

## NOTES TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POETICS OF THE ENGLISH CLASS \*

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I am simply calling attention to the fact that fine art is the only teacher except torture.

George Bernard Shaw  
Preface to *Misalliance*

Human consciousness is in perpetual pursuit of a language and a style. To assume consciousness is at once to assume form. Even at levels far below the zone of definition and clarity, forms, measures, and relationship exist. The chief characteristic of the mind is to be constantly describing *itself*. The mind is a design that is in a state of ceaseless flux, of ceaseless weaving and then unweaving, and its activity, in this sense, is an artistic activity. Like the artist, the mind works upon nature.

Henri Focillon  
*The Life of Forms in Art*

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I am indebted to my years as a teacher for the assumptions and the approach of this paper. The frame of reference is teaching literature through other disciplines. I do not however pretend to assume the position of pedagogue to those of my own ilk. The concepts which the paper advances, like other knowledge, are old wine. If the bottles are new, the concepts ought not on that account to be discarded. The perspective represents an assimilated body of scholarship and numerous presentations in varying contexts. The references to other fields outside literature are not there for the purpose of supporting a *how to* philosophy so much as to explain the *why* of one ratiocinative course and its resultant *modus operandi*.

The teaching of English has not developed any final or ultimate system of poetics. The best we can hope for are a continuing dialectic and committed idiosyncratic stabs in the dark. So long as these stabs are also probes designed to develop meaning and purpose, to that extent they can be successful, however modestly, in accomplishing the goal of learning which is what teaching is about. Teaching is at once difficult and personal. Its significance could lie less in *what* it claims to do than in *how* it goes about fulfilling those claims. There is no pretense that what is proffered here is definitive or conclusive, only, perhaps, with a little bit of luck, an item or two of a provocative nature.

In a lecture on the British Broadcasting System in the 1930's,<sup>1</sup> George Bernard Shaw, then octogenarian, said that, to him,

a person who knew nothing of all the great musