of it measure,
And deepest sleep will on her senses sink.

. . . . .

MARGARET: So much have I already done for thee,
That scarcely more is left me to fulfil.

(Part I, Scene XVI.)

Reversal of Crisis: Valentine (Margaret's brother) discovers that his sister is pregnant:

VALENTINE: I tell thee, from thy tears refrain!
When thou from honour didst depart,
It stabbed me to the very heart.
Now through the slumber of the grave
I go to God. . . .

(Part I, Scene XIX.)

Catastrophe: Margaret is cast into a dungeon for killing her child and her mother, and is thus snatched out of Faust's possession:

MARGARET: Day? Yes, the day comes,—the last day breaks for me!
My wedding-day it was to be!
Tell no one thou hast been with Margaret!
Woe for my garland! The chances
Are over—'tis all in vain!
We shall meet once again,
But not at the dances!

. . . . .

The death bell tolls, the wand is broken.
I am seized, and bound, and delivered—
Shoved to the block—they give the sign!
Now over each neck has quivered
The blade that is quivering over mine.
Dumb lies the world like the grave!

. . . . .

MEPHISTOPHELES: (*to* FAUST) Come! or I'll leave her in the lurch, and thee!

(Part I, Scene XXV.)

And Faust disappears with Mephistopheles, leaving Margaret to her captors. But, as we have seen in the analysis of the *Main Story*, there is a *Denouement* to the Margaret story where she meets Faust in Heaven, thus this final incident acts as *Denouement* not only to the main story, but to the sub-story as well.

As the outline of the *Simple Form* of the Margaret story follows the W without complication and ends at *Catastrophe*, there will be no need to illustrate it by diagram. The reader will have no difficulty in visualizing it. In fact this visualization of the form of a work of literature should be developed by a visualization of each incident as it occurs in reference to *The Line of Intention*, for the drawing of diagrams to illustrate form is to be deprecated when the W with its various *Primary Incidents* has been assimilated. Form should be apprehended in the same manner that 'story' is apprehended, through the imagination.

This story unifies the first part of Faust. There is a great amount of *Tertiary Incident* here, as in the main story. Although much of it is fascinating as reading matter, it has nothing to do with the development of the Faust-Margaret story and so makes the detailed form of the first part unshapely.

In the second part of *Faust* there are two separate and complete stories. The first deals with Faust's desire for Helena, which the critics tell us symbolizes the quest for beauty.[1] It is a most interesting story to follow, as Goethe leads us to the *Denouement* through a world of mixed *Fantasy* and *Actuality*. Classical Walpurgis-Night adds its share to the interest. But even in this realm of *Fantasy*, Goethe makes the barriers of the physical world operative. Faust cannot reach Helena without help. He has to be accommodated with a seat on the back of the centaur, Chiron.

Again, as in the Margaret story, the main incidents are clearly outlined:

Intention: Faust desires experiences of a higher kind:

> And now beginnest, all thy gladness granting,
> A vigorous resolution to restore me,
> To seek that highest life for which I'm panting,—
> (Part Two. Act I, Scene I.)

The Barrier: Mephistopheles laughs at Faust's desire for Helena:

> Think'st Helen will respond to thy commanding
> As freely as the paper-ghosts of gold!
> (Part Two. Act I, Scene V.)

Reversal of the Barrier: Mephistopheles will aid Faust in his quest:

> MEPHISTOPHELES: I've no concern with the old heathen race;
> They house within their special Hades.
> Yet there's a way.
>
> . . . . .

[1] *Notes by Douglas Yates to Goethe's Faust.* Translated by Bayard Taylor.

Unwillingly, I reveal a loftier mystery.—
In solitude are throned the Godesses,
No Space around them, Place and Time, still less;
Only to speak of them embarrasses
They are THE MOTHERS!

. . . . .

Delve in the deepest depths must thou, to reach them:
'Tis thine own fault that we for help beseech them.

. . . . .

Here, take this key!

. . . . .

The Key will scent the true place from all others:
Follow it down!—'twill lead thee to the Mothers.

(Part Two. Act I, Scene V.)

Crisis: Faust enraptured by the vision of Helena, as he experiences perfect beauty:

Have I still eyes? Deep in my being springs
The fount of Beauty, in a torrent pouring!
A heavenly gain my path of terror brings.

. . . . .

The form, that long erewhile my fancy captured,
That from the magic mirror so enraptured,
Was but a frothy phantom of such beauty!

(Part Two. Act I, Scene VII.)

Reversal of Crisis: Faust tries to detain the wraith of Helena, who is vanishing from his sight:

FAUST: How far she was, and nearer, how divine!
I'll rescue her, and make her doubly mine.
Ye Mothers! Mothers! crown this wild endeavour!
Who knows her once must hold her, and for ever!

[*There is an explosion.* FAUST *lies upon the earth.*
The Spirits *dissolve in vapour.*

(Part Two. Act I, Scene VII.)

Catastrophe: Helena vanishes and Faust is distraught.
Reversal of the Catastrophe: Seeking for Helena, Faust is carried toward her on the back of Chiron:

FAUST: O, I scarcely dare
To trust my senses!—tell me more!—
She is my only aspiration!
Whence didst thou bear her—to what shore?
(Part Two. Act II, Scene III (2).)

Denouement: Faust meets Helena again before the palace of Menelaus in Sparta.

HELENA: Fain to discourse with thee, I bid thee come
Up hither to my side! The empty place
Invites its lord, and thus secures me mine.
(Part Two. Act III.)

And so the subsidiary story of Faust and Helena closes, which, together with the Margaret story, forms the greater part of the *Crisis* to *The Main Story*. We have already commented on the use of Fantasy in the development of the drama. He who deals with the devil must deal with other worlds than the actual. But there is still another story which knits the scattered incidents of the second part into a greater unity.

This story deals with Faust operating again in the world of Actuality:

Intention: Faust desires to achieve in the physical world.

Power and Estate to win, inspires my thought!
The Deed is everything, the Glory naught.
. . . . .
To shut the lordly Ocean from the shore,
The watery waste to limit and to bar,
And push it back upon itself afar!
From step to step I settled how to fight it:
Such is my wish: dare thou to expedite it!
(Part Two. Act IV, Scene I.)

The Barrier: Faust does not own the land beside the sea which he wishes to drain.

Reversal of the Barrier: The Emperor, for services rendered by Mephistopheles, gives the land to Faust:

PHILEMON: Can the Emperor's soul be perilled,
Who on him the strand bestowed?
Gave the mandate not the herald,
Trumpeting, as on he rode?
Near our downs, all unexpected,
Was the work's beginning seen,
Tents and huts!—but, soon erected,
Rose a palace o'er the green.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene II.)

Crisis: The dike is built:

BAUCIS: Knaves in vain by day were storming,
Plying pick and spade alike;
Where the fires at night were swarming,
Stood, the following day, a dike.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene II.)

Modification of the Intention: Faust desires *by honest means* to possess a section of land owned by an old couple who live upon it:

My grand estate lacks full design:
The brown old hut, the linden-cluster,
The crumbling chapel are not mine.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene III.)

Reversal of the Crisis: The old couple show unwillingness to leave their home:

The old ones, there, should make concession;
A shady seat would I create:
The lindens, not my own possession.
Disturb my joy in mine estate.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene III.)

Catastrophe: Mephistopheles arranges for the house to be burned down, but this is done at the price of the lives of the old couple.

LYNCEUS THE WARDER (*singing on the watch-tower of the Palace*):
What a horror comes, to fright me,
From the darksome world below!
Sparks of fire I see outgushing
Through the night of linden-trees;

Stronger yet the glow is flushing,
Fanned to fury by the breeze.

. . . . .

Ah, the good old father, mother,
Else so careful of the fire,
Doomed amid the smoke to smother!—
(Part Two. Act V, Scene IV.)

Reversal of the Catastrophe: But Faust is not to blame. He had planned a new home for the old people:

FAUST: (*to* MEPHISTOPHELES)
Deaf unto my commands were ye!
Exchange I meant, not robbery.
The inconsiderate, savage blow
I curse! Bear ye the guilt, and go!
(Part Two. Act V, Scene IV.)

Denouement: Secure in his honesty of purpose, Faust now owns the land; which was all that stood in the way of his *Intention*:

Yet be the lindens extirpated,
Till half-charred trunks the spot deface,
A look-in-the-land is soon created,
Whence I can view the boundless space.
(Part Two. Act V, Scene IV.)

These *Main Incidents* of the three stories: (1) The Margaret Story; (2) The Helena Story; (3) The Story of the Building of the Dike, which are included as parts in the greater story of Faust's search for experience, exhaust, with their unstated *Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents*, the material which is wrought into the form of this massive work of literary art.

Goethe is so often accused of introducing extraneous matter into *Faust*, that it would be redundant to add to these comments. One point, however, the critics appear to have overlooked, that although these extraneous incidents mar the form, and although many of them ignore the principles of cause and effect, yet they are mostly illustrations of Faust's experience in his quest for

knowledge. Goethe may have lost sight of the fact that links are only of consequence when they are part of a chain, but the links are there. What is the consequence of a few dropped stitches in a Gobelin tapestry? He has marred the symmetry of his form, but form is only a means to an end, and the cathedral-like splendour of *Faust* will dominate an awe-inspired throng when formalists are wrangling about the width of the lead in an oriel window.

The *Intention* in many stories is simply stated and easily disentangled from the lesser *Intentions* which dominate the various sub-stories. In the more complicated form of *Faust* we have seen that greater care is needed because the canvas is greater. In such a case if each *Intention* is not expressed clearly and the stories are tangled, an almost minute exactness of analysis is necessary to unravel first the various stories, then the various *Intentions*. It is not enough to state the *Intention* in loose, general terms, it must be expressed so that it will exactly meet the requirements of the various incidents which comprise the action.

This will be clear by the following example. To state the modified *Intention* of Faust in the final story which we have just analysed, as: Faust desires to own a section of land nearby; would be to state it falsely and to rob the story of its *Catastrophe*. Faust desires to possess the land *honourably*. It is the dishonourable act of Mephistopheles which makes the *Catastrophe*.

The Line of Intention is like a seal which stamps its imprint on *The Line of Action*. Unless the statement of the *Intention* is impressed with exactitude upon the reader's mind, the incidents of the story will be affected. They will repeat in themselves the vagueness of *The Line of Intention*. Vagueness will also shed its blurred lights about the hero. His actions, resulting from ill-defined motives, will render him at worst unintelligible, at best needlessly obscure.

Obscurity will be the result of hiding *Primary Incidents* in a maze of *Secondary* or *Tertiary Incidents*. And this is one of the criticisms of *Faust* which from a formal point of view no one can deny. Stripped of its unnecessary detail *Faust* has the outlines of a form so perfect, that its magnificence is second to none in the whole world of literary form. But the inessentials *are* there and cannot be justified in a world of symmetry. For Aristotle tells us : [1]

> Unity of plot does not, as some persons think, consist in the unity of the hero. For infinitely various are the incidents in one man's life, which cannot be reduced to unity. . . . But Homer . . . made the *Odyssey*, and likewise the *Iliad*, to centre round an action, that in our sense of the word is one . . . the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole.

This quotation from the *Poetics* summarizes, in the main, the deductions which will have arisen in the mind of the reader from the analysis of *Faust*. Unity of plot, we are told, does not consist in the unity of the hero. A *Crisis* or *Catastrophe* is not such to the hero as man, but to his *Intention*. Incidents, we are further told, must centre round an action that is one, the structural union of the various incidents being such that if any incident is displaced or removed the whole will suffer.

The *Intention* then must so dominate the flow of incident, that nothing but matter bearing upon the *Intention* must find its way into the action.

So universal is the application of this law of the governing power of the *Intention* that it not only dominates the action of the main story and the sub-stories contained within it, but it dominates the very incidents which compose the sub-stories. Each *Main Story* is dominated by the main *Intention*. Each sub-story, as

[1] *Poetics*.

well as being dominated by the main *Intention*, is dominated by a sub-*Intention*. Each incident in a sub-story is dominated by the main *Intention*, by the sub-*Intention*, and further by an incident-*Intention*.

This repetition of a single, simple principle of form, stamped upon the reader's mind by the plot of the story, reiterated by the sub-plots and echoed by the incidents, gives to literary construction a richness of architecture which is all too rarely utilized to the full. The Greek dramatists, though avoiding the sub-plot in their quest for Doric simplicity, saw its value in the incident. Shakespeare, Goethe, Homer and Dante were masters of its technique. The lesser authors appear to be content with varying degrees of the jerry-built or suburban architectural devices.

As an illustration of form in the incident, consider the scene between Brutus, Cassius and Casca in Act I, Scene II of *Julius Cæsar*:

Intention: Cassius intends to win Brutus to the side of the Conspirators:

CASSIUS: Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is dispos'd. . . .

Barrier: Brutus is cautious:

BRUTUS: Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?

Reversal: Brutus hears the populace cheering Cæsar:

BRUTUS: What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Cæsar for their king.
CASSIUS: Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

. . . . .

(*Shout. Flourish.*)

BRUTUS: Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heap'd on Cæsar.

CASSIUS: Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Crisis: Brutus inclines toward the plans of Cassius:

That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;
What you would work me to, I have some aim;
How I have thought of this and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you
Be any further mov'd.

Reversal: Brutus' natural affection for Cæsar makes him defend him:

CASSIUS: But soft, I pray you: What! did Cæsar swound?
CASCA: He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless.
BRUTUS: 'Tis very like: he hath the falling sickness.

Castrophe: Nil.
Reversal: Nil.
Denouement: Brutus hints of his willingness to be persuaded:

To-morrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or, if you will,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

In this analysis of the incident into the various primaries which together make up its form, it will be seen that it is deficient in *Catastrophe*. Many complete stories are lacking in one or the other of the *Primary Incidents* so that it is no disgrace for a mere incident to be incomplete. But lest it may be thought that for the complete form to appear in an incident is highly improbable, and that the above illustration is an isolated case of form in the incident, we will analyse one of the incidents of the Odyssey.[1] This episode, being the *Denouement* to the main story, will give us an illustration of a complete

[1] *The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Prose.* Translated by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang. Macmillan & Co.

Line of Action in a single incident: The Slaying of the Wooers:

Intention: Odysseus intends to slay the wooers:

If the god shall subdue the proud wooers to my hands, I will bring you each one a wife. . . . (Book Twenty-one.)

Barrier: He is unarmed:

All the rest, as many as are proud wooers, will not suffer that I should be given the bow and quiver. . . .
(Book Twenty-one.)

Reversal: By a ruse, Odysseus acquires his bow and arrows:

Then the swineherd bare the bow through the hall, and went up to wise Odysseus, and set it in his hands.
(Book Twenty-one.)

Crisis: Odysseus begins to slay the wooers:

But Odysseus aimed and smote him (Antinous) with the arrow in the throat. . . . (Book Twenty-two.)

Reversal: Melanthius, the goatherd, steals armour for the wooers:

Therewith Melanthius, the goatherd, climbed up by the clerestory of the hall to the inner chambers of Odysseus, whence he took twelve shields and as many spears, and as many helmets of bronze with thick plumes of horsehair, and he came forth and brought them speedily, and gave them to the wooers. . . .
(Book Twenty-two.)

Catastrophe: The wooers throw their twelve javelins:

So he spake and they all cast their javelins, as he bade them, eagerly. . . . (Book Twenty-two.)

Reversal: Athene causes the javelins to fall harmlessly:

Athene so wrought that they were all in vain.
(Book Twenty-two.)

Denouement: Odysseus slays the wooers:

. . . so now the wooers lay heaped upon each other.
(Book Twenty-two.)

With the exception of the momentary entanglement of the plane of *Fantasy* with the plane of *Actuality* in the appearance of Athene, which is strictly within the convention of the *Odyssey*, the action is confined to a world of reality where each of the *Primary* Incidents occurs in its normal order.

We have now traced the unit of form through the main story, the sub-story and the incident, showing that the form of a work of literature is built up by endless repetition of a single unit. When we have convinced ourselves that this unit again appears in the development of each character in the story, and that no character can be convincingly drawn unless it is under the dominance of the unit of form, we shall be in some measure justified in considering that unless the author makes the *Intention* of every character clear to the reader, he is scamping his work.

Let us consider Laertes in *Hamlet*. If we analyse his conduct throughout the play, we shall find that it is dominated by an individual *Intention* wholly apart from the Hamlet *Intention* which directs the action of the play as a complete structure. Laertes has his own *Line of Action*:

Intention: Laertes intends to protect his family honour:

> I have a voice and precedent of peace,
> To keep my name ungored. . . .
>
> (Act V, Scene II.)

Barrier: Hamlet's interest in his sister, Ophelia:

> . . . . Perhaps he loves you now,
> And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
> The virtue of his will: but you must fear,
> His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own. . . .
>
> (Act I, Scene III.)

Reversal: Laertes warns Ophelia against Hamlet's interest in her:

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain.

. . . . .

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister. . . .
(Act I, Scene III.)

Crisis: Laertes departs for France with Ophelia's assurance of her safety:

LAERTES: Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.
OPHELIA: 'Tis in my memory lock'd
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.
(Act I, Scene III.)

Reversal: Laertes returns to Denmark, hearing that Hamlet has killed his father. On his return he finds his sister, Ophelia, mad:

LAERTES (*to* OPHELIA):
O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. (Act IV, Scene V.)

Catastrophe: Ophelia, a suicide, is buried with restricted rites, the last blow to Laertes' family honour:

FIRST PRIEST:
Her obsequies have been so far enlarged
As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet. . . . (Act V, Scene I.)

Modification of the Intention: Laertes intends to revenge his father's and his sister's death.

"Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father."
(Act IV, Scene V.)

Reversal of the Catastrophe: Hamlet consents to a duel with Laertes which the King and the latter have arranged:

HAMLET: . . . let the foils be brought, the gentlemen willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits. (Act V, Scene II.)

Denouement: Laertes kills Hamlet, avenging the deaths of his father and sister. He redeems his family honour:

LAERTES: . . . Hamlet, thou art slain. . . .

Thus the single character is dominated by his own *Intention*, his own *Line of Action*, while he plays his part under the control of the *Intention* and in *The Line of Action* of the leading characters of the story. But again, lest it may be thought that in Laertes we have another isolated example, glance back at the speech of the First Priest which is quoted after *Catastrophe*. He too has his own *Intention*, which we can infer from his words, although this character only appears once in the play. He obviously wished to bury Ophelia in unconsecrated ground. *His Catastrophe* occurred when he was forced to bury her according to the desires of 'great command.'

Even Yorick's skull has the atmosphere of *Intention* about it. *Intention* which has lost itself in *Catastrophe*:

Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning?

(Act V, Scene I.)

Chapter Three

THE CRISIS

The Crisis of a story, symbolized by the apex formed by the two middle strokes of the W, is that point on *The Line of Action* where the *Intention*, without being achieved, is most nearly achieved. The point where it is actually achieved is, of course, *The Denouement.*

In the simple form *The Crisis* will rise toward *The Line of Intention* and the *Reversal* will follow it by immediately turning the line downward. The more nearly *The Crisis* touches *The Line of Intention*, the more nearly will it approximate to the ideal *Crisis*, and achieve its purpose in giving the reader a foretaste of *The Denouement.* For the business of *The Crisis* is to show the reader what the hero may eventually achieve, or, in the case of a story ending at *Catastrophe*, to show him what the hero has lost through his inability to carry the *Intention* to *Denouement.*

An excellent illustration of this latter construction is given us in the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice.* Shylock, assured of his revenge at *Crisis*, learns at the *Reversal* and *The Catastrophe*, which immediately follow, that his bond is worthless, his goods forfeit and his life in jeopardy.

Shylock's *Intention* with regard to Antonio is clearly stated:

> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
>
> (Act I, Scene III.)

But *The Barrier* to Shylock's *Intention* is the good name of Antonio, and his argosies which are on the high seas.

This *Barrier*, however, is overcome when the latter signs a bond with Shylock in order to obtain money for his friend, Bassanio:

SHYLOCK: Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me. . . .
(Act I, Scene III.)

The Crisis, thus skilfully prepared for, arises when Antonio, by the rumoured loss of his argosies, is unable to repay the money to Shylock, who claims the forfeiture of the pound of flesh. So convincingly is this *Crisis* presented, that it appears for some time to be *The Denouement* to Shylock's *Intention*:

PORTIA: Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh. . . .

. . . . .

SHYLOCK: O noble judge! O excellent young man!

But the *Reversal* follows immediately:

PORTIA: Tarry a little: there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh':
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate.

And *The Catastrophe*, hurrying on the heels of the *Reversal*, closes this rapid movement of *Primary Incidents:*

PORTIA: . . . If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,

> The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
> Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
> Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
> And the offender's life lies in the mercy
> Of the duke only. . . .

In this scene, then, three of the *Primary Incidents* are herded together to achieve the contrasts, and they are used without the aid of *Secondary Incidents*. Thus, out of the seven possible *Primary Incidents*, nearly half of them are used to build up the drama of a single scene. It will follow that considerable secondary matter will be needed to develop the earlier part of the story, and to allow the author to hold back so many *Primary Incidents* to lavish on this one scene.

We shall decide later, in the chapter on *Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents*, that an author is justified in restraining the outflow of his *Primary Incidents* when he has a parallel story to aid him, for this second story will supply those *Primary Incidents* which are being withheld from *The Main Story*, and so prevent the story as a whole from being weakened in the earlier part.

Contrast being the author's method for obtaining his light and shade, a story which is lacking in several of its *Primary Incidents* will be lacking in contrast, for the undulation of *The Line of Action* will be interfered with. The nearer that *The Line of Action* approaches *The Line of Intention* at *Crisis*, the further away it retreats at *Catastrophe*, the greater will be the contrast achieved. And contrast is the enemy of monotony.

If the hero can raise *The Line of Action* but little at *Crisis*, a mere undulation will suffice to symbolize it in diagrammatic form. If he can raise it almost to *The Line of Intention* by some splendid effort after achievement, the line will move sharply upward and the reader's interest will follow it. A weak *Crisis* usually means a weak middle of the story.

Such a weak *Crisis*, and consequently a weak middle, may be seen in the story of *Potiphar's Wife*:

Intention:

And it came to pass after these things, that his Master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

Barrier:

But he refused. . . .

Reversal:

And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her. . . . And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

Crisis:

And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me:

Reversal:

and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

Modification of the Intention: Potiphar's Wife desires revenge.

Second Crisis:

. . . she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. . . .

Reversal: Nil.

Catastrophe: Nil.

Denouement:

And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me, that his wrath was kindled.
And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison. . . .
(Genesis, xxxix. 7-20.)

The Crisis (first) that point in the story where Potiphar's Wife most nearly achieves her *Intention* is so little contrasted with her former failures to have her way with

Joseph, that the dramatic effect is almost negligible. The upward movement of *The Line of Action* would be scarcely discernible in the diagram. But with the failure of the first *Crisis* comes a *Modification of the Intention*, and with this, the lady is far more successful. The second *Crisis* where she presents Joseph's garment as a proof of his attack upon her chastity, leaves little to be desired in the upward movement of *The Line of Action* toward *The Line of Intention.*

The weak first *Crisis* is thus contrasted with a strong second *Crisis.*

This problem of contrasts being an important one, it may be as well to give it some consideration.

If we visualize the W, the unit of form, we shall see that contrast is achieved by changes in the line of direction. The first stroke of the W is downward, away from achievement, the second stroke is upward, toward achievement, the third stroke is downward again, toward *Catastrophe*, and the fourth upward toward achievement and *Denouement.*

We have, however, seen that not all stories follow the simple form where *The Line of Action* begins with *The Barrier* and is followed by the other *Primary Incidents* in their simple order. *Secondary Incidents* are frequently inserted, and this new matter will affect the symmetry of the form and likewise the contrasts.

The unit of form, perfectly balanced in its simple state, will become lacking in balance if many *Secondary Incidents* are introduced between *The Crisis* and its *Reversal*, without a corresponding amount of secondary matter being introduced between *The Reversal of the Barrier* and *The Crisis.* For the diagram will be out of balance from the lengthening of *The Line of Action* by the secondary matter after *The Crisis*, with no lengthening of the line before *The Crisis.*

This balancing of secondary matter, against secondary matter, must be watched with great care if symmetry

of form is to be achieved, for not only will there be a danger of ungainliness, but the introduction of much secondary matter between two *Primary Incidents* has the effect of isolating the second incident and giving it a false dramatic value. If an author lengthens *The Line of Action* between *The Crisis* and *The Catastrophe* by the insertion of secondary matter, he will isolate *The Catastrophe* and *The Denouement* from the other *Primary Incidents* and thus throw them into high light.

Such a heightening, produced by *The Crisis* being separated by much secondary matter from *The Catastrophe* occurs in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*:

Intention: Silas Marner intends to hoard his gold:

. . . he drew out the money and thought it was brighter in the gathering gloom. (Chapter Two.)

Barrier: Silas Marner is robbed:

In haste he (Dunstan) lifted up two bricks, and saw what he had no doubt was the object of his search; for what could there be but money in those two leathern bags? (Chapter Four.)

Reversal: The gold returns, but in the form of a child:

Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! . . . He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls . . . it was a sleeping child. . . . (Chapter Twelve.)

Modification of the Intention: Silas desires to bring up the child.

Crisis: He prevents the child from being sent to the workhouse and begins to rear it:

"Why, you wouldn't like to keep her, should you—an old bachelor like you?"

"Till anybody shows they've a right to take her away from me," said Marner. (Chapter Thirteen.)

Between *The Crisis* recorded above, and *The Reversal* much secondary matter is included concerning the growth of the child and her love affair with Aaron.

Reversal: Godfrey, the child's father, determines to recognize her as his own:

" But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey.
(Chapter Eighteen.)

Catastrophe: Godfrey and his wife come to take the child away:

" You've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It 'ud be a great comfort to you to see her well provided for, wouldn't it?. . . You'd like to see her taken care of by those who can leave her well off, and make a lady of her. . . ."
(Chapter Nineteen.)

Reversal: Eppie refuses to leave Silas Marner:

" Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him." (Chapter Nineteen.)

Denouement: Eppie marries Aaron and continues to live with Silas Marner:

" O father," said Eppie, " what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are." (Conclusion.)

The introduction of secondary matter, dealing with Eppie's growth and love affair, has made a wide space between *The Crisis* and *The Catastrophe*. Between *The Crisis* and *The Reversal* are five chapters; while *The Catastrophe*, *The Reversal* and *The Denouement* are accounted for in three chapters. This hurrying of *Primary Incidents* toward the end of the story has the effect of heightening the dramatic tension and aiding the contrasts.

Concerning the symmetry of the story as a whole, the five chapters of secondary matter between *The Crisis* and *The Reversal* are balanced by the eight chapters of secondary matter between *The Barrier* in Chapter Four, and *The Reversal* in Chapter Twelve.

The careful placing of secondary matter has great influence, then, on the balance of the story, and so on its form; for not only can it disturb the symmetry when it is crudely placed, it can also affect the dramatic tension. By thrusting forward *The Crisis* toward *The Catastrophe*, the rapidity of movement will be greater; and if *Crisis*, *Catastrophe* and *Denouement* are held back until immediately before the end of the story, by the use of much secondary matter, the story will hurry to its close with the rapidity of a bombardment. On the other hand, if *The Catastrophe* and its *Reversal* are utilized early in the story in conjunction with *The Crisis*, and much secondary matter follows, then *The Denouement* of the story will be isolated and thrown into high-light by contrast with the secondary matter preceding it.

The Primary Incidents of the unit of form are necessarily contrasted. The introduction of *Secondary Incidents* between any two *Primary Incidents* will lower the value of these contrasts and tone down the dramatic tension. Consider the court scene in *The Merchant of Venice* where Shylock faces his *Crisis,* in his certainty of the award of the pound of flesh, and *The Reversal*, where he is told that he must not 'shed one drop of Christian blood.' As these two *Primary Incidents* occur one immediately after the other, the dramatic effect is perfect, the contrast is perfect. If we now imagine several *Secondary Incidents* thrust in between this *Crisis* and *Reversal*, we shall realize that not only will the dramatic tension be lowered, but the contrast will be weakened. Juxtaposition of *Primary Incidents* is the technical secret of dramatic contrast.

A story which opens swiftly, with several *Primary Incidents* crowding on each other will certainly grip the reader's attention by presenting him with *Barrier, Reversal, Crisis* and *Reversal* in rapid succession, but he will then be called on to live on meagre fare until the appearance of *The Catastrophe.* Readers whose palates have been

educated to caviare will be contemptuous of mere bread and butter fare.

On the contrary, the story which delays the statement of its *Intention* and its *Barrier*, giving the reader a mass of secondary matter at the opening, will be less likely to awaken interest. One could conceive a story which began with the birth of the hero's great-grandfather and which then proceeded to deal with his genealogical tree. Such a story might occupy twenty chapters, the first fifteen being devoted to events which occurred before the hero's birth. It would probably be written by a story-teller with the mind of an essayist, for it would break the first law of form, that a tale must have, as Aristotle tells us, a beginning, a middle and an end. If the beginning of the story does not begin at the opening of the tale, where can it begin?

If the story-teller may retreat to the hero's great-grandfather for his opening, what law is there to prevent him from retreating to Adam?

An illustration of this retarded opening is found in the superb production of that master story-teller, Rabelais, in *The Life of Gargantua*.[1] However, superb as this story is, *The Intention* is not stated till Chapter XLIV, where we are told that the immortal Picrochole intends to conquer the country:

> Whereupon he answered, that his end and purpose was to conquer all the country, if he could, for the injury done to his cake-bakers.
> (Chapter XLIV.)

The Crisis does not take place until Chapter XLVIII, as the opening has been drawn out with secondary and tertiary matter. Here Picrochole storms and takes the Rock Clermond. In the same chapter occurs *The Reversal* in the defeat of Picrochole's army:

> The beseiged, seeing that the Gargantuists had won the town upon them . . . submitted themselves unto the mercy of the monk, and asked for quarter. . . .

[1] *Life of Gargantua*, by Rabelais. Translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart.

In the same chapter *The Catastrophe* occurs in the flight of Picrochole's army:

> Which unexpected accident so affrighted Picrochole and his men, that, giving all for lost, they betook themselves to their heels, and flew on all hands.

Admittedly, if we insisted on Rabelais following the laws of form, we should lose in wisdom and wit what we gained in symmetry. Rabelais is half story-teller, half essayist, and with a glorious self-confidence uses either technique as he wills. This is a little puzzling to the honest formalist who desires to do honour to his original, at the same time as to discern the underlying laws of the craft of writing. But perhaps the day will come when the sharpest of lines will be drawn between the story and the essay.

And what a superb essay Rabelais might have written on the difference between *venite adoremus* and *venite apotemus.*

Whether the critics of the future will demand that the beginning of a story shall actually be a beginning, and not an introductory essay of unlimited proportions cannot be predicted. That they *should* do so is beyond question. Introductory matter that is necessary, can be foreshortened and retrospected. Either the business of the story-teller is to tell stories, or it is not. If it is his business, and provided that *The Intention* is the motivating force of the story, its goal and its *raison d'être*, then until *The Intention* or *The Barrier to The Intention* has been stated, the story cannot be said to have begun.

Aristotle lays down a law bearing upon this matter. He writes:[1]

> But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life. . . . Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. . . .

[1] *Poetics.*

If the incidents and the plot are the chief things in a story, then it is surely unwise to deal with matter which is only vaguely related to the incidents and the plot, at the opening of a story. If *The Primary Incidents* are unduly delayed, a reader with some sense of form is irritated, because he is attempting to visualize the pattern of the story as it evolves, and is being frustrated by the mass of secondary and tertiary matter which the author presents before a statement of his *Intention* or *Barrier.*

Contrast the introduction of *Rabelais* before the statement of *Intention,* with the opening of Homer's *Odyssey.*[1] On the first page of the latter we are told:

> . . . but Odysseus only, craving for his wife and for his homeward path . . .

The Iliad[2] also gives the reader *The Intention* in its First Book: Athene tells Achilles:

> A threefold compensation shall be thine. . . .

The opening of the *Medea* of Euripides[3] states *The Intention* through the medium of the nurse:

> NURSE: . . . 'Tis this that maketh me
> Most tremble, lest she do I know not what.
> Her heart is no light thing, and useth not
> To brook much wrong. . ..

Again in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides[4] Aphrodite, in the first speech of the play, outlines her *Intention,* which is to govern the *Intention* of Phædra:

> APHRODITE: Yet, seeing he hath offended, I this day
> Shall smite Hippolytus. . . .

Again in the Œdipus of Sophocles[5] *The Intention* is stated by the hero in the third speech of the play:

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[1] *The Odyssey of Homer.* Done into English Prose by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang.

[2] *The Iliad of Homer.* Translated by Edward, Earl of Derby. Everyman Edition.

[3] Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

[4] Translated by Gilbert Murray: Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

[5] Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

> . . . I have sent Menoikeus' son,
> Creon, my own wife's brother, forth alone
> To Apollo's house in Delphi, there to ask
> What word, what deed of mine, what bitter task
> May save my city. . . .

The statement of *The Intention* at the opening of the story is not confined to the play alone, we have seen it in the *Odyssey*, in the *Iliad*. It confronts us in the ballad of the *Not-Browne Mayd*: [1]

> . . . But neverthelesse, ryght good wytnèsse
> In this case might be layd.
> That they love true, and continùe
> Recorde the Not-browne Mayde;
> Which, when her love came, her to prove,
> To her to make his mone,
> Wolde nat depart, for in her hart
> She loved but hym alone.

The Not-Browne Mayd's *Intention* to stay with her lover needs no comment. In the more modern *Ballad of Chevy Chace* [1] the first two verses state *The Intention*:

> God prosper long our noble king,
> Our liftes and safetyes all;
> A woeful hunting once there did
> In Chevy-Chace befall.
>
> To drive the deere with hound and horne,
> Erle Percy took his way;
> The child may rue that is unborne
> The hunting of that day.

In the parable of *The Prodigal Son* [2] we are given *The Intention* immediately after a condensed statement concerning the characters:

> . . . A certain man had two sons:
> And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country. . . .

[1] *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.* Compiled by Percy, Bishop of Dromore: George Bell and Sons.

[2] Luke xv. 11–32.

Enough has been said to show that *The Intention* stated at the opening of the story, concentrates the reader's mind at once upon *The Line of Action.* But a word of warning is necessary against the acceptance of the first Intention which presents itself. One must make certain that one has found the *Main Intention* and not one of the many subordinate *Intentions.* An illustration of this danger may be seen in the *Antigone* of Sophocles.[1] Antigone's *Intention* is stated at the opening of the play:

ANTIGONE: Wilt thou join hand with mine to lift the dead?
ISMENE: To bury him, when all have been forbidden?
Is that thy thought?
ANTIGONE: . . . To bury my own brother
And thine, even though thou wilt not do thy part.

But this is not the *Main Intention* of the story. When the action has been considered and checked by *The Theme* it will be found that Creon's *Intention* dominates the story:

WATCHMAN: The corse hath burial
From some one who is stolen away and gone,
But first hath strown dry dust upon the skin,
And added what religious rites require. . . .
CREON: Unless ye find the man who made this grave

. . . . .

Death shall not be enough, till ye have hung
Alive for an example of your guilt. . . .

Creon intends to punish the person who has broken his orders concerning the burial of the corpse.

But when *The Intention* has been found, it is reasonable to demand that *The Barrier* shall be stated within a certain period, for *The Primary Incidents* are as milestones to the story, between which the way may be made to seem short or long accordingly as they are used. Beyond this, it is difficult for an author to pay regard to his form if he develops the essay habit and loses sight of his mile-

[1] *Sophocles.* The Seven Plays in English Verse. Translated by Lewis Campbell: John Murray.

stones, for he may guide his reader along many unnecessary bypaths before he sights again the road which leads to his *Denouement.*

And in losing sight of his *Denouement,* he loses sight of his *Crisis,* and symmetry depends to a great extent upon these two points along *The Line of Action.*

If much secondary material is introduced early in the story, we have seen that it will tend to force *The Crisis* out of the position which we have looked upon as its ideal one, midway between the opening of the story and the close. Obviously the beginning is that point in the story where the *action* begins: the end, that point where the *action* finishes. But what point along *The Line of Action* may we call The Aristotelian Middle?

If, as we shall assume, *The Crisis* of a story is this middle, then, unlike the beginning and the end, it is a movable point and subject to the influence of *Secondary Incident.* Its position will depend on the amount of secondary and tertiary matter which precedes and follows it. *The Crisis* may occur near the opening of the story, as in *Les Noyades,* or near the end of the story, as in *Lear.*

In the former *The Crisis* occurs in the fourth and fifth verses, and the action ends with the twentieth. In the latter *The Crisis* occurs in Act IV, Scene VII, near the end of the play, where Lear, recovering sanity, finds his daughter, Cordelia, beside him.

If we dismiss *The Crisis* from our thoughts as the true middle, on account of its instability, where are we to look for a middle that is capable of being defined? We cannot rely on a dramatic sense to select such an incident in each story; for a dramatic sense belongs to æsthetic and emotional spheres, and a science of form must define. Besides, if a point midway in the action is selected as the middle, it may prove to be a *Secondary Incident* of dramatic importance but of little value in developing *The Intention,* and *The Crisis* will be forced to cede its position to an incident of inferior value. A *Secondary Incident* thus

thrust into prominence as a middle would take precedence and thrust *The Crisis* into a subordinate place, destroying the symmetry of the form.

This question of the middle is of great importance to the formalist, for the middle is the fulcrum of the story, and the form cannot be judged with any degree of accuracy until a central point can be found on which the structure can, so to speak, balance itself. If, however, we too eagerly accept *The Crisis* as the middle, we are faced with another problem.

The Crisis is not a point on *The Line of Action* which stands alone as does *The Denouement.* In the unit of form, the W, we see that the apex is formed by the middle strokes, which represent not only *The Crisis* but its *Reversal.* As long as these two *Primary Incidents* occur together, the one immediately following the other, the problem does not exist. It is when secondary matter is introduced between *The Crisis* and its *Reversal* that we are faced with the problem of the fractured middle.

In *The Merchant of Venice* we may safely state our middle as being *The Crisis* of the story, as the *Reversal* occurs immediately after it, and there is no secondary matter to consider.

But in Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde, The Crisis* is where Tristan and Isolde, drinking the cup of death, find that it is the cup of love. But secondary matter follows immediately when Brängane warns Isolde that she is betrayed to King Mark by Sir Melot, and *The Reversal* does not arrive until Tristan and Isolde are found in each other's arms.

Now exactly at what point in the action does the middle occur? Where is the fulcrum, that we may balance the story by arranging the body of the incidents equally on either side of it? Is the middle of the story that incident which makes *The Crisis.* Is it that incident which gives us *The Reversal?* Or is it a point midway between *The Crisis* and *The Reversal?*

If we visualize the analysis of *Silas Marner*, we shall see that there is much secondary matter between *Crisis* and *Reversal*, so much indeed, that the whole balance of the story will be altered if we select as our fulcrum, first *The Crisis*, then *The Reversal*, and finally a point midway between both.

In the present embryonic state of the science of form, it would be an impertinence to dogmatize on this point. We shall for our own convenience and as a temporary measure, select *The Crisis* itself as that point in the story which most nearly coincides with Aristotle's middle.

But another problem presents itself. At what point in the story is the middle when several *Crises* occur? But this, it would appear, is a simpler matter, and can be answered with some degree of certainty. *The Crisis* which happens to be the middle one of the series, would naturally become the middle of the story. There could be no other method of choice, for *Crisis* being that point which is nearest to the success of *The Intention* without actually succeeding, all the incidents which are called *Crisis* would be of equal value. If they were not so, then one of them would approach nearer to *The Line of Intention* than the others, and this one would be *The Crisis.*

But, the question may be asked, which is the middle of the story, when there are an unequal number of *Crises*? The answer would appear to be, that *The Crisis* which comes most nearly to a point midway between the beginning and the end.

If this answer is accepted, then the introduction of secondary matter will have an effect on the choice of the middle, for a series of *Secondary Incidents* coming before the first *Crisis* may make this *Crisis* the middle; whilst a series of *Secondary Incidents* coming after the last *Crisis* might make the second or third *Crisis* the middle.

Developing this idea to its logical conclusion, it would

appear that the term ' middle ' means not one thing, but two. First, it means that point on *The Line of Action* which is midway between the beginning of *The Line of Intention* and the end, and directly beneath it, which may be called ' the distance middle.' This may be any secondary or primary matter which happens to lie at such a point. It may even be a *Tertiary Incident.* Second, it means that dramatic incident in the story which acts as a fulcrum for all the dramatic incidents in the tale; this may be called ' the dramatic middle,' and is undoubtedly *The Crisis.*

It would appear from this that the author's endeavour should be to make his ' dramatic middle ' also his ' distance middle,' and that where he fails to do this, his form will be unsymmetrical, and the formalist will be uncertain which to use as a fulcrum—*The Crisis,* or that incident which occupies a point midway along *The Line of Intention* and directly beneath it.

One can do little more than point out the problems which arise concerning this baffling business of the Aristotelian Middle, for more intelligences than one are needed on a question so far-reaching to the student of form. It would be conceivable for a story to be told, in which only *The Barrier* was stated before the ' distance middle ' was reached, by the aid of much secondary matter, and where the remainder of *The Primary Incidents* were crowded into the space after the ' distance middle.' Surely the weight of all *The Primary Incidents* with the exception of *The Barrier,* would overbalance the series of *Secondary Incidents* and *The Barrier,* if the ' distance middle ' was accepted as the fulcrum.

But as we have stated, we are leaving the analysis of this difficult matter to other minds. For the moment we shall consider *The Crisis* as synonymous with the middle.

We have spoken of a series of incidents occurring, all of which are of equal value, all of which are *Crises.*

To illustrate this, we will glance at Chekov's story *The Darling*: [1]

> She was always loving somebody. She couldn't get on without loving somebody. . . .

So Olenka's *Intention* is to find and keep someone beside her whom she can love. At first she finds Kukin, who is the manager of the Tivoli, an open-air theatre, and the first *Crisis* is reached when she marries him.

A telegram arrives saying that he is dead; and Olenka marries Pustovalov, the manager of the merchant Babakayev's lumber-yard, and a second *Crisis* is reached.

Six years later Pustovalov drinks some hot tea and goes out to the lumber-yard without his hat. He also dies. Olenka then concentrates her attention on the veterinary surgeon, Smirnov, and her *Intention* reaches its third *Crisis*.

Smirnov goes away with his regiment and she does not see him for some time. His return is yet another *Crisis*, the fourth.

He and his wife and child come to live with Olenka. Smirnov is away a good deal on business, and Olenka takes his little boy to live with her in her wing of the house, transferring her affection to him, and the fifth, and last *Crisis* is reached.

It will be observed that Olenka's *Line of Intention* does not alter. The one *Intention* ' to love somebody ' remains with her from the opening to the close. A variation of this construction may be seen when a series of *Crises* occurs, but the *Intention* is modified. Thus some of the *Crises* belong to one *Intention* and some to another.

When a story opens with an *Intention* and changes during the action to a second *Intention*, *The Line of Action* should continue with its *Primary Incidents* in the same order which would have occurred if the *Intention* had

[1] *Best Russian Stories*. Compiled and edited by Thomas Seltzer: Boni and Liveright, New York.

not been modified. If the first *Intention* ends at *Crisis* where a modification occurs, then the next movement in the story should be *The Reversal of Crisis* (to the new *Intention*) if a downward movement of *The Line of Action* is indicated. If no downward movement takes place and the line moves upward instead, then this upward movement may, or may not, form a second *Crisis* (the first to the modified *Intention*). It will form such a *Crisis* if no higher movement is later made toward the modified *Line of Intention.* But if a higher movement is made, this latter will be *The Crisis,* and the former will be a *Secondary Incident.*

The Line of Action should continue its course, so far as the incidents allow it, in the order stated in the unit of form, whether *The Intention* is modified or not. The natural rhythm of *Primary Incidents* should not be checked, they should flow from the opening (*Barrier*) to the middle (*Crisis*) and onward to the close (*Denouement* or *Catastrophe*).

To break off *The Primary Incidents* at the end of the first *Intention* and to begin the second or modified *Intention* with a Barrier and its *Reversal* would be to confess that two separate and unconnected stories were being presented in the guise of one story.

An illustration of this continuance of *The Primary Incidents* in the order seen in the unit of form, whether *The Intention* is modified or not, may be taken from the story of *Potiphar's Wife.* Her first *Intention* ends at *Crisis* when she snatches Joseph's garment, and *The Intention* is modified to a desire for revenge. A second *Crisis* occurs with the garment still in her hands, when she calls in the men of her house to make her accusation. To begin an entirely new series of *Primary Incidents* after the failure of the first *Intention,* would be to disrupt the unity of the story.

The unlimited use of *Crises* has its dangers. Whether *The Crisis* is duplicated on *The Line of Intention* or on the

line of *The Modified Intention*, a too frequent use will pall on the reader. There is, however, another way of using *Crisis*, which, even in the midst of *Crises* will give variety.

We have seen that contrasts are obtained by the upward movement of *The Line of Action*, the downward movement, and by *The Line of Action* running parallel to *The Line of Intention*. These alternatives in direction are the only ways of securing variety. But an author is not entirely dependent upon his main *Line of Action* for dramatic contrast.

In some stories the author introduces a sub-story. This we shall deal with at length, later in the book. For the moment it will be sufficient to realize that such parallel action *can* take place. Every story being subject to the same laws, the sub-story will be built up on the unit of form, and will possess, in common with the *Main Story*, a *Line of Intention*, a *Line of Action* and a *Theme Line*.

The author may thus utilize the *Crises* and *Catastrophes* of the sub-story as contrast to the *Catastrophes* and *Crises* of *The Main Story*, for the stories develop side by side and the judicious use of a main *Crisis* placed beside a sub-*Catastrophe* will have the effect of heightening both.

In the same way, *The Crisis* and *Catastrophe* to a character in *The Main Story* may be contrasted with the opposite movements to the hero of the sub-story. Indeed, this method of contrasting the units of form, which control the destinies of the actors, is almost inexhaustible.

In *Lear* the author deals with the character of an old man who divides his kingdom between his two daughters, in an endeavour to find peace from the cares of state. This is *The Main Story*. But a sub-story is also developed which is complete in itself and could be acted apart from the Lear story, with very few modifications. This is the story of Edmund's *Intention*.

If we analyse *Lear* by simple analysis, our *Primary Incidents* will be tabulated and our diagram drawn with

reference only to the development of *The Main Story*. The story of Edmund will only appear to the extent that it influences the story of the man, Lear. And this brings us to the fringe of a problem which we must consider at length later in the book. It concerns the danger of regarding all matter which does not bear upon the hero's *Intention* (or the dominating *Intention*, when the hero is negative) as *Tertiary Incident*. A comment will be sufficient to warn the reader that matter which appears to be of little value to *The Main Story*, may be of infinite value to the sub-story. The discarding of matter which at first sight appears to be extraneous to *The Main Story*, may lead to the mutilating of the sub-story, by throwing aside as incssential, incidents which are *Crises* and *Catastrophes* to such a sub-story.

The two stories, then, in *Lear* run side by side, the one story threading itself through the other. Surely there is opportunity for infinite contrast here.

The *Intention* of Lear ' to shake all cares and business from our age ' will develop side by side with the Edmund *Intention*: ' Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land. . . .'

The Crisis to Edmund's *Intention* is reached in Act III, Scene V, where Cornwall says: ' True or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester.' This moment of almost-success is contrasted with the almost-failure of Lear, babbling in his madness.

But there is still *The Line of Action* of one character which may be contrasted with *The Line of Action* of another character. Laertes, son of Polonius and brother of Ophelia in the *Hamlet* story, is not a character in a sub-story, he is one of the *dramatis personæ* in *The Main Story*. But we have seen that each character is dominated by his own *Line of Action*, therefore Laertes as man, will have his own *Crisis*, *Catastrophe*, etc., and these may be used to contrast with *The Primary Incidents* of *The Line of Action* of any other character in the story.

When Hamlet has reached his *Catastrophe* by boarding

the vessel which is to take him to England and his death, and has reversed the Catastrophe and returned to Denmark, his *Line of Action* moves upward toward *The Line of Intention* and the achievement of his will, in the death of the King.

At this juncture Laertes is introduced—his father murdered, his sister mad. *The Catastrophe* to the Laertes *Intention* occurs with the death of his sister, and the Laertes *Line of Action* falls as the Hamlet *Line of Action* rises.

The simple unit of form, endlessly repeated, gives contrast and variety to literature. And dramatic contrast is always, finally, the balancing of one character or characters against others. For the business of literature is to show the soul of man under stress, that he may express what normally lies hidden. To show him under his weight of difficulties, rising above them and thrusting his head and shoulders free, a martyr poised eternally between good fortune and ill fortune. For this is the test of his calibre. Aristotle tell us: [1]

> Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids.

It shows us one Cleopatra in Antony's arms, another with the Clown who brings 'the pretty worm.' It shows us the Cæsar of the Forum, and the Cæsar of the falling sickness. It shows us the Brutus who is wooed and won like a woman by Cassius, and the Brutus who runs on his sword at the approach of Octavius.

Always the man, and the man battling against his destiny. He may move upward toward the achievement of his *Intention*; away from it, toward *Catastrophe*, or he may remain parallel to it. He can do nothing else. Leading character or small part, his *Line of Action* is controlled by an inexorable law of nature, which makes this three-dimensional puppet, man, eternally balance himself between *Catastrophe* and *Denouement*.

[1] *Poetics*

Chapter Four

THE CATASTROPHE

The word, Catastrophe, has a sinister sound, which is probably due to the note of doom on which so many of the masterpieces of the world's literature end. But we have seen that the word can be misleading in connexion with the technique of form. Hamlet, the man, ends his life on a catastrophic note, but the play ends on a note of achievement, for *The Intention*, which dominates it, reaches *Denouement*.

The *Œdipus Rex* of Sophocles has this same note of doom at its conclusion, but here again *The Intention* is achieved, for the *Denouement* to *The Intention* brings a *Catastrophe* to the man.

As we shall deal with two kinds of *Catastrophe* in this chapter, it will be well to define and illustrate each, before proceeding.

The first type of *Catastrophe* is a point on *The Line of Action* farthest away from *The Line of Intention*. It is normally followed by *The Denouement*, but may be followed by a *Reversal of the Catastrophe*.

Such a *Simple Catastrophe* occurs in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. Samson *Intends* to deliver Israel from the yoke of the Philistines:

> . . . Promise was that I
> Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver! . . .

The Catastrophe occurs at that point in the story where Samson's *Intention* is nearest to failure (the point on *The Line of Action* farthest away from *The Line of Intention*). This incident shows the public officer coming

from the Philistines to command the captive Samson to make sport for them in the worship of Dagon:

> OFFICER: This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
> With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
> Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
> And now some public proof thereof require
> To honour this great feast, and great assembly. . . .

The Catastrophe is followed by a *Reversal* and a *Denouement* which brings the roof upon the Philistine nobility, when Samson pulls down the pillars of the building.

This point on *The Line of Action* where doom appears to be the end of *The Intention*, but where a *Reversal* or a *Denouement*, or both follow, and the *Intention* is achieved, is called *The Simple Catastrophe*.

The second type of *Catastrophe* is the same point on *The Line of Action* considered as the final incident in the story. It will no longer be that point where *The Intention* nearly fails, but that point where it actually fails.

Such a *Catastrophe* may be seen in Shelley's tragedy, *The Cenci*. The modified *Intention* is Beatrice's desire to escape the consequences of the murder of her father:

> . . . we can blind
> Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
> Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
> As murderers cannot feign. . . .

The Catastrophe to her *Intention* occurs when she is condemned to die for her act:

> BERNARDO: . . . The minister's of death
> Are waiting round the doors.

This type of *Catastrophe* which ends the action of the play, we will call *Compound Catastrophe*.

From our considerations of the *Catastrophe*, we now see that, after the manner of *The Crisis*, the end of a story, like the middle, is a moveable point. A story may conclude at *Catastrophe* or at *Denouement*. We also know that *Catastrophe* may be either simple or

compound. It is simple when it is merely one of *The Primary Incidents.* It is compound when it is not only one of *The Primary Incidents* but also ends the story.

We have seen in Chekov's story, *The Darling,* the effect of a series of *Crises.* Reflection, however, will assure us that the story was also told in a series of *Catastrophes.* We viewed the incidents through Olenka's *Intention* to love somebody, i.e., *The Crises*) :

1. Olenka marries Kukin.
2. Olenka marries Pustovalov.
3. Olenka and Smirnov form a companionate union.
4. Smirnov returns to Olenka.
5. Olenka mothers Smirnov's child.

If the stress of the story had been on the fact that Olenka could not hold her lovers when she had attracted them, we should have the interest of the reader concentrated upon a series of *Catastrophes* :

1. Kukin dies.
2. Pustovalov dies.
3. Smirnov goes away with his regiment.
4. Smirnov neglects Olenka.
5. Smirnov's child is taken away from her.

We have used the word ' stress.' It will need a little consideration.

If dramatic authors were aware how easily the mind of the reader can be switched on to a wrong series of events, they would pay a little more attention to this word. We have seen in the illustration above, that *The Darling* can be regarded as a series of *Crises* or as a series of *Catastrophes.* A wrong stress would have forced the reader to consider her life from the catastrophic point of view, rather than from the point of view of her achievements.

If again, dramatic authors were under no other obligations than are the writers of essays, they could state freely

on which characters and events they desired the stress to be. But as they are under restraints which prevent a direct statement to the reader, and which confine them to giving all information by means of action, the stress must be *shown* and not stated. Aristotle tells us: [1]

> Tragedy, then, is an imitation of *an action*. . . .

Actions must explain themselves by other actions, not by explanatory footnotes. So the writer of stories cannot explain to his reader where his stress lies. He must show it by indirect methods.

We have seen that Chekov has given the high-lights of his story to Olenka and her lovers, so that each time she finds a person on whom she can shower her affection, her *Intention* is almost achieved.

This repetition of 'almost achievement' by means of a series of *Crises* stresses the point in the story where the interest lies. Chekov does not stress the *Catastrophes* which lie between. His interest is with Olenka and each new lover, not with Olenka and the lover she has lost. But in what manner has he placed this stress with such exactitude that no one could misunderstand it?

One might reply that the reader feels the greater sympathy expended upon certain sections of the story, to the exclusion of other sections. But sympathy is an emotional factor, and we are seeking for a scientific principle which will enable us to repeat for ourselves the technical achievement. Perhaps we can best answer the question by another question:

On what characters has Shakespeare placed the stress in *Antony and Cleopatra*? Can anyone be sure that Cleopatra is the leading character, and not Antony? Dare we affirm that Octavius is definitely out of the lists for such an honour, when he brings down the curtain with the success of his arms?

In our analysis of *Hamlet* we decided that there were

[1] *Poetics*. Translated by S. H. Butcher.

two influences at work on *The Line of Action*, which modified the incidents and shaped them according to a pre-arranged plan. One of these influences was *The Intention*, the other was *The Theme*.

We found that the method of discovering the main *Intention* was by tracing it backwards from the end of *The Line of Action* to the opening of the story. We have, however, as yet, given very little thought to *The Theme*. This matter we must leave until we can treat it in detail in its separate chapter. For the moment a few general facts must suffice.

Theme will impress itself upon the reader's mind, if it is not mishandled by the author in *The Significance* which appears with the final incident in the story. It will faintly impress every other incident, in the way that *Intention* impresses it, by a restriction on the selection of that incident. *Intention* and *Theme* limit the selection of incidents to those which will not only give the characters scope for action, but which will also illustrate *The Theme* and develop *The Intention*.

By the final incident of the story, where *Denouement* (or *Compound Catastrophe*) fuses with the end of *The Line of Intention* and the end of *The Theme Line*, the author illuminates the reader's mind with *Significance*. At this point the reader is told not so much *what* is happening, as *why* it has happened.

This pervasive influence of *Theme* (and it is merely the expression of a general law of nature, such as ' boys will be boys ' or ' one defect of character may corrupt the whole man ') hovering above each incident and finally flowering into *Significance*, is one of the factors which arouses in the mind of the reader that feeling of sympathy and interest for its protagonist.

The other factor, as we have seen, is *The Intention*.

These two influences, under the control of a creative artist, may be relied upon to lay a *stress* wherever it is required.

He has but to heighten *The Theme* influence or *The Intention* influence, or both, for any incident to become stressed, i.e. marked by the imprint of *why* the story is told (*Theme*), or by the imprint of the desire which motivates the action (*Intention*).

In the one case the reader is given the reason for the action, in the other he is given motive. In other words *The Theme* shows the character in the trammels of a cosmic law, *The Intention* shows the character in the trammels of his own desires. If *Theme* is stressed, the general law of nature is shown as bearing upon the character's destiny. If *Intention* is stressed, the character's own will is shown operating in a world of barriers.

The method for discovering *The Theme* of a story is the same as that method for discovering *The Intention*. It should be traced back from the end of the story to the beginning.

Let us glance at the final episode in *The Darling*:

> " A telegram from Kharkov," she thought, her whole body in a tremble. " His mother wants Sasha to come to her in Kharkov. Oh, great God! "
> She was in despair. Her head, her feet, her hands turned cold. There was no unhappier creature in the world. She felt that another minute passed. She heard voices. It was the veterinarian coming home from the club. " Thank God," she thought. The load gradually fell from her heart, she was at ease again. And she went back to bed. . . .

The veterinary surgeon, or the child, it did not matter greatly to Olenka, if she had somebody to love. This, then, is *The Theme* deduced from the final incident, where *The Line of Action* meets *The Line of Theme* and *The Line of Intention*, and the three lines are fused together, producing *Significance*. It is checked by following backward through each incident to the opening paragraph, and by watching the expression of the general law (*Theme*: Olenka-women must love, it does not greatly matter whom) as it stamps each incident with its peculiar impress.

Theme and *Intention* then, are the two factors by which an author biasses the reader's attitude to his story, and by means of which he places the stress where he will.

As both *Intention* and *Theme* are traced backwards from the final incident, it will be obvious why we have spent so much time on a consideration of stress. Catastrophe, considered in its compound form (end of story), will necessitate some thought, not only as that point which is actually the failure of *The Intention*, but that point where the lines of *Action, Theme* and *Intention* meet and fuse into *Significance.*

For it is most necessary that we should know how to discover *The Theme* of a story before we analyse it. And its secret is hidden in the final incident whether it is *Denouement* or *Catastrophe.*

In simple plots like *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* where there is only a slight *Parallel Story, The Intention* will guide us more or less accurately to *The Theme.* But in cases where two or more *Parallel Stories* are working out their separate *Intentions*, the search for *Theme* is complicated. Nevertheless, it must be discovered or we cannot be sure on which incidents the author is laying his stress. We shall most certainly feel the stress on a particular incident, but 'feeling' is hardly sufficient for scientific analysis, and unless we can *prove* that an incident is stressed, and prove further, that it is stressed intentionally by a manipulation of *Intention* and *Theme*, we shall not have journeyed far in the direction of a knowledge of form.

We have spoken of *Significance*, and it will need some explanation. It is, perhaps, one of the most evanescent of words in the formalist's vocabulary. It cannot be more clearly explained than in Professor Abercrombie's words: [1]

> For what is this most fundamental of all man's desires, the desire that his experience should be significant? It cannot be that

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism.*

> experience should have a meaning outside itself: what meaning intelligible to us could experience have outside itself—to us who cannot pass beyond our experience? It can only be, that experience should have a meaning within itself. But what do we mean by 'meaning?' Simply, the inevitable relation which one thing has with another. A thing is said to be full of meaning, when it is the focus of relationships with many other things. Experience is perfectly significant, when everything in it is a focus of relationships with everything else in it.

And this 'focus of relationships' is achieved when every incident is dominated by that within it which is allied to that which is within every other incident, i.e. *Theme and Intention.*

So the story-teller is limited by the fact that he *is* a story-teller and is *not* a writer of essays, for the essayist may state with what *Theme* he is dealing, and toward what *Significance* he is working. The story-teller may not do this, for, as Professor Abercrombie has pointed out, 'what meaning intelligible to us could experience have outside itself,' so the meaning must be included within the experience of the characters of the story and not added as something extraneous to that experience.

And the meaning of the story cannot be complete until the final episode is written, for this has not only to be one of a 'focus of relationships' but it has to collect all the foci of relationships of the story and to fuse them into a unity. Thus the last of the foci of relationships has a peculiar value. Let us consider this value a little more fully.

We have seen that the main relationships between the incidents are the influences of *Theme* and *Intention.* Each incident may have the imprint of both upon it and yet may yield only a blurred *Significance.* This lack of sharpness in the final impression may be due to *The Theme* (which may not be stated and can only be inferred) impressing not one clear-cut law of nature upon the incidents, but several more or less vague impressions of general laws. It is the peculiar province of the final

incident to gather the impressions given by the various incidents and to stamp one clear-cut *Significance* on the mind of the reader, thus eliminating secondary impressions due to misinterpretations of *Theme*, and to become a ' focus of relationships ' for one definite type of impression.

Consider *Hamlet*. We shall realize, as we run over the incidents, that our minds are receiving impressions which conflict slightly with each other. We observe that Hamlet is too easily influenced by the generalizations of his abstract mind. We observe also that he is dominated by a supreme mistrust of his fellow-men. We learn that he is a vacillator. Each of these impressions will be given us by the various incidents, as they act as foci of relationships with all the other incidents; they will not only be expressing *a* theme, they will be expressing *many* themes. But amongst them will be *The Theme* dominant —that one defect of character may corrupt the whole man. The former secondary themes must be eliminated from the reader's mind leaving the true *Theme* alone dominating it.

Unless the final incident stamps one *Significance* and one only upon the reader's mind, it has failed in its task and the story will lack *Significance*.

If the incident which forms *The Compound Catastrophe* is a weak incident, the *Significance* must also be weak, for the value of a final incident lies in its power of fusing the entire incidents of the story into a unity, which will stamp on the reader's mind *one* of the relationships between the incidents, and one only, which will be the true *Theme*. This, combined with the action which shows the success or failure of *The Intention* will produce *Significance*.

The growth of *The Theme* of *Macbeth* will illustrate this point.

Following our own advice we will turn to the end of the play to find our *Theme*, and trace it backward to its

source. Immediately before the close of the tragedy, Macduff enters with Macbeth's head. A little earlier we have seen the beginning of the fatal duel during which Macbeth tells Macduff that he is invulnerable:

MACBETH: Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born. . . .
MACDUFF: Despair thy charm;
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

From this ending we might imagine that Macbeth thought his life secure, until he should be confronted by some person who was not of woman born. Working backwards, we find Macbeth speaking with a Messenger in Act V, Scene V:

MESSENGER: As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

. . . . .

MACBETH: I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth; 'Fear not till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane. . . .'

We hear the note of a fulfilled prophecy. Macbeth thinking himself secure until Birnam Wood shall come to Dunsinane, finds the opposing soldiery carrying branches which have been torn from the trees of the wood.

So Macbeth put his faith in an oracle which told him he would be secure until (1) he was faced by a person not born of woman, (2) until Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane. Macbeth made the mistake of thinking that the oracle was prophesying his safety, when it was merely fixing the date of his destruction.

This episode will probably awaken in our minds the memory of a similar circumstance from Greek History [1]

[1] *A History of Greece*, by J. B. Bury.

when Crœsus of Lydia, wishing to know what would be the outcome of his enterprise against Media, consulted the Greek oracles, who replied: 'that if he crossed the Halys he would destroy a mighty Empire.' He did cross the Halys, but it was his own empire that was destroyed.

We can now express *The Theme* of *Macbeth* in some such words as the following: Put not your trust in oracles which you have not the vision to interpret. This *Theme* is accentuated earlier by Macbeth referring to The Weird Sisters as 'imperfect speakers.'

Should *The Theme*, which we have tentatively accepted, prove by a study of the remainder of the incidents to be the true one, then the final incident (when Macduff, 'who was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd,' slays Macbeth) is an illustration of the true *Theme* eliminating all secondary *Themes*.

These secondary *Themes*, such as Macbeth's love of power, his unscrupulousness, his brutality and ruthlessness, which might be considered as influences veiling the true *Theme*, are finally scattered in the last incident, which conclusively tells us that the only *Theme* with which the incidents are dealing concerns the misjudgment of a prophesy.

Let us trace back to check our finding:

In Act V, Scene I, while Macbeth is secure in the faith of his own interpretation of the prophesies, he is told of the avenging army which is approaching Dunsinane:

MACBETH: Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. . . .

. . . . .

SERVANT: There is ten thousand——
MACBETH: Geese, villain?
SERVANT: Soldiers, sir. . . . The English force, so please you.

In Act IV, Scene I, we have the prophecy of The

Weird Sisters on which Macbeth pins his faith for the security of his crown:

SECOND APPARITION:

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. . . .

THIRD APPARITION:

. . . Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.

In Act III, Scene I, Macbeth has a soliloquy. He has entered the scene for the first time as King of Scotland:

. . . To be thus is nothing,
But to be safely thus. . . .

It would seem that here we have a *Modification of the Intention.* Macbeth is King, but he wishes now to be *safely* King. If we are right in our assumption, then all the incidents which follow this one in the tragedy, will be dominated by this *Modified Intention.* These incidents then, should have shown us not only Macbeth's trust in his own interpretation of the prophecy (*Theme*), but also his desire to retain his crown (*Modified Intention*).

In the earlier part of Act III, Scene I, Banquo speaks the words which announce *The Crisis* to Macbeth's earlier *Intention*:

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promis'd. . . .

From this we gather that the original *Intention* was Macbeth's desire to become King of Scotland, and that he was promised the achievement of this *Intention* by The Weird Sisters.

Retracing still further, we find Macbeth soliloquizing concerning the murder of Duncan, in Act II, Scene II:

I have done the deed.

. . . . .

To know my deed 'twere best not know myself.
(*Knocking within*).
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou could'st!

King Duncan then was the barrier to Macbeth's *Intention*, to become King of Scotland. Tracing back still further, we see the birth of the *Intention*. In Act I, Scene III, Macbeth and Banquo are with The Weird Sisters:

FIRST WITCH: All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
SECOND WITCH: All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
THIRD WITCH: All hail, Macbeth! that shall be king hereafter.

And with the birth of *The Intention* in the mind of Macbeth, the embryonic *Theme* awakens also, for Macbeth's faith in the prophecy is in a few moments to be strengthened.

We can now realize the importance of the final incident, whether it is *Denouement* or *Catastrophe*, for at this point on *The Line of Action The Theme* must be boldly impressed on the reader's mind and disentangled from the vague, secondary themes which cluster about it and mar the sharpness of *The Significance*.

The vision of the creative artist must be crystal clear where his *Intention* and *Theme* are concerned, or his unity will be lost, and with it his symmetry of form. Professor Moulton writes:[1]

> And so the tangle of life, with its jumble of conflicting aspirations, its crossing and twisting of contrary motives . . . this has gradually in the course of ages been laboriously traced by the scientific historian into some such harmonious plan as evolution. But he finds himself long ago anticipated by the dramatic artist, who has touched crime and seen it link itself with Nemesis, who has transformed passion into pathos, who has received the shapeless facts of reality and returned them as an ordered economy of design.

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[1] *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*: R. G. Moulton.

This ' ordered economy of design ' depends to a very great extent upon how the final scene in a work of literature is treated. If it is mishandled the design will be blurred. If it is treated as the most important point on *The Line of Action*, the point where *Theme, Intention* and *Action* flower into *Significance*, then it can be made to yield what Professor Abercrombie calls ' the revelation of law and order in things,' and what Professor Moulton calls ' an ordered economy of design.'

If we now turn to the end of *Antony and Cleopatra* we shall be confronted by a problem which cannot be answered so simply as the discovery of *The Theme* in Macbeth. Indeed, if we ask ourselves so simple a question as who is the leading character, our minds will vacillate between Antony and Cleopatra. For the stress would appear to be equally on both.

Cleopatra's *Intention* would seem to be to keep Antony beside her. But Antony's *Intention* wavers between ridding himself of Cleopatra:

> These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
> Or lose myself in dotage.
>
> (Act I, Scene II.)

and hurrying back to her as rapidly as he can:

> I will to Egypt;
> And though I make this marriage for my peace,
> I' the east my pleasure lies.
>
> (Act II, Scene III.)

The action is further complicated by the *Parallel Story* of Octavius and his *Intention*, which is to influence the destiny of Antony, as he has already influenced the destinies of Pompey and Lepidus . . . that he may wield the power of Rome.

With these various *Intentions* complicating the action it is small wonder that *The Significance* is decidedly weak. *The Theme* is not apparent in the incidents, and when we search the final incident for an indication of its

presence, we are faced with a vague generalization which would fit almost any dramatic story:

> High events as these
> Strike those that make them; and their story is
> No less in pity than his glory which
> Brought them to be lamented. . . .
>
> (Act V, Scene II.)

This is sheer genius of evasion, the least we should expect from so great a master of words. No one was more aware than Shakespeare himself that he had no *Theme* to sum up, and that the final incident of the play had failed in its task. He has given us a pageant; he has given us drama; he has given us pictures of a carnal love which no other dramatist has equalled, but he has *not* given us 'an ordered economy of design' with a 'revelation of law and order in things,' because *Theme* has been lost in the intricacy of the tangled *Intentions*.

If *The Main Intention* is in the mind of Octavius, his victory at Actium will bring the play to a close at *Denouement*.

If *The Main Intention* is in the mind of either Cleopatra or Antony, then the story will end on Catastrophe, for they both die, and their *Intentions* end with them.

Cleopatra's *Intention* being to keep Antony by her side, will conflict with Octavius' *Intention* to remove Antony from Egypt.

Now, if we regard the play from this latter point of view, the plan will be a little more clear, for we shall visualize the action as a clash of wills. Antony is the prize for which both Cleopatra and Octavius are warring. As the father of Cleopatra's children, Antony is bound to her by emotional ties. As the husband of Octavius' sister, Antony has his obligations also to Octavius.

Thus Antony becomes a subordinate character in the Octavius story, and also a subordinate character in the Cleopatra story. The control of *The Main Intention* lies with either Cleopatra or Octavius. Either might be looked upon

as the leading character in the play, if it were not for the fact that Antony finally throws in his lot with Cleopatra. Their joint *Intentions* outweigh the *Intention* of Octavius.

Cleopatra then, is the leading character, and with her death the play ends on a note of *Catastrophe.*

Even with this conviction in our minds, we are no nearer to a discovery of *The Theme* of the play. Cleopatra's actions might furnish matter for a score of *Themes,* they definitely fail to furnish matter for *a Theme,* and so the action concludes not with a *Significance* but with many *Significances.*

Such then, is the responsibility of the final incident in a story whether it is in the form of a *Denouement* or a *Compound Catastrophe.* It must be the climax to the series of incidents which have built up the body of the story. It must collect the varying impressions of *The Theme* and show unmistakably the true *Theme* from the false ones. It must dramatize the success or failure of *The Intention.* If it has done its work well it will show ' the revelation of law and order in things ' as is shown in the final episode of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth.* If it has done its work badly, *The Intention* and *The Theme* will be blurred, as in the case of *Antony and Cleopatra.*

With the final incident, not only are the destinies of the characters held in the balance, but the destinies of unity and *Theme.*

Contrary to popular belief, *Catastrophe* to a *Main Intention* does not necessarily imply that the end of the story is an unhappy one. This idea springs from a confusion of thought. *The Catastrophe* to either the hero or his *Intention* will cast a note of gloom over the play. But this will not be the case if *The Catastrophe* occurs to *The Intention* of the villain. If the story is written from the angle of view of an unsympathetic character, then *The Catastrophe* to his *Intention* will give a certain pleasure to the reader, for *Catastrophe* to the villain frequently means *Denouement* to the hero.

Shylock's *Catastrophe* is Antonio's *Denouement.*

A glance at the ending of a few stories will make this point clear. *The Intention* which dominates the play of *Othello* is, without doubt, Iago's. A single reading of the text will convince the most sceptical mind of this truth. Othello is thrown into the high-light as the leading character, but Othello is negative to *The Intention* of Iago: Hear the latter speak:

> Now, sir, be judge yourself,
> Whether I in any just term am affin'd
> To love the Moor. (Act I, Scene I.)

> Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,
> Yet, for necessity of present life,
> I must show out a flag and a sign of love.
> (Act I, Scene I.)

> Cassio's a proper man; let me see now:
> To get his place and to plume up my will
> In double knavery; how, how? Let's see:
> After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
> That he is too familiar with his wife. . . .
> (Act I, Scene III.)

> . . . yet that I put the Moor
> At least into a jealousy so strong
> That judgment cannot cure. . . .
> (Act II, Scene I.)

> . . . for whiles this honest fool
> Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
> And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
> I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
> That she repeals him for her body's lust. . . .
> (Act II, Scene III.)

The jealousy motif which dominates the action is the outcome of Iago's *Intention.* Remove this character and the story of Othello and Desdemona might have been a love idyll.

Having awakened jealousy in the heart of Othello, Iago achieves his *Denouement* when Othello strangles Desdemona and kills himself. Thus *The Denouement* to Iago's *Intention* brings *Catastrophe* to Othello.

In the story of *Œdipus Rex*,[1] Œdipus, king of Thebes desiring to cleanse his city intends to discover the man who is polluting it:

TIRESIAS: Thou seek'st this man of blood: Thyself art he.

And this, Œdipus is to discover for himself. He has killed his father Laïus and committed incest unwittingly with his mother, Jocasta. He puts out his eyes when he learns the truth:

MESSENGER: Like a song
His voice rose, and again, again, the strong
And stabbing hand fell, and the massacred
And bleeding eyeballs streamed upon his beard,
Wild rain, and gouts of hail amid the rain.

. . . . .

From man and woman broken, now made one
In downfall. . . .

The catastrophic note thunders across the action. But *The Intention* has been achieved, and the play ends with a *Denouement*. Œdipus sought 'the man of blood' and found him, in himself.

Another illustration occurs in Milton's *Paradise Lost*,[2] i.e. where *The Intention* is stated in Book Two. Satan determines to 'seduce mankind to his party and make their god, their foe:

By sudden onset—. . . .
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe. . . .

---

[1] *Œdipus Rex, King of Thebes*. Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

[2] *Complete Works of Milton*: J. W. Meyer & Co., New York.

The Intention reaches its *Crisis* in Book Nine with Adam and Eve transgressing according to Satan's desire:

> Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.
>
> . . . . .
>
> She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
> With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,

And *The Intention* is apparently achieved with the appearance of the Archangel in Book Eleven:

> But longer in this Paradise to dwell
> Permits not. To remove thee I am come,
> And send thee from the Garden forth. . . .

Stopford Brooke,[1] commenting on the close of the epic, writes:

> In this, his Purification, at which Milton works throughout, has now begun. Adam confesses the justice of God, and his desire for death is a desire of self-sacrifice, that he may save his race. . . . When Eve sees Adam she says, " On me, me only, let the curse fall," she also reaches the spirit of sacrifice . . . while Adam, in feeling love again fill his heart for Eve, steps into a higher life.

And in this scene the note of *Denouement* is unmistakable, for have not Adam and Eve thwarted Satan's desire? The expulsion from the Garden has resulted in their spiritual development:

> . . . then wilt thou not be loth
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A Paradise within thee, happier far.

But in spite of this feeling of satisfaction, the epic ends on *Catastrophe*, for we have been dealing with Satan's *Intention*, and it has been thwarted.

Now, if we had trusted to our emotional responses we should undoubtedly have agreed that *Othello* ended with *Catastrophe*, and *Paradise Lost* with *Denouement*. A scientific analysis assures us that exactly the reverse is the truth.

[1] *Classical Writers—Milton*: Macmillan & Co.

But there is still another angle of view from which we must consider the final incident.

We have drawn a distinction between the *Ostensible* and the *True End* of a story. *The Ostensible End,* which the reader foresees in *Hamlet,* is the hero sailing from Denmark and arriving in England to meet his death. This, we later discover, is not *The True End,* for Hamlet returns and achieves his *Intention.* This distinction between *The Ostensible End* (the final development toward which the story *appears* to be moving) and *The True End* (the final incident toward which the story *is actually* moving) must be borne in mind in all story analysis, for unless *The True End* is hidden from the reader, his interest will tend to lapse and the difficulty of stressing *The Significance* will be heightened.

If we glance again at the text of *Lear* we shall see this *Ostensible End* luring us toward false conclusions and blinding us to the *True End.*

Lear's *Intention* we already know:

> To shake all cares and business from our age,
> Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
> Unburden'd crawl toward death. . . .

The act of unburdening provides the action and *The Theme* of the tragedy. The latter might be stated as: None may unburden himself in this world of burdens. Lear, imagining that in signing his abdication he has shifted all his burdens on to other shoulders, finds that as soon as one burden is displaced, another appears.

From the moment that Lear abdicates, the new burden is upon his shoulders and the story is told in a series of *Catastrophes.*

The Crisis (that point in the story where *The Intention* is most nearly achieved, i.e. his unburdening) is not reached until immediately before the close of the play. But this *Crisis* in *Lear* has a double function to perform.

First, it is a point on *The Line of Action.* Second, it is *The Ostensible End.*

In Act IV, Scene VII, Lear lies asleep in a tent in the French camp with his good angel, Cordelia, beside him. After the tempest-tossed emotions of the preceding scenes, this peaceful contrast lulls the reader, desiring Lear's safety, into a false security. He foresees the victory of Cordelia's army and Lear living the remainder of his life in peace and happiness, his burdens cast aside:

> I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
> On her kind nursery. . . .
>
> (Act I, Scene I.)

The Crisis then, is also *The Ostensible End.*

But *The True End* to the story is different indeed, for Lear and Cordelia are captured by the opposing forces and end their lives at *The Catastrophe* to Lear's *Intention.*

If the reader had been able to foresee *The True End,* his interest would have slackened and *The Theme* and *Significance* would have been weakened. Further, verisimilitude would have been offended. The future is hidden from mortals. We try to peer through the veil, to interpret the symbols, but we interpret wrongly as Macbeth discovered. For the reader to be in possession of truths which are still in the womb of time, would be a misinterpretation of life. Hence art must have its *Ostensible End* as well as its *True End.*

The prophesies in *Macbeth* act in a similar manner to the scene in the French camp in *Lear.* We are misled by seeing the earlier prophecies of The Weird Sisters fulfilled in a manner that we anticipated. Macbeth becomes Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland. We naturally expect the latter prophecies to be fulfilled as the earlier have been. Having interpreted correctly one set of prophecies, we imagine that we can interpret all prophecies. So does Macbeth.

Thus we are led to build up for ourselves an *Ostensible*

Denouement in which Macbeth, immune from danger, reigns as King of Scotland; when, in reality the prophecies are leading us to *The True End* where Macbeth dies at the hands of Macduff.

The Compound Catastrophe is thus as important to *The Line of Action* as *The Denouement.* But we have yet to consider *Catastrophe* in its simple state, that point where *The Intention* is almost frustrated, but from which it recovers and achieves *Denouement.*

Catastrophe regarded thus, is the point which contrasts with *Crisis.* Aristotle advises us: [1]

> Above all, it is the plot that contains those Reversals of the Action and other decisive moments, which most powerfully awake tragic feeling and excite the pleasure appropriate to tragedy.

Crisis and *Catastrophe* occurring together afford a most effective contrast, but they are not under a compulsion to occur together, for *Secondary Incident* may separate them. But a sharp upward movement to *Crisis* followed by a sharp downward movement at *The Reversal,* and a further sharp downward movement to *Catastrophe* will be far more effective dramatically than such movements broken by secondary matter.

But *The Simple Catastrophe* may occur at any point on *The Line of Action* (it may be a beginning, or a Distance Middle) except at the end, for if it occurs at this point it becomes a *Compound Catastrophe.* Also a story may be told as a series of *Catastrophes,* as we have seen in Chekov's story, *The Darling.*

The danger of using this series of *Catastrophes* lies in the note of doom that it engenders. Shakespeare has counteracted it in *Lear* by one of the most philosophical clowns of the tragedies; he has also balanced the note of doom, by Edmund's story with its lighter *motif.*

Let us glance at the simple action of *Lear* with its

[1] *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art.* S. H. Butcher: Macmillan & Co. 1898.

series of *Catastrophes.* The old man by dividing his realm between his two daughters and banishing the third, prepares the stage for his own chastisement. The fool sums up his action:

> . . . ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gavest them the rod and puttest down thine own breeches . . .
>
> (Act I, Scene IV.)

The preparation for the first *Catastrophe* begins early in the first scene, with Lear's abdication. It is heightened by the banishment of Kent and the disinheriting of Cordelia. Its growth is then slow but insistent. The first indication of impending disaster to Lear is when Goneril advises her steward, Oswald, to be discourteous to her father's retainers:

> GONERIL: Idle old man,
> That still would manage those authorities
> That he hath given away!
>
> (Act I, Scene III.)

> LEAR: Saddle my horses; call my train together.
> Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
> Yet have I left a daughter.
>
> (Act I, Scene IV.)

And so Lear, having discovered Goneril's treachery, rides away to discover Regan's. But Regan has hurriedly left her castle to stay with Gloucester, that she may avoid entertaining her father. At Gloucester's castle Lear finds his messenger in the stocks. Then, with Goneril's arrival, and further indignities from his two daughters, Lear hurries into the night and into his *Catastrophes.* He is then an outcast:

> Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
> Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
> I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
> You owe me no subscription. . . .
>
> (Act III, Scene II.)

Then madness comes:

GLOUCESTER: . . . where is the king my master?
KENT: Here, sir, but trouble him not, his wits are gone.
(Act III, Scene VI.)

The *Line of Action* moves upward again when Lear is taken from the chamber of the farm house by Gloucester, Kent and the Fool, to bear him toward Dover and his friends. But again the note of catastrophe is heard when Lear is found by Edgar and Gloucester near Dover, dressed fantastically with wild-flowers:

LEAR: Ha! Goneril, with a white beard!
. . . they told me I was everything; 'tis a lie,
I am not ague-proof. (Act IV, Scene VI.)

The Crisis, withheld for so long, now appears. Lear lies in Cordelia's presence, safe in the French camp:

LEAR: For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
CORDELIA: And so I am, I am.
(Act IV, Scene VII.)

But *The Line of Action* sweeps down again to *Catastrophe*

EDGAR: Away, old man! give me thy hand: away!
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.
(Act V, Scene II.)

Lear and Cordelia, prisoners in the English camp, have had their moment of almost-success. Again the line shows a tendency to rise toward *Crisis*, for Edmund, before his death, confesses to Albany that he has given orders for Cordelia to be slain:

He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair. . . .
(Act V, Scene III.)

But the groove of *Catastrophe* has been too deeply cut

in the action and Lear enters with the dead Cordelia in his arms:

> Howl, howl, howl, howl! O! you are men of stones:
> Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
> That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever. . . .
> (Act V, Scene III.)

And still the line attempts to rise to a second *Crisis*:

> You lords and noble friends, know our intent;
> What comfort to this great decay may come
> Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,
> During the life of this old majesty,
> To him our absolute power. . . .
> (Act V, Scene III.)

But *Compound Catastrophe* is at hand to close the series with Lear's death. The action is ended, *The Intention* frustrated, *The Theme* has flowered into *Significance* as the old man, who had thought it possible to lay down his burden in a world of burdens, gives up his task in death.

We have seen in this illustration of a series of *Simple Catastrophes* that there is no necessity for a *Crisis* to appear between each pair, for secondary matter has been introduced to link the *Catastrophes*. In *The Darling* each *Crisis* is followed by a *Catastrophe*, but in *Lear* the two do not alternate. *Crisis* being that point on *The Line of Action* where *The Intention* is almost achieved, Lear would have had to be as near his 'unburdening' as he was with Cordelia, to produce a repetition of *Crisis* between the *Catastrophes*. And this is not the case.

It would appear from our survey of *Simple Catastrophe* that the most effective use of it is where the hero is shown as being entangled in difficulties which appear to be beyond his power to overcome. In other words, each *Simple Catastrophe* should have the momentary appearance of a *Compound Catastrophe*.

Such an effect is produced by Euripides in *Iphigenia In*

Tauris.[1] *The Simple Catastrophe* gives the impression of being a *Compound Catastrophe*:

Intention: Orestes desires to expiate a sin by stealing the heavenly image of Artemis from the Tauri and returning with it to Athens:

> . . . what land but this
> Of Tauri, where thy sister Artemis
> Her altar hath, and seize on that divine
> Image which fell, men say, into this shrine
> From heaven. This I must seize by chance or plot
> Or peril—clearer word was uttered not—
> And bear to Attic earth.

Barrier: Orestes and Pylades are seized by Taurian herdsmen and brought to Iphigenia to be sacrificed upon the altar of Artemis:

HERDSMAN: A ship hath passed the blue Symplêgades,
And here upon our coast two men are thrown,
Young, bold, good slaughter for the altar-stone
Of Artemis!

Reversal: Iphigenia recognizes her brother and plans the escape with the image:

IPHIGENIA: Belovèd! oh, no other, for indeed
Belovèd art thou! In mine arms at last,
Orestes far away.

. . . . .

I think I dimly see
One chance.

Crisis: Iphigenia persuades King Thoas to allow her to take the Image, Orestes and Pylades down to the sea, on the pretext of purifying them from 'those two men's bloodguiltiness':

THOAS: Some rite unseen? 'Tis well. Go where thou wilt.

Reversal: The guard sees them trying to escape in Orestes' ship and sends a messenger to inform King Thoas:

[1] Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

MESSENGER: The virgin minister
That served our altar, she hath fled from this
And stolen the dread Shape of Artemis,
With these two Greeks. The cleansing was a lie.

Catastrophe: A wind springs up and drives the ship back on to the shore:

MESSENGER: . . . she ran true
Full for the harbour mouth. . . .
. . . . Then sudden in her teeth a squall
Drove the sail bellying back. The men withal
Worked with set teeth, kicking against the stream.
But back, still back, striving as in a dream,
She drifted.

Denouement: Athena appears and commands Thoas to refrain from punishing the fugitives. She foretells their return to Argos and the building of a temple to Artemis at Halae for the Image:

ATHENA (*to* ORESTES):
. . . Lead forth thy sister from this shore
In peace; and thou, Thoas, be wroth no more.

It would appear to the most optimistic reader of the play, that when the ship carrying the fugitives and the Image was driven back to the shore, the end would inevitably be catastrophic. *The Simple Catastrophe* thus usurps for the moment the appearance of *The Compound Catastrophe*, and *The Denouement* becomes the more effective by contrast.

With a final illustration of this method of securing the most effective *Simple Catastrophe* we will close the chapter. This time we will turn to a Roman. *The Matron of Ephesus* from the *Satyricon* of Petronius [1] may be told in skeleton:

A certain matron of Ephesus was so notably pure that women came from afar to look upon her. When her husband was buried, she was not satisfied with the usual custom of following the body

[1] *Great Short Stories of the World.* Revised by Barret H. Clark and Maxim Lieber.

with loosened hair and beating her breast in the presence of the people: she accompanied her dead spouse right into the sepulchre . . . and there remained to watch and weep by day and by night. . . .

Then the soldier is introduced without preamble:

Meantime, the provincial governor crucified certain thieves near the sepulchre where the matron was weeping over the body of her late husband, and a soldier was commanded to keep guard over the crosses, to prevent the bodies from being taken down and buried.

The soldier visits the matron:

They were together not only on that first night, but on the second and the third.

The Simple Catastrophe has been foreshadowed in the statement that the soldier was posted to prevent the bodies from being taken down and buried:

The parents of one of the thieves who had been crucified, perceiving that the soldier was not strictly guarding the crosses, took down the body of their son and buried it. Next morning, seeing the body gone, the soldier knew what his punishment would be, and went and told the woman.

So final is this *Simple Catastrophe*, so apparently without a chance of *Reversal*, that the reader feels it must be a *Compound Catastrophe*. The soldier was posted to guard the bodies. One has been stolen. He has neglected his duty and must face his punishment. But the woman is a lady of astonishing astuteness:

And therewith she told the soldier to take the husband's body from its place and put it upon the cross that was vacant..

The Simple Catastrophe has acted as *Ostensible End*, and has prepared the way for a surprise *Denouement*, by means of which *The Intention* to possess the woman is achieved; and *The Theme*, 'women love the living, not the dead,' is fused into *Significance* by the final incident. *The Denouement* thus becomes 'a focus of relationships' with every incident in the story.

Chapter Five

THE DENOUEMENT

The Denouement is the point on *The Line of Action* where *The Intention* is achieved. But it must be achieved in its entirety. If it is only partially successful then we shall have not a complete, but a partial *Denouement.*

Jeanne d'Arc in the farmhouse at Lorraine dreams of making a conquest of France. The fact that she breaks the siege of Orleans, has her successes at Jargeau, Beaugency, Patay, Troyes and reaches her *Crisis* when the king is crowned at Rheims, does not imply that her *Intention* will reach *Denouement.* On the other hand it does not prove that because she dies at the stake her story will end in *Catastrophe.*

Her *Intention,* partly achieved, is checked when she is captured by the Burgundians; and it is the fact alone that her *Intention* is not achieved in full, which brings her story to a close at *Catastrophe.*

Denouement is a point symbolizing the achievement of *The Intention* viewed as a whole. The King in *Hamlet* must not merely be wounded, he must die.

And not only must the incident which achieves *Denouement* show the complete achievement of *The Intention*; it must be an incident which arises naturally out of the incidents which have preceded it.

Each incident from the opening to the close of the story is limited by three factors: (*a*) it must advance or retard *The Intention,* (*b*) it must illustrate *The Theme,* (*c*) it must arise naturally out of the foregoing incidents. Concerning the first incident in the story, it must flow from the joint stream of *Theme* and *Intention.*

No incident must be allowed a place on *The Line of Action* which is not ' a focus of relationships ' with every other incident.

The Line of Action must be as true to its own unity, as *The Line of Intention* and *The Line of Theme* are true to their unities.

To introduce a second *Intention* unconnected with the original *Intention*, and not leading naturally from it, would be to destroy the unity of *The Intention*. To introduce a new *Theme* unconnected with the original theme, would be to destroy the unity of *The Theme*. To introduce incident unconnected with the other incidents is to destroy the unity of action.

Aristotle has given us this principle in the *Poetics*: [1]

> . . . so that what follows should be the necessary or probable result of the preceding action. It makes all the difference whether any given event is a case of *propter hoc* or *post hoc*. . . .

If the various incidents of *The Line of Action* form *merely* a sequence of events, they cannot be unified. If they are not unified they can have no *Significance*; for what possible *Significance* could an array of unrelated facts have, when viewed as a whole?

Each incident must be the consequence of the incidents before it.

That event which is a natural consequence of the event preceding it, and the cause of the event following it, will be a link in a chain of causation. It is this chain of causation, achieved by making each incident a unit in a consequential sequence, which reaches its full expression at *Catastrophe* or *Denouement*.

As an illustration of such a consequential sequence the reader is referred to the analysis of *The Darling* in a previous chapter.

To achieve the perfect end to a work of literature, will presuppose that either the author has inspiration of a

[1] *Poetics of Aristotle*. Translated by S. H. Butcher.

very high degree, or that he has a well-considered technique. This technique will, to achieve this perfect end, necessitate his restricting his incidents by *Theme* and *Intention*, by the law of consequential sequence, by the erection of an *Ostensible End* which, although it never occurs, should be one of the most dramatic incidents in the story.

When he is master of these methods, he may well turn to a study of *Denouement*, which will present him with an embarrassing array of technical achievements by masters of the art. We have already seen examples of *The Simple Denouement*, where the story threads the various points on *The Line of Action*, and achieves its effect by simple statement. Another illustration will recall the method.

In the story of *The Shepherdess and the Sweep* by Hans Christian Andersen,[1] *The Intention* is in the mind of the China Shepherdess who desires to marry the China Sweep. The old Chinese who pretends to be her grandfather and can nod his head, states *The Barrier*:

> " You will have a husband," the old Chinese said, " who I almost believe is made of mahogany, and he has the whole cabinet full of plate, besides the valuables that are in the hidden drawers."
> " I will not go into the dark cabinet," the little Shepherdess said, " for I have heard that he has eleven China wives in there."

So the Shepherdess makes her *Reversal of the Barrier* by eloping with her fiancé, the China Sweep:

> The Sweep looked at her intently, and then said, " My way lies up the chimney, and that way I know well enough, and if you really have courage to go with me, we shall soon mount up so high that they will never be able to reach us."

She reaches her *Crisis* when they are safe from grandfather Chinese:

> They crept on and climbed, and a dreadful way it was—so high, so high, but he held and lifted her, and showed her where to place her little china feet, till at last they reached the edge of the chimney. . . .

[1] *Great Short Stories of the World.*

Then *The Reversal of the Crisis* occurs:

"The world is too large; oh, were I but back again on the table under the looking glass! I shall never know happiness till I am back there. . . ."

The Shepherdess' fear makes them climb down again:

There lay the old Chinese on the floor; . . . he lay broken into three pieces. . . .

Which produces a second *Crisis*, also a second *Reversal of the Crisis*; for the Sweep says:

"He can be riveted. . . . He can very well be riveted . . . for if they put a good strong rivet in his back and neck he will be as good as new again, and will be able to say many unpleasant things to us yet."

And with the riveting of grandfather Chinese comes *The Catastrophe*, for grandfather's choice of a husband for the Shepherdess, the GoatslegHighadjutantgeneralmilitary-commandant, who is a figure on the cabinet, demands:

"Now, am I to have her, or am I not?"

But grandfather Chinese does not choose to tell a stranger that he has a rivet in the back of his neck and cannot nod his answer, so *The Reversal of the Catastrophe* occurs and *Denouement* arrives with:

. . . so he (grandfather Chinese) was quiet, and the Shepherdess and Sweep remained together, loving each other till they got broken.

The Intention is developed through a series of incidents, each of which is a consequence of the incidents before it. Grandfather's breakage was due to his desire to prevent the flight of the Shepherdess. *The Crisis* and its *Reversal* are repeated. With the exception of this irregularity, the incidents follow the plan in the unit of form, the W. This is by far the most usual method of reaching a *Denouement*. *The Ostensible End* is that the Shepherdess will be forced to marry the man of grandfather's choice

on her return. *The True End* is hidden behind the rivet in grandfather's neck.

But all *Denouements* are not formed by following the order of the incidents in the unit of form, nor need *The Denouement* be an entirely separate incident from the incident forming *The Catastrophe*, for there is a certain type of *Denouement* which flows directly from the incident forming *The Catastrophe* and cannot be regarded as being separate from it. This is where the leading character metaphorically grasps the rod which is thrashing him and turns with it upon his tormentors. Such a method of concluding a story we will call *The Reversal Denouement.* An illustration of it occurs in Milton's *Samson Agonistes. The Intention* is clearly stated by Samson:

> . . . Promise was that I
> Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver!

The Barrier to the Intention is Samson's blindness and the fact that he is in captivity. *The Theme* is stated:

> But what is strength without a double share
> Of wisdom?

The Catastrophe is Samson being forced to make sport for the Philistines by feats of strength. This *Catastrophe* Samson turns into a *Denouement*; which is reported by a Messenger:

MESSENGER: At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud;—
'Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld;
Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength yet greater
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.'
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bow'd;
As with the force of wind and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsions to and fro
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,

Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast. . . .

Samson appearing to be thwarted in his *Intention* by a *Simple Catastrophe* having the appearance of a *Compound Catastrophe*, effects a *Denouement* with a rapidity almost unknown in literature.

Here, there is no need for a *Reversal of Catastrophe*, for the incident nearest to the failure of *The Intention*, becomes itself the incident by which *The Intention* is achieved. The Messenger's speech deals with Samson's *Catastrophe* until the lines:

. . . till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them. . . .

Eleven words are needed for Samson to turn his almost-failure into success; an illustration of one of the ablest manipulations of the technique of *The Reversal-Denouement* in the whole realm of story-telling.

This rapidity of movement, effected by discarding *The Reversal of the Catastrophe*, which we have called an occasional *Primary Incident*, shows how much is gained by making *Denouement* follow rapidly on *Catastrophe*.

Another interesting type of ending we may call *The Denouement of Deduction*. In this form of conclusion there is no action, no single incident which specifically shows the success of *The Intention*. By the failure of *The Catastrophe* alone, is the reader made aware that a *Denouement* has been reached.

This type of ending cannot be achieved by allowing *any* story to conclude at *Catastrophe*. It must have a *Catastrophe* of a very particular type.

If *Hamlet* had ended in the failure of the King, who desired to slay his nephew, it would certainly not imply a *Denouement* for the Hamlet *Intention*, which was to avenge his father's death.

This particular form of *Denouement* is most frequently used in those cases in which *The Intention* belongs to a secondary character, the so-called villain of the story. When this *Intention* fails in its endeavour to harm the hero, it brings *Catastrophe* to the villain, and implies a *Denouement* to the hero's *Intention.*

Such a *Denouement* occurs to Antonio's *Intention* when Shylock fails to enforce his bond, and his own *Intention* ends with *Catastrophe.*

The reason that all *Catastrophes* to a *Main Intention* are not *Denouements* to the opposing character's *Intentions,* is that there is no assurance that opposing characters will necessarily have opposing *Intentions.*

If Iago had failed to convince Othello of Desdemona's unfaithfulness, it would certainly have inferred a *Denouement* to Othello's desire, which was to retain his belief in the chastity of his wife. But as we have seen in *Hamlet,* this does not always follow.

Closely allied with this type of ending is *The Denouement of Suggestion.* Here, again, there is no specific incident to illustrate the achievement of *The Intention.* This unwritten end is awakened in the reader's mind solely by suggestion. The more subtle the suggestion, the more effective is the close. There is, however, a danger that the reader may fail to recognize *The Denouement,* and a note of catastrophe be left in his mind, which will blur *The Theme* and make *Significance* impossible.

Perhaps the most delicate handling of this subtle method may be seen in Henry James' short story, *The Story In It.*[1]

The Intention is in the mind of Maud Blessingbourne who wishes to prove that an interesting story can be written around a woman who is chaste:

> " Oh, now we have you! " her interlocutor laughed. . . .
> " When you say we get always the same couple (in French fiction) what do you mean but that we get always the same passion? Of

[1] *The Better Sort*: Methuen & Co.

course we do!" Voyt declared. "If what you're looking for is another, that's what you won't anywhere find."
Maud for a while said nothing, and Mrs Dyott seemed to wait.
"Well, I suppose I'm looking, more than anything else, for a decent woman."

And Maud continues to discuss with Voyt, with whom she is in love, and with his mistress, Mrs Dyott, her plan to write a book with such a heroine in it. *The Catastrophe*, and it has all the appearance of being compound, is the last incident in the story. Yet *The Intention* is achieved. Voyt sits with Mrs Dyott after Maud's departure, and after they have failed to convince her that her story could have no possible interest. But Maud has also failed to convince them that her story *might* have interest.

Her consciousness, if they let it alone—as they of course after this, mercifully must—*was* in the last analysis, a kind of shy romance. Not a romance like their own, a thing to make the fortune of any author up to the mark—one who should have the invention or who *could* have the courage; but a small, scared, starved, subjective fascination that would do her no harm and nobody else any good. Who but a duffer—he stuck to his contention—would see the shadow of a 'story' in it.

If we were satisfied to lay the story aside at its close, without further thought, we might conclude that Henry James had definitely proved, at all events to his own satisfaction, that there could be no story in a chaste woman.

But on reflection, we decide that Maud Blessingbourne, herself a chaste woman, has not only interested Voyt and Mrs Dyott in her story, but she has held the reader's interest through a story of some seven thousand words . . . about a chaste woman.

Maud thus achieves her *Intention* by showing us that there is most decidedly a 'story' in a chaste woman. But *The Denouement* is not written as a separate incident, and it is not achieved until some thirty seconds after the story has been laid aside.

This example should be studied by those who desire

to master this subtle method of achieving an unwritten *Denouement.*

Frequently confused with *The Denouement of Suggestion* is an end which is the result of totally different causes. If we read George Moore's short story, *Julia Cahill's Curse,*[1] we shall probably wish to place it in the above category, but it does not belong there.

The story opens with a driver talking to a traveller as they amble through the Irish country-side. It begins with dialogue:

> " And what has become of Margaret? "
> " Ah, didn't her mother send her to America as soon as the baby was born? Once a woman is wake here she has to go. Hadn't Julia to go in the end . . . ?
> " Julia who? " said I.
> " Julia Cahill."
> The name struck my fancy, and I asked the driver to tell me her story.
> " Wasn't it Father Madden who had her put out of the parish, but she put her curse on it, and it's on it to this day."
> " Do you believe in curses? "
> " Bedad I do, sir. It's a terrible thing to put a curse on a man, and the curse that Julia put on Father Madden's parish was a bad one, the divil a worse. The sun was up at the time, and she on the hilltop raising both her hands. And the curse she put on the parish was that every year a roof must fall in and a family go to America. . . .

And now, twenty years after Julia has been sent away, a traveller listens to her story. Julia's power over the male was unusual, and the priest found that his influence was being undermined by it. Presently the driver points out the spot where Julia cursed the village:

> I could see he believed the story, and for the moment I, too, believed in an outcast Venus becoming the evil spirit of a village that would not accept her as divine.

A little later the traveller glances over the landscape:

> . . . though the land was good, there seemed to be few people on it, and, what was more significant, that the untilled fields were

[1] *The Untilled Field*: Heinemann.

the ruins, for they were not the cold ruins of twenty or thirty or forty years ago when people were evicted and their tillage turned into pasture—the ruins I saw were the ruins of cabins that had been lately abandoned. . . .

The driver tells the traveller that most of the people who knew Julia are dead, or have gone . . . to America.

"It's said, your honor, that Julia has been seen in America, and I'm going there this autumn. You may be sure I'll keep a look-out for her."
"But all this is twenty years ago. You won't know her. A woman changes a good deal in twenty years."
"There will be no changes in her, your honor. Sure, hasn't she been with the fairies?"

It would appear that here, again, *The Denouement* is being left to the reader's imagination. This is due to the error in accepting Julia's curse as *The Intention* of the story. It should be remembered that the story is being told by an illiterate driver who is all the time adding his suggestions and constructions to it.

The author uses the driver as an *Ostensible End,* building up in the reader's mind a false *Denouement,* having the curse as its *Intention.* But the *Main Intention* is not the curse. Julia, and women of her magnetic type do not need curses to aid them in luring the male. Julia must lure men as the magnet lures steel shavings. This is the real *Intention* of the story, and its *Denouement* lies in the ruined cabins that have been lately abandoned, in the departure of the villagers to America, heightened and symbolized by the driver's *Intention* of going there also.

This *Denouement of False Intention* has probably been given more consideration by authors than any other technical device. There is an instinctive feeling amongst writers that a certain surprise should accompany the end of a story. But this element of surprise has had many antagonists, who assert that any kind of surprise ending is achieved by a trick, whereby the author deceives his reader.

Most surprise endings are tricks, indeed, if by this is meant a conscious device whereby the story is presented in the most arresting manner possible. In this sense all technique is a trick.

Perhaps the antagonism to this type of technique is due to a superficial consideration of Greek drama, from which deductions have been drawn that are inapplicable to drama in general. Stopford Brooke writes in his consideration of *Paradise Lost*: [1]

> He (Milton) wins our interest . . . by expectation, not surprise. It was the way of the Greek Dramatists, it was Shakspere's way. The audience know the conclusion, and wait for it. This is the finest way to work, but only a great artist has the power to do it well. . . . The advantages of it are great, but only great genius can use them; and the conclusion being known, the way in which it is brought about, and its catastrophe heightened or softened, lies open to continuous criticisms, criticisms which, in a play or a story which rests on surprise at the end, cannot be given until the story is finished. In Milton's work, expectation is everywhere, surprise nowhere.

It may be laid down as an axiom that the author who arouses criticism during the telling of his story must admit defeat. Criticism is a function of the mind, and a story is directed toward the reader's emotions. If the emotional hold of the story is interfered with, and the mind of the reader is allowed to function to the extent of criticism, imagination will be dissipated, illusion will give place to reality, and *The Significance* will be blurred.

Concerning 'expectation and surprise,' it would seem that in a work of literature which one has already read, the end could give the reader no surprise. If then, surprise is necessary, why is it not necessary at a second reading?

The reply to the question would seem to be that the reader who is aware of the end of the story, is also aware of *The Significance*, and being aware of this, he would not need surprise to stamp it clearly on his mind. Thus he

[1] *Milton.* The Classical Writers Series. By Stopford A. Brooke.

would be, at a second reading, far more able to follow *The Theme* to its *Significance* than he would have been at a first reading. Surprise is but the etching acid of *The Significance.*

And Stopford Brooke is wrong in concluding that neither Shakespeare nor Milton used surprise. In *Samson Agonistes* anyone unfamiliar with the story would hardly foresee the superb *Denouement.* In *Lear,* who could foresee the tragic end, when the old man lies in the French camp with Cordelia watching by his side? In *The Merchant of Venice,* a reader unaware of the ending to the Shylock-story would need a little more than a high degree of dramatic vision to foresee Portia's somewhat thinly-drawn sophistries, by which she snatches the pound of flesh from the Jew's hands.

But Aristotle has surely said the final word on this point: [1]

> . . . Tragedy is an imitation not only of a complete action, but of events terrible and pitiful. Such an effect is best produced when the events come on us by surprise. . . .

The methods by which surprise can be achieved at *The Denouement* should be a special study for the author who wishes to print his *Significances* sharply on the mind of the reader. But we shall give a chapter to the consideration of this in due course.

For the moment we will glance at that type of ending, not so subtle as the two foregoing examples, which we will call *The Denouement of Pre-Existing Fact.* An example of this method of surprise is given by Hermann Suderman in his short story, *A New Year's Eve Confession.*[2]

The story opens with two old gentlemen talking:

> . . . half in the shadow of the green lamp-shade, mouldering ruins both, from long-past days, bowed and trembling, gazing before them with the dull glance of the dimming eyes of age. . . .

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[1] *Poetics.*

[2] *Short Story Classics.* Translated by Grace I. Colbron. P. F. Collier's Sons, New York.

The wife of one of them is dead, and the other is an old friend, a bachelor, who desired the love of the dead woman:

"I did not think it would be so desolate without her," said the first speaker again.
The host nodded, his jaws moving.
"She made the New Year's punch for us four-and-forty times," continued his friend.
"Yes, it's as long as that since we moved to Berlin, and you became our friend. . . ."

The man who was in love with his friend's wife makes a confession that there was once 'something' between the dead wife and himself. The conversation turns on a woman who was the husband's mistress. The friend had bribed her to leave the husband, to save the wife from pain. The 'something' between the friend and the wife is explained:

And she hurried to me, laid both her hands on my shoulders and buried her tear-bedewed face on my breast. I trembled in every fibre, no woman had ever stood so near to me before. . . . Our eyes met for an instant; I seemed to see a secret understanding, an answer in her glance. I could control myself no longer; I fell at her feet and buried my burning face in her lap . . . then I felt her soft hand rest cool upon my head, and her voice, soft and gentle, spoke the words: "Be brave, dear friend; yes, be brave—do not deceive the man sleeping so trustfully in the next room." Since that day I have been calmer. I knew that she did not return my love, and that I had only pity to hope from her. Years passed, your children grew up and married, we three grew old together. You gave up your wild life, forgot the other woman, and lived for one alone; as I did. . . .
He held out an imploring hand toward his friend; but the other answered, grumbling: "Nonsense. There's nothing to forgive. What you told me there, I knew it long ago. She confessed it herself forty years ago. And now I will tell you why I ran after other women until I was an old man—because she told me then that you were the one and only love of her life."

The Denouement, which occurred forty years ago, is reserved until the time when the husband chooses to

narrate it. There is needed an impetus to excite him to this narration. It happens when his friend makes his confession. *The Denouement* is timed superbly, for it comes in its true time sequence, that is, the expression of it, although forty years have elapsed since the event took place.

If the author had narrated the story, beginning with the marriage, *The Denouement*, to be true to the time sequence, must have occurred forty years earlier in the midst of the narrated facts, and the story would have been spoilt. By allowing the two old men to discuss their lives, incidents can so be arranged that the one which is to produce *The Denouement*, can be made a consequential sequence, not of the act which led to its occurrence, but of the act which leads to its narration, i.e. the bachelor's confession.

In this *Denouement of Pre-Existing Fact,* the justification for withholding or rearranging incidents must be as logical as the justification for the incidents narrated.

We have already commented on a type of story which, leaving the world of reality, impinges on a world of Fantasy. Prospero in *The Tempest* is a character from such a world. Mephistopheles in *Faust* is another. Aladdin and those who wield mysterious powers by means of lamps, wands, and waxen effigies, belong to the class. Many of the conclusions to the Greek plays are aided by the gods, and so come into the same category.

The justification for mingling of two separate planes of being, lies in the convention which the author has chosen. If he can be assured that his reader is in agreement with him, and that they both understand that the story is to deal with characters who are denizens of both the actual and the super-physical worlds, his position is impregnable. No one is at liberty to dictate what an author shall write about, though one may, with some reason, dictate *how* he shall write about it, if he is taking liberties with his material which confuse the reader.

If no such understanding exists between author and reader (as it can hardly be said to exist to-day except in the case of the fairy story), then, to admit a character from the plane of Fantasy on to the plane of Actuality is to court disaster.

If Fantasy must be used in stories dealing with the life of citizens in a modern world, it should not be used in place of incident to prove or disprove fact, to reverse a *Barrier*, a *Crisis*, a *Catastrophe*, or in any way to lower or raise *The Line of Action*, or to do those things for the hero which the reader may fairly expect him to do for himself. That is the modern convention.

Fantasy does not remove *Barriers* in this world. It frequently adds to their difficulty. If Fantasy must be used whimsically, to create a certain atmosphere, to stress a point *which has already been proved*, it can be an aid to the reader's imagination, although it is always a doubtful one, even in the hands of so subtle a craftsman as Anatole France. For while it may give pleasure to the emotions, it invariably awakens the critical faculties.

In *Our Lady's Juggler*,[1] Anatole France has chosen a mediæval setting. The monastery and its monks could hardly have been more convincingly portrayed. If Fantasy there must be, then surely no setting could be more appropriate. Let us glance through the main incidents of the story and watch this technique, which at the end, gives us amongst the characters of the actual world, a character from a world of Fantasy:

> In the days of King Louis there lived a poor juggler by the name of Barnabas, a native of Compiègne, who wandered from city to city performing tricks of skill and prowess. . . . One evening, after a day of rain, as he walked sad and bent with his juggling balls under his arm and his knives wrapped up in his old carpet . . . he saw a monk going in his direction. . . .
> "Friend Barnabas, come with me and I will see that you enter the monastery of which I am the Prior. . . ."
> Thus did Barnabas become a monk.

[1] *Great Short Stories of the World.* Translated by Barret H. Clark.

In the monastery Barnabas laments his ignorance and simplicity:

> "Alas!" he sighed. . . . "I am so unhappy because I cannot, like my brothers, give worthy praise to the Holy Mother of God. I have no edifying sermons, no fine treatises nicely prepared according to the rules, no beautiful paintings. . . . Alas, I have nothing!"

But one morning an idea comes to Barnabas, and he runs off to the chapel, returning there day after day. All his sadness leaves him and he sighs no more. The prior is curious to know what Barnabas is doing there, so one day he enters the chapel with two of the Brothers:

> They saw Barnabas before the image of the Holy Virgin, his head on the floor and his feet in the air, juggling with six copper balls and twelve knives. In honour of the Holy Virgin he was performing the tricks which had in former days brought him the greatest fame. . . . All three set about to remove Barnabas from the chapel, when they saw the Virgin slowly descend from the altar and, with a fold of her blue mantle, wipe the sweat that streamed over the juggler's forehead.

The simplicity of Barnabas has been proved by his act, such an act which all the world would feel must be acceptable to even the least discerning of Deities. Barnabas has achieved *Denouement* to his *Intention* to give worthily, before the Virgin descends, and poetic justice alone calls for an appreciation of his act.

To the extent that *The Denouement of Fantasy* can be justified, Anatole France has justified it in this short story. The Fantasy is not in itself the actual *Denouement*, but a statement that *The Denouement* has been reached. The Virgin has shown her pleasure in his giving.

Another type of *Denouement* which has been called *Parallel Denouement*, occurs frequently enough to deserve comment. But this is a misnomer, as the *Denouement* is not a parallel one, as will be realized when its case is stated. An illustration of it occurs in *Twelfth Night*.

Briefly summarized this category of story deals with the development of 'X' who intends to marry 'Y' but eventually marries 'Z.'

From this situation it is inferred that *The Denouement* where 'X' marries 'Z' is an exact parallel to the proposed *Denouement* of 'X' marrying 'Y.'

This is undoubtedly flawless reasoning, but beside the point, for when 'X' changes his *Intention* from a desire to marry 'Y' to a desire to marry 'Z,' *The Line of Intention* is modified and the new *Intention* alone arrives at *Denouement*, i.e., 'X's' desire to marry 'Z.'

In *Twelfth Night*, the Duke desires to marry Olivia:

> O! when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
> Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence.
> That instant was I turn'd into a hart
> And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
> E'er since pursue me. (Act I, Scene I.)

But at the close of the comedy, the Duke's *Intention* has been modified. He desires to marry Viola. The *True Denouement* should not rank as parallel to the imaginary *Denouement*, which should be regarded as an *Ostensible Denouement*, for it misleads the reader, who imagines that the Duke will marry Olivia, when in reality he marries Viola:

> . . . And since you called me master for so long,
> Here is my hand: you shall from this time be
> Your master's mistress. (Act V, Scene I.)

It is clear then, that this is not a case of parallel *Denouement* where one ending takes the place of another, but is a case of simple *Modification of the Intention*, which may be utilized to build an *Ostensible Denouement* in the mind of the reader.

The best known method for obtaining the perfect *Denouement* is by means of *The Tangent Story*. This somewhat complicated technical device will be discussed

in detail in a later chapter, for the moment we will only take a general view of it.

It has been said that every outstanding story has in its make-up the nucleus of two distinct stories. This may be misleading, but it has more than a modicum of truth in it. In *The Widow of Ephesus* there are two distinct stories at work: (1) The development of the Soldier-Widow idea, and (2) the development of the Crucified-man and Relatives idea. That one of these ideas is more fully worked out than the other is beside the point.

We have already seen that *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Lear* are composed of more stories than one—*Parallel Stories.* But it is not the *Parallel Story* with which we are dealing, nor will the linking together of two tales in a haphazard manner produce a *Tangent Story.*

The two stories which are to be joined must have a connecting link. Further, at a certain point on *The Line of Action* one story must cross the other, influencing its direction.

If one will imagine the action of a story AB moving toward a *Denouement*; and further, the action of a story CD cutting across the story AB and diverting its line downward to D, one will visualize the diagram of *A Main Story* (AB) being diverted from its *Denouement* (*Ostensible*) by a *Tangent Story* (CD).

All that is required at this point is a general impression of the method. We will illustrate it from Boccaccio's story *Theodoro and Violante* from *The Decameron.*[1]

The story may be analysed by a statement of its *Primary Incidents*:

Intention: Theodoro, a slave, falls in love with his master's daughter, Violante. He desires her.

Barrier: He is afraid to tell her of his love.

Reversal: They are driven by hail and thunder to take shelter in an uninhabited cottage.

[1] *The Decameron.* Boccaccio: Chatto and Windus.

Crisis: They confess their love.

Reversal: Violante becomes pregnant.

Catastrophe: 1. Her father threatens to kill her if she will not confess the name of her seducer. 2. She confesses, and Theodoro is condemned to be flogged and hanged. Violante is to die either by poison or the sword.

Reversal: Phineo, Theodoro's father, an Armenian ambassador to the Pope, looks out of his window and sees Theodoro stripped to the waist, being led to execution. He recognizes him as his own son who was stolen by pirates, by means of the red spot on his breast.

Denouement: Theodoro is rescued and marries Violante.

If we read over the list of *Primary Incidents* a second time with special consideration given to the characters, we shall see that we are following the fortunes of two people, Theodoro and Violante, as far as the double *Catastrophe*. At *The Reversal of the Catastrophe* the angle of view is changed, and we view the remainder of the story through the eyes of Theodoro's father, who suddenly appears on the scene:

> Now Pietro (Theodoro) was whipped, and as he was led along to the gallows, he chanced to pass by an inn, where lodged three noblemen of Armenia, who were sent as ambassadors by their King to the Pope, to treat of some weighty affairs with regard to an expedition he was going to make. . . . (*Note the change in angle of view.*) Observing the people pass by who were leading Pietro (Theodoro), they went to the window to see what was the matter. . . .

We are, at this point, at the junction of two quite separate stories. *The Main Story* should obviously have continued to its *Catastrophe* with the death of the hero and heroine. *The Tangent Story* should have completed its business of arranging for the Pope's expedition and have passed on. *But* the stories cross each other, and in

the crossing the leading character of one story recognizes the leading character of the other story and the destiny of each story is altered.

Nor is this method an unreal one for achieving an unforeseen ending, for we frequently see its correspondence in nature, when a weak man strives to achieve his *Intention*, and failing, is carried onward by *The Intention* of a stronger man, who, to achieve his own *Intention*, must achieve that of his parasite.

So influenced was Euripides by this sudden change in the stream of affairs from *Catastrophe* to *Denouement* and *vice versa*, that he comments frequently upon it. Witness the close of the *Helen*: [1]

> CHORUS: Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes; and many a thing God brings to pass contrary to expectation: that which was looked for is not accomplished, while Heaven finds out a way for what we never hoped; e'en such has been our issue here.

and the close of the *Medea*: [2]

> CHORUS.
>
> Great treasure halls hath Zeus in heaven,
> From whence to man strange dooms be given,
> Past hope or fear.
> And the end men looked for cometh not,
> And a path is there where no man thought:
> So hath it fallen here.

The change from adversity to glory has led to the statement of an axiom that the greatest tragedies are those which never happen. The hero foresees the failure of his *Intention* when he reaches *The Simple Catastrophe* and this suggests an *Ostensible End* to the reader, that end which is not destined to occur, and which gives place to a *True End*, as in the story of *Theodoro and Violante*.

The Ostensible End, although never written, should be

[1] *The Plays of Euripides*. Translated by Edward P. Coleridge: Bohns Library.

[2] *The Medea*. Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

one of the most dramatic incidents of *The Line of Action.*

Such then is *Denouement* by *Tangent Story.*

It will be seen that contrast is its soul, contrast between that which the reader expects will happen, and that which does happen. And contrast, we know, is one of the essentials of drama. It is not confined to *Denouement* but should be present throughout the story. Various methods have been used to achieve it, from the sudden change in the hero's fortunes, to the stage direction written in the margin of the old Chester Miracle Play: 'The boye with pigge when the kings are gone.'

A certain amount of contrast must inevitably occur without any technical assistance, for the hero first sees his *Intention* through the veils of a world of Fantasy, and as it develops through a world of Actuality, there will appear the contrast between the dream and the business.

Charlotte Corday in her convent at *Abbaye-aux-dames* at *Caen* dreams of delivering France from the oppression of Marat. She sees the knife, the rooms of the tribune, long before she sets out for the *Hôtel de la Provence* with her introduction to Duperret.

But all she has visualized will be vague, and will have to be corrected when the final moment comes. She sees all from a world of Fantasy. She must presently view it in a world of Actuality.

The vague knife of her imaginings must become the forty-sous knife of the ebony handle. Marat's rooms will be alive with unexpected details. Catherine Edward will be there, unlooked-for. About the tribune's naked body will be the soiled sheet, on his knees the writing board. And Charlotte will stab with a knife that meets the resistance of human flesh.

Afterwards, when the young judge has tried to save her, the executioner will cut the fichu from her neck and tip her body forward, under the knife of the guillotine. But it will be a different guillotine from the

guillotine of her nervous dread. The lights will dance on its razored edge, and there will be knots and warps in the wood of its uprights, puffy bubbles of sun-scorched paint. It will be a guillotine in a world of Actuality.

So much for the contrast between Fantasy and Actuality. The natural contrast between the two will aid the author, if he is aware that *The Intention* is undergoing a change, as it shuttles its way through the loom of action. If he is not aware of this change and does not compensate for it, as it alters his hero's perspective, he may find it a very great disadvantage when, immediately before the close of his story, he is confronted with an *Intention* which has become starkly realistic and entails infinitely more than its counterpart of Fantasy.

And contrast can play strange tricks with an author, both with *The Intention* and with *The Primary Incidents.*

A moment will come in the story when *The Intention* has been achieved. That moment should be the end of the story. To add one incident to the chain is to court an *Anti-Climax.* Nothing can equal in dramatic value either *The Intention* achieved, or *The Intention* thwarted, and to attempt to add incident when the addition can only mar, is not the work of a creative artist at his best.

It is equivalent to offering the ridiculous after the sublime, and Shakespeare has fallen into the error in *The Merchant of Venice*:

Portia in the court scene has forced a *Catastrophe* on Shylock's *Intention* with dramatic suddenness:

> Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
> Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more,
> But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak'st more,
> Or less, than a just pound, be it but so much
> As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance,
> Or the division of the twentieth part
> Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
> But in the estimation of a hair,
> Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

With some reservation for Portia's dubious reasoning, the scene is as impressive in dramatic contrast with all that has occurred earlier, as any scene in the Shakespearean comedies. Unfortunately this high dramatic tension, which has culminated in the thwarting of Shylock, is followed by the trivial ring episode:

BASSANIO (*to* PORTIA):
Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee. Grant me two things, I pray you;
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.
PORTIA: You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
(*to* ANTONIO) Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
(*to* BASSANIO) And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

And so on, until Portia acquires the ring which is to form the basis for the final act.

The dramatic values of the 'ring episode' are obviously lower than those of the 'Shylock-bond episode,' and the addition of the former to the latter presents an *Anti-Climax.*

For Shakespeare to have sinned so flagrantly will need some explanation. Now, there could have been no explanation if the Shylock-story had been the only one with which the play dealt. Shakespeare would certainly not have added such matter to the end of a highly dramatic scene and have rung down a final curtain on it. He was too great a master of his technique. But his problem was, not to ring down a final curtain, but to keep a final curtain in hand for another act. Discarding Shylock when his *Intention* is frustrated, with the rapidity of a master of his craft, he cannot so discard Portia, for her story is not yet complete. With this other story of Portia-Bassanio in his mind, he hastens at the end of the

court scene to add a complication to it, which will be unravelled in the final act.

It is this second story which proves the dramatic undoing of the play.

It may be argued that no *Anti-Climax* was in the scene as it was originally written, and that the court scene should have ended with Shylock's *Intention* frustrated; the 'ring episode' taking place in a street outside the court. Thus the burden is placed on Nicholas Rowe and his first critical edition of Shakespeare, for wrongly tabulating the scenes.

Let us concede this point of an error in tabulation. There yet remains the still greater *Anti-Climax* to the play as a whole. *The Catastrophe* to Shylock's *Intention* occurs toward the end of the last act but one, and is the highest point of dramatic tension in the play. The Portia-Bassanio *Intention* reaches its *Denouement* at the end of the final act. This *Denouement* is at a lower dramatic tension than the Shylock *Catastrophe*; and the lower tension occurring after the higher tension produces an *Anti-Climax* to the play.

If Shylock's *Intention* had been frustrated at the end of the final act, and the Portia-Bassanio *Denouement* could have been achieved at the end of the previous act, the laws of dramatic climax would have been complied with, for the more intense, would have followed the less intense drama.

A *Denouement*, however perfectly it may have been thought out, cannot be effective if subsidiary matter is added to it. Indeed, when an author has shown the success or frustration of the hero's *Intention*, he has shown all.

Chapter Six

SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INCIDENTS

A LIST has been given earlier in the book of *The Primary Incidents*. No further comment will be needed beyond a reminder that *The Reversal of the Catastrophe* is an occasional *Primary Incident*, but is frequently absent from *The Line of Action*.

Secondary Incidents have been defined as those incidents which are not *Primary Incidents* and yet are needed for the development of *The Intention*.

Great care will be needed to distinguish between repeated *Primary Incidents*, such as *Crises* and *Catastrophes*, and *Secondary Incidents*. We have already seen that Chekov's *The Darling* is told in a series of *Crises*. To select one of these and call it *The Crisis*, regarding the others as *Secondary Incidents*, is to mistake *Primary* for *Secondary Incident*.

Tertiary Incidents are those which are neither *Primary* nor *Secondary Incidents*, and they are introduced into the action for other reasons than for the developing of *The Intention*. The final test of a *Tertiary Incident* is its elimination from the story without affecting the plot.

As an illustration of *Secondary Incident* we may turn to the second scene of the third act of *Macbeth*. Here we are given information which is necessary to the audience concerning Macbeth and his attitude to Banquo. It is not a *Primary Incident*, but it could not be eliminated from the play without loss:

MACBETH: We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. . . .

LADY MACBETH: Come on;
Gentle, my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

MACBETH: So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you.
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams. . . .

Eliminate this scene and we eliminate far more than the words, we eliminate their unspoken *Intention* with regard to Banquo. An illustration of *Secondary Incident* of the most pregnant kind.

Tertiary Incident is scattered throughout the Shakespearean plays, and one has only to turn to the majority of the scenes between the clowns to find it in abundance. In Act II, Scene II, of *The Merchant of Venice* is an excellent example of it:

LAUNCELOT: (*aside*) O heavens! this is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high gravel-blind, knows me not: I will try confusians with him.

GOBBO: Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?

LAUNCELOT: Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

GOBBO: By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

And so on, until the arrival of Bassanio and Leonardo.

As contrast to the more dramatic action of the Shylock story, the scene is effective, but it is tertiary matter, and it would in no way effect the plot if it were eliminated.

It would seem to be a rule that before we can decide

which incidents are *Primary* we must discover *The Main Intention.* Before we can decide which incidents are *Secondary* we must identify *The Primary Incidents.* Before we can decide which incidents are *Tertiary* we must discover both *The Primary* and *Secondary Incidents.*

Perhaps the best method of assuring ourselves that we fully understand the difference between these various incidents, will be to glance through a complete story, selecting *The Main Incidents* together with some secondary and tertiary matter. Virgil's *Æneid*[1] will afford us opportunity for such selection:

Æneas himself expresses *The Intention* to his comrades:

Intention:

Through various mishaps, through sundry risks and chances, our course is to Latium; there the fates point to quiet resting-places; there heaven allows that the kingdom of Troy once more shall rise. . . . (Book One.)

Books Two and Three deal with the adventures of Æneas, as narrated by him to Dido and her court. As this retrospect gives the reader necessary information concerning the hero, it must be looked upon as *Secondary Incident* of an introductory kind.

Toward the close of the Second Book *The Intention* is amplified. This occurs several times throughout the Epic. Æneas tells of the shade of his dead wife, Creusa, who prophesied:

Intention:

Distant exile awaits you, and a vast expanse of sea must you plough, and you will come to the land of the West, where Lydian Tiber flows with gentle current. . . . There a smiling fortune, and a realm, and royal bride are provided you. . . .

The Barrier to this *Intention* is the love of Dido for Æneas. Already his comrades have begun to settle in Carthage and forget their mission.

[1] *The Works of Virgil rendered into English Prose*, by James Lonsdale and Samuel Lee. Macmillan & Co.

Barrier:

> That day was the first that was of death, and the first that was of misery the source; for Dido is neither any longer influenced by a regard for appearances or reputation, nor any longer thinks of a clandestine love: she calls it wedlock; behind this name she screens her frailty. (Book Four.)

But *The Reversal* is not long delayed, for Dido sees the fleet of Æneas sailing from her shores.

Reversal:

> All are at once possessed with the same ardour; they hurry and hasten; the shore is deserted: the sea is hidden beneath the fleet, with vigour they dash up the foam and sweep the dark sea. (Book Four.)

Then follows what is, perhaps, the best-known scene in the *Æneid*, Dido's death:

> But Dido, all trembling, and wild with her savage task, rolling her blood-shot eyes, and with her quivering cheeks interspersed with hectic spots, and pale at the approach of death, rushes through the doorway of the inner portion of the palace, and, full of frenzy, mounts the lofty pile, and unsheaths the Dardan sword . . . her attendants see her fallen upon the blade, and the sword reeking with gore, and her hands bespattered with it. . . .

Vivid and dramatic as this scene is, it is not essential to the story, which deals with the Æneas *Intention*, and Æneas has put off from her shores and is directing his way toward the Tiber, where his *Intention* leads him.

As *Tertiary Incident*, the narration of The Games must be classified, although this honour to the memory of Anchises occupies three-fourths of Book Five.

Secondary Incident is illustrated in the attempted burning of the ships by the Trojan matrons, who are weary of their endless voyaging. This incident bears upon *The Intention* as it forces Æneas to a decision to leave behind on the island the old and the faint-hearted.

Almost the entire Sixth Book, which deals with the visit of Æneas to the 'unsubstantial realms of Dis,' and

is thronged with vivid pictures, must be regarded as *Tertiary Incident*, for it could be removed without affecting the development of *The Intention.*

With the entrance of the fleet into the mouth of the Tiber comes *The Crisis.* Here the orators of the hero are received by King Latinus, who announces:

Crisis:

> Only let Æneas come hither in person, if such is his desire to know me. . . . I have a daughter; to unite her to a husband of our race, neither the oracles from the shrine of my father nor many prodigies in the heavens allow; that a son-in-law will come hither from foreign coasts, this is what they foretell awaits the Latins . . . That this is he, the man whom the gods demand, I both believe, and, if my soul presages aught of truth, I hope.
>
> (Book Seven.)

But the friendly reception of the Trojan orators is misleading, for the Queen is opposed to her daughter's marriage with Æneas. She takes her away and hides her, stirring up anger against the Trojans in the hearts of her countrywomen. Turnus, to whom the daughter had been promised, demands war with the strangers, and with the coming of war, *The Reversal of The Crisis* sets in.

Reversal:

> Thereupon heaven's queen, the daughter of Saturn, descended from the sky, and with her own hand pushed the lingering gates, and turned the hinge, and burst open the iron-bound portals of war.

But *The Catastrophe* is long delayed, for victory hovers over the Trojans and their enemies in turn, effecting an even balance of the scales and making *Primary Incidents* difficult to decipher amongst the welter of war and the many skirmishes. There is the poetic *Secondary Incident* of the Trojan ships being transformed into sea-nymphs to prevent them from being set on fire:

> And lo! in an instant the stern of every ship breaks away its hawser from the bank, and like a dolphin makes for the depth of the water

with its beak plunged in the stream. From the same depths (marvellous miracle!) as many brazen prows as stood by the shore, so many maiden faces rise again, and are wafted o'er the seas.
(Book Nine.)

The appearance of the nymphs later, when they come through the sea to tell Æneas of the state of his armies on land, is again *Secondary Incident*, for their coming bears upon *The Intention*:

And there behold! in the middle of his course the band of those who were once as his comrades meet the chief, those Nymphs, whom the kindly Godess Cybele had commanded to be deities in the sea, once ships, now Nereids, in a line they were swimming to his ship, breasting the waves, as many Nymphs now, as once on the shore had stood brazen prows. . . . (Book Ten.)

There is also the story of the heroism of Nisus and Euryalus, and of their friendship. Nisus states *The Intention* of this inset story:

That Æneas should be summoned, all, commons and senators alike, earnestly demand; and that messengers be sent to bring back certain news. If to you they will promise the rewards I ask, for myself the glory of the deed is recompense enough; I seem to myself to be able to find a way beneath yonder mound to the walls and towers of Pallanteum. (Book Nine.)

But the attempt of the friends to break through the lines of the enemy is frustrated, and their short tale ends with a *Compound Catastrophe*:

. . . Turnus rouses his men to arms, with arms himself is clad, and musters the brazen array to the fight. . . . Farther, they bear in front those very heads, oh piteous sight! fixed on raised lances, and they follow with loud shouts; the heads were those of Euryalus and Nisus. . . . (Book Nine.)

Again, however, we are dealing with *Tertiary Incident*, for if this story is eliminated from the Epic, no appreciable difference is made to the development of *The Intention*. The friends set out to carry news to Æneas, they fail and the incident closes with their deaths. If they had succeeded in reaching Æneas and their action had resulted

in the changing of the fortunes of war, we shoud have been dealing with either *Primary* or *Secondary Incident*, according to its position on *The Line of Action*.

These illustrations will point out the danger of attempting to analyse a work of literature by one's own dramatic response to the action. From the point of view of dramatic interest, The Death of Dido, and the adventure of Nisus and Euryalus, are undoubtedly amongst the most striking examples in the Epic. From the point of view of their value to *The Intention* they are practically worthless.

But *The Catastrophe*, after many pages of descriptions of the war, comes at last:

Catastrophe:

> While he uttered these cries, and these words were on his lips, lo, an arrow with whizzing wings lighted on the hero: by what hand discharged, by what blast impelled, who it was, whether chance or god, that bestowed so great renown on the Rutulians, is unknown; lost is the glory of the illustrious deed. . . .
>
> (Book Twelve.)

But Æneas recovers. He fires the city of his enemies, and thus brings about *The Reversal of The Catastrophe*.

Reversal:

> As when in the crevices of a pummice-rock a shepherd tracks out the bees that lurk within, and fills the nest with bitter smoke; they within, alarmed for their safety, hurry to and fro throughout their waxen camp, and with loud buzzings whet their rage. The black and the noisome vapour rolls through the mansion; then with stifled hum the crags resound within; the smoke goes upward to the empty air. . . . (Book Twelve.)

Which is further strengthened by the death of Turnus at the hands of Æneas.

Reversal:

> . . . With these words, full in his breast he plunges deep the steel, in the heat of wrath; but coldly droop the others limbs, and with a sigh the affronted soul flies forth beneath the shades.

So *The Æneid* ends on a *Denouement of Suggestion*, for with the deaths of Turnus and the Queen, we may suppose that the prophecies will be fulfilled and Æneas with Latinus' daughter will rule over a citizen body which incorporates the Trojan warriors. Æneas and his companions thus become the ancestors of the Romans of the days of Augustus.

From this Simple Analysis it would appear that the selecting of *Primary, Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents* is not a matter of any great difficulty. First *The Intention* is discovered, then the list of *Primary Incidents* is made. *Secondary Incidents* are next sought for; and *Tertiary Incidents* will remain with the residue.

But a complication arises at this point.

If we had selected *The Merchant of Venice* for Simple Analysis instead of *The Æneid*, we should have discovered that Shylock's *Intention* was a desire to destroy his enemy, Antonio. *The Primary* and *Secondary Incidents* would next have been laid bare. But when we came to cast aside all those incidents which did not bear upon Shylock's *Intention*, we should discover ourselves discarding the casket scene of Act II, as well as the Jessica-Lorenzo scene in the same act. The final act of the play we should also write off as tertiary matter, for Shylock's *Intention* is thwarted in the previous act and with the thwarting of *The Main Intention* the story should end.

Thus the bulk of the Portia-Bassanio story would be eliminated, as also the Jessica-Lorenzo story, and the Nerissa-Gratiano story. This would not be analysis, but mutilation.

Before any complete analysis can take place, the analyst must be assured of the number of separate stories, which, together, unite to build up the unity of the complete structure. Simple as this may sound, it is often a most complicated task to disentangle these various stories.

When one considers that each character in each story has, either expressed or inferred, his own *Intention* and his own *Line of Action*, some very subtle reasoning is at times needed to decide whether a character is a personage in some other character's story, or is developing his own *Intention* in a *Parallel Story*.

Hamlet, we have seen, is the leading character in the play, because his *Intention* dominates *The Intentions* of the other characters. The King is a character in the Hamlet story, because his *Intention* is dependent on the Hamlet *Intention* for its existence. Remove Hamlet and the King's *Intention* fades. The same reasoning applies to the Queen, Laertes, Ophelia and the other characters. They centre round Hamlet, drawing the breath of their existence from him. Remove Hamlet and the sun is removed from their reflectors.

In *The Merchant of Venice* the situation is more complicated. If you remove Shylock, it will not prevent Lorenzo from wooing Jessica. Portia will still test her lovers in the casket scene, and Bassanio will have his way with her. Gratiano and Nerissa will not kiss less fervently because the Jew is removed from the Comedy.

Thus we are in a position to state our problem.

By what means can we decide whether a given character is a leading character in a *Main Story*, or a subsidiary character in a *Main Story*; or, further, a character leading or otherwise in a *Parallel Story*? For unless we can discover some method for aiding our search for definite rules which will clarify these perplexing problems, we shall always be in danger of misreading the signs, and discarding primary matter belonging to a *Parallel Story* as mere tertiary matter clogging *The Main Story*.

Before we attempt to state the principles which would seem to govern the interplay of characters and stories, it will be as well to view the matter from a philosophical

angle. With this in mind we turn to Schlegel, who will illuminate the problem: [1]

> Farther, there could be no complication of the plot without opposition, and this arises mostly out of the contradictory motives and views of the acting personages. If, therefore, we limit the notion of an action to the determination and the deed, then we shall, in most cases, have two or three actions in a single tragedy. Which now is the principal action? Every person thinks his own the most important, for every man is his own central point. . . .

In his last sentence, Schlegel states the problem for us. It is the problem of the Central Point.

Consider a modern household—father, mother and daughter. The father in all probability will be the leading character in the household's battle for existence. He will lay down its laws, its conventions, its general policy. The mother and daughter will play subordinate parts to the father's *Intention.*

But the story of the household by no means exhausts itself with the father's *Intention.* Although he is the leading character in the story of the household *qua* household; he, himself, may play only a minor part in his wife's personal story. She will have her friends, her relatives, her servants. She may even have her lovers. With these, as subordinate characters in *her* story, she may not only play a small part in the story of the household, but a leading part in her own story—at one and the same time.

The situation will be repeated with the daughter. Condemned to a minor role in the story of the household, and also in her mother's story, she may yet play a leading role in the story of her own life. So, the father, whilst playing a leading character in the story of the household, plays at the same time a small part in his wife's story and also a small part in his daughter's story.

It is this fact which permits a leading character in a

[1] *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.* Augustus William Schlegel. (Bohn.)

Main Story to play at the same time a subordinate part in one or more *Parallel Stories*, which complicates the problem of disentangling the various threads of *The Intentions*.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Antony, the shuttlecock, plays a subordinate part in the Cleopatra story, whilst he is playing a subordinate part in the Octavius story—but all the time he is playing a leading part in his own story.

We must know with the certainty of an exact science, when the author is developing a character as a leading part in his own story, and when he is developing this character only as a subordinate part in another character's story.

Until this point is clear we shall be unable to decide upon the value of the various incidents. Actions impinging upon Antony's *Intention* when he is a subordinate character, cannot be regarded as necessarily of *Primary* or *Secondary value* to the *Main Intention*. Incidents impinging upon Antony's *Intention* when he is a leading character in his own story, must of course be regarded as of *Primary* or *Secondary* value. But how are we to know whether the author is treating him as a leading character or not?

Let us return to Schlegel's central point.

Characters exist solely by virtue of their *Intentions*. To portray a character of any magnitude an author must directly or indirectly show his *Intention*. A character without an *Intention* is a contradiction in terms. If this character's *Intention* does not bear upon *The Intention* of the leading character who dominates the particular story, such a character may be said to be outside 'the sphere of influence' of that leading character. He will therefore be a character in another story—either the leading character in that story or a subordinate character.

But what is meant by 'sphere of influence'? and what is meant by one *Intention* bearing upon another *Intention*?

An *Intention* bears upon another *Intention* when the first *Intention* is of value to the second, in that it helps in its development, and is repaid by the second *Intention* with a reason for its own existence.

Sphere of influence is the dominance which is exercised by an *Intention* in subordinating other *Intentions* to itself.

In a given story we must first decide whether there are more stories than one, making up the unity of the whole. If there are several, we must then decide upon the leading character in each story, and discover those subordinate characters who come within his sphere of influence.

When this has been done (and the work requires a certain dexterity of mind), the various stories will have disentangled themselves as though they had been cut apart.

In *Hamlet*, almost every character in the play (for there is a short *Parallel Story* in it, on which we will comment later) bears upon *The Main Intention*. King, Queen, Clowns, all come within the sphere of influence of the leading character. The exceptions are Fortinbras, a leading character in a *Parallel Story*; Voltimand and Cornelius, further characters in that story, and Reynaldo, the servant of Polonius, a *Tertiary Character* appearing in a *Tertiary Incident*.

A subordinate character in one *Parallel Story* may transfer his activities to another story, *Main* or *Parallel*. He will then become a character in the second story, as the sphere of influence of its *Intention* closes about him. Such a change of allegiance occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The subordinate character, Enobarbus, leaves the sphere of influence of Antony for that of Octavius:

ENOBARBUS: When valour preys on reason
It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
Some way to leave him (Antony).

(Act III, Scene XI.)

ENOBARBUS O Antony!
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular;
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver and a fugitive. . . .
(Act IV, Scene IX.)

For a character to have a sphere of influence he must obviously have other characters dependent upon his *Intention*. Otherwise it might be said that a character in passing from one sphere of influence to another was exercising a sphere of influence of his own. That Enobarbus might be dignified into a leading role, we know, for is he not such already in his own story? That Shakespeare did not mean to present him to the audience in such a manner, we know also. If he had meant so to present him he would have developed his *Intention*, amplified his actions, stressed *The Theme* of his treachery, and have drawn other characters within the sphere of his influence. But Enobarbus, as a leading character in a *Parallel Story*, intriguing as the idea is, must sink into the depths of the might have been.

Contrast Enobarbus with Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The latter, unlike the former, plays a leading part in his own story. He has his own *Intention*, his own sphere of influence, for he has already drawn into it, when the curtain rises, Gratiano, Salarino and Jessica, subordinate characters in his story.

At the opening of Act II, Scene VI, Gratiano and Salarino are waiting in a street before Shylock's house:

GRATIANO: This is the penthouse under which Lorenzo
Desir'd us to make stand.

These two first lines are significant. They state under whose sphere of influence the characters are appearing. The concentration on the true centre of this *Parallel Story* is again shown:

SALARINO: Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.
LORENZO: Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait. . . .

Although Lorenzo is treated as the leading character in his own story (The Lorenzo-Jessica *Parallel Story*), he is also treated as a subordinate character in the Portia-Bassanio *Parallel Story*. In other words the author views him at times as a central point in his own story, at other times as a subordinate under another sphere of influence:

PORTIA: Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return. . . .
I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.
LORENZO: Madame, with all my heart:
I shall obey you in all fair commands.
(Act III, Scene IV.)

Primarily then, an author regards his characters as being under the sphere of influence of some one leading character, whose *Intention* dominates their *Intentions*. If he does not develop *The Intentions* of any of these subordinate characters, he will have presented to us the story of simple action, which is illustrated by The Greek Drama.

If he does further develop subordinate characters and makes of them central points, each having its sphere of influence, *Parallel Stories* will appear, and he will have presented to us the story of complex action, which is illustrated by The Shakespearean Plays.

Tertiary Incident in a story of simple action is soon recognized and easily remedied. *Tertiary Incident* in a story of complex action is considerably more difficult to recognize and frequently quite hopeless to remedy, for if it has occurred in the *Main Story*, and the author has passed it unnoticed, he may have built a *Parallel Story*

about a character from such tertiary matter, and will thus make of the *Parallel Story* itself, as we shall presently see, *Tertiary Incident* also.

We must know which characters have been developed with spheres of influence, for these will be the leading characters of *The Parallel Stories,* and each will have its *Primary, Secondary,* and *Tertiary Incidents,* its *Lines of Theme* and *Intention.*

In a well-constructed story, it should be possible to decide from *The Themes* and the various *Intentions,* the dominating story, which we have called *The Main Story.* If these are further checked by *The Primary Incidents,* and the various dependent stories are then worked out, the whole being considered as a unified experience, error should be at a minimum.

Each story should assist the development of *The Main Story,* as each character assists *The Intention* of the leading character. If a *Parallel Story* does not assist the development of *The Intention* of *The Main Story,* and merely develops its own action, parasitic on *The Main Story,* then that *Parallel Story* is tertiary matter, as it could be eliminated from the story, as a whole, without loss.

A *Main Story* should utilize each of *The Parallel Stories* to aid the development of its *Intention,* and each *Parallel Story* should, when possible, be interlinked with every other *Parallel Story,* for this makes for unity of plot.

In *The Merchant of Venice,* most complicated of stories, *The Main Story* of Shylock-Antonio is assisted in its development by the Portia-Bassanio story. It is assisted by the Jessica-Lorenzo story, as also by the Nerissa-Gratiano story, and there is an interlocking of the three latter stories with each other, and with *The Main Story,* at Portia's house at Belmont.

Characters in a *Parallel Story* then, come under the sphere of influence of the leading character in that story. This Master of *The Parallel Story* becomes a subsidiary character in *The Main Story.* That character in the

story whose sphere of influence has been developed to include not only the characters in his own story, but also the leading characters of *The Parallel Stories*, becomes the leading character in *The Main Story* — Master of the Show.

Thus, the so-called hero of the story breathes out *The Intention*, on which *The Parallel Stories* depend for the development of their own *Intentions*, and on these intentions the subordinate characters depend for the development of *their Intentions*.

We should now be in a position to consider principles which would appear to govern the matter of *Tertiary Incident*.

If an incident in either *Main* or *Parallel Story* does not assist the development of *The Intention* in that *Main* or *Parallel Story* such an incident is a *Tertiary Incident*.

If an incident in a *Main Story* does assist the development of *The Intention* in that story it cannot be *Tertiary Incident*.

If an incident in a *Parallel Story* assists the development of *The Intention* of that story, and provided that *The Parallel Story* itself assists in the development of *The Intention* of *The Main Story*, such an incident cannot be a *Tertiary Incident*.

If an incident in a *Parallel Story* assists in the development of *The Intention* of that story, but *The Parallel Story* itself does not assist *The Intention* of *The Main Story*, then both incident and *Parallel Story* must be regarded as tertiary matter.

Parallel Stories develop side by side with each other and with *The Main Story*. They may begin earlier than each other, or earlier than *The Main Story*. They may end earlier. But under no circumstances may a *Parallel Story* begin when *The Main Story* has concluded. Neither should a *Parallel Story* conclude later than *The Main Story* (witness the last act of *The Merchant of Venice* where the Portia-Bassanio *Parallel Story* concludes after

the Shylock-Antonio *Main Story*, thus producing an Anti-Climax).

If these rules are followed we shall be prevented from calling that type of illegitimate action, where *The Intention* of one story having been achieved or frustrated, another *Intention* immediately springs up, by the name of *Parallel Story*. It is not parallel action but patchwork, for it joins together stories which have no relationship and therefore cannot be unified, as the consequential sequence which joins incident to incident has been broken.

An illustration of this method of linking stories which are in no wise connected with each other, except through similarity of background and characters, may be seen in *The Story of Abou Hassan the Wag*, from *The Thousand and One Nights*.[1]

This constructional confusion is probably due to the author postulating that if two or more *Intentions* concern the same set of characters, it is permissible to add plot to plot endlessly, by the shifting of the *Intention* from one character to another. This is illusory. A story must deal with the development of one *Main Intention*, and when that has been resolved the story must end.

The Intention of the opening story of the series is in the mind of Abou Hassan, the son of a merchant of Bagdad:

> In our neighbourhood is a mosque to which belong an imam and four sheiks, and whenever they hear music or any sport, they incite the judge against me, and impose fines upon me, and trouble my life, so that I suffer torment from them. If I had them in my power, therefore, I would give each of them a thousand lashes. . . .

The Barrier is that Abou has no power to punish his enemies. This difficulty is overcome and *The Reversal* takes place by his happening to meet the Caliph, Alrashid, who drugs Abou and takes him to his palace for his sport. The royal servants are instructed to address the merchant's son as 'Caliph' when he awakens. Abou,

[1] Translated by Edward William Lane.

accepting the situation as he finds it, orders that the sheiks and the imam be given a thousand lashes each. This is logically the end of the first story, for *The Intention* has been achieved.

But the incident continues: Abou finds himself back in his own bed at home, after having been drugged once more, and still imagines himself to be the Caliph. He is taken to an asylum and put under restraint, then, finally, liberated, that the series of stories may continue.

He meets the Caliph again. At this point a new *Intention* appears. The Caliph desires Abou to be his guest again. So once more he is drugged:

> The caliph then rose immediately, and ordered his young men to convey Abou Hassan to the palace, and to lay him upon his couch, and commanded the female slaves to stand around him. . . .

But this time Abou recognizes the Caliph when he awakens, and later he is accepted into the royal household:

> Abou Hassan, after this, became a greater favourite with the caliph than all the other boon-companions; so that he sat with the caliph and his wife, the Lady Zobeide, the daughter of Kasim, and he married her female treasurer, whose name was Nouzatalfuad. . . .

And now a third story begins to develop its *Intention.* Abou desires to raise money:

> "I desire," said he, "to practise a trick upon the caliph, and thou (Nouzatalfuad) shalt practise a trick upon the Lady Zobeide, and we will obtain from them immediately two hundred pieces of gold, and two pieces of silk. . . .

Abou pretends to be dead, and the Lady Zobeide gives his wife one hundred pieces of gold, and a piece of silk in which to bury him.

Then Abou's wife pretends to be dead, and the Caliph gives Abou the same presents.

This, of course, is the end of *The Intention* to the new story, for the conspirators have achieved their desire. But now the Caliph and the Lady Zobeide discover that

they have been tricked, and a fourth story begins with the *Intention* of these two to discover which of the conspirators is, in reality, dead. After some developments and complications they find both Abou and his wife laid out in death, and the fourth *Intention* is modified into a desire to discover which of them died first.

Each story, it will be seen, is distinct from the other stories, and complete in itself. The technique, by which an author may link a series of stories, either related or unrelated, will be considered in the chapter on *The Picaresque Form*. The story outlined above is an illustration of this method. It has been included at this point so that the reader may not confuse its technique with that of *The Parallel Story*, and be misled in his quest for tertiary matter.

This *Tertiary Incident* is not confined to entire episodes, but may intrude into sections of scenes where *The Intention* of a subordinate character may momentarily dominate *The Main Intention*. The author, misled by the dramatic interest in such tertiary matter, may develop what appears to be of prime importance, to find eventually that he has slighted his *Main Intention*, for dramatic tertiary matter.

This is often illustrated in long scenes where dialogue grows rhetorical and psychology develops into psychoanalysis. H. R. James, writing of Euripides, says: [1]

> Some of the plays certainly suffer from those rhetorical tendencies (*Poetics*, vi. 16. "Now the older poets gave their dialogue a truly civic cast, the poets of to-day make it rhetorical). . . ." Even in *The Trojan Women*, which we selected for special admiration, there is a bad example of this in the debate over Helen's guiltiness to which Menelaus is made to listen. We find it in the *Hecuba*, in the *Orestes*, even in the *Alcestis*. This rhetoric is a real blemish spoiling the poetry and offending our sense of dramatic fitness.

An excellent commentary on the dangers of introducing *Tertiary Incident* into dialogue, which, in the same way as

action, must carry forward *The Main Intention.* If it digresses, it must be pruned. The test of tertiary matter in dialogue is the same as the test of it in action; if it can be eliminated without loss to the story, it is redundant.

If we turn to Act III, Scene II of *Julius Cæsar* and read the speech which Antony makes from the rostrum, we shall see that every word has its use, and that *The Intention* dominating this speech never varies from its purpose of swaying the emotions of the citizens, and directing them toward one definite end.

In John Webster's *Vittoria Corombona,* an encyclopædia of tertiary matter, there occurs a scene where the following dialogue takes place:

FRANCISCO: Have you any children?
CAMILLO: None, my lord.
FRANCISCO: You are the happier.
I'll tell you a tale.
CAMILLO: Pray, my lord.
FRANCISCO: An old tale.
Upon a time Phœbus, the god of light,
Or him we call the Sun, would needs be married:
The gods gave their consent, and Mercury
Was sent to voice it to the general world.
But what a piteous cry there straight arose
Amongst smiths and felt-makers, brewers and cooks,
Reapers and butterwomen, amongst fishmongers,
And thousand other trades, which are annoyed
By his excessive heat! 'twas lamentable.
They came to Jupiter all in a sweat,
And do forbid the banns. A great fat cook
Was made their speaker, who entreats of Jove
That Phœbus might be gelded; for, if now,
When there was but one sun, so many men
Were like to perish by his violent heat,
What should they do if he were married,
And should beget more, and those children
Make fireworks like their father? So say I;
Only I will apply it to your wife:
Her issue, should not Providence prevent it,
Would make both nature, time, and man repent it.
(Act II, Scene II.)

The story of Phœbus is tertiary matter. Camillo's wife is the subject of the discussion, and the Phœbus story has been introduced for its own sake, not for the sake of illustration, as a simple metaphor would have been more appropriate.

If such tertiary digressions are to be permitted in dialogue, then any character has it in his power to narrate a story of any length he chooses, after the manner of Fielding in *Tom Jones*. In fact, there would be no limit to the evil, and a story might be composed of two-thirds extraneous matter, if it was given in dialogue.

We have now considered the digression in narrative and dialogue, but there is still another angle from which we must view it. Concerning the retrospect, which occurs so frequently in modern literature, and which has to a great extent taken the place of the early chapters of the older romance, we must make a few observations.

Authors have realised that to begin with the birth of the hero, which they supposed to be the natural beginning of the story, was to fill their early pages with matter which could not be regarded as strictly necessary. The new method appears to be to cut into the story at a convenient dramatic situation, and to retrospect all that has occurred up to this point.

That some kind of introductory matter is needed in most stories is obvious. An author deals with a mature hero and his *Intention*, so the reader may be supposed to desire some knowledge of the events which took place before the first recorded incident. Exactly to what extent the author is at liberty to enlarge upon the matter is open to question. At present he seems free to trace backwards as far as he desires, and to occupy as many pages with the tracing, as he later occupies with the narrative.

It is probably dangerous for him to have this liberty, considering our inexact knowledge of the laws of heredity.

Beyond this, his business is not with psychology but with psychology *in action*—which is character. The further the author roams from character, and the nearer he approaches psychology, the nearer is he to the quicksands of *Tertiary Incident.*

When a story opens with a hero confronted with *The Barrier* some kind of retrospect would seen advisable, but this should deal, not with the hero's ancestry, but with the ancestry of his *Intention*, for this is the main concern of the story. To the extent that the author concentrates on his hero as man, to the exclusion of him as the agent of the *Intention*, to that extent he is focusing upon the husk to the exclusion of the kernel. He is showing the sculpture of the limbs and not the power which animates the mind.

Lessing writes : [1]

> To act with a purpose, is what raises man above the brutes; to invent with a purpose, to imitate with a purpose, is that which distinguishes genius from the petty artists who only invent to invent, imitate to imitate.

The hero must have his *purpose* writ large.

Retrospect, then, or matter relating to events which took place before the recording of the first incident, will come perilously near to tertiary matter unless it bears directly upon *The Intention.*

In the *Odyssey*,[2] the hero, Odysseus, narrates his adventures to the Phæakians during a period covered by five books. As there are twenty-four books in the Epic, a little more than a fifth of the story is retrospect. These books deal with the adventures of Odysseus and show how he has been thwarted in his *Intention* to return home to his wife, Penelope. That is both their glory and their excuse.

This *Intention* of Odysseus is stated in the first paragraph

[1] *Hamburg Dramaturgy.*

[2] *The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Prose*, by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang: Macmillan & Co.

of the First Book. The business of the author being to tell a story, he *first* tells what it is to be about:

> Tell me, Muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy . . . many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the deep, striving to win his own life and the return of his company . . . .

There is no mistaking the author, he is about to tell the reader how Odysseus came home.

In the *Æneid* again, the wanderer narrates his adventures in retrospect, this time at the court of Dido. Æneas' *Intention* is also perfectly clear, and no time is lost in stating it, as we have seen. Part of the retrospect deals with the manner in which this *Intention* has already been thwarted. In this case two books are concerned with the previous adventures (Books Two and Three) out of the twelve books contained in the Epic. Virgil thus gives up one-sixth of his story to retrospect.

Narrative would thus seem to be more greatly handicapped in its need for retrospect than the drama, for in the latter a few lines often suffice for retrospect, with a few more lines scattered throughout the play.

The Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* will illustrate this:

> Two households, both alike in dignity
> In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
> From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
> Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
> Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
> Do with their death buy their parent's strife. . . .

But Shakespeare is concerned with the story and its development. A few lines are enough to give the audience all he thinks necessary for them to know. He deals with a future to be born, not with a past to be buried.

It is the same with the Greek drama, retrospect is curtailed. In the *Alcestis*[1] the retrospect occupies the time

[1] Translated by Gilbert Murray (1915): George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

given to recording the opening speech, which is roughly one thirty-second part of the time given to the entire action:

APOLLO.

Admetus' House! 'Twas here I bowed my head
Of old, and chafed not at the bondman's bread,
Though born in heaven.
. . . To this folk
I came, and watched a stranger's herd for pay,
And all his house I have prospered to this day.
For innocent was the Lord I chanced upon,
And clean as mine own heart, King Pheres' son,
Admetus. Him I rescued from the grave,
Beguiling the Grey Sisters till they gave
A great oath that Admetus should go free,
Would he but pay to Them Below in fee
Another living soul. Long did he prove
All that were his, and all that owed him love,
But never a soul he found would yield of life
And leave the sunlight for him, save his wife:
Who, even now, down the long galleries
Is borne, death-wounded; for this day it is
She needs must pass out of the light and die.

This short retrospect, with an occasional comment during the action, tells the audience all that is needed for a complete understanding of *The Intention*.

If, then, the dramatist can so easily avoid the long retrospect, and the narrative writer cannot do this, it would seem that the dramatist's technique is far ahead of the narrative writer's. But possibly the narrative writer has a false conception of retrospect, or possibly (for it would seem improbable that the art which the dramatist achieves with so little difficulty is completely beyond the narrative writer's powers) the novel and its related writings have not yet broken away from the pernicious influence of the Essay.

The Essay has its own sphere. It is a commentary on man, his actions and his environment. The story also has its own sphere. It *reproduces* man, his actions and his

environment, that they may awaken a commentary in the imagination of the reader. It is the reader who must turn essayist, not the narrative writer.

Where the writer of fiction falls behind the dramatist, a mere knowledge of technical principles can aid him, for technique has just this function—to correct imperfections in the work of the artist, whose creative energy is not sufficient to direct him unerringly toward his goal.

Matthew Arnold in *Essays in Criticism*[1] confirms this point:

> . . . the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not. . . .

To develop the critical faculties of the mind, the author has only to study the life about him. Unless the technique of an art can justify itself by a final appeal to Nature, it must be arbitrary. Life in its apparently meaningless drift, will, when the author's form-sense is awakened, show him patterns which he could not conceive of as existing before, or to express it in Pope's words:

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst not see. . . .

Unless the author takes his principles of form direct from Nature, he will mutilate Nature in his portrayal of it. And life will offer him an endless variety of combinations. It will present him with *Primary, Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents* in the lives of those about him, when he has been dexterous enough to surprise their *Intentions. Crisis, Catastrophe* and *Denouement* will be in these lives for him to witness and to copy in his art.

Stripping the tertiary matter from *The Line of Action*

[1] Oxford University Press.

he will see the form of their comedies. For *Tertiary Incident* is the undergrowth which obscures the more delicate blooms. We have seen that it may creep into the action in the form of incident, of extraneous dialogue, of unneeded explanation. It will creep in where it may, in the form of redundant words and sentences—but we have now traced its activities to the borderland of Style, and there we must leave it.

Knowing its dangers, we shall always be watching for it, lest in an unguarded moment it creeps into the form and robs it of its symmetry, for, however we may regard a work of literature, if its form is unbalanced, it cannot give the same pleasure as it would have given if it had the added grace of shapeliness.

To the emotionalist, *Hamlet* is an absorbing drama of action. To the intellectualist, it is a philosophical dissertation. To the formalist, it is, with *Œdipus Rex*, one of the most perfectly constructed works of literature in any language. And it is this, in part, because behind the work of creation lies what Matthew Arnold calls ' a great critical effort.'

And now that we have given some consideration to *Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents* it will be advisable to test our principles by the touchstone of literature itself, With this end in view we will complete a *Major Analysis* of *Hamlet*:

THE MAIN STORY

Act I, Scene I:

Secondary Incident: Bernardo relieves Francisco of his watch. Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo see the Ghost of the late King. They retrospect the recent history of Denmark.

Comment is made concerning young Fortinbras of Norway

This latter comment we should have dismissed as

Tertiary Incident, for it does not refer to the Hamlet *Intention*, nor bear upon it. Young Fortinbras, however, is the chief character in a short *Parallel Story*, and will be dealt with after the *Main Story* of Hamlet's *Intention*.

Secondary Incident: The Ghost enters again, and they decide to inform Hamlet.

Act I, Scene II:

Claudius, the new King speaks of his grief over the late King's death, he comments on the conflict with Fortinbras. He sends Cornelius and Voltimand to ' old Norway ' to curb his nephew's purpose.

The King's comments on the late King are secondary matter. Reference to ' old Norway ' and to Fortinbras belong to the Fortinbras *Parallel Story*, and must not be regarded as *Tertiary Incident* to the Hamlet *Main Story*.

Secondary Incident: The King permits Laertes to return to France, now all the ceremonies are over. The Queen seconds her new husband's desire that Hamlet should ' cast thy nighted colour off.' Hamlet's grief and bitterness are shown over his father's death. The King, Claudius, chides him and bids him stay with them at Elsinore. Hamlet soliloquises on the situation. Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo tell Hamlet of the appearance of his father's ghost. Hamlet decides to encounter it.

Act I, Scene III:

Secondary Incident: Laertes bids good-bye to his sister, Ophelia, and warns her against Hamlet's advances. Polonius gives advice to his son, Laertes, and forbids Ophelia to talk with Hamlet.

Act I, Scene IV:

Theme and Secondary Incident: First intimation of *The Theme*: one defect of character may corrupt the whole man. Hamlet and Horatio discuss the King's drunkenness. The Ghost enters and beckons Hamlet. Marcellus and Horatio beg Hamlet not to go. Hamlet follows the Ghost.

Act I, Scene V:

The Ghost tells Hamlet of his murder and urges him to avenge it.

This scene with the Ghost awakens *The Intention* in the mind of the hero. It is secondary matter in itself, as it is the introduction to *The Intention*, and is not *The Intention* shown in action.

Secondary Incident: Hamlet mocks Horatio and Marcellus when they inquire about the Ghost. They swear to conceal all they know.

Act II, Scene I:

Tertiary Incident: Polonius sends his servant, Reynaldo, to spy on his son, Laertes, in France.

This entire scene between Polonius and Reynaldo is tertiary matter, as it does not bear upon the Hamlet *Intention*, nor upon the *Intention* of the *Parallel Story*.

Secondary Incident: Ophelia tells her father, Polonius, of Hamlet's interview with her, and of his distraught manner. Polonius thinks Hamlet is mad for love of his daughter.

Act II, Scene II:

Secondary Incident: The King and Queen welcome Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and tell them of

Hamlet's ' madness.' They also ask them to try to discover the cause of this ' transformation.' The ambassadors from Norway return and are interviewed. They have been successful in their mission.

The latter scene is, of course, matter concerning *The Parallel Story.*

Secondary Incident: Polonius tells the King that Hamlet is mad for love of his daughter, Ophelia. He suggests an eavesdropping plan. Hamlet welcomes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He realizes their treachery. Polonius returns and announces The Players. Hamlet talks with The Players. He arranges for the staging of a certain play in which he will interpolate some matter for dialogue.

The Barrier: At this point Hamlet's vacillations take the form of doubting the Ghost:

> The spirit that I have seen
> May be the devil. . . .

Act III, Scene I:

Secondary Incident: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern report their lack of success with Hamlet to the King and Queen. Polonius and the King instruct Ophelia how to act with regard to Hamlet. Hamlet's soliloquy and his harsh words to Ophelia. The plan for a second eavesdropping between the King and Polonius. The King is not convinced that Hamlet is mad, and determines to send him to England with speed.

Act III, Scene II:

Secondary Incident: The Play Scene. Hamlet's final instructions to The Players. Hamlet partially

confides to Horatio his plan for the play. The audience collects. The play begins and the murder scene is enacted.

Reversal of the Barrier: The King is trapped into betraying his guilt. Hamlet has overcome the barrier of his vacillations.

Secondary Incident: Hamlet's exultation. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern summon him to an audience with the Queen. Polonius also summons him.

Act III, Scene III:

Secondary Incident: The King tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to make ready to go to England and to take Hamlet with them. Polonius tells the King that Hamlet is on his way to the Queen's closet.

The Crisis: The Prayer Scene. The King kneels in prayer and Hamlet enters. At this moment he has his chance to slay the King and avenge his father.

Reversal of the Crisis: But Hamlet vacillates again and his chance is lost.

Act III, Scene IV:

Secondary Incident: Polonius admonishes the Queen 'to be round with him' (Hamlet). Hamlet taunts the Queen. She is frightened and cries out. Polonius, hidden behind the arras, also calls out. Hamlet stabs him to death.

The above scene is an illustration of Hamlet's neurosis. He cannot kill the King when he is kneeling before him in the prayer-scene, but he can thrust at flesh and blood when it is hidden from him by a curtain. Hamlet must always work in terms of the imagination; his mind is

tuned better to the plane of Fantasy than the plane of Actuality.

Secondary Incident: Hamlet accuses the Queen of treachery, but believes that she is ignorant of the murder of his father, her late husband. The Ghost intervenes and rebukes Hamlet for his delay in avenging him, also for frightening the Queen. She, who cannot see the Ghost, imagines Hamlet's malady to be growing worse. He urges her not to go to the King's bed again. Hamlet expresses his suspicions of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and of the plan to send him to England.

Act IV, Scene I:

Secondary Incident: The Queen speaks of Hamlet's madness and of the death of Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent to bring Hamlet.

Act IV, Scene II:

Secondary Incident: Hamlet girds at Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and banters them over their desire to know where the body of Polonius is hidden.

Act IV, Scene III:

Secondary Incident: The King discovers where the body is hidden. He tells Hamlet that he is to go to England.

Catastrophe: Hamlet leaves for England without having avenged his father. The King soliloquises on Hamlet's death.

Act IV, Scene IV:

Fortinbras sends a Captain to ask permission to march through Denmark. Hamlet, Rosen-

crantz and Guildenstern meet the Captain, and Hamlet asks him about the Norwegian army. Hamlet soliloquises upon his vacillations and leaves for England.

The Fortinbras matter again relates to *The Parallel Story*. The Hamlet matter is a continuation of *The Catastrophe*.

Act IV, Scene V:

Secondary Incident: The Queen refuses to see Ophelia. Horatio persuades her to alter her mind and brings Ophelia to the Queen. Ophelia is mad. The King sees her and pities her. He tells the Queen that the people are discontented over Polonius' death and burial. Laertes enters armed and demands redress for his father's murder. The King greets him and calms his anger. Ophelia's madness inflames it again.

Act IV, Scene VI:

Reversal of the Catastrophe: Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet saying that he has returned to Denmark. He summons Horatio.

It will be noted that this *Primary Incident, The Reversal of the Catastrophe* takes place 'off stage,' and is referred to only in the letter.

Act IV, Scene VII:

Secondary Incident: The King explains to Laertes why he has not punished Hamlet. He reads a letter he has received from Hamlet, to Laertes, and further instructs him how he may kill Hamlet. The Queen enters and tells them that Ophelia is drowned.

Act V, Scene I:

Two Clowns are digging Ophelia's grave. Hamlet bandies words with them and happens upon Yorick's skull

This is *Tertiary Incident* of no value to *The Intention.*

Secondary Incident: Ophelia's funeral procession arrives. The maimed rites are commented on. Laertes's grief incenses Hamlet and he reveals himself. He jumps into the grave and they fight. They are separated.

Act V, Scene II:

Secondary Incident: Hamlet tells Horatio of his escape from the ship in which he was travelling to England, and of the fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Secondary Incident: Osric enters and at length tells Hamlet of the King's wager. Hamlet is to fight Laertes with foils. He consents. A lord is sent to know if Hamlet will duel immediately. The King, Queen, Laertes, etc., enter, and the King makes a formal reconciliation between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet apologizes. Laertes agrees to a truce. They choose their foils. The King fills a poisoned cup for Hamlet. . . . The duel. The King offers Hamlet the cup, but he refuses. The Queen drinks the poisoned cup. Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned rapier. The rapiers are changed in a scuffle and Hamlet wounds Laertes. Laertes tells Hamlet that he is killed. The Queen dies. Hamlet realizes that he has been tricked. Laertes tells him that he is slain and casts the blame on to the King.

Denouement: Hamlet slays the King.

Laertes dies, forgiving Hamlet. Hamlet bids

Horatio tell the story. Horatio desires to die also, but Hamlet pleads with him to live and cleanse his name. Hamlet hears Fortinbras arriving and names him as successor to the Danish throne. Hamlet dies.

This episode, the death of Hamlet, is purely dramatic. It cannot be said that it is essential to the story, for *The Intention* has ceased to operate with the death of the King. Thus it cannot be either *Primary* or *Secondary Incident*. Actually it is *Tertiary Incident*. The Fortinbras matter is *The Denouement* to *The Parallel Story*, and thus breaks the law that *Parallel Stories* must not end after *The Main Story* (as we noted concerning *The Merchant of Venice*).

Fortinbras enters with the English ambassadors, who say that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been slain. Horatio promises to explain. Fortinbras puts forward his claim to the throne. The bodies are borne off.

The amount of tertiary matter in the play is practically negligible. So perfect a design would not seem to be due to chance, but to that 'great critical effort' which the mind of genius makes, or appears to make, almost unconsciously; but which a lesser mind must train itself to achieve by a knowledge of the principles of its craft.

But perfect as the development of *The Main Story* is seen to be, *The Parallel Story* of Young Fortinbras is by no means so symmetrical. Indeed one might put forward an hypothesis that this subsidiary story is totally unnecessary, and cannot justify itself by its slight repayment to *The Main Story* for its existence. This would condemn the entire action of this *Parallel Story* as *Tertiary Incident*.

The argument for its inclusion as being of value to the Hamlet *Intention* would appear to rest upon the

scene in Act IV, where Hamlet meets Fortinbras' Captain. This certainly gives rise to a soliloquy about action, but what else it achieves would seem to be a matter for speculation. Truly at the end of the play Fortinbras becomes King of Denmark, but this occurs when the Hamlet *Intention* has been achieved and the action to all intents and purposes has ended.

Such problems, however, we must lay aside until the major principles of form have been more fully tested and analysed. It is sufficient at this point to cast a certain doubt upon the Fortinbras story, and to leave further criticism to others.

Let us now turn to the Fortinbras story and glance over the action as we have done with the Hamlet story:

The Parallel Story

Act I, Scene I:

The Intention governing the story is in the mind of young Fortinbras. He intends to recover land from Denmark which he considers has been wrongfully withheld from him. Horatio tells Marcellus and Bernardo:

Barrier, Reversal and Crisis:

> Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
> Of unimproved metal hot and full,
> Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
> Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
> For food and diet, to some enterprise
> That hath a stomach in't; which is no other,
> As it doth well appear unto our state,
> But to recover of us, by strong hand
> And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
> So by his father lost. . . .

In this section of Horatio's speech, we have *The Intention* stated, also *The Barrier* in the refusal of Denmark to give up the lands, *The Reversal of the Barrier* in the

gathering of the ' resolutes,' and *The Crisis* in the army formed to march against Denmark ' to recover . . . by strong hand.'

Act I, Scene II:

Claudius, King of Norway, sends Voltimand and Cornelius to the King of Norway to make him check young Fortinbras' ardour.

KING: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, to suppress
His further gait herein. . . .

Act II, Scene II:

In this scene *The Reversal of the Crisis* to the Fortinbras *Intention* is reported to Claudius, King of Denmark by his ambassadors, Cornelius and Voltimand:

Reversal of Crisis and Catastrophe:

VOLTIMAND: Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
To be preparation 'gainst the Pollack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras: which he, in brief, obeys,
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.

As we must regard the matter from the view-point of Fortinbras, this demand of the King of Norway would be *The Reversal of the Crisis* to his *Intention*. *The Catastrophe* would follow when he complied with the demand.

Act IV, Scene IV:

Hamlet encounters a Captain of Fortinbras' army as the former is about to board the ship to take him to England:

Modification of the Intention:

HAMLET: Good sir, whose powers are these?
CAPTAIN: They are of Norway, sir.
HAMLET: How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?
CAPTAIN: Against some part of Poland.
HAMLET: Who commands them, sir?
CAPTAIN: The nephew of old Norway, Fortinbras.
HAMLET: Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
CAPTAIN: Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name. . . .

Act V, Scene II:

When Hamlet is dying from the thrust of Laertes' poisoned rapier, the stage directions are: March afar off, and shot within. Osric informs the audience of its portent:

Denouement:

OSRIC: Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This war-like volley.

It is the beginning of *The Denouement. The Modified Intention* to gain the 'little patch of land' may or may not have been successful, that is not the point. It is obvious that *The Intention* has been further modified and that young Fortinbras now desires to become King of Denmark. That he *has* actually gained his strip of land we know, and there his story must have ended with the success of *The Modified Intention*, if it had not been

further modified. Fortinbras is acclaimed as the new king by Hamlet:

> . . . I cannot live to hear the news from England,
> But I do prophesy the election lights
> On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;
> So tell him, with occurrents, more and less,
> Which have solicited—the rest is silence.

And Fortinbras adds:

> . . . For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:
> I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
> Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

The two stories, *Main* and *Parallel*, when they are separated, show one further technical element in this tragedy. They show how perfectly contrasted is the leading character of the *Main Story* 'Carrying . . . the stamp of one defect' with the leading character of *The Parallel Story* 'of unapproved mettle hot and full.' Fortinbras is a standing reproach to Hamlet's vacillations, as he is a foil to Hamlet's questing intellect.

But these are trivialities. We have now had an opportunity of considering the values, dramatic and technical, of *The Parallel Story*, with its *Secondary* and *Tertiary Incident*. We must now pass on to an analysis of the more subtle *Theme* and *Significance*.

Chapter Seven

THEME AND SIGNIFICANCE

To the psychologist everything has *Significance.*

The simplest human action conveys to his mind information which to the untrained eye is lacking.

The story-telling art is largely a matter of conveying information to the reader by indirect methods, much in the way that life conveys it to the trained mind of the psychologist. A sudden resistance to a line of thought will tell the latter that a trauma is influencing the subject's emotional response; a hand moved instinctively to the latch of a gate without the eye following, will enlighten the reader's mind and convey to it the fact that the character in the story must have opened the gate many times before.

These human actions and reactions have varying degrees of information locked up within them. It is the business of the literary craftsman to know exactly what *Significance* each action and reaction will have for the reader. Some are so obvious as to be illuminating to the poorest intelligence. Tears suggest pain; laughter, happiness; a scowl, displeasure; a smile, affection. And so the series shades off into the more subtle expressions which will only give up their *Significance* to a mind trained to apprehend them.

But there is a point on the line of action-conveyed *Significance* beyond which it is not wise for (neither is it the province of) the author to pass. That point is reached when he demands an effort of the intellect from his reader, to grasp a *Significance* hidden in a character's action. The mind is the province of the scientist:

emotion of the artist. Unless the *Significance* of the action can be felt and apprehended by other means than by a mental effort, the author is awakening the very faculty that he should endeavour to keep anæsthetized—the reader's mind.

If the mind awakens, criticism will awaken with it, and criticism is fatal to artistic conviction.

The author's business is to awaken pictures in the reader's imagination, to make him see, feel and absorb the experience that is being given him, and only through the imagination can this be done. If, beyond this world of imagination (where we are enabled to live by proxy and gain experience, sometimes as vivid as in actual life, by an imaginative effort) we are conscious of our own minds functioning, which appear to gather the experience the author is giving us, and to question its validity and its value to us, this is a different kind of mentality from that which criticizes the author's work. In the first place this intellectual activity is awakened, not by the printed page, but by the experience the printed page has given the reader. In the second place it is an activity directed toward withdrawing from the experience just those sections of it which the reader feels most in need of, and is a corollary to the imaginative life.

An illustration will clarify this.

H_2SO_4 is the symbol for sulphuric acid. It is a statement directed to that analytical-critical mechanism which keeps man reasoning in a world of facts. It conveys no more than it appears to convey. There is no suggestive value in the formula.

This mechanism, if awakened by an author through his stating facts to his reader, instead of picturizing them, will seriously handicap the imaginative relationship which should exist between reader and author.

On the other hand consider: An elegantly dressed woman steps from a Rolls-Royce in a down-at-heel shoe. This conveys infinitely more than it states, for

the information is not directed toward the brain, but toward the imagination. It is not stated as a formula, but is presented as a picture.

The appeal of literature then is directly to the imagination. This is the first principle we must accept in our quest for the technique underlying *The Theme* and its *Significance.*

Into the imagination of the reader the author has not only to insinuate his personality, he has also to awaken pictures there, and pictures which shall have a definite *Theme* and *Significance*; that is—they shall have a special meaning for the reader.

Theme may be defined as the statement of a general law of life, such as: no one can foresee the will of the gods; a woman's intuition usually works to her own advantage; phrases which have grown into the body of our language through their power to state in general form, truths which the world can easily assimilate.

As these potential *Themes* are mental statements, they cannot be expressed directly to the reader, but must first be transformed into pictures, which shall act upon his imagination and awaken equivalents there.

If, in a series of incidents which tell a story, we are shown a hero who always vacillates when he is called upon to act, then, as the pictures progress there will be implanted on the imagination of the reader a 'something beyond' the actual picture. This 'something beyond' is the first vague impression, awakened by *The Theme* of vacillation. For *Theme* being one of the restrictive factors which controls the choice of incident, all incident will show the imprint of this controlling factor and convey it to the reader. Picture after picture may be imprinted before this 'something beyond' is other than a vague awareness in the reader's mind, but sooner or later he will become conscious that this vacillating man, this Hamlet, is causing infinite vexation by his malady.

And this is, in all probability, everything that *The*

Theme will be able to achieve by means of pictures. But this is all that it is called upon to achieve—to stress its message as distinctly as possible on the various incidents, for *Significance* will presently take up the work and complete it.

Throughout the story *The Theme* is said to hover. With the final incident it is said to materialize. It should hover over the story like the sound of horses' hoofs in Virgil's line: *Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.* Its note should be as clear.

Significance, called upon to complete the labours of *Theme*, is quite as handicapped. It can only operate as *Theme* operates, by means of pictures awakened in the reader's imagination. Then how can *Theme*, which is condemned to hover over the story, materialize itself by means of *Significance* which is just as equally handicapped?

We are materializing by means of words throughout the day, thoughts which have hovered for a considerable time above the stream of consciousness. It is much the same with *Significance*. It is as though the soul of the story is suddenly given flesh after an existence in a world of Fantasy.

But this sudden materialization of *Theme* into *Significance* can only be achieved by means of action. If, then, *Significance* is as limited as *Theme* is limited, to an indirect means of expression, it would seem that this final incident, in which it materializes, must have some inherent virtue which the other incidents on *The Line of Action* lack.

It has. Not until the final incident has been read is the story a complete whole, a unity. Throughout all the other incidents, two or more hazy *Themes* may be threading their way. It is the business of the final incident to cut short all the *Theme*-threads except the one that it wishes to materialize.

But first let us try and discover in a work of literature these two or more hazy *Themes* which thread their way

through a story, confusing the reader's mind as to which is the true *Theme*. Then, when we have discovered the danger, we may return to consider *Significance* and decide by what methods we may prevent more than one of *The Themes* from materializing.

In Browning's *Statue and the Bust* we have an illustration. The story deals with the love of a newly-married woman for the Great Duke Ferdinand, and with his love for her:

> And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
> Filled the fine empty sheath of a man—
> The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.
>
> He looked at her, as a lover can;
> She looked at him, as one who awakes:
> The past was a sleep, and her life began.

But the time passes and their love lies static:

> But next day passed, and next day yet,
> With still fresh cause to wait one day more
> Ere each leaped over the parapet.

The weeks grow into years, and the lady finding herself ageing determines to have herself sculptured:

> Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
> Arrest the remains of young and fair,
> And rivet them while the season's range.

The Duke also has himself sculptured:

> The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
> In Florence, "Youth—my dream escapes!
> Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch
>
> Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes—
> "Can the soul, the will, die out of man
> Ere his body find the grave that gapes?"

And so the love of the Duke and the lady wastes itself with the years and is never expressed.

At this point we reach the end of *The Line of Action*, and so naturally we ask ourselves what Browning meant

to convey by this story of self-frustrated lovers. Did he wish us to understand that in not giving way to their desire for each other, the lovers remained true to their higher selves? or was the carnal love sublimated into a spiritual love during the years, and symbolized by the sculptures? or did they merely lack the dynamic force needed to take what they desired?

Any one of these *Themes* might be the true *Theme* of the story.

But let us follow Browning himself, his story does not end with its *Line of Action* as technically we should expect it to. Having narrated the action, Browning proceeds to discuss *The Theme*:

> I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
> For their end was a crime." Oh, a crime will do
> As well, I reply, to serve for a test. . . .

And a few verses later:

> . . . Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it will!
>
> The counter our lovers staked was lost
> As surely as if it were lawful coin:
> And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
>
> Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
> Though the end in sight was a vice, I say. . . .

So finally we have Browning's assurance that, of the several *Themes* suggested by the story, the true *Theme* deals with the castigation of the lovers for their inactivity, and might be stated in some such words as: man must contend to the uttermost for his life's set prize.

But this is only one of the three *Themes* which the story illustrates, and the final choice has had to be given by a bald statement, in case we chose for ourselves one of the other *Themes* which ran through the story, and which may be regarded as *Secondary Themes.*

The reason for the need of a direct statement of *Theme*

is that there is no *Significance* in the final incident to eliminate the *Secondary Themes* and to materialize *The True Theme*. Browning has been forced to discuss his *Theme* instead of showing it to us by means of action.

It is seldom that the incidents of a story can be restricted by *The Theme* sufficiently for the author to be sure that only the one he has selected shall impress the incidents. To restrict each incident of a story to the conveyance of a single *Theme*-impression is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks in story-telling. But it can be done. And Browning has done it in *The Patriot*. There is but one *Theme* in the verses. No confusion of choice can be here:

> The air broke into a mist with bells,
> The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
> Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
> But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
> They had answered, "And afterwards, what else?"

And a year later:

> I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
> A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
>
> . . . . .
>
> For they fling, whoever has a mind,
> Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

The Theme: put not your trust in man, is too clear to need interpretation. In this poem there was no need to *state The Theme* or to discuss it as Browning has done in *The Statue and the Bust*; he has selected certain incidents to *show* a patriot who has first pleased the citizens, then displeased them.

In this latter story, the author appeals directly to the imagination by means of pictures. In the former he appealed partly to the imagination and partly to the mind. The moment he appealed to the mind of the reader his attitude of story-teller ended, his function as poetic essayist had begun.

The Statue and the Bust is not an isolated illustration of this change from an appeal to the imagination, to an appeal to the mind. The so-called Classical Writers of the Eighteenth Century freely adjusted their methods of appeal. Indeed, one might almost say that their greatest effort was toward capturing the mind of the reader, then, almost incidentally, awakening his imagination.

This mixing of methods, though, is part of the natural evolution of *The Significance.* In the early days of the story, the action was narrated, then a reason for its narration was added. This reason was called The Moral. As the art of story-telling progressed and a better understanding of the function of *Significance* came, the moral was first included in the story in a haphazard manner, then later it became an integral part of the tale, and finally it seemed to disappear altogether. It was at this point that its real influence was felt, the unseen influence of *The Theme* operating by its selective power over the incident.

In the tales of Boccaccio and Chaucer we shall find many stories which adhere to the technique of the old Moral, a few which are perfect examples of *Themes* culminating in *Significances,* and others, still in the spate of evolution, using both the *Moral* and *The Theme.*

In *The Pardoner's Tale* from *The Canterbury Tales* we have a story which uses both a *Significance* and a *Moral.* One would be inclined to think that this reduplication of a technical method would strengthen *The Theme.* On the contrary. Also, in this particular story the statement of The Moral not only brings the reader from an imaginative world into a world of discursive ideas, but *The Significance* and *The Moral* do not happen to coincide.

The Intention is stated by one of three Revellers to the others. He means to slay Death, who has slain so many :

Let eche of us hold up his hond to other,
And eche of us becomen others brother,
And we wol slen this false traitour deth:
He shall be slain, he that so many sleth,
By Goddes dignitee, or it be night. . . .

The Barrier to their *Intention* is that they do not know where Death is to be found. Drunk, they set out to seek him in a certain village. On the way they meet an old man, who tells them that Death is in a nearby grove, under an oak:

"Now, sires, quod he, if it be you so lefe
To finden deth, tourne up this croked way,
For in that grove I left him by my fay
Under a tree. . . ."

The Revellers leave the old man and come to the tree where they find what he has called Death, a precious hoard of gold. Instantly the desire modifies to possess the gold. *The Crisis* to this story is stated clearly:

And everich of thise riotoures ran,
Till they came to the tree, and ther they found
Of Floreins fine of gold ycoined round,
Well nigh an eighte bushels, as hem thought.

The story continues with the Revellers drawing lots to decide which shall go to the town and bring bread and wine for the others, who will guard the treasure in the meantime. The lot falls to the youngest. While he is away the other two plot to kill him on his return and divide the money between them:

Thou wost well that our felaw is agon,
And here is gold, and that ful gret plentee,
That shal departed ben among us three.
But nathless, if I can shape it so,
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not don a frendes turn to thee?

But the youngest also had had his dream of possession. He has bought poison with which to slay his companions

on his return. He is, however, slain first, then the two murderers sit down to drink the poisoned wine:

> Now let us sit and drinke, and make us mery,
> And afterward we wiln his body bery.

With this *Catastrophe* to *The Modified Intention* the action ends. *The Theme* is obvious. Indeed there is but one *Theme* with barely a hint of *Secondary Theme* to confuse the mind of the reader, and it is forced on the mind by an almost flawless technique. Death, whom the Revellers have forgotten, as they sit down to drink the wine, forgetful of their original *Intention*, is grinning over their shoulders.

But The Pardoner who tells the story to the Canterbury pilgrims adds a moral. Missing the irony of his story, he falls into platitudes:

> O cursednesse of alle cursednesse!
> O traitours homicide! O wickednesse!
> O glotonie, luxurie, and hasardrie!
> Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanie,
> And others grete, of usage and pride!
> Alas! mankinde, how may it betide,
> That to thy Creatour, which that thee wrought,
> And with his precious herte-blood thee bought,
> Thou art so false and so unkind, alas!

And so on, as he canvasses the sale of the pardons he carries.

It is obvious that this commentary is redundant. There is a story to be told. It must be told in pictures that will awaken pictures in the imagination of the reader. If The Moral is to be added, it must also be told by means of symbols which will awaken pictures in the mind of the reader.

Again, in Boccaccio's *The Tale of Patient Griselda*[1] we see The Moral added as something extraneous to the story, and not accepted into the body of the tale. This

[1] *The Decameron*: Chatto and Windus.

story, like the one quoted in brief above, needs no Moral. It has a perfect *Theme* and *Significance.*

The story deals with the search of a man for an agreeable wife. He meets Griselda, a poor, country girl, and discovers in her all that he imagines the perfect woman should possess. When he has married her, his *Intention* is modified:

> But soon afterwards a new fancy came into his head; and that was, to make a trial of her patience by long and intolerable sufferings.

Then follows a series of trials, all of which Griselda accepts with humility. The action ends with the husband embracing his wife and assuring her that 'no person in the world can be happier in a wife than I am.'

Instead of concluding the story at the end of *The Line of Action* the author begins to comment on it after the manner of the moralist:

> . . . What can we say, then, but that divine spirits may descend from heaven into the meanest cottages; whilst royal palaces shall produce such as seem rather adapted to have the care of hogs, than the government of men. Who but Griselda could, not only without a fear, but even with seeming satisfaction, undergo the most rigid and unheard-of trials of her husband? Many women there are who, if turned out of doors naked in that manner, would have procured themselves fine clothes, adorning at once their own persons and their husband's brows.

The Moral as an addition to *The Line of Action* would appear to be the most reprehensible form of *Tertiary Incident.*

Imagine such matter tagged to the end of *Lear* or *Macbeth.* But Shakespeare was too great a formalist to comment on a tale that had been told. If the action tells the reader all that the author wishes to tell him, it has achieved its purpose. If the action has not told the reader all that the author wishes to tell him, the alternative is for the author to rewrite his story.

The function of *Theme* is to tell the reader why the

story happened in a particular manner, at the same time that the action is telling him *how* it happened. But however careful the author has been to shape his incidents into the mould of his *Theme*, his ending will be in danger unless a strong final incident impresses *The Theme* forcefully on the reader's imagination.

For one reason, there is much to claim the attention at the close of a story. There is the outcome of *The Intention* to be considered. There is the final incident itself viewed as action, to distract the mind. There are the characters, reassembled by *Denouement* or *Compound Catastrophe* into new combinations by a single incident. There is *The Significance* itself.

With the handicap of being restrained from stating in direct language his *Theme* and *Significance*, when coupled with all the problems of the final incident, it is no wonder that so many stories end on a note of almost trivial despair. Not only has the author to narrate action in pictures, which shall develop an *Intention*, but this same action must fascinate the reader for its own sake, at the same time that it imprints a universal law upon the reader's mind, and develops this law, together with the action itself, and *The Intention*, to a point of climax which shall fuse all into a *Significance*.

The author must not only show the development of Hamlet's *Intention*, he must hold up Hamlet himself throughout the story as a specimen, metaphorically saying: 'this man through some weakness in his nature is corrupting his whole psychic make-up. All men with a similar weakness will be in a similar danger.'

And he is forbidden to state his truths in direct language.

As we have seen that every action has its *Significance*, so we may postulate that every series of incidents will have their *Significance*. They will frequently have more than one. Our problem will be, not to discover a *Significance* for a given story, but to limit the *Significances* to one. We must eliminate the many general laws which

will be attempting to express themselves through the incidents, and to retain only the one general law that is to be *The Significance.*

Which one shall we retain? Obviously that one which arises naturally from the incidents viewed as a whole.

But this inevitability of *The Significance*, although it is stamped on the story from the first paragraph, should not be apparent to the reader until the last paragraph is written. The reader should no more be permitted to visualize *The Significance* than he should be permitted to view *The Denouement* or *The Compound Catastrophe* before their occurrence. If he should be able to foresee *The Significance*, the *why* of the story, he will probably be able to deduce the final incident, the *how* of the story, or *vice versa.* In this case his interest will fail, for when he knows the *why* and the *how* of any story, he has virtually reached the end of that story, for it is precisely these factors which it is the business of the end to tell him.

Hence we have the technical methods of *Ostensible End* and *Tangent Story* to aid us in keeping the reader's imagination occupied, while we prepare the way for the final incident.

Theme should now be clear in the mind of the reader, as an expression of a general law of life, illustrated through action. But what is *Significance*? Let us turn to Professor Abercrombie for enlightenment: [1]

> For it is the nature of man never to be satisfied with himself simply as the being that experiences; the whole of his practical and speculative effort is to make, or to discover, significance in his experience. Now, in literature, we do not need to make, or to discover, significance in our experience there; experience there *is* significant, simply by virtue of being literature.
>
> And that by reason of the *form* which literature gives to experience. . . .
>
> If the experience is not significant, literature has not succeeded in coming into existence. . . .

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism*: Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

In dividing up the story into segments for analysis, we are in danger of forgetting that we are dealing with a unity, and that this unity is the form of the story. Professor Abercrombie gives us a timely warning that *Significance* is due to form. In this statement is a hint of the difference between *Theme* and *Significance*. The former hovers above each incident, but only when the story is told—when the *form* is complete can *Significance* appear. It is the 'why' of the story told in terms of the 'how.'

We know that *The Significance* of a story is being prepared by the dominance of *The Theme* over the various incidents, and that, regarded in this light, *Theme* is to some extent dominating *form*, for it is influencing *The Line of Action* which traces the outline of the symmetry of the story. *Theme* will influence the final incident to a great extent, for it will make this point on *The Line of Action* either a *Denouement* or a *Compound Catastrophe*. A most dynamic influence on the *form*.

In the Shylock *Main Story* of *The Merchant of Venice* *The Theme* might be stated as a modification of Psalm lvii. 6: 'They have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.' Shylock falls into the pit he dug for Antonio, and *The Theme* of the story concluding at this point, calls for a certain *form* through which to express itself, i.e. *Compound Catastrophe* to the Shylock *Intention*. If *The Theme* had been different, for instance: 'Who shall contend successfully with an evil man?' it would have dictated not a *Compound Catastrophe* but a *Denouement* to the Shylock *Intention*. Thus *Theme* would alter *form* to suit its own demands.

This might be stated in a different manner, for instance from the angle of view of the action. The Shylock story ending on *Catastrophe*, produces a pre-arranged *Significance*. If the story had ended on *Denouement* it would have produced a different *Significance*. Thus *form* alters *Theme* to suit its demands.

The Theme of a story depends upon the selection of

incidents. Or, we may say with Professor Abercrombie, that *Significance* is there by reason of the form.

If we select an historical character and set down the main facts of his life, they will assume a certain form by virtue of the selection. This form will give us a *Theme* and a *Significance*. It will convince us that *form* will produce a *Significance*, by virtue of its being form. Perhaps it will also prove that *Significance* and *Theme* can in return produce form:

Christopher Columbus, the eldest son of a Genoese wool-carder finds himself in Portugal, through his ship having been burned in the roads at Lisbon. Student of geometry, geography, astronomy and navigation, he eventually comes to the conclusion that the known continents of the world do not balance themselves symmetrically, and that the world seems in need of 'the counterpoise of a continent.'

He intends to discover a western passage to Asia, which he imagines stretches to the present confines of America. He is handicapped through lack of funds to fit out the expedition.

Through the kind offices of Juan Perez, and Mendoza, cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, he is presented to the Queen of Spain, who finances him.

He sights land on October 11, 1492. It is the island of San Salvador. But near though he is to the discovery of the balancing continent, he returns to Spain without having discovered it.

On his second voyage he finds his forts destroyed, his guns buried under debris and his garrison killed. Treason, felony and murder follow, and Columbus is recalled to Spain, a felon himself.

He sets out again, later, and lands on the American continent in the Bay of Honduras.

These incidents, selected from the life of Columbus, assume a certain form by virtue of their selection. Incidentally, they assume the ideal order of the unit of form, which presents *The Primary Incidents* in a certain sequence. By means of our selection, a story and its *Intention* are developed. And because it is composed of a series of incidents it will demonstrate one or more general laws of life (Theme). It demonstrates *The Intention* of a poor gentleman to prove that his dream was a reality. He does prove it, and a commonplace statement of the general law thus illustrated might be: 'all things are possible to the will of man.'

But this *Theme*, this general law, which is inherent in the action, and due to its form, will not necessarily remain *The True Theme* of the story—if we alter the story in any way. In other words, if we alter the form, we shall alter *The Theme*. It is just these particular incidents in the particular order stated, which gives this particular *Theme*. If we alter the incidents, we shall alter the form, and if we alter the form we shall alter *The Theme* and with it *The Significance*.

It will be an interesting experiment to alter the incidents and to watch the effect on the form and *The Theme*.

Suppose we make *The Intention* that of gaining honour and wealth from the discovery, and bring the story to a close by adding a fact not yet commented on, Columbus' death in poverty. This will give us a *Catastrophe* to *The Intention*:

Intention: Columbus desires honour and wealth.
Barrier: He has no money to equip his expedition.
Reversal: The Queen of Spain finances him.
Crisis: He sights San Salvador.
Reversal: Returns without discovering the Mainland.
Secondary Incident: Recalled from his next voyage, a felon.

Secondary Incident: Finally lands on American continent in Bay of Honduras, without knowing that he has proved his deductions.
Catastrophe: Columbus dies in poverty.

With the alteration of *The Line of Action* comes a change to the form, and consequently to *The Theme*. Columbus' life, viewed from this new angle, gives a very different *Significance* from that of the first point of view. Here we have the story of a man striving for honour and riches by means of an heroic discovery, but who, having triumphed, is unaware of his achievement and returns home to die in poverty. *The Theme* is obviously not: 'all things are possible to the will of man,' for Columbus, to all intents and purposes, has failed in his project, as he fails to gain the wealth and honour which formed his *Intention*. The alteration in the form has necessitated an alteration in *The Theme*. It may now be stated in some such words as: 'man's hope and achievement seldom coincide.'

If we regard our problem from a purely objective standpoint we see that as incidents change, *Theme* changes. But should we not be quite as accurate in our statement if we said that the incidents had changed *because The Theme* had changed? as if we said that *The Theme* had changed *because* the incidents had changed?

Professor Abercrombie tells us that experience in literature is significant by reason of its form.

But what *produces* the form?

Surely just this *Significance* in the experience, viewed abstractly as experience. Experience (viewed as the various incidents composing it) to be significant must have its general law, its *Theme*. This *Theme* exercising a restrictive influence on the choice of these incidents, moulds them into a certain form, which will convey to the reader's imagination a message which *The Theme* cannot convey directly.

Theme and *Significance* first mould the form; this form then conveys the message which *Theme* and *Significance* have stamped upon it; which message is imprinted on the reader's imagination as *Theme* and *Significance*. The clay of experience is shaped by *The Theme*; the reader grasps *The Theme* through the shape of the clay.

Form is thus inseparable from the inspirational mechanism of the mind. The creative faculty invents the story (that particular instance which illustrates a general law), it also invents the general law (which is to be proved by the particular instance). These two, particular instance and general law, when dominating a *Line of Action* are the supreme controlling forces of the form.

Form is thus controlled by the creative mind.

It does not matter now that we have reached this conclusion, whether we say with Professor Abercrombie that experience in literature is significant by reason of its form, or whether we say that experience in literature has form by reason of its *Significance*. We have arrived at the old problem of the chicken and the egg.

If an author considers a series of incidents (form), these will of necessity have *Theme* (general law). In exactly the same way, if an author considers a *Theme*, he can only express it through a series of incidents (form). It matters little to the success of a story whether the incidents or *The Theme* are first decided upon. The one will produce the other. And this would appear to be as close to a dictum as one could arrive, that form and *Theme* are mutually inter-dependent.

But Professor Abercrombie infers this, perhaps, in his *Thomas Hardy, a Critical Study*: [1]

> No great poet can do without a metaphysic; but that does not mean that it must always be explicit. Creative literature divides itself into two main kinds; that in which a metaphysic is fitted to

[1] Published by Martin Secker.

> experience, and that in which experience is fitted to a metaphysic. The first kind is the work of the poet who judges instinctively; the second, of the poet who judges intellectually. . . .

Before we can dismiss this problem of form and *Theme*, we must decide the effect of *Intention* upon them. It would seem to be obvious that they must be interdependent, for the aim of story-telling is to show the working of a universal law through a particular instance by means of action. *The Theme* with its *Significance* is the statement of the universal law; *The Intention* is the motivating force of the particular instance; and these express themselves through *The Line of Action* which is the form. It would seem that the author may begin his creative labours from any one of these three factors. He may decide first on a *Theme* and evolve later a *Line of Intention* and a *Line of Action*. He may begin with a *Line of Action* and add *Intention* and *Theme*. Or, he may begin with an *Intention* and add a *Line of Action* and a *Theme*. Each will modify the other two. None of them has the honour of being the First Cause of the story. Each may claim it in turn.

S. H. Butcher commenting on the universality given by *Theme*, writes: [1]

> Unity of form is brought by Aristotle into immediate and even necessary connection with universality of content. The one depends on the other. In proportion as the subject matter is universalized, the unity is perfected. For in the process of universalizing, the transient and the perishable part is eliminated; the unreason of chance is expelled; we are admitted to observe the working of human motive in a world into which pure accident hardly intrudes, where cause and effect have fuller and freer play—the realm of art which is the realm of design. In short, the world of poetry—and this is true pre-eminently of dramatic poetry—is a world more unified, more intelligible than the world of experience, just because the subject-matter is the universal.

And subject-matter (incidents) becomes universal the more fully it illustrates the development of a general

[1] *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (1898).

law by means of a particular instance, that is—when a *Line of Action* most perfectly illustrates its *Theme*.

But we have seen that it is not sufficient to illustrate a general law by a particular instance and there to leave the matter, for the general law cannot be stated in logical terms and may only be conveyed symbolically. In this symbolism, we have seen by experiment, that more than one general law may gain expression. To correct this error *The Theme* has to be re-stated in the final incident of the story. It should not be stated in words in the form of a moral, as we have seen it stated in Chaucer and Boccaccio. It has evolved beyond that. It must flash into the reader's imagination, reassembling the incidents of the story, fusing them into a unity which shall have the effect of a sudden enlightenment to him. *Significance* should be an illumination of the reader's imagination, a sudden and complete expression of all the vague emotions which have hovered above the surface of his mind during the reading of the story. It should come upon him with the force of a hitherto unrealized truth.

In this manner *The Theme* materializes at the end of *Hamlet*, when the dead lie about the stage—pawns in the tragedy of the hero's vacillation. In this manner it comes at the end of *Macbeth*, when the hero is slain by the man not of woman born. It comes also in *Œdipus Rex* when the hero realizes that he, himself, is the scourge of his city, the man for whom he has been seeking. And in the coming we are shown ' a world more unified, more intelligible than the world of experience, just because the subject-matter is the universal.'

To achieve this illumination of the mind of the reader it is essential that *The Significance* should fuse within his mind. It cannot be achieved by thrusting *Significances* upon it from without. Here it is that the murmurings of *The Theme* through the various incidents are of value. They will have awakened faint glimmerings of compre-

hension in the mind of the reader. The more forcefully the author can stress the notes of his *Theme* on the reader's mind, the more surely will the final Significance achieve its object.

It is by repetition, and by repetition alone, that the reader's consciousness is awakened to *Theme*. It is by a final repetition that *Significance* is achieved.

Theme is a controlling factor of form. *Significance* is an illumination in the mind of the reader.

Chapter Eight

THE TANGENT STORY

Aristotle has called the three critical points in the story, The Beginning, The Middle and The End. These roughly correspond with *The Barrier, The Crisis,* and *The Denouement* or *Compound Catastrophe.* The essential attribute of a convincing *Barrier* would appear to be the difficulty of its *Reversal.* The essential attribute of a convincing *Crisis* would appear to be its similarity to a *Denouement.* But how shall we define the essential attribute of the perfect ending?

It is not enough that the story shall end satisfactorily, that its loose threads shall be neatly trimmed, nor is it enough that the hero is shown as failing or succeeding in his *Intention.* This indeed will inform the reader concerning the 'how' of the story, but the reader must also be informed concerning the 'why.'

It will be clearer to the mind if we state exactly what the end of the story may logically be expected to achieve. It should, in its final incident tell the reader (*a*) how the leading character fared with his *Intention*; (*b*) *why* he fared in this manner; (*c*) what general law underlay his success or failure.

We will now test this theory of the ideal ending by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* two plays whose form is beyond reproach.

Macbeth ends on an incident which tells the reader *how* the hero died at the hands of Macduff. It tells him *why* he dies in this manner, i.e. through misreading certain prophecies. It tells him of the general law underlying the action, i.e. that no man can read the future.

Hamlet also ends on an incident which tells the reader *how* the hero slew the King. It tells him *why* Hamlet eventually carried out his *Intention* when goaded beyond himself by the deaths of the Queen and Laertes. It tells him of the general law underlying the action, i.e. that the vacillator eventually achieves through the maximum amount of suffering, what he might have achieved through the minimum.

We have already decided that if the reader, owing to a flaw in the author's technique, is able to foresee any of the factors which are to fuse at the end of the story, his interest will lapse, and the author's chance of achieving a perfect end will be lost.

The author, knowing that his appeal is to the reader's imagination, will do all in his power to anæsthetize the reader's critical mind. By an apparent frankness he will overcome the first critical response to the story, by appearing to face every problem which could be stated, and whilst doing so, he will shift the focus of the reader's mind from the critical to the imaginative attitude.

Having done this, the reader will be at the author's beck and call until either a flaw in his technique awakens the critical mind again, or the imaginative faculty of the reader leaps the barriers and foresees the end.

It will be clear, then, that not the least difficult of the author's tasks is the hiding of the *True End* of the story.

From a vague misleading hint to the reader, to downright misrepresentation of fact, every shade of lie has been attempted to veil this *True End*. One illustration will suffice, and that from a master of the French short story, de Maupassant.

In *The Necklace* the author tells a story of a woman who borrows a necklace, loses it, and spends years of her life paying off the price of a duplicate. The end of the story is admirably arranged, for here the reader

learns for the first time that the borrowed necklace was paste. Now the full force of the surprise can only be achieved if the reader thinks that the borrowed necklace was a diamond one. de Maupassant does not lead the reader into this error through a mistake in judgment in the mind of a character, he makes a frank misstatement:

> All of a sudden she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb necklace *of diamonds*; and her heart began to beat with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her throat, outside her high-necked dress, and remained lost in ecstasy at the sight of herself.[1]

The above comment is not made to the reader by 'the concentration through consciousness method,' whereby the author states only what the character sees or thinks she sees. It is direct narrative. And when the end of the story is reached the reader feels that he has been misled.

Mr H. W. Leggett commenting on the above, wrote:

> I do not agree with this. To me it seems a "concentration through consciousness." The point, I think, is this: de Maupassant did not *have* to lie to get this effect. It is only when the lie is *necessary* that it is offensive.

But we can leave the matter an open question to those students interested enough to decide for themselves the degree of de Maupassant's culpability. The story has served its purpose as an illustration of an undesirable method of misleading the reader.

It would be profitless to retrace the historical course of this mistaken method in fiction, which must be classed with the Chatterton and Macpherson forgeries, and should have found a place in Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*. Everyone knows what a lie is in life. Everyone mistrusts a liar both in fact and in fiction. The method of wilfully misleading a reader concerning the end of a story must be regarded as not only unforgiveable

[1] *The Odd Number*: Harper and Brothers.

but unprofitable. For the reader will lose faith in this guide, and the annoyance caused by the deception when it is discovered, will ruin the very effect for which the lie was told—that illumination of the reader's mind by *The Significance.*

There are, however, many legitimate methods for concealing *The True End,* as we have seen in the chapter on *The Denouement,* such methods operating in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth.* The reader is always inclined to view the story-action through the eyes of a leading character, and thus to believe with Macbeth that he is invulnerable, and to see in Hamlet's boarding of the ship to take him to England, the end of his vacillating career—as the King believes it to be.

In both these cases the reader is misled. But he is not misled through a misrepresentation of fact on the author's part, he is misled by identifying himself with a leading character, whose judgments are at fault. For a character to be misled, is a character true to life. For the author to be misled, is for him to confess that he is not in possession of the facts which the telling of the story assumes that he should be in possession of.

All this misleading of the reader is due to the author's desire to concentrate the reader's attention away from *The True End* and toward *The Ostensible End,* while he prepares for his final incident. Now, the most effective method for achieving this is by means of *The Tangent Story.*

But before we analyse stories to learn this technical device, we must first give some consideration to *The Ostensible End,* for this is the first movement in the technique of the method.

In the story from *The Decameron* which we have already commented on, *Theodoro and Violante,* we have seen *The Line of Action* develop toward the death of the lovers. The moment we read of Violante's pregnancy, we immediately foresee such an end. Death is the only

solution to the difficulty. It flows naturally out of the incidents which precede it. It is a consequential sequence, as all *Ostensible Endings* must be. Any other ending than the death of, at least, the slave, Theodoro, would offend our sense of the fitness of things.

Theodoro and Violante then, offer us an illustration of an almost perfect *Ostensible End*. And there is no hint of misrepresentation of fact.

But there are other methods of preparing an *Ostensible End*, and not the least effective is by suggesting the *True End* to the reader, who, refusing to accept so incredible a suggestion, invents an *Ostensible End* for himself. Some such method as this is behind the grim atmosphere of Prosper Merimée's story, *Mateo Falcone*.[1] The key to the *True Ending* is in the general attitude of the shepherds to malefactors. It is given in the second paragraph of the story:

> If you have killed a man, go into the mâquis of Porto-Vecchio. With a good gun and plenty of powder and balls, you can live there in safety. . . . The shepherds will give you chestnuts, milk and cheese, and you will have nothing to fear from justice nor the relatives of the dead. . . .

This tradition of the country is stated by the author. The people protect each other against the law. Amongst lawless tribes such as these, the breaking of a tradition of sanctuary would be attended by a horrible punishment. That is inferred.

Mateo Falcone, one of these shepherds, has left his little son alone in the house. A man, wanted by the police, asks the boy to hide him, and bribes him with a coin to do so. When the police arrive, they also bribe the boy—with a silver watch, to tell them where the man is hidden. The boy, tempted beyond endurance, does so. Mateo Falcone returns and hears how the fugitive has been taken.

[1] *International Short Stories*: P. F. Collier's Sons, New York.

The Real End is now perfectly clear, Falcone will punish the boy for his treachery with a brutality unheard of, and the reader foreseeing this end, forces it from his mind for a shadowy *Ostensible End* where the child will be pardoned. The story continues:

> Falcone seized the watch and smashed it in a thousand pieces against a rock.
> "Wife," said he, "is this my child?"
> Giuseppa's cheeks turned a brick-red.
> "What are you saying, Mateo? Do you know to whom you speak?"
> "Very well, this child is the first of his race to commit treason."
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Fortunato, go close to that big rock there."
> The child did as he was commanded, then he kneeled.
> "Say your prayers."
> "Oh, father, do not kill me!"
> "Say your prayers!" repeated Mateo in a terrible voice.
>
> . . . . .
>
> The boy made a desperate effort to rise and grasp his father's knees. but there was not time. Mateo fired and Fortunato fell dead. . .

Another method of preparing an *Ostensible End* is for the author to infer that if a certain event takes place, a definite result will be obtained. Then, while the reader's concentration is focused on this matter, and he is wondering (*a*) if the event *will* take place, and (*b*) if it does take place, whether it will produce the suggested result—*The Tangent Story* cuts across *The Main Story* and resolves the problem. O. Henry's short story, *The Last Leaf*,[1] illustrates this method:

> Mr Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californian zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house. . . .

[1] *The Best of O. Henry*: Hodder and Stoughton.

The leading character of *The Main Story* is introduced. Her *Intention* soon follows:

> "Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

So *The Main Story* is to deal with *The Intention* of a sick woman, who imagines that she must die when the last leaf falls from the wall opposite. *The Ostensible End* is that, as the last leaf, in the nature of things, must fall, in all probability the patient will die when it does so. Sick peoples fancies have a trick of becoming real.

As the author has carefully prepared his *Ostensible End*, so he has carefully prepared his *True End*, which *The Tangent Story* is to introduce:

> Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. . . . He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. . . .

Here then, are two distinct stories.

The Main Story concerns a very sick woman who thinks she will die when the last leaf falls.

The Tangent Story concerns an artist who still desires to paint a masterpiece.

A link is needed between these *utterly unconnected stories* that they may operate the one upon the other. This link is provided in the friend of the dying woman who uses Behrman as her model.

Behrman through this link-interest, learns of the sick girl's whim, to die when the last leaf falls, and this knowledge produces action in him which cuts across *The Main Story* before *The Ostensible End* (the falling of the last leaf and the sick girl's death) is reached. Behrman's act is *The True End*, coupled with the girl's recovery.

> . . . Mr Behrman died of pneumonia to-day in hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through. And then they found a lantern . . . and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and—look out of the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall . . . it's Behrman's masterpiece—he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.

Thus there are two distinct movements in the creation of an end by *Tangent Story*. First, the preparation of *The Ostensible End*, which is the logical conclusion to *The Main Story*. Second, the preparation of *The True End*,

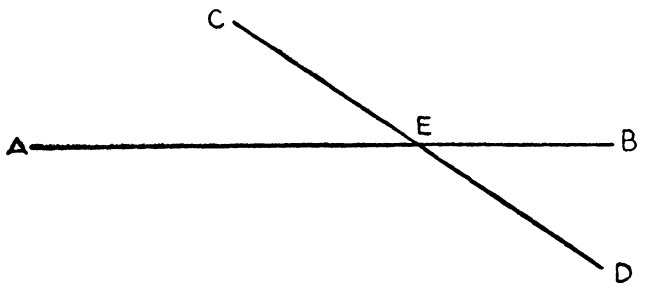

DIAGRAM NO. 6.

which is the logical conclusion to *The Tangent Story*. When the story is read as one complete whole, a unity, the ending of *The Tangent Story* appears to be the logical ending of *The Main Story*.

It will be seen that either *The Tangent Story* or *The Main Story* in *The Last Leaf* could have been treated as *The Main Story*, the other then becoming the tangent. It is immaterial whether Behrman and his masterpiece is regarded as the leading motif or not, the story of the dying woman would automatically fit into the secondary role.

Both stories need the same care whether they are regarded as *Main* or *Tangent Stories*. *The Main Story* AB moves along its *Line of Action* toward an *Ostensible End*. *The Tangent Story* CD cuts across it at the point E as it

moves along its *Line of Action* toward *The True End.* The point of intersection E is the link between the two stories. Unity is obtained when the story is regarded, not as a compound of the lines AB and CD, but as a compound of the lines AE and ED.

Although modern form owes much to O. Henry and de Maupassant, it is a mistake to attribute to either of them the invention of *The Tangent Story.* This technical device was used as early as the days of fifth-century Athens, by Sophocles in *Œdipus Rex.*[1]

As we have already commented on the play we need do no more than point out *The Main* and *Tangent Stories* and their link interest.

The Main Story deals with Œdipus and his desire to save his city from the scourge:

> CREON: Thus saith
> Phœbus, Our Lord and Seer, in clear command.
> An unclean thing there is, hid in our land,
> Eating the soul thereof: this ye shall cast
> Out, and not foster till all help be past.

The Tangent Story deals with The Stranger who comes from Corinth, bringing the news that the gathering of folk desires to make Œdipus king of that city.

> STRANGER: I come from Corinth.—And my tale, I trow,
> Will give thee joy, yet haply also pain. . . .
> 'Tis spoke in Corinth that the gathering
> Of folk will make thy lord our chosen King.

The link interest is derived from the fact that Œdipus was as a child brought up as the son of the King of Corinth. Œdipus still imagines him to be his father.

Through the appearance of The Stranger and his *Tangent Story,* which cuts across the Œdipus *Main Story,* the truth comes to light that Œdipus has slain his real father and is now married to his own mother. Œdipus himself

[1] *Œdipus Rex, King of Thebes.* Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxford University Press.

is the scourge of the city, the man for whom he has been seeking.

The Tangent Story is thus a link in the chain of reasoning which turns *The Ostensible End* (Œdipus' discovery of the scourge and the saving of the city) aside, and produces *The True End* (Œdipus's discovery of his own dishonour).

It should be noted in *Œdipus Rex* that the two stories, *Tangent* and *Main*, are not so clearly defined in their separate functions as they are in the O. Henry story; for in the Greek play, The Stranger's story becomes intertwined with the Œdipus story, and a blending of the two stories produces *The True End.*

But the use of the tangent was not confined, among the Athenian dramatists, to Sophocles. Euripides uses it in the *Alcestis.*[1]

The Main Story deals with Alcestis, who to save her husband's life, dies in his stead.

The Tangent Story deals with Heracles, who comes to Admetus's house at the moment when Alcestis has given her life for him. He is on his way to achieve a Labour:

LEADER: What prize doth call thee, and to what far place?
HERACLES: The horses of one Diomede, in Thrace
. . . This labour fitteth well my large
Fortune, still upward, still against the wind.
How often with these kings of Arês' kind
Must I do battle? First the dark wolf-man,
Lycaon; then 'twas he men called The Swan;
And now this man of steeds! . . . Well, none shall see
Alcmena's son turn from the enemy.

Unknowing of the loss that Admetus has sustained, Heracles sits feasting in the halls of death, resting on his way. When he learns the truth concerning Alcestis, he determines to save her from Death:

HERACLES: I needs must save this woman from the shore
Of death, and set her in her house once more,
Repaying Admetus' love. . . .

[1] Translated by Gilbert Murray: George Allen and Unwin.

The Tangent Story of Heracles and his Labour, joins a this point with *The Main Story* of Admetus-Alcestis, an *The Tangent Story* being cast aside, Heracles now become a subordinate character in *The Main Story*. Through hi aid Alcestis is restored to her husband.

Slightly divergent from this method is the one whicl Euripides uses in the *Medea*. The *Tangent* and *Mai Stories* assist each other, *The Tangent Story* of Ægeu making possible *The Denouement* to its own story, b the promises of assistance to *The Main Story*.

This *Main Story* deals with Medea's *Intention* to b revenged on her husband, Jason, for taking another wif and for discarding her.

The Tangent Story deals with Ægeus, who desire children in his childless house.

Medea promises that by her spells she will cure hi impotence, if he will give her sanctuary when she ha revenged herself on Jason :[1]

MEDEA.

He loveth to bear bravely ills like these!
But, Ægeus, by thy beard, oh, by thy knees,
I pray thee, and I give me for thine own,
Thy suppliant, pity me! Oh, pity one
So miserable. Thou never wilt stand there
And see me cast out friendless to despair.
Give me a home in Athens . . . by the fire
Of thine own hearth! Oh, so may thy desire
Of children be fulfilled of God, and thou
Die happy! . . . Thou canst not know; even now
Thy prize is won! I, I will make of thee
A childless man no more. The seed shall be,
I swear it, sown. Such magic herbs I know.

So Ægeus, the leading character in *The Tangent Story* is promised *Denouement* to his *Intention* in return for th guarantee of sanctuary to Medea, the leading character o *The Main Story*.

[1] *The Medea of Euripides*. Translated by Gilbert Murray: Oxfor University Press.

Again in the *Andromache*, Euripides uses the tangent method, but as this play has a more complicated *Line of Action* than either the *Medea* or the *Alcestis*, it will be as well to make a simple analysis:

Intention: Hermione and her father, Menelaus, desire to be rid of Neoptolemus' slave, Andromache, who, they claim, is making Hermione, Neoptolemus' wife, sterile.

Barrier: Andromache will not leave until Neoptolemus returns.

Reversal: Hermione and Menelaus tell Andromache that they will kill either her child or her. She may choose. By a ruse they force her to leave the sanctuary.

Crisis: Both Andromache and her son are bound and are about to be killed.

Reversal: Peleus is sent for, and arriving, saves them both. Menelaus departs for Sparta.

Catastrophe: Hermione, afraid that her husband will kill her on his return, seeks to kill herself.

Modification of the Intention: Hermione desires to disappear before her husband's return.

At this point *The Tangent Story* is introduced with the appearance of Orestes, who was to have married Hermione before Neoptolemus won her:

ORESTES:

The son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, by name Orestes, on my way to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona. . . . I, for instance, though unaware of the confusion in this house, the quarrel between thee and Hector's wife, waited awhile and watched to see whether thou wouldst stay here or from fear of that captive art minded to quit these halls. . . .[1]

Denouement: Hermione flees with Orestes.

[1] Translated by Edward P. Coleridge.

It will be noted that Orestes' business was with the oracle at Dodona; that is, *The Intention* of *The Tangent Story*. It is cast aside when he meets Hermione.

In these illustrations we are confronted by a problem which must have some consideration. In each play a character *outside the story* appears, and in one way or another influences the main action. The problem can be stated in this way: when is a character who appears from outside the main action, a newly-introduced character into the *Main Story*, and when is he a leading character in *The Tangent Story*?

Could not Ægeus in the *Medea*, The Stranger in *Œdipus Rex*, Heracles in the *Alcestis* and Orestes in the *Andromache* be regarded, not as leading characters in *Tangent Stories*, but simply as characters newly introduced into *The Main Stories*?

It would seem that certain rules which we have already deduced as applicable to *Parallel Stories* would aid us here. If a character is treated as a centre of his own story, as Heracles is undoubtedly treated on his first appearance; as Ægeus is treated; as The Stranger is treated; and if the action introduced by these extraneous characters influences the main action, then it would surely seem wrong to regard them as subordinate characters in *The Main Story*.

In the case of Orestes in the *Andromache* the situation appears to be different, for the character, although stated as being on his way to the oracle at Dodona (and this being accepted as his *Intention*), has come to Hermione to see if she desires to leave her home. In other words, whilst intimating that he is a leading character in a *Tangent Story* (*Intention* to go to Dodona), he adds that he is entangling himself in *The Main Story* as a subsidiary character (desire to help Hermione with *her Intention*).

It is regrettable that one must leave subtleties such as these are, as open questions, until a great deal more is known about the form of literature than is known at the

moment. To attempt to dogmatize would be to mislead the reader.

There is, however, one more type of *Tangent Story* which we must discuss before we can deduce the general laws underlying the use of *The Tangent Story*. In this case *The Main Story* is forced to bargain with *The Tangent Story*, that each may achieve its *Denouement*.

Without the aid of the tangent the *Main Story must* end in *Catastrophe*, and without the aid of *The Main Story* the tangent *must* end in *Catastrophe*.

Cymon and Ephigenia from *The Decameron*[1] is an illustration of this technical device:

Intention: Cymon of Cyprus desires Ephigenia.
Barrier: Her father has promised her to Pasimunda of Rhodes.
Reversal: Cymon and some young noblemen set out in a ship of war to waylay the vessel which is taking her to Rhodes.
Crisis: They capture her.
Reversal: A tempest forces them to put into harbour at Rhodes where the other ship has put in also. The crew of the other ship recognize Cymon and his friends.
Catastrophe: Cymon and his friends are thrown into prison by Lysimachus, the chief magistrate for that year.

At this point in the action, *The Reversal of the Catastrophe, The Tangent Story* is introduced. Lysimachus, who desires to marry a certain lady, promises Cymon his freedom if he will help him to carry her off on the eve of her marriage. Cymon does so, and at the same time carries off Ephigenia. Lysimachus proposes the plan:

> Now I see no remedy for either of us, but what consists in our resolution, and strength of our arms: it will be necessary, there-

[1] *The Decameron*: Chatto and Windus.

fore, to make our way with our swords, for each of us to gain his lady: if then you value (I will not say your liberty, because that, without her, would be of little weight with you; but, I say, if you value) your mistress, you need only follow me, and fortune has put her into your hands.

Denouement: The joint plan is successful.

It will be seen that *The Denouement* to *The Tangent Story* relies on *The Denouement* to *The Main Story* and *vice versa.*

We have illustrated a similar case in the *Medea.* But in this play *promises* of assistance between *Main* and *Tangent Stories* were exchanged only. Ægeus promises sanctuary in exchange for potions. In *Cymon and Ephigenia* the bargain between *Main* and *Tangent Story* is essential for the action of either story to reach a *Denouement.* Each story bears directly upon *The Intention* of the other story. In the *Medea The Tangent Story* might be eliminated and the action would not be affected, *The Intention* would not be interfered with: actually the story of Ægeus could be regarded as tertiary matter. In the story from *The Decameron, The Main Story* without the aid of the tangent must end in *Catastrophe.*

From the foregoing examples we shall be able to outline the various types of *Tangent Story.*

In its simplest form it is an *Intention* which crosses another *Intention,* and, whether achieving its own *Intention* or not, achieves an unforeseen ending to the main story which it crosses.

In *The Last Leaf, The Tangent Story* not only achieves an end for *The Main Story* which it crosses, but it achieves an end for its own story.

In *Hamlet, The Tangent Story* of the pirate ship achieves an end for *The Main Story* by bringing Hamlet back to Denmark. It's own end (piracy) is lost sight of.

A slightly more complicated form is shown where the tangent *Intention* cuts into the main *Intention,* and,

becoming complicated with it and involved in the main action, works with it toward a parallel *Denouement*, that is, a *Denouement* which is common to both *Main* and *Tangent Stories*. This has been illustrated by the story of *Cymon and Ephigenia*, where Lysimachus bargains with Cymon.

A modification of this form is seen where the tangent *Intention* cuts into the main *Intention*, and after bargaining with it, passes on its way, both *Denouements* having been affected. This is illustrated by the *Medea*—if Ægeus' promise can be said to affect even indirectly Medea's *Intention*.

A final modification occurs when the tangent *Intention* cuts into the main *Intention* and, losing sight of its own end, becomes absorbed in *The Intention* of *The Main Story*.

This we have seen occur in the story of *Theodoro and Violante* at that point where Theodoro's father recognizes him and desires to save his son; we have seen it happen in *Œdipus Rex*, where The Messenger comes from Corinth to tell Œdipus that he is to be proclaimed king, and remains to assist in the unravelling of *The Main Story*; we have seen it happen in the *Alcestis*, where Heracles leaves his own affairs to aid Admetus; and we have seen it in the *Andromache*, where Orestes, on his way to Dodona, becomes entangled in the Hermione story.

But in our concentration on *The Tangent Story* technique we must not lose sight of the fact that it is merely an interest heightener. It is introduced at that moment in the development of *The Main Story* when increased interest is most necessary—when the story is about to fuse action, *Theme* and *Intention* into *Significance*.

Unless *The Tangent Story* actually assists the heightening of the interest at this crucial point, it is worthless—less than worthless, for the introduction of a new story with all the necessary explanations at the climax of *The Main*

Story must achieve considerable effect to warrant its inclusion.

If a character already in *The Main Story* can quite as well achieve the function which *The Tangent Story* fulfills, the author is sinning against the law of economy by the introduction of a tangent.

On the other hand, if the author has a character in his story which is only to be used at the end, for the purpose of heightening the final incident, and who is kept before the reader throughout the story only for this purpose, it would be economical to eliminate this character from *The Main Story* and to use him as the leading character of a *Tangent Story*.

The great importance which attaches itself to the *Tangent Story*, lies in its power of being foreshortened. A full-length short story is telescoped into a few incidents which suggest the wealth of thousands of words, given in a few hundred words. It enriches the total effect in a way that no other method can achieve. But it has its dangers. Lack of economy, we have seen, is one of them.

There is the danger also of the reader's concentration being distracted from *The Main Story* to *The Tangent Story*. This is more to be feared when *The Tangent Story* cuts into *The Main Story* early in the action, and for a time runs parallel with it. We have an illustration in the *Medea*. If the *Ægeus Intention* had been developed to a point of interest as great as the Medea *Intention*, even though infinitely less space was given to it, there would have been a conflict of interests in the reader's mind. If the *Ægeus Intention* had been further stressed, there would have been grave danger of the reader transferring his interest from the main *Intention* to the tangent *Intention*.

So one of the laws of *The Tangent Story* would appear to be that the tangent *Intention* must be kept subsidiary to the main *Intention*.

In *The Last Leaf* it is not the painting of the masterpiece which must be stressed, for this is *The Intention* of *The*

Tangent Story. It is *The Intention* of the dying woman which must be stressed, for this is *The Intention* of *The Main Story*.

In *The Matron of Ephesus* an example occurs of *The Tangent Story*, when a mishandling of the technique would have resulted in making *The Intention* of *The Tangent Story* of greater interest than *The Intention* of *The Main Story*. The latter concerns the Matron and the Roman soldier, and up to the point where the tangent is introduced, the interest lies in the conflict between the loyalty of the widow to her dead husband, and her newly-awakened interest in the soldier.

The tangent introduces the relatives of a crucified man, and the angle of view of the reader is suddenly shifted from *The Intention* of the widow to *The Intention* of the crucified man's relatives. The story value of relatives who come to cut down a crucified man for burial while the guard is temporarily absent, is undoubtedly high; and if this tangent had not been foreshortened, the reader might have become more interested in the relatives than in the problem of the widow. But *The Intention* of the tangent is not allowed to dominate. It is dismissed in a few words:

> The parents of one of the thieves who had been crucified, perceiving that the soldier was not strictly guarding the crosses, took down the body of their son and buried it.

Just a strict statement of fact. Restricted in this manner, foreshortened into insignificance, the tangent *Intention* has not time to awaken the reader's interest and divert it from *The Main Intention*.

A glance at the main incidents of the story will further illustrate the necessity for deft handling:

1. The Matron follows the corpse of her husband into the sepulchre.
2. She lives for days without food.

3. The Provincial Governor crucifies certain thieves and sets a soldier to guard them.
4. The soldier goes to the widow in the sepulchre.

Tangent: The parents of one of the thieves cut down the crucified body and bury it.

5. The soldier discovers the theft.
6. The Matron tells the soldier to take her husband's body and put it on the vacant cross.

The technique by which so important an occurrence as the removal of the crucified body is foreshortened into a sentence, is worthy of some study. It will be seen that this incident is part of *The Essential Situation* of the story. This *Essential Situation*, or nucleus around which a story is developed, is formed by those incidents alone, without which the story could not have been told.

The Primary Intention of *The Matron of Ephesus* is the desire of the widow to remain loyal to her dead husband. *The Essential Situation* is a compound of those incidents which are the original inspiration of the story. They may be stated thus:

1. The widow going to the sepulchre with her dead husband.
2. A Roman soldier guarding a crucified man.
3. Relatives of the crucified man cutting down their kinsman and burying him.

Without the dead husband *The Intention* would not be set in motion. Without the Roman soldier it would not have failed. Without the disappearance of The Crucified Man it would not have been proved to the reader to exactly what extent *The Intention* had failed.

This further test of the value of the tangent by means of the check of *The Essential Situation*, should be applied whenever there is a doubt concerning the necessity for a *Tangent Story*.

If the tangent forms part of *The Essential Situation* it may surely be regarded as essential to the story.

In the *Medea* the tangent which concerns the Ægeus *Intention* does not form part of *The Essential Situation.* In *Œdipus Rex,* the tangent which concerns The Stranger is necessary to the unravelling of the mystery, and so it forms part of *The Essential Situation.* In the story of *Cymon and Ephigenia* the tangent which concerns Lysimachus and his *Intention,* and which brings a *Denouement* to *The Main Story,* does form part of *The Essential Situation.* The same reasoning applies to the tangents in *Theodoro and Violante, The Last Leaf,* the *Alcestis* and possibly to the *Andromache.*

There are, then, three factors necessary for the effective use of *The Tangent Story*: (*a*) An *Ostensible End*; (*b*) a second *Intention* which crosses *The Main Intention* and alters its direction; (*c*) a link interest which joins the one *Intention* with the other.

The rules governing the use of *The Tangent Story* would appear to be: (*a*) that it must achieve its end more economically than could have been achieved by any other method; (*b*) that *The Intention* of the tangent must be subordinated to *The Intention* of *The Main Story*; (*c*) that the tangent must form part of *The Essential Situation* of the story regarded as a unity.

If the tangent subscribes to these rules, it can be one of the most effective methods for ensuring a clear-cut *Significance.*

It is sometimes condemned as a method, on account of what is called the trickery of it; the fusing of two stories which have no logical connection with each other, and which at their junction break the law of consequential sequence. Others have called it an arbitrary technical device without philosophical justification.

To consider these condemnations in their order: all technical devices are tricks whereby the artist achieves an impression of unity. The building of a Doric temple

necessitated many such tricks—pillars thickened toward the middle to give the impression of straightness, etc.

The tangent and *The Main Story* are not fused at the sacrifice of the law of consequential sequence. The *link* between the two stories necessitates a consequential sequence.

If *The Main Story* is followed incident by incident to the point at which the tangent is introduced, it will be seen that the incident introducing such a tangent *must* lead naturally out of the sequence of incidents composing *The Main Story*. Further, unless the incident introducing the tangent is a consequential sequent of the previous incidents, the rule concerning *The Tangent Story* and its connection with *The Essential Situation* will have been broken.

In *The Last Leaf* the introduction of the painter, Behrman, into *The Main Story* of the dying woman, is a consequential sequence, on account of the link interest between the two stories, the friend of the dying woman who uses Behrman as a model. Behrman, knowing the sick girl's need, and recognizing in this need his own chance to paint the long-deferred masterpiece, does so and effects a *Denouement* to *The Main Story* through a consequential sequence of incidents.

In *The Matron of Ephesus* the incident which introduces the tangent is again a consequential sequent, for the Roman soldier has deserted his post and, naturally, the relatives who are watching will cut down their kinsman.

In *Cymon and Ephigenia* the introduction of the tangent is again a consequence of a previous incident, for Lysimachus offers a *Denouement* to *The Main Story* in return for a *Denouement* to the tangent. Having Cymon in his power, and in consequence of this, he knows that in offering him the girl he loves as a bribe, Lysimachus himself will attain his own desire.

Thus *The Tangent Story* and *The Main Story must* be fused according to the laws of Consequential Sequence.

Because the tangent method has been used by authors who have not fully realized its dangers, it would seem illogical to expel it from a literary technique. And it has also its philosophical basis.

We have already seen in our consideration of *The Parallel Story* how the leading character in a *Main Story* may at the same time play a small part in a subsidiary story—and thus alter *The Main Story*. If we consider that each character in life is playing a multitude of small parts in the comedies of his associates, at the same time that he is playing the leading part in his own comedy, it will not be difficult to foresee that the comedies in which he acts such small parts will have their influence upon his own comedy in which he is playing a leading role.

If ' A,' the main character in the main story plays also a subordinate part in ' B's ' story, then it would appear natural for ' B's ' story to act as a *Tangent Story* to ' A's ' story and to influence its development. If, moreover, ' A ' should be lacking in force and ' B ' should be a dominant personality, it would seem probable that ' B ' in achieving his own ends would utilize ' A ' for his own advantage, and possibly force a *Denouement* on ' A's ' story which ' A ' could not have achieved for himself.

With Cymon in prison and Ephigenia about to be married to his rival, this is what happens in the story of *Cymon and Ephigenia*, when Lysimachus, the stronger power at the moment, cuts across the Cymon story.

Thus, philosophically, *The Tangent Story* is beyond reproach, and, as we have seen from the above example, has its roots fast in human nature.

But *The Tangent Story* must stand or fall, not as a technical device which can justify itself by an appeal to nature, but as a method of heightening the interest toward the close of a story, that *The Significance* may illuminate the mind of the reader. For *Significance* is the pearl of great price. It satisfies the desire in man for that inherent harmony which lies beyond the discordant chaos in which

he lives. Significance is the shadow of the cosmic on the pathway of the materialist. Professor Abercrombie, in his introduction to *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study*, writes:

> It matters not at all what material be used, so long as it is used to give the complete satisfaction, the final employment, to imaginative desire; for that brings consciousness to its highest sense of mastery. What does matter is the form given to the material; it can only be by a rigorous and exquisite order that the metaphysic of art, the ethically-formed sense of temporal things irresistibly wielded by eternal things, can become expressed and symbolized throughout the whole of a work of art. . . .

It is the search for this 'rigorous and exquisite order' which has led us to concentrate so long upon the fusion of two distinct stories and their tangent effect, in order that *The Significance*, 'that ethically formed sense of temporal things irresistibly wielded by eternal things' may 'be expressed and symbolized throughout the whole of a work of art. . . .'

Chapter Nine

THE NEGATIVE FORM

Through the earlier parts of the book we have been dealing with stories in which each incident is modified by an *Intention*. If, however, we glance at random through the world's literature, taking up a story here and there, we shall discover that some of the plots are not dominated by such an *Intention*.

Instead of the leading character dominating circumstances, we have that type of story where circumstances dominate the leading character. Such a type of character is frequently seen in life, so we shall naturally expect to find his counterpart in literature. Sometimes we shall find it playing a leading role.

There are two types of this negative character which we must expect to find, and which we must learn to recognize if we are to avoid attempting to analyse a *Negative Story* by a *Positive Method*.

The first of these types is the strong, dominant personality, who by force of circumstances *alone* is thrust into a defensive attitude toward life, and whilst battling with a stronger force than himself, can have no *Intention*, but only a hope 'that somehow good will be the final goal of ill.'

Such a character Shelley presents in *Prometheus Unbound*:

> Prometheus: . . . Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
> And moments aye divided by keen pangs
> Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
> Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire:—

More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The positive force leashed under a negative restraint is the keynote of this type. Defeat is sounded from the depths of a soul scourged by the thongs of destiny. The same note, modified by a difference in the character of the man, is heard again in *Job*:

But Job answered and said,

2. Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

3. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

4. For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

. . . . . .

8. Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!

9. Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

. . . . . .

10. What *is* my strength, that I should hope? and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life? (Job vi. 1-11.)

This note of thwarted positivity can be heard in each stricken hero of this class. It is almost a definite sign to the reader that the character and his story belong to *The Negative Method.* Listen for the note once again in Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet, that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

There is not necessarily weakness apparent in a character of this type, although there may well be.

He may be a man of great strength of purpose who is faced by a problem too difficult for him to master. It is all a matter of the difficulty of the test which the character is called upon to undergo. A strong character may be thrust negative at one time by a circumstance which at another time he would master with comparative ease.

A Lear may lose his positivity through a Goneril and a Regan, when an army of mail-clad warriors would fail to throw him negative. A Judas may remain positive until life tests him a fraction beyond his power of resistance, when he is thrust negative. This type of character is positive until life drives him into a negative attitude.

The second type with which we shall have to deal falls into two sub-divisions: (*a*) the character who plays a negative role in life owing to the exigencies of the story calling out this side of the nature to the exclusion of the more positive side; and (*b*) the character who plays a negative role owing to the negativity of the character.

An illustration of the former is Roderigo in *Othello*; an illustration of the latter is Ophelia. We shall treat this type, which may be, as in the first instance, only weak in so far as we know him, or as in the second, inherently weak—as one single type. And we will use Ophelia as the prototype:

OPHELIA: Alas! my lord, I have been so affrighted.
POLONIUS: With what, i' the name of God?
OPHELIA: My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.
POLONIUS: Mad for thy love?
OPHELIA: My lord, I do not know;
But truly I do fear it.

. . . . .

POLONIUS: ...What! have you given him any hard words of late?
OPHELIA: No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

Here are not the thunders of a giant writhing under the scourge of destiny, but a character which would seem to fall naturally into a negative attitude toward its companions. Contrast Ophelia with Miranda, and the latter will show Ophelia's negativity. Contrast Ophelia with Portia, Lady Macbeth, Calpurnia, and her negativity will be obvious to the point of absurdity.

Another negative character of this class is Boccaccio's Griselda:[1]

> . . . so he began with harsh words, and an appearance of great uneasiness; telling her that his subjects were greatly displeased with her for her mean parentage, especially as they saw she bore children; and that they did nothing but murmur at the daughter already born. Which, when she heard, without changing countenance or her resolution in any respect, she replied, "My lord, pray dispose of me as you think most for your honour and happiness: I shall entirely acquiesce, knowing myself to be meaner than the meanest of the people, and that I was altogether unworthy of that dignity to which your favour was pleased to advance me."

The negativity of Griselda is more stressed than the

[1] *The Decameron*: Chatto and Windus.

negativity of Ophelia, but the kinship is obvious. Euripides' *Alcestis*[1] is also of this type:

ALCESTIS.

Admetus, seeing what way my fortunes lie,
I fain would speak with thee before I die.
I have set thee before all things; yea, mine own
Life beside thine was naught. For this alone
I die. . . . Dear Lord, I never need have died.
I might have lived to wed some prince of pride,
Dwell in a king's house. . . .

But there is here a faint note of the Prometheus, which perhaps makes Alcestis a mixture of the two types.

These two types of leading characters: (*a*) the strong personality labouring under too heavy a yoke; (*b*) the weaker character falling negative to circumstances, must now be considered in relation to form. That they can have no dominating *Intention* would appear to be proved. Their energies are subservient to a stronger force than their own *Intentions*.

If this 'stronger force' should be another character in the story, then the leading character thus driven is a leading character only in name. It must then be considered whether this subordinate character which is driving the leading character, is not the true leading character.

We have an illustration of this in *Othello*. The Moor would appear to be the leading character, but soon we discover that *The Intention* which dominates the action of the play is in the mind of Iago. This character in dominating the play with his *Intention* also dominates The Moor.

IAGO: . . . Cassio's a proper man; let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery; how, how? Let's see:
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife. . . .
(Act I, Scene III.)

[1] Translated by Gilbert Murray: George Allen and Unwin.

Iago awakens jealousy in Othello's heart as part of his *Intention*, and then dominates Othello through this jealousy; so Othello is a character in the Iago *Main Story*. Thus, we find that in this play we have a Negative Leading Character which would appear to call for a *Negative Form*, while, at the same time, we have a Positive *Intention* governing the action of the play.

In those stories where a positive *Intention* dominates the action, the form would appear to be positive, whether the leading character is negative or not.

In the majority of cases where there is a negative leading character, there is, however, no positive *Intention* dominating the story. Anatole France's story, *Crainquebille* will show the pure *Negative Form* in operation. It is the story of a costermonger:

One morning when he is selling greengroceries from his barrow he is told by a policeman to move on. As he happens to be waiting for a customer to make payment for a purchase, he delays. The outcome of the matter is that he is arrested and brought before the magistrate. He is charged with insulting the police, which he had not done, and is fined fifty francs and sent to prison for a fortnight.

When he is released he begins to drink more than was his custom, and soon grows demoralized. His customers desert him, for they will not deal with a man who has been in prison.

At last, driven by cold and hunger, he does insult a policeman that he may be taken back to the gaol, where he was fed and kept warm. But the policeman refuses to arrest him; and Crainquebille, puzzled by the fact that when he did not insult the law he was punished for it, but now that he *has* insulted the law it refuses to punish him—goes his way baffled by life.

If we analyse the incidents of this story, we shall discover that although the leading character is fate-driven and has no definite *Intention*, yet the incidents follow each

other in a natural chain, each incident being a consequence of the incidents before it.

Although we may, at the moment, be unable to decide what the power is that keeps the incidents directed toward a goal, yet there must be, we feel, a kind of directive force similar to *The Intention* of *The Positive Form.*

If we look closely into the construction of the story we shall be able to discover signs of *Primary Incidents.* For instance, in Crainquebille's ending we sense that inevitable disaster which we have learnt to associate (often wrongly !) with *Catastrophe.* In his arrest there is a suggestion of *The Barrier* to some desire, hope or vague *Intention.* In the court scene, which we have not commented on in detail, Crainquebille is almost acquitted, and this gives an appearance of *Crisis.*

If we set down these apparent *Primary Incidents* and glance again through the story we may be able to discover the power which drives the leading character onward to a pre-arranged goal:

Barrier: Crainquebille is arrested.
Crisis: He is almost acquitted.
Catastrophe: He is destitute through his conviction, and fails to get arrested a second time.

As out first *Primary Incident* is *The Barrier,* we must next seek for an incident which may stand for a *Reversal of The Barrier,* and we find this in Doctor David Matthieu who witnessed the episode and the arrest, and told the policeman that he had *not* been insulted—and in the fatuous young counsel who defends Crainquebille.

The Crisis we have already discovered.

The Reversal of The Crisis occurs immediately after, when the magistrate sentences Crainquebille.

Developing the form to this point, we now have:

Barrier: Crainquebille is arrested for insulting the law.

Reversal: (*a*) He is defended.
(*b*) Doctor Matthieu testifies that he did not insult the policeman.
Crisis: He is on the point of being acquitted.
Reversal: He is fined and imprisoned.
Catastrophe: He fails to get himself re-arrested.

So again in *The Negative Form*, as in *The Positive Form* we have a *Line of Action* composed of precisely the same type of incident. And if the tale had continued by showing Crainquebille's finding peace from his troubles, the end would have been, as in a *Positive Story*, a *Denouement*.

But we have not yet discovered what the thread is which links the incidents in *The Negative Form*, and is a parallel factor to *The Intention* of *The Positive Form*.

In *Crainquebille* this factor is perhaps less apparent than in some of the Greek stories. In *The Trojan Women*[1] of Euripides, the play opens with Troy in the hands of the Argive victors, and the Trojan women, who have not yet been apportioned to the conquerors, are awaiting news of their masters:

POSEIDON: The groves are empty and the sanctuaries
Run red with blood. Unburied Priam lies
By his own hearth, on God's high alter-stair,
And Phrygian gold goes forth and raiment rare
To the Argive ships; and weary soldiers roam
Waiting the wind that blows at last for home,
For wives and children, left long years away,
Beyond the seed's tenth fulness and decay,
To work this land's undoing. . . .
And others yet there are,
High women, chosen from the waste of war
For the great kings, behind these portals hid. . . .

The note of the opening of the play is, of course, one of misery and despair. But the form of the work will

[1] Translation by Gilbert Murray: George Allen (1905).

depend to a great extent upon whether the action is to deal mainly with the Trojan captives, or with the Argive victors. In the former case (and the title of the work would lead us to anticipate this) the form would in all probability be *Negative*. In the latter case, *Positive*.

As we have already anticipated, *The Trojan Women* is an example of *The Negative Form*.

The leading character, Hecuba, wife of the conquered and dead Priam, is stricken by her fate and admits her negativity when she sees her grandson, Astyanax, taken away to be murdered:

HECUBA: O Child, they rob us of our own,
Child of my Mighty One outworn:
Ours, ours thou art!—Can aught be done
Of deeds, can aught of pain be borne,
To aid thee?—Lo, this beaten head,
This bleeding bosom! These I spread
As gifts to thee. I can thus much.
Woe, woe for Troy, and woe for thee!
What fall yet lacketh, ere we touch
The last dead deep of misery?

In face of such complete misery it would seem that there was no place in the human heart for desire or hope. And yet this is only a seeming, or Hecuba would not be the leading character of the play. No dramatist would consider making a heroine of a woman whose feelings were so atrophied that she *literally* could feel no more. Such a character would be dramatically impotent.

Hecuba, in spite of her gloom-stricken mind, with her husband dead, her city in the hands of the Argives, her daughters the prey of the lust of soldiers, can still suffer when she learns to whom she, herself, has been apportioned:

HECUBA: Beat, beat the crownless head:
Rend the cheek till the tears run red!
A lying man and a pitiless
Shall be lord of me, a heart full-flown
With scorn of righteousness:

O heart of a beast where law is none,
Where all things change so that lust be fed,
The oath and the deed, the right and the wrong,
Even the hate of the forkèd tongue:
Even the hate turns and is cold,
False as the love that was false of old!
O Women of Troy, weep for me!
Yea, I am gone: I am gone my ways.
Mine is the crown of misery,
The bitterest day of all our days.

This speech indicates that there is still a dominant emotion in the heart of Hecuba, which is being played upon by the incidents which are to make her, her children and her countrywomen, outcasts.

But what is this emotion? It is decidedly not an *Intention*, for Hecuba admits that she has no power to alter circumstance.

If we glance back to the illustrations we gave of the negative type of character, and read the quotation from *Job*, we shall find the sentence: 'What *is* my strength, that I should hope?' If we, further, glance at the quotation from *The Hound of Heaven*, we shall find a similar comment on hope: 'Up vistaed hopes I sped.'

Now, both *Job* and the hunted man in Francis Thompson's poem are negative characters suffering the scourge of God. Both are driven negative to a power stronger than they. The same applies to Hecuba in *The Trojan Women*, and Pope tells us in his *Essay on Man*:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.

Hope is the thread which strings the incidents of *The Negative Form*, in the same way that *The Intention* links the incidents of *The Positive Form*.

If now we reconsider our short analysis of *Crainquebille*, and in the space where *The Intention* appears in *The Positive Form*, we write: *Negative Hope*, we should have a simple analysis of the story.

As an example of *The Negative Form* we will set down *The Primary Incidents* of *The Trojan Women*:

Negative Hope: Hecuba hopes to avoid the worst that the Greek conquerors are meting out to the Trojan captives—for herself and her daughters.

Barrier: 1. Her daughter, Cassandra, a virgin of the shrine of Phœbus, is given to Agamemnon as concubine.

2. Her daughter, Polyxena is to become 'a dead man's slave' ministering at the tomb of Achilles.

Reversal:———

Crisis: 1. Cassandra foretells the ruin of Agamemnon.

2. Prophesies that Hecuba shall die in Ilium.

3. Prophesies that Andromache shall take her child, and in her new home rear him to lend stout aid to Ilium.

Reversal: Odysseus has decided that Astyanax must be slain. The news is brought to Hecuba.

Catastrophe: 1. Corpse of Astyanax is brought on Hector's shield.

2. Andromache has been carried off on a Greek ship.

3. Troy is set on fire and the captives are dragged away to slavery.

Professor Gilbert Murray has himself suggested *The Theme*. He writes:

> . . . (this speech) expresses the inmost theme of the whole play, a search for an answer to the injustice of suffering in the very splendour and beauty of suffering . . . to turn it from shame and misery into tragedy. . . .

The speech referred to is the one spoken by Hecuba just before Astyanax is buried:

Lo, I have seen the open hand of God;
And in it nothing, nothing, save the rod
Of mine affliction, and the eternal hate,
Beyond all lands, chosen and lifted great
For Troy! Vain, vain were prayers and incense-swell
And bulls' blood on the altars! . . . All is well.
Had He not turned us in His hand, and thrust
Our high things low and shook our hills as dust,
We had not been this splendour, and our wrong
An everlasting music for the song
Of earth and heaven!

The first point that we note in the analysis is that there is no *Reversal of the Barrier.* There could hardly be one. It is a story of forlorn hopes. But whether the stress is upon the *Hope* itself, or upon the adverse forces against which the hero or heroine is struggling, *The Negative Form* invariably gives us the types of leading character which we have seen in our illustrations.

In this form we are no longer dealing with dominant Macbeths and wayward Antonys—but with dominant and wayward *life-eddies* which create situations and incidents that sweep human nature before them.

Consider the attitude to life of Shelley's Prometheus, of Job, of the hunted man in *The Hound of Heaven*, of Ophelia, Alcestis, Crainquebille and Hecuba, and you will realize that they belong, not to the *doers* of deeds, but to the type that has deeds done to it.

They have much in common with Hamlet.

Remove Hamlet's *Intention*; give the leading *Intention* to the King who desires his death, and Hamlet will be blood-brother of Crainquebille.

We have called the Crainquebille-Prometheus type of character the Negative Type, and the Macbeth-Portia type of character the Positive Type, to show that each type belongs to its distinctive form. But these two types of character are allied to the two broad types of humanity, the Sadists and the Masochists, the Doers and the Done-to,

the Crucifiers and the Crucified. Loosely they illustrate the philosophies of Free Will and Fatalism.

The Negative Characters do not dominate a *Line of Action* by their *Intentions*. Their *Negative Hope* is dominated by *The Line of Action*. The various incidents, instead of being impressed by the characters, impress them; so instead of a *Line of Action*, this type of story has a *Line of Compliance*.

The Negative Form has its *Theme*, its *Primary* and *Secondary Incidents*, its *Significance*, its *Line of Compliance* and, in place of *The Intention* it has a *Negative Hope*.

There is only one danger of any magnitude in the using of this form, and that has already been stated. In *Othello* there is a negative leading character demanding a *Negative Form*; there is also a positive, subordinate character who in dominating this leading negative character by his *Intention*, demands a *Positive Form*.

To analyse *Othello* according to a negative plan would seem to be a misunderstanding of the principles at work behind the forms. Othello can only be the leading character in the play if we cast it into *Negative Form*. And we can only do this if the leading character is negative to Life's actions. This, however, is not the case with Othello. He is not negative to the action of Life, but to the action of Iago.

If Iago could be eliminated from the play, and the author could replace him by a Heavenly Scourge for Othello, this character would then be negative to Life. He would be the sport of the gods, and would need a *Negative Form* through which to express himself. But as he is only the sport of Iago, this latter character must be elevated to the principal role, and his *Intention* must dominate the action.

The rule would appear to be that when both Positive and Negative Characters appear in one story, the Positive will take precedence if *The Positive Intention* dominates *The Negative Character*. The form will then be Positive.

One has only to contrast the positivity of the King and Laertes with the negativity of the Queen and Ophelia, to realize who would dominate in a clash of wills.

The dominant character, therefore, will thrust his form on the story.

And at this point we may interpolate a warning concerning form in general. We have stressed the need for form, so that the amorphous may be made shapely and symmetry may enter more fully into works of literature. Form, we have seen, is a language where symbols convey to the imagination of the reader, truths, far more effectively than words can be made to do. But form, with its suggestive *Theme* and *Significance*, is a language so subtle that the mind of man cannot yet fathom more than a fraction of its implications. With form, we talk in the symbolism of pictures, instead of in ideas; by suggestion instead of by direct statement, by *Significance* instead of by stated moral.

But usually life balances our gains by our losses. There is the danger of this loss, if form be too highly developed at the expense of inspiration. Bernard Bosanquet writes: [1]

> There is a naive apprehension of a profound truth in the familiar saying of Herodotus, that Homer and Hesiod made the Hellenic theogony, and determined the forms and attributes of the gods for Hellenic belief (Herodotus ii. 53). The full force of this reflection is measured by the interval between the early wooden image and the Phidian statue, or between the superstition of the savage and Antigone's conception of duty. It was in the world of fine art that Hellenic genius had mainly recorded, and, in recording, had created, this transformation.

But with the gain comes the loss. Something of naturalness and simplicity will have faded from the idea with the coming of the Phidian statue, with the coming of Antigone's elaborate ethical system. There is something in the early wooden image, in the superstition of the savage, that Phidias and Antigone overlooked. There

[1] *History of Æsthetic*: George Allen and Unwin.

is something in *Beowulf* that even Shakespeare did not understand.

Something of the primitiveness of the early wooden image clings to the idea of the Russian Andreyev, in his short story *Lazarus*.[1] It is also a striking example of *The Negative Form*.

It deals with Lazarus after he has been raised from the dead:

> That which was new in Lazarus' face and gestures they explained naturally, as the traces of his severe illness and the shock he had passed through. It was evident that the disintegration of the body had been halted by a miraculous power, but that the restoration had not been complete. . . .
>
> Thus it was that Lazarus sat at the festive table among his friends and relatives—his face the face of a corpse over which, for three days, death had reigned in darkness, his garments gorgeous and festive, glittering with gold, bloody-red and purple; his mien heavy and silent. . . .

And someone asks Lazarus what lies beyond the tomb, and he is silent with the sinister silence of one who has been disillusioned:

> This was on the third day after Lazarus had arisen from the grave. Since then many had felt that his gaze was the gaze of destruction, but neither those who had been forever crushed by it, nor those who in the prime of life (mysterious even as death) had found the will to resist his glance, could ever explain the terror that lay immovable in the depths of his black pupils. . . .

This feeling of death which appals the onlooker is mirrored in the eyes of Lazarus as an expression of *The Horrible . . . the unfathomable there.*

Lazarus is shunned, and only the children who bring him food are indifferent to him. No visitor, attracted by his story, who comes to gaze on him, goes away quite as he arrived. '*Darkness and Empty Space*' seem to be about them in a place where '*Man trembled hopelessly before the dread of the Infinite.*'

[1] *Best Russian Short Stories*. Compiled and Edited by Thomas Seltzer: Boni and Liveright, New York.

A Roman sculptor, Aurelius, hears of Lazarus and comes to pay him a visit. He is dissatisfied with his own powers of expression. On his return home his family is shocked at the change in him. He tells them that he has found what he sought. He begins to work and eventually shows the result of his labour:

> " Here is what I have created," he said thoughtfully.
> His friends looked, and immediately the shadow of a deep sorrow covered their faces. It was a thing monstrous. . . . On a thin, tortuous little branch, or rather an ugly likeness of one, lay crooked, strange, unsightly, shapeless heaps of something turned outside in. . . .
> . . . And only after they spoke to him much and long of beauty, he would reply wearily:
> " But all this is—a lie."

Lazarus is commanded to Rome to appear before Augustus.

A drunken courtier meets him with a smile and a request for Lazarus to drink with him. ' But the drunkard looked into the eyes of Lazarus—and his joy ended forever.' A youth and his beloved meet the death-stricken eyes and their love becomes mournful as they realize the more vividly ' a sense of their slavery to the silent Nothing.' A sage greets Lazarus. ' And the boundaries between knowledge and ignorance, between truth and falsehood, faded, and his shapeless thought suspended in emptiness.'

Before Lazarus is presented to the Emperor he is given over to the *coiffeurs*:

> . . . expert painters, barbers, and artists were secured who worked the whole night on Lazarus' head, his beard was trimmed and curled. The disagreeable and deadly blueishness of his hands were whitened, his cheeks rouged. The disgusting wrinkles of suffering that ridged his old face were patched up and painted, and on the smooth surface, wrinkles of good nature and laughter, and of pleasant good-humoured cheeriness, were laid artistically with fine brushes . . . they could not change his eyes—the dark, terrible eyes from out of which stared the incomprehensible *There*.

Augustus commands Lazarus to look at him:

> At first it seemed to divine Augustus as if a friend were looking at him, so soft, so alluring, so gently fascinating was the gaze of Lazarus. It promised not horror but quiet rest, and the Infinite dwelt there as a fond mistress, a compassionate sister, a mother. And ever stronger grew its gentle embrace, until he felt, as it were, the breath of a mouth hungry for kisses. . . . Then it seemed as if iron bones protruded in a ravenous grip, and closed upon him in an iron band; and cold nails touched his heart, and slowly, slowly sank into it.

And Augustus has a vision of Rome falling into ruins, of kingdoms as they 'swiftly fell and disappeared into emptiness—swallowed up in the black maw of the Infinite. . . .' And next day, by order of Augustus, the eyes of Lazarus are burned out, and he is sent home.

For the nights of Augustus are haunted by horror. And as Lazarus stumbles blindly on his way through the desert 'against the red curtain of sunset, his dark form and outstretched arms gave him the semblance of a cross.'

So the story of Lazarus ends.

The main technical interest that it has for us is the negativity of the leading character. Throughout he is quiescent, acted-upon. This gives him his kinship with the other characters of his class, Prometheus, Hecuba, etc.

And yet, in spite of this negativity, Lazarus is perhaps the character of all characters most embodied with power, that the mind of man can conceive. He alone knows the secret of death.

In exactly what manner a *Hope* would fashion itself in a mind so magnified, no lesser mind could imagine. But Lazarus with the power of blighting with his eyes as death blights, could not be indifferent to *Hope*.

Before his gaze the divine Augustus pales. The blight of his glance must tell him of his power—unique power, as artists lose their sense of beauty, lovers their happiness, drunkards their serenity. *Hope* cannot be absent

from a man whose influence is so vast. But *Hope* in what . . .?

If we analyse the story, we shall visualize a series of *Crises*—if we regard Lazarus' *Hope* as being concentrated on a full expression of his power over men. We shall visualize a series of *Catastrophes*—if we assume his *Hope* to be focused on losing the blight of death in his eyes.

So negatively has the author drawn this character of Lazarus, that we have small means of discovering whether Lazarus is desirous of expressing his power or not. Perhaps we should be near the truth if we assume that Lazarus is indifferent to the pain he causes, and too greatly concerned with his fearful experience to turn outward eyes that have been introverted by a terrible shock to the soul.

But form demands that we know his attitude to life, so that *The Line of Negative Hope* may be drawn with certainty, or *The Line of Intention.*

Then we must proceed logically: either this character is *Intention* driven, *Hope* driven, or is indifferent to both. In the first case the story must be analysed by *The Positive Method*; in the second case by *The Negative Method*, in the third case by *The Picaresque Method*, which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

If we decide to view the story from Lazarus' *Hope*, that the strange power which is his, will continue; then the various incidents will, as we have said, be *Crises*; for each encounter with the other characters in the story will show the possession of his power.

If we decide that Lazarus is dominated by a *Hope* that the power may lose its potency, then the series of incidents will be *Catastrophes*, for each encounter will stress the proof of the very power he desires to be rid of.

It is such problems as these that test the efficacy of forms of literature, and throw into high-lights their

inconsistences. The creative spirit, in whose service they are formed, must be the final court of appeal for form in all its manifestations. And if form fails to include one single example of an expression of this creative spirit, then form is at fault and must be remodelled.

The search for form is the search for the symmetries which the imagination traces.

Positive Form, we have seen, is rigid in its demand for a specific *Intention*. *Negative Form* is not so insistent, for *The Hope* need not be specifically stated. Sometimes it is not specifically known.

A leading Negative Character may be so harassed by life that he can scarcely formulate a *Hope*, and can only feel a negative desire for the scourge of life to fall less often about its shoulders.

And possibly this vague *Hope* would meet the case of Lazarus.

The statement of a *Hope* in *The Negative Form* is not of the same importance as the statement of an *Intention* in *The Positive Form*. A vague *Intention* can make a *Positive Story* almost meaningless, for the *Intention* being vague, the imprint of it will be vague upon the incidents. A vague *Hope* cannot do this to a *Negative Story*, for it is the incidents which modify *The Hope*, not *The Hope* which modifies the incidents.

With these comments we will leave the story of Lazarus without attempting to thrust our *opinion* upon the reader concerning its *Line of Hope*. It has fulfilled its mission in illustrating a story with a leading Negative Character, and it has given us an opportunity to point out some of the difficulties of negative analysis.

A story with a vague *Negative Hope*, concerning which opinions cannot differ, may be followed in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The story opens with a Wedding Guest being delayed at the door of the church by an Ancient Mariner, who insists on telling his story. The leading character in the

tale is the Mariner himself, and the reader soon realizes that he is a Negative Character:

> The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
> Merrily did we drop
> Below the kirk, below the hill,
> Below the lighthouse top.

The action continues with the coming of the Storm-blast which drives the ship through mist and snow and ice until the Albatross is sighted. Then the good South Wind springs up behind them and the bird follows, feeding from scraps which the sailors throw. At this point the Mariner commits his one positive action, on which the Negative Story is founded:

> God save thee, ancient Mariner!
> From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
> Why lookst thou so?—"With my cross-bow
> I shot the Albatross."

We are given the interpretations the sailors place upon the killing of the bird:

> And I had done an hellish thing,
> And it would work 'em woe:
> For all averred, I had killed the bird,
> That made the breeze to blow.
> Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
> That made the breeze to blow!
>
> Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
> The glorious sun uprist:
> Then all averred, I had killed the bird
> That brought the fog and mist.
> 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
> That bring the fog and mist.

The wind falls and they burst into a silent sea. In the sluggish atmosphere, without wind, short of water, they are plagued by the spirit of the Albatross in their dreams:

> Day after day, day after day,
> We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean.

With the knowledge of his deed the Mariner can, from this point onward, be seen harbouring his hope, vague as yet, that he may be rid of the curse of the Albatross.

The crew suffer from the horrors of thirst, from delusions that the Albatross is following the ship nine fathoms deep. And about the Mariner's neck, in place of the cross, hangs the body of the Albatross.

The story then, deals with a Negative Leading Character, who wishes to be free of his obsession, or, in other words: the Mariner hopes to arrive safely in port.

Negative to circumstances, the sport of supernatural powers, the Mariner stares westward and sights a speck moving through the mist. Day begins to give place to night, and the speck becomes a ship which approaches them. There is a woman aboard, and when the ship comes alongside it is seen that she is playing dice with her partner and claiming that she has won. As the sun's rim dips, the spectre barque vanishes and one by one the crew die.

The Mariner now finds himself alone in mid-ocean with his dead companions. Their eyes curse him, and he cannot shake himself free from their glances. Suddenly he sees live things in the water:

> O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare:
> A spring of love gushed from my heart,
> And I blessed them unaware. . . .

The prayer, gushing unaware from his heart, frees the Mariner from his curse:

> The selfsame moment I could pray;
> And from my neck so free
> The Albatross fell off, and sank
> Like lead into the sea.

The Mariner sleeps.

When he awakens, having dreamt that the buckets on

the deck are filled with water, he finds that it is raining. He drinks to repletion. The ship begins to move onward without the aid of the winds. The dead men rise up and work the ropes. But the souls of the dead have not returned. A troup of spirits, who sing, as the spirit under the keel steers the ship home, have come to the Mariner's aid.

Presently the ship gives a lurch and the Mariner is thrown to the deck in a swoon. He hears two voices conversing:

> " Is it he? " quoth one. " Is this the man?
> By him who died on cross,
> With his cruel bow he laid full low
> The harmless Albatross.
>
> " The spirit who bideth by himself
> In the land of mist and snow,
> He loved the bird that loved the man
> Who shot him with his bow."
>
> The other was a softer voice,
> As soft as honey-dew:
> Quoth he, " The man hath penance done,
> And penance more will do."

The Mariner then sees the dead men standing together and he cannot move his eyes from theirs, for he knows that the ' pang ' and the ' curse ' with which they died is with them still. At last the wind rises and the ship flies onward. The Mariner sees the lighthouse-top and the kirk of his own country-side. Home is in sight. *The Hope* that has been almost stifled within him breaks out:

> Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
> The light-house top I see?
> Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
> Is this mine own countree?

He sees a seraph-band standing over the corpses of the seamen.

The pilot-boat comes alongside with the Hermit on board, and the Mariner greets him with a cry of joy:

> He singeth loud his godly hymns
> That he makes in the wood.
> He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
> The Albatross's blood.

There is a loud noise as the Hermit approaches. The ship sinks and the Mariner finds himself in the water of the harbour, being dragged aboard the pilot-boat. The Hermit asks what manner of man he is, and the Mariner tells his story. In this confession of his sin he finds peace:

> Since then, at an uncertain hour,
> That agony returns:
> And till my ghastly tale is told,
> This heart within me burns.

The wedding is over and the guests approach with the bride and bridegroom. The Mariner then, unfortunately, and contrary to the law of *Significance*, states The Moral of the tale, which is already clear, from the influence of *The Theme* on the incidents, and from *The Significance*:

> Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
> To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
> He prayeth well, who loveth well,
> Both man and bird and beast.
>
> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

The Ancient Mariner has not been betrayed by his *Hope*. He arrives safely in harbour.

If we analyse this story we shall find that the incidents fall perfectly into *The Negative Form*:

Negative Hope: The Mariner hopes to be freed from the curse of the Albatross and to reach port safely.

Barrier: He is becalmed in a silent sea.
Reversal: The Albatross falls from his neck, as a prayer gushes from his heart.
Crisis: The dead arise to work the ship by the aid of 'the troop of spirits blest.'
Reversal: The Mariner is cast into a swoon.
Catastrophe: He is cast into the harbour as the ship sinks.
Denouement: He is rescued by the pilot-boat and shrieved by the Hermit.

The Negative Form is sufficiently clear without any comment. It has shown us in this story that the leading character is operated upon throughout by circumstance, and in no case operates upon circumstance except in the one instance of the slaying of the Albatross. The problem aroused by the story, and hence its interest to the reader, is: In what way will this character react to this incident? and not, as in *The Positive Form*: What incident will be the outcome of this character's mood?

Hecuba gives us a hint of this in *The Trojan Women*,[1] where she says:

> Death cannot be what Life is, Child; the cup
> Of Death is empty, and Life hath always hope.

And Andromache in the same play:

> There liveth not in my life any more
> The hope that others have. Nor will I tell
> The lie to mine own heart, that aught is well
> Or shall be well. . . . Yet, O, to dream were sweet![1]

This *Negative Hope*, the stronger, the more the character feels that the scourge of destiny is but a passing thing, can fade until only the vaguest sensation of interest is left.

Bernard Bosanquet in his *History of Æsthetic*[2] writes:

> In the Shakespearian drama the character is made to work itself out inevitably, exhibiting and accepting in itself the consequences of its action.

[1] Gilbert Murray's translation. [2] George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

This would seem to be an excellent summary of The Positive Character in its *Positive Form.*

> But if the connection between character and issues is lost, and the story becomes one of pure innocence oppressed by the chances of a hostile world, then the tragic element is destroyed, and the effect is no longer tragic, but an idle or futile melancholy or horror.

'Pure innocence oppressed by the chances of a hostile world' is also an excellent summary of The Negative Character in its *Negative Form.* But it would seem that Mr Bosanquet arrives at a different conclusion from his facts than has been arrived at in this book. So far as we have been able to judge from *The Negative Form* it would not appear that the tragic element is destroyed when this method is used, neither would *The Trojan Women,* the character of Othello, *The Ancient Mariner, The Hound of Heaven* or the book of *Job* appear to be 'idle or futile melancholy or horror.' But some such phrase *might* apply to Ophelia.

The Negative Form appears to have been greatly misunderstood. Prometheus, Job, Hecuba and their kin may be oppressed by the outside world, in exactly the same manner that Ophelia and Griselda may be oppressed—but this does not make their characters similar. The former are strong, positive forces who have found life stronger than themselves—but who have not lost their individuality or their courage. The latter are Negative Characters who would naturally fall negative to any display of positivity. As these are weaker and more negative in character than the others, there is naturally not the same tragic potentiality in them as in their more positive counterparts.

To scourge Ophelia to a point of madness and suicide (in a play where she is a leading character) *might* be regarded as 'an idle or futile melancholy or horror.' But to scourge Prometheus to the same action might

well be to reiterate *The Theme*, which Professor Gilbert Murray gives us, to *The Trojan Women*:

> . . . a search for an answer to the injustice of suffering in the very splendour and beauty of suffering. . . .

The Negative Form is eminently suited to show the responses of character to circumstance. The Positive Iago is too occupied with his schemes to have time for displays of feeling and emotion on all occasions. *His* character is shown in his actions. The Negative Othello however, displays the most profound emotions as he reacts to Iago's schemes.

It will be noticed that *The Negative Form* follows the scheme of *The Positive Form*, with the exception of *The Negative Hope* in place of *The Intention* and *The Line of Compliance* for *The Line of Action*.

This is an undoubted weakness in the *expression* of a form.

If so great a change takes place in the story when a *Negative Form* usurps *The Positive Form*—when a character changes from an active agent to a passive agent, making *The Line of Action* a *Line of Compliance*—then so great a change should show more clearly in the symbols used. Yet all that is actually shown in the diagram is a change of name and in no case a change of form.

That a greater change is not shown is our confession of impotence, and as Samuel Johnson would have said: 'Ignorance, madame, pure ignorance.' Refuge can only be taken in the difficulties of pioneering in this tangled forest of form, where one may shelter under the, at times voluminous, at times threadbare, cloak of Croce:[1]

> If language is the first spiritual manifestation, and if æsthetic form is language itself, taken in all its true scientific extension, it is hopeless to try to understand clearly the later and more complicated phases of the life of the spirit, when their first and simplest moment is ill known, mutilated, and disfigured. . . .

[1] *Æsthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic.* Translated by Douglas Ainslie: Macmillan & Co. 1909.

That the æsthetic form *is* language itself, it has been our endeavour to prove by this book, but a language so imperfectly understood by authors, critics and readers, that even those whose province it is (or who have made it their province) to outline the laws of form, can only speak it incoherently. Approximations are all that one dare to attempt with so subtle a tongue. But approximations to truth in a pure language, probably convey more than can be conveyed by the most fluent Esperanto. So it is better for the author to learn what may be learnt of this language of form, than to rely on the cruder methods of direct statement. For direct statements are the ugly sisters of the story-telling art, and a hint of *Significance* outweighs a whole *Talmud* of moral.

But a hint from so subtle a language as form may act like the vulgar nudge of a fishwife in its final effect, and extreme care must be taken that the reader is not misled. The author must not mean to convey one particular idea, and by his carelessness, convey another. Where direct statement is avoided and appeals are made to the imagination, they must be made as perfectly as a knowledge of the language of form will allow.

With the best intentions an author may plan his *Tangent Story*, his *Theme*, and yet he may convey a totally false impression to the reader. When the author speaks the language of form he should speak slowly and distinctly.

Bernard Bosanquet has given us much food for thought in Appendix II to his *History of Æsthetic*, where he quotes from the notes of Mr J. D. Rogers. Here is a statement of a musician's ' story ' as given in the form of his music. Here also is a trained artist's emotional response to that same music. By studying the ' story ' which the musician read into his own music, and the ' story ' which this listener took from the piece of music, we are enabled to form a judgment of the point to which the language of form has developed in this art. But that which might

be looked upon as a high level of communication for the form of music, would be a disastrously low level for the form of literature:

> I. Schumann's *In der Nacht* used to summon up before my imagination the picture of the moon struggling through the clouds on a windy night—emerging and disappearing by turns; then for awhile reigning 'apparent queen' amid white fleecy clouds, which are not sufficient to intercept its light. During two moments even this silk veil is withdrawn, only to be succeeded by a bank of black clouds, for a long time impenetrable, at last penetrated at intervals a little more irregular and with a brightness a little wilder and more meteoric than before; finally—the light is put out and quenched by the storm.
>
> I learned some years afterwards that Schumann also associated this piece with a picture, the idea of which occurred to him after he had written the entire set of *Fantasiestücke* to which it belongs. It was a picture portraying the story of Hero and Leander; his picture is not incompatible with mine. In his the clouds correspond to the waves, the moon to a swimmer, buried and stifled in their troughs or flashing and calling out from their crests. Where the moon triumphs in my story, in his there is a love scene on the shore, accompanied by the distant rippling of the waves; it seems almost as though
>
> The billows of cloud that around thee roll
> Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day.
>
> But, no; there comes the plunge back into waves blacker than before—tossings to and fro—cries from the swimmer and from the shore—and, finally, 'night wraps up everything.'

Most people would agree that an author who used the language of form to build a picture of Hero and Leander, and only succeeded in conveying the impression of the moon struggling through clouds on a windy night, had not developed his talents far in the direction of form linguistic.

But form-language does not entirely depend upon the author for its effect. Literature is a social habit and requires at least two to indulge in its pleasures. There is the author and there is the reader. Some onus for

intelligent participation must fall upon the latter. Coleridge is, perhaps, a little ungenerous to readers in general when he classifies them as: [1]

1. Sponges, who absorb all they read, and return it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtied.
2. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing, and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time.
3. Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read.
4. Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also.

A perfect form-expression would assist the evolution of the sponges, sand-glasses and strain-bags toward the mogul-diamond state, for the language of form does not require a high degree of intelligence in the reader. It requires mainly an awakened imagination.

For form can convey in a flash what pages of direct statement will frequently fail to convey.

The defendant in a brawling case would be better advised to hold up the form of the battered crown of his bowler hat, than to state in the periods of Cicero or Demosthenes that he was forced to strike in self-defence.

The former will leap to picturized expression in the imagination, while the latter must painfully build up step by step its logical chain of reasoning.

Between an author's form and the reader's imagination there is a strange link, and one that will repay infinite study. We have already seen that the more perfect the form is, the more illuminating will be *The Significance*. But each author must learn for himself that the more perfectly the form expresses the story to the imagination of the reader, the more perfectly it will express the

[1] *Lectures on Shakspere*: George Bell & Sons.

author; the more perfectly will it show the reader to himself; Coleridge tells us: [1]

> The ordinary reader, who does not pretend to bring his understanding to bear upon the subject, often feels that some real trait of his own has been caught, that some nerve has been touched; and he knows that it has been touched by the vibration he experiences —a thrill, which tells us that, by becoming better acquainted with the poet, we have become better acquainted with ourselves.

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[1] *Lectures on Shakspere*: George Bell & Sons.

Chapter Ten

THE PICARESQUE FORM

Professor Walter Raleigh refers to the Picaresque Romance as: [1]

> . . . a romance describing realistically the shifts and adventures, perils and escapes, of a light-hearted, witty, spring-heeled knave, who goes through all worldly vicissitudes, thus lending himself to his creator's purpose of gaining the opportunity to describe or satirize all classes of society . . . .The plot of this class of romance is always slight, often hardly a plot at all, the character of the hero, and the reader's interest in his fortunes, giving to the work the only unity that it attains. . . .

Which, all things considered, is a little damaging to the reputation of the Picaresque Story. But it is by no means an isolated opinion. *The Picaresque Form* has harboured bad company, and is suffering from its lack of discrimination. For Professor Raleigh to say that the only unity this type of story attains, is in the hero's fortune and character, would seem to be a death-blow to any hope it might have to formal claims. But again, this is no isolated opinion.

The Picaresque Story needs a champion.

We realize from Professor Raleigh's comments that we are dealing with a new type of hero, one who will not easily resign himself to the restraints of either a *Positive* or a *Negative Form*. The Picaresque hero will not fit into the former, because this 'spring-heeled knave' does not offer the reader interest in his fortune, but in his fortunes—not in his one *Intention*, but in his many *Intentions*. He will not fit into the latter because

[1] *The English Novel*: John Murray.

he is usually preying on society in a most positive manner, and is very far from being the sport of destiny. Even when he is so placed, his interest in his experiences instead of in his goal, removes him from the control of the pure Negative Form.

This type of leading character, whose ancestry may be traced through eighteenth-century knavery back to the knight-errants of the age of Chivalry, is one which we shall frequently meet in literature. We must learn to recognize him at a glance, for the form he uses is a little complicated, and its recognition is aided by a recognition of its hero.

He is usually—for it is *he* as a rule—a very definite type. Even where the author has masked him heavily and endeavours to pass him off as other than his true self, he can usually be known by his interest in the affair of the moment, as opposed to his interest in the achievement of a future goal. He is usually an opportunist.

A cheerful opportunist he is, as a rule, seeking in the daily round for a chance to turn the affair of the moment to his personal advantage. He may wish to turn the *material* world to his advantage after the manner of Tom Jones, or he may wish to turn the *spiritual* world to his advantage after the manner of Dante in *The Divine Comedy*, or he may wish to turn the world of *fantasy* to his advantage after the manner of *Don Quixote*.

Scattered amongst these three types is the whole world of Picaresque herodom with its thievery, its adultery, its debauchery, wasting its splendid vitality in grasping at baubles in Vanity Fair.

How then, shall we discover a form which will bound the activities of the essentially formless? For this hero, at his highest, passes from one experience to another, casting aside one transcendental sublimity to grasp at another with a recklessness which leaves the reader gasping—and at the lowest drowning the memory of one debauch in the excitement of another.

Ceaseless activity and restless energy mark the progress of the Picaresque hero, who, with a score of *Intentions*, or a score of *Hopes*, or a mixture of both *Intentions* and *Hopes*, hurries from experience to experience, changing his attitude to life as frequently as he changes his desires.

We realize from this, that form, as we know it at the moment, cannot bound so exuberant a vitality, and that our ideas concerning the inflexibility of *Positive* and *Negative Forms* must undergo a distinct change before this outlaw can be admitted into a decent society of regulated manners.

Perhaps it would be as well, before attempting to formalize this type of character, to glance at him in action and to learn something of his methods of procedure.

The story of *Don Quixote* [1] as most people know, deals with an old-fashioned gentleman who decides to turn knight-errant, and to roam the country-side in quest of adventure:

> The first thing he did was to scour a suit of armour that had belonged to his great grandfather, and had lain time out of mind carelessly rusting in a corner. . . . The next morning he went to view his horse, whose bones stuck out like the corners of a Spanish real . . .

The first point of interest for us lies in the fact that Don Quixote has a wide, general *Intention*. He intends to become a knight-errant. Please observe that his interest lies, not in *The Intention* itself so much as in the various adventures which will form the achievement of *The Intention*. This is the true Picaresque attitude.

The incidents, the parts, appear to be of more value to the hero than the whole. His mind is not focused (after the manner of the Positive hero's) on the attainment of a distant ideal, but upon the affair of the moment and the attainment of an immediate desire.

[1] *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha.* Translated by Motteux. (Chandos Classics.)

We shall realize the preoccupation of this type of character with the success of the minute, if we glance at Quixote in his encounter with the windmills, which he imagines to be giants:

> As they were discoursing (Quixote and his squire, Sancho), they discovered some thirty or forty windmills, in the plain; and as soon as the knight had spied them, "Fortune," cried he, "directs our affairs better than we could have wished; look yonder, Sancho, there are at least thirty outrageous giants, whom I intend to encounter; and having deprived them of life, we will begin to enrich ourselves with their spoils: for they are lawful prize; and the extirpation of that cursed brood will be an acceptable service to heaven."
>
> "What giants?" quoth Sancho Panza.
>
> "Those whom thou seest yonder," answered Don Quixote, "with their long extended arms; some of that detested race have arms of so immense a size that sometimes they reach two leagues in length."
>
> "Pray look better, sir," quoth Sancho: "those things yonder are not giants, but windmills, and the arms are their sails. . . ."
>
> "'Tis a sign," cried Don Quixote, "thou art but little acquainted with adventures!"
>
> This said, he clapped spurs to his horse. . . .
>
> "Stand, cowards!" cried he as loud as he could; "stand your ground, ignoble creatures, and fly not basely from a single knight, who dares encounter you all."
>
> . . . and so covering himself with his shield, and couching his lance, he rushed with Rozinante's utmost speed upon the first windmill he could come at, and running his lance into the sail, the wind whirled it about with such swiftness, that the rapidity of the motion presently broke the lance into shivers, and hurled away both knight and horse along with it, till down he fell, rolling a good way off in a field. . . .
>
> "Did not I give your worship fair warning?" cried he (Sancho), "did not I tell you they were windmills, and that nobody could think otherwise, unless he had also windmills in his head?"
>
> "Peace, friend Sancho," replied Don Quixote. . . . "I am verily persuaded, that cursed necromancer Freston . . . has transformed these giants into windmills, to deprive me of the honour of the victory. . . ."

This incident, one of the many which develop the general *Intention* of Don Quixote to become a knight-

errant, is complete in itself. It is unconnected with any other incident in the story. It stands alone, to be judged on its merits as a piece of story-writing, and the whole incident could be removed without interfering with the story as a whole. But in *The Picaresque Form* this fact alone does not constitute *Tertiary Incident.*

As it is a complete story in itself, we must consider it first from a Positive angle of view, and then from a Negative angle of view, to decide which form this isolated story, section of a complete *Picaresque Story,* may be fitted into. We see at once that it belongs to *The Positive Form,* for it has a clearly defined *Intention*:

Intention: Don Quixote intends to kill giants.
Barrier: He tilts at windmills.
Reversal: Nil.
Crisis: He runs his lance into the sail of a windmill.
Reversal: His lance is broken.
Catastrophe: He is hurled to the ground, and no giants are killed.

Even in *The Picaresque Form* we discover that the familiar unit of form is present. This is not strange, however, since every story must be composed of human actions, and human actions must have a goal. The moment that these human actions are set in motion toward the goal, they must either move upward toward success or downward toward failure—or, in extreme cases, remain parallel to *The Line of Intention* or *Hope.*

Thus, the unit of form accompanies us into the picaresque world.

With one more glance at the picaresque Quixote, to see again his preoccupation with the affair of the moment, to familiarize ourselves with his type, and to visualize the *single adventure* as the unit of *Picaresque Form,* each of which adventures may be either *Positive* or *Negative* in *Form,* we will pass on to other considerations.

This unit of form, the adventure, must be complete

and capable of standing alone without reference to the other units, adventures, themselves, and each capable of standing alone.

In the affair of The Wine-Skins Don Quixote again imagines that he is attacking giants:

> . . . Sancho Panza came running out of Don Quixote's chamber in a terrible fright, crying out, "Help, help, good people! help my master! He is just now at it tooth and nail with that same giant. . . . I never saw a more dreadful battle in my born days. He has leant him such a blow, that whip off went the giant's head, as round as a turnip."
>
> Upon this they presently heard a noise and bustle in the chamber, and Don Quixote bawling out, "Stay, villain! robber, stay! since I have thee here, thy scimitar shall but little avail thee!" and with this they heard him strike with his sword with all his force against the walls.
>
> . . . He wore on his head a little, red, greasy nightcap of the innkeeper's; he had wrapped one of the best blankets about his left arm for a shield; and wielded his drawn sword in the right, laying about him pell-mell; with now and then a start of some military expression, as if he had been really engaged with some giant . . . and dreaming that he was then fighting him, he assaulted the wine-skins so desperately that he set the whole chamber afloat with good wine. . . .

If we consider these two incidents, the affair of The Windmills, and the affair of The Wine-Skins, we shall find, that although each is separate and independent of the other, yet there appears to be a connection between them. They are related. This relation, of course, lies in the fact that each story is an expression of Don Quixote's general *Intention* to become a knight-errant.

Our problem of discovering a true *Picaresque Form* is now less difficult, for we have two factors which may guide us toward the general principles: (*a*) The adventure is the unit of *Picaresque Form*, and is to be analysed by either the *Positive* or *Negative Method* as each case demands; (*b*) The various adventures (units, which are separate stories) are linked together by a general *Intention*.

The Positive Form is governed by an *Intention* which

threads together a *consequential sequence* of incidents, each of which may, or may not, be complete in itself. *The Negative Form* is dominated by a *consequential sequence* of incidents, which also may, or may not, be complete each in itself, and through which is threaded a vague *Hope.*

The Picaresque Form, in so far as we have analysed it, is a complete story composed of a series of adventure stories which may or may not form a consequential sequence. Each adventure story is complete in itself, and its withdrawal from the unified story as a whole will have no other effect than that of shortening its length. These separate adventure stories are threaded together by an *Intention* more or less vague and generalized.

In *Don Quixote* this generalized *Intention* is the hero's desire to become a knight-errant. Two of the incidents from this story we have shown to be separate adventure stories, each having its own *Intention.* A study of the complete text of *Don Quixote* will assure the reader that the general *Intention* dominates each of the adventures and links them into a unified whole.

The adventures of The Balsam, The Blanket Tossing, The Enchanted Barque, The Galley-Slaves, Mambrino's Helmet, The Puppet-Show, The Wooden Horse—disconnected as they are, are yet parts in a greater whole, which is presided over by *The General Intention.*

Picaresque writer though Cervantes is, he knows that his story must have form and direction for he makes a character say:

> "Come, come boy . . . stick to your story and lead us not into curves and cross ways." [1]

Regarded, then, as a series of adventure stories dominated by *The General Intention, The Picaresque Story* appears to be less formless than has been generally supposed.

In fact, this form, with its concentration on the separate adventure, with its lack of necessity for the restricting

[1] *Don Quixote.* Translated by Robinson Smith.

consequential sequence of events between the separate adventures, and hence its greater liberty, has produced one of the sublimest works of literature known to man.

And the grandeur of *The Divine Comedy* is to some extent due to the fluidity of *The Picaresque Form*. Dante, whose unfettered imagination has broken the more constricted forms of *The Positive* and *Negative*, is in this form permitted to create, not only worlds beyond the sensual, but the characters who dwell within them, with all the liberty given to the wandering Picaresque hero.

If he had fettered his imagination by a form dependent upon a consequential sequence, each adventure that he narrates must have been connected through cause and effect with the previous adventures. Instead of a panorama governed by the exigencies of a transcendental world, Dante would have been forced to show a panorama governed by the exigencies of the material world from which he had momentarily escaped.

In *The Picaresque Form* Dante is only limited by the law which demands that each adventure shall be governed by *The General Intention*:

> And he (Virgil) offers to conduct Dante by another road; to show him the eternal roots of misery and of joy, and leave him with a higher guide that will lead him up to Heaven.[1]

Such, then is *The General Intention* of *The Divine Comedy*.

From the text itself:

> Wherefore I think and discern this for thy best, that thou follow me; and I will be thy guide, and lead thee hence through an eternal place,
>
> where thou shalt hear the hopeless shrieks, shalt see the ancient spirits in pain, so that each calls for a second death;
>
> . . . And I to him: "Poet, I beseech thee by that God whom thou knowest not; in order that I may escape this ill and worse, lead me where thou now hast said. . . ."

[1] Summary of Canto I, *The Inferno*. (Temple Classics.)

The General Intention is obvious. It is stressed throughout the earlier parts, where Virgil acts as Dante's guide. It is stressed again when Virgil leaves him in the guidance of Beatrice.

Let us now glance at one of the adventure stories, which, though isolated, as in the case of *Don Quixote*, is in the same manner, under the dominance of a *General Intention*:

" We are come to the place where I told thee thou shouldst see the wretched people, who have lost the good of the intellect."

And placing his hand on mine, with a cheerful countenance that comforted me, he led me into the secret things.

Here sighs, plaints, and deep wailings resounded through the starless air: it made me weep at first.

Strange tongues, horrible outcries, words of pain, tones of anger, voices deep and hoarse, and sounds of hands amongst them,

made a tumult, which turns itself unceasing in that air for ever dyed, as sand when it eddies in a whirlwind.

And I, my head begirt with horror, said: " Master, what is this that I hear? and who are these that seem so overcome with pain? "

And he to me: " This miserable mode the dreary souls of those sustain, who lived without blame, and without praise.

. . . These have no hope of death; and their blind life is so mean, that they are envious of every other lot.

Report of them the world permits not to exist; Mercy and Justice disdains them: let us not speak of them; but look and pass."

. . . and behind it came so long a train of people, that I should never have believed death had undone so many.

. . . These unfortunate, who never were alive, were naked, and sorely goaded by hornets and by wasps that were there.

These made their faces stream with blood, which, mixed with tears, was gathered at their feet by loathsome worms. . . .

(*Inferno.* Canto III.)

As in the case of Don Quixote and The Windmills, we see that a short, complete adventure has taken place. Virgil has conducted Dante to a point along the way, and they have paused. During this pause he has informed Dante of the people who dwell there, he has commented upon their punishments, and the reasons for them. Dante has thus had an experience as definite, as complete, as Don Quixote enjoyed in the adventure of The Wine-Skins; and like that adventure, this incident might be removed from the Dante story without interfering with the action.

Both incidents illustrate their separate *General Intention*, but neither the one nor the other is a necessity to that *Intention*.

If the adventure of The Wine-Skins and the adventure of The Hornet-Goaded were incidents in a *Positive* or *Negative Form*, they would have to be connected, with the incidents which preceded and followed them, by a consequential sequence. *The Picaresque Form* has freed them from this necessity.

But similar as these two adventures are, there is a difference.

In the adventure of The Wine-Skins, and also in that of The Windmills, the hero is a positive agent. In the adventure of The Hornet-Goaded, the hero is distinctly not a positive agent. Don Quixote directs his own adventures by his will. Dante has his adventures directed for him; he is a negative force receiving the imprint of experience on his mind. Don Quixote's imagination is thrust outwardly upon events. Dante's imagination is busy organizing his impression of the events which have occurred. The one is positive, the other negative.

Don Quixote is thus an example of a *Positive Picaresque Hero*, while Dante is an example of a *Negative Picaresque Hero*.

Contrast the positivity of Don Quixote's battle with The Windmills with Dante's experience in Canto III of he *Paradiso*. He is questioning one of the shades:

And I to the shade who seemed most to long for converse turned me and began, as one whom too great longing doth confound:

"O well created spirit, who in the rays of eternal light dost feel the sweetness which, save tasted, may ne'er be understood;

it were acceptable to me, wouldst thou content me with thy name and with your lot?"

Whereat she, eager and with smiling eyes:

"Our love doth no more bar the gate to a just wish, than doth that love which would have all its court like to itself.

In the world I was a virgin sister, and if thy memory be rightly searched, my greater beauty will not hide me from thee,

but thou wilt know me again for Piccarda, who, placed here with these other blessed ones, am blessed in the sphere that moveth slowest.

Our affections, which are aflame only in the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, rejoice to be informed after his order.

And this lot, which seemeth so far down, therefore is given us because our vows were slighted, and on some certain side were not filled in."

Enough of the scene has been quoted to show that Dante, negative to his surroundings, is drawing information, inspiration, from them. He is in no way thrusting his personality outward upon events. But Dante is not negative as Prometheus is negative; as the hunted man in *The Hound of Heaven* is negative, as Hecuba in *The Trojan Women* is negative. Neither is he negative as are Ophelia and Griselda. The former are thrown negative by a greater force than their own personalities, the latter are thrown negative *by* their personalities.

Dante, allied to the Prometheus-Hecuba class, resigns his will after the manner of the Ophelia-Griselda class. He is a Prometheus who has accepted the ruling of the gods, an Ophelia who has learnt to accept her destiny with unbowed head. Dante is the apotheosis of the scholar.

But these two classes of the Picaresque type, the positive and the negative, do not exhaust its possibilities. There is a third type in which the positive and negative characteristics are blended. No better illustration of this *Compound-Picaresque Hero* can be had, than in the life of Cervantes himself, that master of *The Picaresque Form.*

We will select incidents from his life and arrange them as a picaresque author would do so for his story:

Cervantes was born at Alcalá in 1547, but we know little of his early life until we see him as a boy of fourteen at Valladolid watching the plays which were produced in the public Square. Here he received his first knowledge of the dramatic form from the grandiloquent Lope de Rueda, who with the aid of his sheepskins, beards, wigs and crooks, stamped a lasting impression on the boy's mind.

At twenty-one he is in Madrid, writing poetry.

Later, he is in Rome, a warrant issued for his arrest for having wounded a certain Antonio de Sigura. Here he served Cardinal Aquaviva as his valet.

Enlisting under Captain Diego de Urbina he began a life of soldiering, during which time he sailed under Don Jon of Austria against the Turkish fleet. Two gunshot wounds in the chest and one that robbed him of a hand were his portion.

Later again, Don Jon gives him permission to return to Spain, and sends him with letters of introduction to the King, asking that he may be placed in command of a company.

Cervantes sets sail in a galley and is attacked by corsairs off Marseilles, where, after a sixteen-hour fight, he is taken prisoner.

Becoming a slave in the hands of the Turks at Algiers he is herded with twenty-five thousand others and forced to work under the Moslems.

His first attempt to escape is foiled by the guide's desertion, and he and his companions return on the second day and give themselves up to captivity again.

The second attempt is made. Cervantes orders a cave to be dug in a friend's garden, and here he hides the Christian captives until he can arrange for a ship to rescue them. When the rescue party is about to land they are sighted by Moors, and are forced to put to sea again.

In 1580 Cervantes is ransomed at a moment when he is heavily burdened with chains and is about to be taken out of the country.

Later, we hear of him in Portugal, bearing messages stamped by the royal seal.

We hear of his marriage with Catalina, a girl of nineteen.

A period follows, blurred by time, when he writes for the stage.

Again he is in Andalusia, collecting wheat and oil and bread for the Great Armada. Trouble awaits him at Écija for seizing provisions belonging to the cathedral of Seville.

Six years later he is in Granada, still under government employ.

He is committed to Seville gaol for being unable to find securities concerning some seven thousand four hundred reals, for which he is held responsible.

Later again he is carrying on a small business as notary. Prison follows, and a royal warrant for his release. Then, at the age of fifty-five we hear that he sits down to write the first part of *Don Quixote*.

If we contrast this outline of the life of Cervantes with the outline of the life of Columbus we shall be aware of a striking contrast. Columbus is dominated by a fixed idea, by a positive *Intention* which influences the incidents composing his story. Cervantes is dominated by no such *Intention*. If his interests can be said to be concentrated on the final achievement of one thing more than another, then that final achievement would probably be soldiering. Cervantes frequently visualized himself as a successful soldier. But in all probability, and judging from the events of his life, the idea of generalship obsessed him little more than what would have probably been a preposterous idea to him, that of becoming the greatest humorous Picaresque writer the world has produced.

Let us accept the incidents of his life as they stand above, and for our present purpose disregard the question of historical accuracy. We realize by their diversity that there is no apparent consequential sequence between the various adventures. Cervantes becomes Soldier, Dramatist, Government Official, Notary, with the same careless lack of a governing *Intention* that he became a slave.

There is, of course, *The Intention* attached to each individual adventure. Cervantes intends to gain freedom for himself and his comrades when he is in captivity, exactly as he would intend to succeed as Soldier, Dramatist or Notary.

If we could establish the fact that Cervantes' ruling *Intention* was to become the world's greatest humorous Picaresque writer, and that through all vicissitudes he was working toward this end, we should at once have a *Positive Hero* working in a *Positive Form*, and all his adventures would be *Primary* and *Secondary Incidents* along a positive *Line of Action*, or we should be given *Tertiary Incidents* which we could discard.

If we could establish the fact that all his life he battled

against a destiny which crippled his personality and his actions, and left him only a vague *Hope* that one day life would spare the rod, we should at once have a *Negative Hero* working in a *Negative Form* and all his adventures would be *Primary, Secondary* and *Tertiary Incidents* along a *Line of Compliance.*

But we cannot substantiate either of these suggestions.

Cervantes apparently saw the phantasmagoria of life much as his hero Quixote saw them—as matter for adventure. The governing *Intention* of his life would seem to be, not that of a *Positive Hero,* but that of a *Picaresque Hero.* Such a *General Intention* might be expressed as a desire to gain affluence, experience, independence, amusement, etc., depending on the orientation of the hero.

But we must give this *General Intention* of *The Picaresque Hero* a little careful attention.

In the first place this type of *Intention* fails to give the many incidents which compose the complete story, that consequential sequence which we look for in *The Positive* and *Negative Forms,* because the hero is not dominated by one single *Intention* but by many single *Intentions* which are grouped under a *General Intention.*

The Positive Hero may be concentrated on a subordinate *Intention,* which he must bring to a successful issue before he can achieve his *Main Intention, but* it is *The Main Intention* which is always before his mind's eye, and upon this he is concentrated.

With *The Picaresque Hero* the reverse is the law. He forgets his *Main* (*General*) *Intention* in his quest for the subordinate *Intention,* for he has not set out to achieve a specific *Intention* to which all else is made subordinate. He may set out, as he frequently does, with an *Intention* in his mind, but like a child in a toy-shop, he is distracted by the many opportunities for choice.

Contrast *The Intention* of Richard III with *The Intentions* of Tom Jones, *The Intention* of Coriolanus with *The*

Intentions of Don Quixote. *The Intention* of Richard III is a dominating principle in his life, influencing all his actions. It is a fundamental urge from the very springs of his character. *The Intentions* of Tom Jones range from pugilism to seduction, and his beloved Sophia is not sufficiently an *Intention* to hold his wayward fancies in subjection.

Richard III is *Intention*-directed. Tom Jones is desire-driven.

This is due to a fundamental difference in the characters of *The Positive* and *The Picaresque Hero.*

The main characteristic of *The Picaresque Hero* would seem to be his fixation on *The Intention* immediately before him, to the exclusion of his *General Intention.* In other words Don Quixote is intent upon his windmills and his wine-skins to the exclusion of his knight-errantry. He loses sight of the whole, in the parts.

From the formal point of view each adventure is a separate story. It must be complete with either a *Line of Action* or a *Line of Compliance*; an *Intention* or a *Hope*; *Primary, Secondary Incidents*; a *Theme*; and a *Significance*—though the latter are invariably embryonic. And each separate adventure must be regarded as a unit of *The Picaresque Form.*

Viewed from this angle, it is not usually difficult to discover, underlying the various adventures, *The General Intention* which knits these separate adventure-stories into a unity.

Viewed from any other angle *The Picaresque Story* presents a sorry appearance with regard to form.

But this *General Intention* is capable of expansion and contraction. It may be so *generalized* that it becomes little more than a statement that the hero desires to live with as little discomfort as possible. (And nature gives us its counterparts—alas!) It may be so *particularized* that in effect it becomes almost a *Positive Intention.* An illustration of the latter may be seen in *The Intention*

of Tom Jones; of the former in *The Intention* of David Copperfield.

David passes from experience to experience with only the vague *General Intention* of existing, to thread together the many *Intentions* which compose his story.

Tom's *Intentions* are all subservient to *The General Intention* of marrying his Sophia.

This width of range in *The General Intention* of *The Picaresque Story* makes classification difficult. But once *The General Intention* has been discovered it will show what limits are placed upon the various adventures, for there is a limitation of the choice of incident even in *The Picaresque Story*, little though one would imagine it. The rule of this type of story is that every adventure must come within the scope of *The General Intention.*

The wider *The General Intention*, the more generalized it becomes, the less is the limitation upon the individual adventure. The more *The General Intention* is narrowed down, the greater is the limitation upon the individual adventure. Thus the form of *Tom Jones* is more symmetrical than the form of *David Copperfield.*

Where David Copperfield may experience all the ills and joys of existence possible within his *General Intention* Tom Jones has to accept the limitation imposed by the pursuit of his Sophia, which *should have* restricted him to those adventures which would lead this errant hero eventually to his mistress. We shall see, however, that Fielding has not always kept Tom within decent bounds.

But before we can discuss this matter, we must return for a moment to the life of Cervantes.

The greater part of the writer's life, it would appear, was spent with his will battling against circumstance. He has his plays produced. He is recommended for a captaincy. He is given a government position. All of which would seem to stamp him as a *Positive Hero*—if he had not spent some considerable time in prison, and had not been a slave under the Moslems.

Slavery and servitude in gaol are scarcely compatible with freedom of will and *The Positive Form*, for in both cases the hero's power of action is limited, and his *Intention* is frustrated before it can awaken to life. As a slave and a prisoner, Cervantes shows a kinship with the chained Prometheus.

Adventures there must have been, during these periods when he was forced into a state of negativity, although he had no historian to record them. These adventures then, falling under *The Negative Form*, would be placed in their proper position between the more positive adventures of his *Line of Action*. *Positive* and *Negative Incidents* would, therefore, alternate in his story, under the dominance of *The General Intention*, which for the *Negative Incidents* would be regarded as a *Generalized Hope*.

Perhaps, at this point, it would be wise to glance over the laws of *The Picaresque Form* as we visualize them:

1. The Hero has a *General Intention* which is capable of expansion or contraction, to admit every kind of experience, or to admit one kind of experience only.
2. Whether *The General Intention* (or *Hope*) is contracted or expanded, the adventures must be bounded by it, and no adventure should be admitted which does not lead to the achievement of this *General Intention* (or *Hope*).
3. The adventures are not necessarily bound, the one to the other, by a chain of causation.
4. The unit of *The Picaresque Form* is the adventure, and not a separate incident in the adventure.
5. The units may be either positive or negative.
6. The *Major Analysis* of a *Picaresque Story* is the analysis of *The Line of Action* of *The General Intention*. *The Minor Analysis* is the analysis of

The Lines of Action of the separate units, the adventures. *The General Analysis* is the analysis of *The Line of Action* of *The General Intention* and *The Lines of Action* of the unit *Intentions.*

The unit of *The Picaresque Form* is negative only in that case where the hero is negative to his destiny, that is (*a*) when his will is fettered by his own desire (Griselda); (*b*) when it is fettered by his own character (Ophelia); (*c*) when it is fettered by circumstance (Prometheus).

The unit is not negative because the hero fails to achieve the particular *Intention* of a given adventure. In this case the unit would be a positive one ending on a *Compound Catastrophe.* A negative unit is dominated by a *Hope*, not by an *Intention.*

That *The Picaresque Form* has been maligned we must admit, but this is to some extent due to the fact that *The Positive* and *Negative Forms* have obvious symmetries which this looser form cannot claim. But it is far from formless, indeed, we have discovered that its form is far more complicated than the two other kinds, for it has not only to subject its individual adventures to *The Positive* or *Negative Forms*, it has also to subject itself as a whole to a *Major Analysis*, where a *General Intention* demands a reconsideration of the form.

But the critics do not like to think of *The Picaresque Form* as being bounded by rules. Professor Raleigh, as we have seen, writes: [1]

> The plot of this class of romance is always slight, often hardly a plot at all. . . . The slender thread of narrative on which these incidental scenes for once are strung may fairly be regarded as unessential.

The 'unessential thread' of Dante's *General Intention*, if it were lacking, would make the incidents of *The Divine Comedy* but scattered pearls. Don Quixote, without his desire to exhibit himself as a knight-errant,

[1] *The English Novel.*

would be a fit subject for a mental home, indeed. Tom Jones without his desire for his Sophia could be duplicated in most of the police-courts after the week-end.

Every story *must* have form of some kind by virtue of its being a story. Professor Butcher [1] insists on this:

> The supreme merit of the Greeks is that, on the one hand, they felt and showed that beauty is of the essence of literature, and that a formless work of literature is in truth a misnomer, being dead while yet it lives: it may have philosophical, it may have scientific merit, but it will be superseded: what is in it of value will be incorporated with other works: its substance is separable from its form.

And that substance which is 'separable from its form we know by the name of *Tertiary Incident.* Unless form of some kind is controlling the substance there is no method by which we can decide what is extraneous matter. To regard *The Picaresque Story* as formless is preposterous, for, if there were no form to this type of story much of its matter would have to be regarded as *Tertiary Incident.* To brand *The Divine Comedy* and *Don Quixote* in this way would be to deny the existence of any laws of form.

But the final test of form lies in its truth to nature.

That *The Picaresque Form* has been so frequently used, is no argument in its favour as a symmetrical shape; that it has given to English literature new types of character is still beside the point. Only if we can show that this form is essential to the development of a certain type of story (which neither of the other forms can develop as satisfactorily), shall we be justified in advancing its claims.

Agustus Schlegel, writing on the tragic and the comic, gives us an interesting angle of view on the matter: [2]

> Animals seem, indeed, at times to labour as if they were earnestly intent upon some aim, and as if they made the present moment

[1] *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art.*

[2] *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.* Translated by John Black. (Bohn's Library.)

> subordinate to the future; at other times they seem to sport, that is, they give themselves up without object or purpose to the pleasure of existence. . . .

These principles apply to two different types of character.

The former which 'makes the present moment subservient to the future' may well be an illustration of the type of hero we have called positive, and who dominates *The Positive Form.*

The latter who 'give themselves up without object or purpose to the pleasure of existence' may well be a loose generalization of *The Picaresque Hero* in his concentration on the immediate *Intention,* to the exclusion of *The General Intention.*

The laws of *The Picaresque Form* then, may be said to be founded in nature, which produces Picaresque types as she produces Positive and Negative types of character. It is to nature which we must turn for confirmation of all the laws governing form. Fielding's plea for exemption from criticism as the founder of a new province of writing, would appear to be invalid:

> For all which I shall not look on myself as accountable to any court of critical jurisdiction whatever: for as I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein. . . .
>
> (*Tom Jones.*[1] Chapter I, Book II.)

If Fielding had indeed founded a new province of writing and was at liberty to make what laws he pleased his name would be synonymous with Nature.

One cannot make what laws one pleases in literary form, one can only discover what laws there are, and utilize them. As well one might say that Livingstone, having discovered Lake Ngami, was at liberty to alter the flora and fauna.

As we have already glanced at *The Picaresque Form*

[1] J. M. Dent.

through the eyes of Dante and Cèrvantes, who have both shown us *General Intentions* of moderate expansiveness, let us now glance at this form through the eyes of Dickens. In *David Copperfield* we shall discover a hero as concentrated on *The Intention* of the moment, as any hero in Picaresque fiction. A few incidents from the story will illustrate this fact:

1. David is born.
2. Peggotty takes David to spend a week at the boat-house with Daniel.
3. They return to find David's mother married to Mr Murdstone.
4. Mr Murdstone begins to bully David under pretence of being firm. Mr Murdstone beats David. David is sent to school.
5. Barkis, the carrier, tells David to tell Peggotty that he is 'willing.'
6. David arrives at Salem House school.
7. Peggotty and Ham visit David at school. They meet Steerforth.
8. David returns home and sees his mother again.
9. David is told that his mother is dead.
10. David becomes a bottle-washer with Murdstone and Grinby.
11. He lodges with the Micawbers.
12. David runs away from his employment to his aunt at Dover. She adopts him.
13. David is sent to school at Canterbury.
14. David leaves school.
15. David and Agnes. David leaves Dover for Suffolk. He again meets Steerforth.
16. Steerforth and David go to Yarmouth, where Steerforth meets Emily Peggotty and the ground is sown for the tragic harvest.

17. David falls in love with Dora.
18. David hears that Barkis is dying. He decides to go to Yarmouth.
19. David arrives at Yarmouth. Emily's strange behaviour. Death of Barkis.
20. Emily elopes with Steerforth.
21. Peggotty begins his search for Emily.
22. David meets Dora again at her birthday party.
23. He becomes secretly engaged to her.
24. David tells Dora of his poverty. She is frightened.
25. David marries Dora.
26. David's disappointment with Dora as a wife.
27. Death of Dora.
28. Death of Steerforth.
29. David becomes a famous writer.
30. He marries Agnes.

In these headlines of incidents selected from *David Copperfield*, which give a more or less accurate picture of the hero's activities, we shall see that we are not dealing with *The Positive Hero* dominated by a single *Intention*. As in the case of Cervantes, David mends his fortunes at the close of the story by his success as an author. If he had been dominated throughout the action by an *Intention* to achieve success ultimately in this walk of life, and if the various adventures had formed a consequential sequence of events, we should have had *The Positive Hero* and *The Positive Form*.

But David's *Intention* is too generalized for this. He is as much a *Picaresque Hero* as Gil Blas. To stigmatize *David Copperfield*, however, as being formless, would be to disregard all that we have considered in this chapter. His *General Intention*, though wide, is perfectly clear. Each of his separate *Intentions* has its own *Line of Action*,

its *Primary Incidents*, etc., giving form to each unit of adventure, the sum of which gives unity to the whole.

If the majority of *Picaresque Heroes* had been cast in the same character mould as David, there would have been no stigma on *The Picaresque Form*. It would not have been looked upon as the ideal form for toss-pots, foot-pads and the inmates of the Fleet and their descendants. These gentry have dishonoured the form which Dante had glorified and Cervantes had expanded.

Truly the hero of *Don Quixote* is blinded by the immediate *Intention*, seeing the part to the exclusion of the whole. But there is something of Lear in his fixity of purpose, when his eyes fall on the sails of a wind-mill or on the stitched sack of a wine-container. There is in his madness a little of the grandeur that Lear might have shed in passing, and there is irony which would have made Sophocles smile.

With Dante there is the preoccupation with the moment to the exclusion of time in general, but the moment is so vast with possibility that one would need the mind of his guide to see beyond it. And what significance can time hold for one who has traversed the City of Dis?

If *The Picaresque Form* can give us such heroes as these, it has no need to seek around the wine-cask and the back alleys of the slums. Truly an ancestor with a taste for pornography has borne illegitimate children to the form, but further back, beyond him, are the shadows of knights in armour and fair, girdled ladies riding on white palfreys —ancestors of *The Picaresque Form* also—a little unreal in these days of over-accelerated emotions, but honest and cleaner and fresher than their descendants, which may count in the favour of *The Picaresque Form* . . . perhaps.

But *The Picaresque Form* must be true to itself. Don Quixote may tilt at wind-mills, he may thrust at wine-sacks, for here he is acting under the influence of his *General Intention*—his desire to be a knight-errant. But

he must *not* become priest or notary, for that would not be acting in accordance with his *General Intention*, and the incidents arising from such action would be *Tertiary Incidents.*

Unless *The General Intention* is first discovered, it is impossible to recognize *Tertiary Incident* in *The Picaresque Form.*

In *The Positive Form* any incident which does not bear upon *The Intention* is *Tertiary Incident.* In *The Negative Form* any incident which does not bear upon *The Hope* is *Tertiary Incident.* In *The Picaresque Form* any adventure which does not come within the scope of *The General Intention* is *Tertiary Incident.*

If we imagine a Picaresque Story not governed by a *General Intention* of a certain breadth, but governed by one which might have been *The Intention* of a *Positive Form*, we shall be faced with the problem of *Tertiary Incident.* Such a problem presents itself in Fielding's *Tom Jones.*

Professor Saintsbury writes: [1]

> *Tom Jones* . . . is as artfully constructed as the most nicely proportioned drama, and, long as it is, there is hardly a character or an incident (with the exception of some avowed episodic passages, made tolerable and almost imperative by the taste of the day and the supposed example of the classical epic) which is not strictly adjusted to the attainment of the story's end.

The comment in parenthesis is interesting, for it is an admissal that the matter introduced into the novel is inorganic, that it is *Tertiary Incident.* Neither the 'taste of the day,' nor the 'supposed example of the classical epic' can excuse tertiary matter. If the substance is tertiary it has no right, formally, to be there. If it is not tertiary, it will need no excuse for being there. It is undoubtedly true that the novel is excellently planned, but there are far more incidents in it which are not strictly

[1] *A Short History of English Literature*: Macmillan.

adjusted to ' the attainment of the story's end ' than would appear at first sight.

If we analyse *Tom Jones* according to the rules of *The Positive Form* which its restricted *General Intention* might lure us into attempting, we shall glance over the various adventures expecting them to form a consequential sequence of events which shall lead to the achievement of *The Intention*, i.e. Tom's marriage with Sophia.

We discover that there are many adventures in the book which fall outside such a consequential sequence. We discover also that the stress is laid upon the individual adventure, and not upon the attainment of *The General Intention*. All of which would lead us to suppose that we were analysing the book by a wrong method, and that we were discarding incidents as tertiary to a *Positive Form*, which would be true incidents in a *Picaresque Form*.

The Intention is certainly less general than is to be found in the majority of Picaresque Stories, and it is through the restriction of the *General Intention* that Fielding has made a host of difficulties for himself and his critics. If Tom desires Sophia as earnestly as we are led to believe, then why does the author entertain us with the many Don Juan-like amours which form the incidents leading to his union with Sophia?

Either Tom was less interested in Sophia than Fielding imagined, or more interested in the individual liaison than he would like us to believe.

It is this battle between *The General Intention* and the incidental adventure-*Intention*, between an *Intention* which in reality belongs to a *Positive Form* and adventures which belong to a *Picaresque Form*, which has produced so much inorganic matter in so admirably constructed a story.

The author's end is always before his mind's eye: Tom must marry Sophia. On the other hand, Tom must be provided with entertaining adventures by the way. Hence we have offered to us:

The seduction of the gamekeeper's daughter.
Tom's adventures with the company of soldiers.
The adventures of The Old Man of the Hill.
Mrs Fitzpatrick's adventures.
The affair of the gipsies.
The affair of The Stranger who holds up Tom in Highgate.

These, and many others, indicate that Fielding was not primarily concerned with his hero's achievement of Sophia.

Tom's *General Intention*, then, must be regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. To what extent did his love for Sophia, his desire to possess her, regulate his actions? That must be the question to be answered first. If we come to the conclusion that Sophia did not influence his actions to any great extent, then *The Intention* which Fielding has given his hero is not justified by the facts.

Tom, himself, would undoubtedly have told a questioner that Sophia was the dominating influence of his life. He would have fought upon the issue. But there are turbulent scenes in the bedrooms of wayside Inns which leave us in doubt. . . .

If we make Tom's *Intention* more general, we take Sophia from her place of honour. And there is little question that Tom loved Sophia . . . in his own curious manner. If we leave her as a *General Intention*, then how can we deal with the wayside adventures which have no bearing upon Tom's desire for Sophia. We must, therefore, if we wish to keep the story within bounds of *The Picaresque Form*, disregard to a great extent *The General Intention* as it stands, giving ourselves latitude to doubt Tom's concentration on Sophia.

Or (and perhaps we shall find that this is the correct solution to the difficulty) *Tom Jones* is an example, not of *The Picaresque Method*, but of a form combining both

positive and picaresque qualities, *The Dual-Picaresque Form.* And this we would put forward as a matter for the student's consideration, but one upon which, at this early date in form-analysis, it would be premature to dogmatize.

Another point which may give the student of *The Picaresque Form* considerable trouble in analysis is *The Parallel Story.*

It must be judged by the same rules that apply to *The Positive* and *Negative Forms.* The leading character in a *Parallel Story* must be regarded as having his own *Intention,* which may be, strangely enough, not a *General Intention,* but a highly particularized one. Recollect the *Parallel Story* of The Nancy-Nightingale affair in *Tom Jones.*

Thus it seems that because the chief character in a *Picaresque Story* has his mind more concentrated on the adventure of the moment, than on his final achievement of an ideal, there is no need for his associates (potential characters in *Parallel Stories*) to have their minds so adapted. They may be positive characters with very definite *Positive Intentions.*

But enough has been said concerning the technique of *The Picaresque Story* to act as introduction to a fuller analysis of one than has yet been given, Let us analyse the story of Browning's *Pippa Passes,* watching the *Intentions* in the various adventures develop under the *influence* of *The General Intention.*

The story concerns an Italian silk-winder, Pippa, who, on her one-day annual holiday, does not wish to waste her time:

> —My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,
> Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

As she passes on her way singing, her voice awakens the finer emotions of the characters in the various adventures, which, at the moment of her passing, are taking place.

It will be noticed as the story proceeds that Pippa does not take part in the adventures herself. Her voice alone alters the action of the adventures, as she herself develops *The Major Line of Action* which concerns her, alone.

The first adventure deals with the German, Sebald, who has murdered Ottima's husband, and is now with the woman at dawn. Pippa's voice, as she passes the shuttered windows, awakens a realization of their crime in their hearts, driving out the glamour and the false love.

The second adventure deals with a party of students who have made their friend, Jules, marry an artist's model under the impression that he is marrying an aristocrat. At the moment when he is about to cast her off and seek his revenge on the students, Pippa passes singing her song. Jules then sees Phene in a new light and determines to take her away and make her happy.

The third adventure deals with Luigi, whose patriotism makes him desire to free his oppressed fellows. He knows that in the work he is called upon to do he will probably lose his life. His mother tries to dissuade him from going, by suggesting that she shall send for the girl he loves. Pippa passes, singing, and Luigi hurries away on his mission, passing close to the police who are waiting to arrest him, but who have been misinformed concerning his movements.

The fourth and last adventure deals with Monsignor, who has come to punish a rascally Intendant, who acted as his dead brother's private assassin. The Intendant's papers are in order, but Monsignor tells him that he has orders from the Pope to carry out condign punishment on him and to seize the goods of his brother for the church. He says, further, that he knows that the Intendant killed the child heir to the estates.

The Intendant replies that as Monsignor is afraid of a certain woman, he, the Intendant, will get rid of her for him, and give him Pippa in her place. Monsignor considers the offer at the moment, when Pippa passes with

her song. Monsignor leaps to his feet and cries out for the arrest of the Intendant.

Let us now analyse these four adventures with their *Minor Lines of Action*, which are dominated by Pippa's *General Intention* and her *Major Line of Action*:

THE SEBALD-OTTIMA ADVENTURE:

Intention: Sebald intends to possess Ottima.

Barrier: Her old husband lives.

Crisis: Sebald, to gain complete possession of her, kills the husband.

Modification of the Intention: Sebald desires to retain Ottima, and escape the consequence of his actions.

Reversal: Pippa passes singing. Her song awakens the best in Sebald, and he realizes his sin and worthlessness.

Catastrophe: Sebald and Ottima are parted by their knowledge of the crime.

THE JULES-PHENE ADVENTURE:

Intention: Certain students desire 'friendly vengeance' on a young artist.

Barrier: He is disinterested in women.

Reversal: They have made him believe, by means of a scented letter, that he is marrying a lady of quality, when he is being forced into a marriage with an artist's model.

Crisis: The artist and his artist-model wife arrive at their new home.

Reversal: Phene, the model, awakened by the fineness of the man she has tricked into marriage, gazes rapturously at him, instead of speaking the lines she has been taught, which will shatter his dream.

Secondary Incident: She tells him that he has been hoaxed.

Secondary Incident: He gives her all his worldly goods and is about to seek vengeance on the students.
Catastrophe: Pippa passes singing, and the artist sees the girl anew. He falls in love with her.

THE LUIGI-MOTHER ADVENTURE:

Intention: The police wish to prevent Luigi from acting in his capacity of conspirator.
Barrier: They think that if he leaves his house that night that he will not be so acting.
Reversal: They watch his house.
Secondary Incident: Luigi tells his mother that he must leave the house at once. It is to be his death with honour.
Secondary Incident: She begs him to wait till the morning, trying to detain him with conversation about the woman he loves.
Secondary Incident: Pippa passes, singing her song.
Catastrophe: He bids his mother farewell and goes to his work.

THE MONSIGNOR-INTENDANT ADVENTURE:

Intention: Monsignor intends to punish the Intendant who has been his brother's personal assassin.
Barrier: The Intendant's papers are in order.
Reversal: Monsignor tells the Intendant that he has orders from the Pope.
Crisis: He tells the Intendant that he knows he killed the child heir to the estates.
Reversal: Intendant tries to bribe Monsignor by offering to kill a woman he is afraid of, and by offering Pippa in the woman's place.
Catastrophe: Monsignor considers the offer.
Reversal: Pippa passes singing.
Denouement: Monsignor orders the arrest of the Intendant.

If we now consider *The Lines of Action* of the adventures which we have analysed, and symbolize them in diagrammatic form, they will give us, together with *The Major Line of Action* dominated by Pippa's *General Intention*, *The Picaresque Form* which Browning has used in *Pippa Passes*.

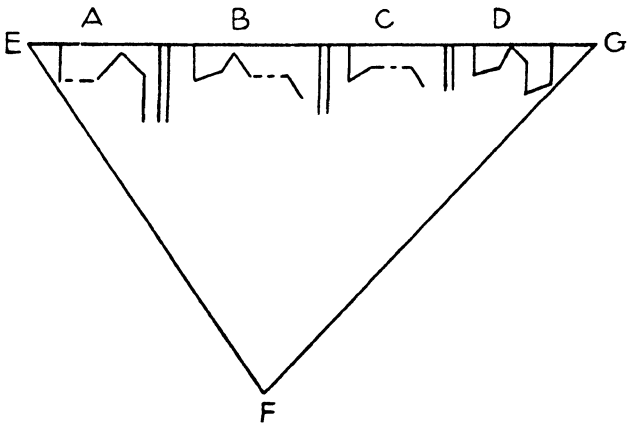

DIAGRAM No. 7.

A = The Sebald-Ottima Adventure.
B = The Jules-Phene Adventure.
C = The Luigi-Mother Adventure.
D = The Monsignor-Intendant Adventure.
EF and FG = Pippa's Major Line of Intention.

The four *Minor Lines of Action* are treated exactly as though they were separate *Positive Stories* working out their *Intentions* irrespective of each other.

The Major Line of Action is not as symmetrical as one might have wished.

The line EF represents *The Barrier* to *The General Intention*, which is Pippa's presumed inability to be of use to anyone in her lowly position. The line FG is *The Reversal of The Barrier*, which slowly rises to *Denouement* as the day passes and her influence is felt by the various leading characters of the adventures.

If there had been a check from one of the characters—

another *Barrier* to her *Intention*, *The Major Line of Action* would have fallen away again from *The Line of Intention*, and have added interest to the story and symmetry to the form.

So we must leave *The Picaresque Form*, with the hope that critics and scholars will look upon it with a more kindly eye, and add their constructive thoughts to the many destructive thoughts which have been concentrated on this type of story, which includes within its structure *The Positive* and *Negative Forms*. That structure, which has given us the architecture of both *The Divine Comedy* and *Don Quixote*, cannot be entirely worthless.

Chapter Eleven

CONCLUSION

To answer the problems of form—when the content appears to have grown too great for the container, by eliminating half that content, and expecting the other half to do its work, as the Modernist Poets appear to have done, is certainly an entertaining method. But to a more traditional formalism it appears a little like a man who, discovering that he has developed a nose as large as Cyrano's, cuts off half of it for appearance sake, instead of developing sufficient character of face to balance it.

But the Time Spirit reproduces its ideas as it reproduces its types of people. Bolshevism is not confined to politics, and the Œdipus-complex with its hatred of authority shows in art as in the suburban side streets. But who shall say that a judicious Bolshevism in the world of form will not, in disrupting preconceived ideas, make us reconsider our forms, and, when the final bomb has been thrown, enable us to piece them together with something added by the experience.

Still, if Mr Cummings *could* have answered his poetic problems without taxing our brains and the reference-habit so greatly, he would have put us under the same debt of gratitude we are under to Mr Yeats, who has reconstructed with the minimum of destruction.

But these form-puzzles of the Modernist are, perhaps, road-houses on the way toward a design not yet imagined by the traditionalist. Not even a talented botanist could have foreseen the full-grown tea rose from a glance at its seed. And, no doubt, the archetypal rose was once a Bolshevistic idea in a world of giant fern.

The only safe course for us, in our quest for the principles underlying form, is to keep as close as possible to human nature and its manifestations; and when a theory obtrudes, to test it directly by the life about us. If the principles we seek are true to life, they will be true to literature. This would appear to be the only touchstone we have, or need, concerning their validity.

This word 'form,' however, can be confusing, for there are obviously two distinct types of form. The outer form which distinguishes the Ballad from the Sonnet, the Play from the Novel. The inner form which is under the dominance of *Intention* and *Theme*, and which expresses itself through a *Line of Action*.

If we glance at a verse of Browning's *The Statue and the Bust* we shall see that it is under the control of an outer form, which limits the number of feet in the line, the rhymes and the rhythms:

> There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
> And a statue watches it from the square,
> And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Obviously this outer form, which controls the number of feet, etc., will, to some extent, influence the inner form which controls the expression of the story. In the same manner the division of a play into acts and scenes, which is an expression of the play's outer form, will have its influence upon the thoughts contained within the acts and scenes. In the narrative story, a division into paragraphs and chapters will have a corresponding effect.

This outer form needs little comment; the world is still experimenting with it, and as its effect upon content is so infinitely less than the effect of the inner form, we may dismiss it with a polite nod of acceptance.

It is with the inner form that we must concern ourselves, that form which, when it has influenced the creative idea, is careless whether the outer form makes of the matter a poem, a play or a romance. When the two

forms are in harmony the probability is that the inner and outer forms augment each other and accentuate the unity. A perfect inner form which would admirably fit the Ballad outer form, would not necessarily, *so* perfectly fit the short story outer form.

The inner form, as Professor Moulton has realised, is 'the extension of design to the sphere of human life.' He writes: [1]

> It has become proverbial that taste in art is incapable of being settled by discussion, yet the art of music has found exact treatment in the science of harmony. . . .
> If Plot be understood as the extension of design to the sphere of human life, threads of experience being woven into a symmetrical pattern . . . then the conception of it will come out in its true dignity.
> What else is such reduction to order than the meeting-point of science and art? Science is engaged in tracing rhythmic movements in the beautiful confusion of the heavenly bodies, or reducing the bewitching variety of external nature to regular species and nice gradations of life. Similarly, art continues the work of creation in calling ideal order out of the chaos of things as they are. . . .

Or, perhaps, not to take too certain an attitude that we humans can now see all of infinity that there is to be seen (and indeed, the discoveries of Science in each age would lead us to suppose that future ages may add to our knowledge somewhat) we had better modify Professor Moulton's last sentence into 'Similarly, art continues the work of creation in calling ideal order out of *what appears to us to be* the chaos of things as they are. . . .'

For, since we are claiming for ourselves the benefit of form, we must, at least, postulate for Deity the conception of Ideal Form. For Deity, who can swing a moon round a planet, and both around a sun, would have little difficulty in staging, with some degree of accuracy, a mere ten million or so interconnected tragedies and comedies with

[1] *Shakespeare as Dramatic Artist.*

their accompanying *Parallel Stories* to make up what we call the human comedy.

It would be almost worth the formalist's time, as it appears to be worth the theologian's, to glance down on this seething mass of drama, for a better understanding of its rules. Or would it disturb the egoism of modernist man to learn that he was, perhaps, not made for his own sake, to play a meaningless part in a drama without *Significance*, that he might show Deity by his art how the rules of form should be applied? . . . But perhaps the millions of interconnected dramas with their attendant *Spheres of Influence* and their *Parallel Stories* and *Tangent Stories* and their mechanisms not yet dreamt of, must be left to the formalists of a future age, who from the laws of science may eventually postulate the formal laws of Man. Until then the syntax of the language of form will remain unwritten:

> ISHAK (*bitterly*): Allah did not ask me that question when he made me a poet and a dissector of souls. It is my trade: I do but follow my master, the exalted Designer of human carpets, the Ruler of the World.[1]

Plot, then, becomes for Professor Moulton what the inner form appears to have become for the formalist. The perfect plot, with its *Intention*, its *Theme*, its *Line of Action* and its *Significance* is almost indistinguishable from the formalist's idea of symmetry. A perfect plot will presuppose a perfect form. A perfect form will presuppose—not a perfect plot, but the best that can be done with any given plot.

If we ask why a perfect form will not produce a perfect plot, we are forced to admit that a generalized *Theme* working with a weak *Intention* and a commonplace *Line of Action* culminating in a badly fused *Significance*, will yield, if the incidents are part of a consequential sequence, as perfect a *form* as a highly specialized *Theme* working

[1] *Hassan*, by James Elroy Flecker (Act IV, Scene I).

with a strong *Intention* and an original *Line of Action* culminating in an illuminating *Significance*.

And the reason of this is that plot carries a shade more meaning than form does. Plot includes form—and that spirit which animates form.

If we imagine the perfect form animated by the perfect inspiration, then, and then only, shall we have the perfect plot, for by inspiration alone will a generalized *Theme* become a specialized *Theme*, the weak *Intention* become the strong *Intention*, the commonplace *Line of Action* become the original *Line of Action*, and *a Significance* become the illuminating *Significance*.

Contrast the two stories, *The Widow of Ephesus* and its Chinese counterpart, *A Fickle Widow*. Both have the same theme, the inconstancy of women, both forms are more or less adequate, but in the former the creative imagination is far more all-present—that is, the plot is superior:

The Widow of Ephesus	*A Fickle Woman*
A widow is so devoted to her husband that she descends into the sepulchre with his corpse	Chwang, a magician (seeing a woman fanning her husband's grave, as she has promised not to leave it till the earth is dry) desires to prove that all women are inconstant.
Some thieves are crucified nearby and a soldier is posted to guard them.	
The soldier sees a light in the sepulchre and goes to the woman.	His wife protests that she is chaste.
	He ' magically ' dies.
He stays with her each night when he should have been on guard.	A new suitor woos her and she immediately marries him, putting the coffin of her late husband into an out-house, and dressing herself gaily.
The relatives of one of the crucified men cut down his body and bury it.	
The soldier discovers his predicament.	The new husband has a fit, and she knows that only a man's brains can save him.

The widow gives him the body of her dead husband to put on the cross.	She goes to her late husband's coffin and chops it open to relieve him of his brains.
	The late husband then awakens from his ' magical ' death, and sitting up, denounces her.

To comment on the values of these stories would be a disparagement of the reader's intelligence. Both have adequate forms, both lead to the same *Significance* along their different *Lines of Action*, both have *The Theme* of the inconstancy of women. But one is informed with a high degree of the creative imagination, the other is not. Thus an ideal form will not necessarily produce an ideal plot, as an ideal plot will produce an ideal form.

Concerning this creative imagination, which, when allied to form, will, if the form is perfect, produce the perfect plot, Croce writes : [1]

> Certainly art is symbol, all symbol—that is, all significant; but symbol of what? . . . The intuition is truly artistic, it is truly intuition, and not a chaotic mass of images, only when it has a vital principle that animates it, making it all one with itself; but what is this principle? . . . what gives coherence and unity to the intuition is feeling: the intuition is really such because it represents a feeling, and can only appear from and upon that. Not the idea, but the feeling, is what confers upon art the airy lightness of the symbol: *an aspiration enclosed in the circle of a representation*—that is art; and in it the aspiration alone stands for the representation, and the representation alone for the aspiration. . . . What we admire in genuine works of art is *the perfect imaginative form* which a state of the soul assumes; and we call this life, unity, compactness and fullness of the work of art.

The italics are ours. They call attention to the ' aspiration enclosed in the circle of representation,' i.e. to the creative impulse enclosed in the form, which alone can raise it to the heights of the perfect story—which may

[1] *The Essence of Æsthetic*, by Benedetto Croce. Translated by Douglas Ainslie: Heinemann. 1921.

then be regarded as a ' perfect imaginative form '—that is, form illuminated by creative energy.

The difference between the inner and outer forms has been responsible for much formless writing. The copyist sees the outer form, and also senses something of an inner form which he cannot quite define. With a mixture of inner and outer imperfectly assimilated, he begins his task of reproducing the original

The Romans, struck by the formal simplicity of the Greek drama, began to copy its form—as they imagined. The result was the *Phormio* of Terence, the *Amphitryon* of Plautus and the others. A student of form has only to read the former and skim the latter to know that neither Terence nor Plautus understood the form of the originals.

Later the Roman error was repeated by the French, when Molière wrote *The Misanthrope*, a confusion of *Parallel Stories* which intermingle in the most startling manner. *The Intention* of Alcestes to show the human race its corruption is blurred by the equally strong *Intention* of Alcestes to believe in the loyalty of Célimène. In Molière's *Tartuffe*, Cléante desires to banish hypocrisy, symbolized by Tartuffe, the character. This *Intention*, which dominates Act I, gives place in Act II to Orgon's *Intention* to make his daughter (Mariane) marry Tartuffe. In Act III *The Intention* changes again and Tartuffe becomes the leading character in his desire to seduce Mariane's mother. In Act IV Cléante's *Intention* becomes a desire for Tartuffe to leave the house and so prevent anyone else suffering for his sins. In Act V . . . but the *chef d'œuvre* of Act V is *The Denouement*, where Molière, writing to stigmatize the hyprocrisy of the age, ends the play with a glorification of *Le Roi Soleil*, the very apotheosis of hypocrisy. . . .

But Corneille and Racine have understood the traditional inner form of the story far better than Molière. The former's *Polyeucte* and the latter's *Athalia* have more

than a shadow of the Greek simplicity. *Polyeucte* by Corneille gives us on analysis:

Intention: Pauline wishes to be true to her husband.
Barrier: She is forced to meet an old lover whom she thought was dead.
Reversal: She sends him away from her, although loving him.
Crisis: She tells her husband of the treachery which was in her breast before she sent the old lover away.
Modification of The Intention: Pauline desires to save her husband from the consequences of his having declared himself a Christian.
Reversal: He will not deny his new religion.
Secondary Incident: She pleads with her old lover to save her husband's life.
Secondary Incident: He goes to Rome to petition the Emperor.
Catastrophe: During his absence Pauline's father gives orders for the husband's execution.

With the exception of the doubtful elasticity of *The Modification of The Intention*, the form is as clear-cut and as simple as one could desire.

Racine's *Athalia* also gives us a sound form:

Intention: Queen Athalia desires the destruction of the avenging child which she has seen in a dream.
Barrier: She has prayed that she may find him, but her prayers have not been answered.
Reversal: She later recognizes the dream-child as one of two children who serve at a holy feast.
Secondary Incident: She discovers the child, but fails to get him to return and live with her.
Secondary Incident: She tells the religious party that she will despoil their temples if the child is not given up to her.

Crisis: She storms The Temple with her soldiers, and discovers the treasure hidden there. She is admitted with a bodyguard presumably to take the treasure away, and also the child.

Reversal: A curtain is drawn back and she sees the child seated on a throne, the rightful king.

Catastrophe: She is killed and her army is scattered.

Form, then, as we have seen, is not quite synonymous with plot, for the latter includes an act of creative imagination which may, or may not, be present in mere story—if we call plot the *successful* blending of the necessary factors to produce a perfect form; and form, the mere blending of the factors which will produce a perfect symmetry.

But this inner form is seldom either simple or pure in the sense of being true to its own type. *Œdipus Rex* and *Hamlet* are singularly true to type. Even *Lear* propounds a problem in form, which in its present state of unassimilated principles, is most difficult to answer. The question may be asked: can this play be regarded as an example of *The Positive Form*, when its hero is driven mad by his sufferings, and becomes so fate-driven that he is a prey of the elements? Surely this character is an example of *Negative Hero*, a parallel to the weeping Hecuba, blood-brother of the chained Prometheus, robbed of all but *Hope*.

Undoubtedly Lear begins as a *Positive Hero* with his free-will act of abdication—but when he *has* abdicated, must not the form change to accommodate his new attitude? If not, then why should The Ancient Mariner be regarded as a *Negative Hero* when he, also, begins as a *Positive Hero* by his act of aggression on The Albatross?

Such questions, and alas! there are many, can only be finally decided when the principles of literary form have been studied as painstakingly as the principles of other art-forms. At this juncture one may only suggest that

Lear and *The Ancient Mariner* do not belong to the same type of form, as Lear is perpetually seeking for a place 'to lay down his burden,' which is a *Positive Intention*, and the Ancient Mariner is perpetually desiring freedom from the curse and a safe return to port, which is a *Negative Hope*.

In *The Picaresque Form* we have seen that a particularized *General Intention* will add positive elements to *The Picaresque Form*, and we have suggested that *Tom Jones* may be an example of such an amalgamation of *Positive* and *Picaresque Forms*. But there would appear to be no limit to the fusing of the forms. *Negative, Positive* and *Picaresque* may all be so intertwined in construction, that the careless writer may at once take heart in the thought that he can shelter his amorphous production under the title of *Dual-Positive-Negative-Picaresque* Form.

This fusing of the forms must for a long time be a thorn in the side of the careful analyst, for, although we have outlined the various elementary principles dominating the forms, we have made no attempt to outline the principles of the forms when they are complicated by fusion. Indeed the language of form is so immature that such an attempt would be akin to attempting to write a syntax before the accidence of the tongue was compiled.

And this Accidence of Form still presents us with difficulties. We have seen Shakespeare stumble over a *Parallel Construction* in *The Merchant of Venice*, where he ends his story with a *Parallel* instead of a *Main Story*. But when a lesser than he errs in this fashion, and falls into other errors of construction, which make it difficult for the analyst to decide which is *The Parallel* and which *The Main Story*, how is one to proceed? Walter Pater writes:[1]

> Chaucer expressing the sentiment of it (comradeship) so strongly in an antique tale, that one knows not whether the love of both Palamon and Arcite for Emelya, or of those two for each other, is the chiefer subject of the *Knight's Tale*. . . .

[1] *The Renaissance*: Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

And this is only an individual expression of an extended problem. The student who would entertain himself profitably concerning this inarticulateness of form, should read Meredith's *Tale of Chloë*. There is a veritable Philosophy of Parallel Entanglement in this story.

We have to some extent shown the magnitude of the problem in our analysis of *Antony and Cleopatra*. But if we have succeeded in answering the problem in this case, the problem in general is still unanswered, for we have been unable to state the underlying principles which control the formal mechanism of parallel leading characters. And even when these principles have been discovered another problem awaits the discoverer—that of designing a diagram which will show the unified form of such dual leading characters—who may be separated in the play, each developing his separate *Line of Action*.

If we admit our failure to suggest a diagram which will include a simple *Main and Parallel Story* dominated by a single hero, of what help can we be in suggesting a diagram for such a story, complicated by several *Parallel Stories* and the duplication of the leading character? These are the problems which await the Syntax of Form.

And are these three forms, *The Positive, The Negative* and *The Picaresque*, final; do they include every type of story that has been written? It would appear so, unless the philosophy behind the forms is at fault. Mankind appears to be divided into 'the doers' and 'the done to,' into those who work toward a definite *Intention*, those who live on a Hope—negatively, and those who are near-sighted and are content with satisfying the desires of the moment.

These types have all been provided for in the three forms.

Bur even if the forms should prove to be comprehensive the question remains, can they make significant all the types of action with which the writer comes into contact?

Do they include *The Conte*, which may be foreshortened into a single incident?

Let us consider a story of a single incident. Chekov's *Vanka* [1] will answer our purpose.

It deals with a nine-year-old child, Vanka Zhukov, apprenticed to the shoemaker, Aliakhin. He is very unhappy in his new home and writes to ask his grandfather, his only relative, to take him back home. This sole incident forms the story:

Intention: Vanka wants to return to his grandfather.
Barrier: His apprenticeship.
Reversal: ———
Crisis: The letter he is writing, which is to awaken in his grandfather's mind a desire to have him back home.
Reversal: Vanka's hectic demand is foredoomed to fail.
Catastrophe: The letter is addressed to: The Village, to my grandfather. It can never reach him.

In one incident Chekov has told his story. But in that incident the entire form of a complete story lies hidden.

The Conte, however, cannot be dismissed as a problem by the answering of one question. Frequently in *The Contes* of de Maupassant, of O. Henry, of Russian and American literature, we are faced by a type of short story (and *The Conte* is but a foreshortened short story) which appears to be formless, aimless and frequently meaningless —a mere episode or two in the life of its leading character. Such stories have been called Character Stories or Atmosphere Stories, and as the plot element is so weak in them they appear to have broken free from form. But have they? Let us glance at one of these apparently formless stories and decide for ourselves if we must accept it as an outlaw from the realm of form.

[1] *Best Russian Short Stories*: Boni and Liveright, New York.

Maxim Gorky's short story *One Autumn Night*[1] yields on analysis the following incidents:

Intention: A student of eighteen desires food, shelter and warmth for the night.
Barrier: He is without money.
Reversal: He meets a girl in the same circumstances digging in the sand under a crate.
Crisis: They discover bread in the crate and they take shelter under an overturned skiff.
Denouement: The girl lies close against the student and gives him warmth.

From the type of characters we are dealing with, our impression will at once lead us to the conclusion that here are *Picaresque Characters*, not seeking for the achievement of deferred *Intentions*, but considering the problem of the immediate present, The man is a student, he is not, however, concerned with books, but with bread. Regarding his *General Intention* as being one connected with the student-life, his immediate *Intention* as being connected with food, shelter and warmth, we are assured that this story will fall into *The Picaresque Form.*

One Autumn Night is a *Picaresque Story* limited to a single incident. But again we have found the unit of form as its basis. Truly, there is overmuch talk by the girl about her lover, Pashka, the baker with the red moustache, and this verges on tertiary matter.

Tertiary Incident, as we have seen, is one of the most fruitful of the destructive forces which operate against symmetry. The most perfect form can be destroyed by it. We have only to introduce sufficient extraneous matter into *Œdipus Rex* and *Hamlet* to completely wreck their symmetries. And Fielding did not mend matters when he wrote in *Tom Jones*:

[1] *Best Russian Short Stories*: Boni and Liveright, New York.

Reader, I think proper, before we proceed any further together, to acquaint thee that I intend to digress, through the whole history, as often as I see occasion. . . .

And Fielding frequently saw occasion.
R. W. Livingstone writes in *The Legacy of Greece*:

The greatest figures of the last fifty years, such as Browning, Meredith, Hardy, and Conrad, dilute their pages with unessential, if not inferior, stuff, and produce writing which has not received the *summa manus*. . . .
The art of omission is the art which English writers most need to learn. . . .
Though the strength of English literature does not lie in *technical perfection*, Milton, Pope, and Tennyson—to name no others—have in their different ways as firm a grasp of it as any Greek, and it can be learnt from French writers, with whom it is the rule rather than the exception, as well as from the Greeks. . . .
Greek technique is a lesson in 'form' and a reminder of its place in literature.

And form, Sir Joshua Reynolds tells us, is the understanding of the laws of one's art: [1]

We are very sure that the beauty of form, the expression of the passions, the art of composition, even the power of giving a general air of grandeur to a work, is at present very much under the dominion of rules. . . .
How many more principles may be fixed and ascertained we cannot tell; but as criticism is likely to go hand in hand with the art which is its subject, we may venture to say, that as that art shall advance, its powers will be still more and more fixed by rules. . . .
What we now call Genius begins, not where rules abstractedly taken end, but where known vulgar and trite rules have no longer any place . . . even works of Genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance. . . .

And the laws of literary technique may be summed up in one sentence: the casting aside of the inessential, which

[1] *Discourses.* Sir Joshua Reynolds: Walter Scott.

robs art of its unity which is its form. Croce is insistent on this point: [1]

> Another corollary of the conception of expression as activity is the *indivisibility* of the work of art. Every expression is a unique expression. Activity is a fusion of the impressions in an organic whole. A desire to express this has always prompted the affirmation that the work of art should have *unity*, or, what amounts to the same thing, *unity in variety*. Expression is a synthesis of the various, the multiple, in the one.

The two factors which bear most strongly on the sharpening of the outlines of form, and therefore aid the reader to grasp the unity of the whole, are: (*a*) the 'picturizing' of the author's material, that the appeal may be to the imagination and not to the reasoning brain. For, if the author 'picturizes' his scenes he will be in a better position to realize any divergence of his *Line of Action* from its true direction—the attainment or failure of *The Intention*. He will be more directly in touch with his medium; and (*b*) the making of *The Essential Situation* the nucleus of his story from which all action is developed.

Concerning the 'picturizing' of the author's material, read this short paragraph from the *Odyssey* [2] and count the number of pictures flashed into the imagination, contrasting them with the number of words used. Then take up a modern novel. . . .

> Therewith grey-eyed Athene departed over the unharvested seas, and left pleasant Scheria, and came to Marathon and wide-wayed Athens, and entered the good house of Erechtheus. Meanwhile Odysseus went to the famous palace of Alcinous, and his heart was full of many thoughts as he stood there or ever he had reached the threshold of bronze. For there was a gleam as it were of sun or moon through the high-roofed hall of great-hearted Alcinous.
>
> (Book VII.)

But picturization, that transformation of abstract thought into concrete terms, is not enough by itself, even when the rules of form have been intelligently

[1] *Æsthetic.* [2] Translated by Butcher and Lang.

applied, as we have seen in our consideration of plot and form. The creative act must be behind the form; that imaginative impulse which fuses all into what Croce has called 'that synthesis of the various.' It has long been recognized by writers that a plot is of doubtful value which cannot be expressed in a single, short sentence. This sentence should be the expression of *The Essential Situation.*

The Essential Situation develops into *The Line of Action* plus *The Theme* plus *The Intention* and *Significance.* A contraction of these, therefore, results in *The Essential Situation,* which is the nucleus of the plot—that acorn which has the potentiality of the flowering oak within it. It is therefore the germ of form as it is the germ of plot, and the symmetries are there in embryo. So essential a factor as the germ of form cannot be dismissed without a comment, in a survey of literary technique. If the germ is malformed, both the plot and the form will be malformed and the only remedy will be a return to the germ state and a pruning of the malformation.

As it is impossible within the scope of this book to show the growth of the germ into the completed story, it may be as well to consider a few analyses with their *Essential Situations,* so that one may at least see the connection between this germ and the bud of the story.

An analysis of Ambrose Bierce's short story, *The Man and the Snake,*[1] yields the following incidents:

Intention: A man desires to escape from the snake he has seen under his bed.

Barrier: Impelled by the snake's eyes, he moves toward it, instead of away from it.

Secondary Incident: He hears drums beside the Nile, he sees visions of a crowned snake.

Secondary Incident: He falls to the floor.

[1] *In the Midst of Life*: Chatto and Windus.

Secondary Incident: Attracted, he crawls toward the snake.
Catastrophe: He dies in a fit.

The Essential Situation of this story is built up of (*a*) an imaginative man; and (*b*) a stuffed snake with boot-button eyes.

The Ballad, *The Twa Sisters of Binnorie* yields:

Intention: Elder Sister desires the love of a certain Knight.
Barrier: He is in love with the Younger Sister.
Reversal: The Elder Sister pushes the Younger into the river.
Crisis: The Younger Sister is drowned.
Reversal: A Harper cuts a lock from the drowned Sister's hair to make a string for his harp.
Catastrophe: The Harper plays his harp before the Elder Sister's family and the harp tells them of the murder.

The Essential Situation of this story is built up of (*a*) a woman who kills her sister; and (*b*) a Harper needing a string for his harp.

Let us now glance at the analysis of a play, and isolate the *Essential Situation*. Pirandello's *Right You Are* yields:

Intention: The Agazzis desire to know the truth concerning Signor Ponzo and his strange behaviour.
Barrier: Ponzo's mother-in-law refuses to receive them when they call.
Reversal: Agazzi uses official pressure to make the mother-in-law call on them.
Crisis: Signor Ponza calls and gives an explanation.
Reversal: Mother-in-law calls and explains by telling a contradictory story to that of Ponza, her son-in-law.

Catastrophe: Signor Ponza's wife and mother-in-law are brought together with Ponza, that the truth may be forced from them. Ponza's wife tells a story which combines the stories of Ponza and the mother-in-law, which leaves both the audience and the Agazzis still in doubt when the final curtain falls.

The Essential Situation of this play is built up of (*a*) a man who keeps his wife and mother-in-law apart, and will not give his reasons until forced to—then, doubtful reasons; and (*b*) the burning of the village where the only true explanation could be discovered.

This nucleus of the story is frequently more difficult to discover in a novel of any great length, than it is in other types of literature. Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* yields:

Intention: Roger Chillingworth desires to ruin the soul of his wife's paramour.

Barrier: Only the wife knows the identity of the lover.

Reversal: Roger suspects the clergyman, Dimmesdale, and eventually proves it to his satisfaction.

Crisis: After seven years he has nearly driven Dimmesdale mad by 'psychological torture.'

Reversal: The wife and Dimmesdale decide to run away together.

Catastrophe: Dimmesdale, delivering his last sermon, dies on the scaffold, his soul saved by a confession of his sin.

The Essential Situation of this story is built up of (*a*) the seduction of a young wife; and (*b*) a husband who has the power of 'psychological torture.'

It will be obvious by now that *The Essential Situation* contains within its short statement the embryonic plot and the embryonic form. But it is not sufficient to assure

oneself of the symmetry of the whole, the symmetry of each part must be considered; for that which appears perfect as a whole, may in its parts show errors of symmetry which have been overlooked in the general survey. Each side-chapel must be perfect when viewed as a unit, as the cathedral itself must be perfect when it is viewed as a whole.

The symmetry of *Hamlet* is what it is, because the symmetry of the parts are what they are. Alter the *Line of Action* of Polonius, Laertes, Ophelia and you alter their forms, and in altering their forms you alter the form of *Hamlet.*

Schlegel has commented on this: [1]

> . . . whereas in the truly dramatic poem, intended to carry the spectators along with it, the separate parts must be fashioned after the figure of the whole, so that we may say, *each scene* may have its exposition, its intrigue, and its winding up. . . .

And not only must each scene have its form, but each character in the play must have its definite form. And if the individual form is unsymmetrical it will affect the form of the story, and the single action of a minor character, which alters his *Line of Action* will have its effect upon the main *Line of Action* if the story is the unity it should be. Thus, if the form as a whole is unsymmetrical it may be rectified by a reconsideration of the individual *Lines of Action.*

But before we close this survey of technical principles we must comment once again on that incident we have called an occasional *Primary Incident, The Reversal of the Catastrophe.*

If the W, which we have used as a symbol of the unit of form, is reconsidered, it will be seen that the last upward stroke symbolizes the movement from *Catastrophe* to *Denouement,* thus eliminating this *Reversal of the Cata-*

[1] *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature,* by Augustus William Schlegel: Bohn.

strophe. It will be clear to the reader by now, why we have been forced to call this incident an occasional *Primary Incident*, for had we admitted it to full enfranchisement, it would have necessitated a change from one upward line to two upward lines between *Catastrophe* and *Denouement*, thus:

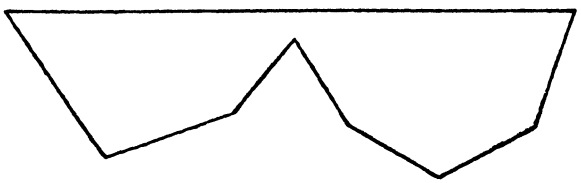

DIAGRAM NO. 8.

and the consequent unbalancing of the form. To rectify this error in symmetry, we should have been forced to postulate *two downward lines* where there is only one at present, and by this means to regain the balance:

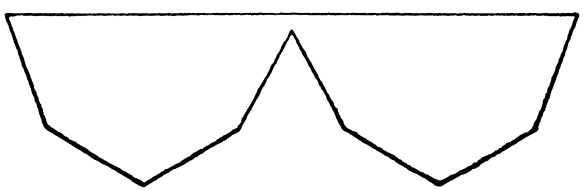

DIAGRAM NO. 9.

The result of this symbolization on *The Line of Action* would have been to add a *Second Barrier* to *The Intention*, to balance *The Reversal of the Catastrophe*. No justification for this could be discovered in literature.

Although this *Second Barrier* could not be justified (as by far the most common method of construction is to proceed directly from *The Intention* to *The Barrier* and then to *The Reversal*) one was still left with *The Reversal of the Catastrophe*, which *could* be justified to some extent. Then arose the question of balancing this *Reversal* by the inclusion of a balancing line elsewhere, to the left of *The Crisis*.

But on attempting to construct a unit on these lines, one met with failure, for in each case the balance was destroyed, or the symbol had no actuality in dramatic movement. The exclusion of *The Reversal of the Catastrophe* thus seemed to be inevitable.

When *The Reversal of the Catastrophe* does occur as an occasional *Primary Incident* and is balanced by a *Secondary Incident*, this may be a *Second Barrier*, or a *Secondary Incident* before or after *The Reversal of the Barrier*, but unless other secondary matter is introduced into the story the diagram will tend to become unbalanced; although this diagram may be adjusted by a careful consideration of dramatic values.

And this brings us to the consideration of the value of diagrams as the symbolic expression of dramatic action.

An incident, whatever its value to the story, can only be expressed in a diagram by a line or a point. *The Crisis* in *Lear*, a momentary affair toward the end of the play, where Cordelia and Lear meet in the French camp will be dignified by the same position as *The Crisis* in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. That is, *The Crisis*, whether of great intensity and dramatic importance, or of little intensity and dramatic importance, in relation to the other *Primary Incidents*, will be represented in the diagram in precisely the same manner. To the diagrammatic mind *The Crisis* is just *The Crisis* whatever its dramatic value.

The diagram of a strong story will appear exactly the same as the diagram of a weak story, the great artist's work in diagram will appear like the amateur's work if the formal principles have been complied with. This would not be of great consequence in itself, as we know that the diagram represents only the form of the story, but it has implications.

The diagram which symbolizes a story where some of *The Primary Incidents* are weak and others strong will be

the same as in the case where all the incidents are strong or all the incidents are weak. We know that the diagram only represents the form, but it should be a true representation of form-values, and it is not. The diagram, knowing no difference between the various dramatic values, may symbolize a badly balanced story in exactly the same way that it would have symbolized a perfectly balanced one. Imagine a story with five *Secondary Incidents* to the left of *The Crisis*, and five to the right of it. Whatever the dramatic value may be of these *Secondary Incidents* they will be symbolized in the diagram in exactly the same manner. The five *Secondary Incidents* to the left of the diagram may be of little dramatic value, and the five to the right may be of great dramatic value—so the diagram should show a greater preponderance of weight to the right than to the left. It should show an imperfectly balanced form. It does nothing of the kind. The diagram will appear to symbolize a perfectly balanced form—in the same manner that it would have shown the *Secondary Incidents* if the five to the left had perfectly balanced, in dramatic value, the five to the right.

This is the way of diagrams. One must accept their disabilities as one makes use of their virtues. They are admirable adjuncts to a rule-of-thumb judgment on form, but to accept their finding as final would be the same as accepting the painter Ingres as a greater artist than Botticelli on account of his draughtmanship.

And the diagram can be misleading in other ways. *The Primary Incidents* are listed and the diagram is drawn as though each *Primary Incident* followed the other, as in the unit of form. Although this is done for the convenience of the student who wishes to gain an understanding of formal principles, there are occasions when several of *The Primary Incidents* do not occur in the direct action of the story, but are foreshortened by retrospect into an introductory paragraph. This fore-

shortening of a *Primary Incident* will rob it of some of the dramatic value it would have possessed if it had been presented to the reader in the course of the story by direct action. In the diagram this, or these *Primary Incidents*, will be symbolized as though they had occurred in the direct *Line of Action*. Thus we are again dealing with false dramatic values, and the diagram is not expressing what it purports to express.

But perhaps the formalist of the future will overcome this difficulty by some method of notation which will mark the dramatic values of each line of the diagram.

These difficulties and a score of others haunt the form of literature, when one attempts to gather the principles of the methods which authors along the ages have used, and to systematize them so that they may be expressed simply by means of the diagram. And yet there is no better method known for developing a form sense than the diagram, if one will remember that it is as far removed from the realities of form as thought is from words. A study of the masterpieces of literature by means of the formal diagram, will slowly awaken a correct attitude to abstract form, which, when it is developed, will thrust aside diagrammatic aid as a builder casts aside his scaffolding when his house is built.

Symmetry alone is the final test of form—but the final test, in its niceties of values, can only be made by a finely adjusted form sense, which will awaken when the cruder methods of the diagram have been dispensed with; for a judgment on form is an æsthetic judgment, and the whole problem of form is inseparably bound up, as we have seen, with the problem of creative imagination.

That we have attempted to separate a unity into parts which in reality do not exist as parts, is not to imply that one can isolate a *Significance* and metaphorically regard it under the microscope as one can a 'smear.' *Significance*, *Theme*, *Intention* are as much parts of the story as its leading character and its subordinate actors.

To take a subordinate actor and to regard him, apart from the story, as an isolated unit, would only yield a small proportion of his characteristics, which could only be appreciated by his relation to the rest of the characters in the story. The same is true of plot, form, *Intention*, *Significance*, *Theme*, etc., they are the limbs, the body, the brain of the story-man, and each viewed separately is robbed of something that can only be appreciated when the mechanism is viewed as a whole. The man hurrying about his daily affairs is a unit; he is something less lying dissected on the operating table.

And although we are passing through an age when form in all its art-manifestations is being shattered, and the debris lies about us of musical, painting, dramatic and poetic shards, which once bounded the activities of the artist—and, although we know that form is inseparably bound up with the creative imagination, and that if form is mutilated, the imagination must be mutilated also, we need not despair.

The old must be destroyed before the new can take its place. And if, in the destruction of Romantic-sentimentality and Realistic-crudity (both deeply embedded in glamour and fantasy—which come from seeing life as one wants to see it, rather than seeing it as it is), the former in its over-acceptance, the latter in its under-acceptance of facts, a little of creative imagination is discarded also, it is only of momentary importance.

The Othellos, The Lears, The Don Quixotes, The Agamemnons, will one day return to take the place of the Alfred Prufrocks, all the more human for having been immersed in the superficialities of life, all the saner for having been forced to view the ugliness of the uninteresting from the angle of view of the essentially commonplace. For the creative imagination cannot be destroyed. In the reconstruction which inevitably follows such a massacre of art-forms, it will transform Alfred Prufrock into Œdipus-Prufrock, and casting off his

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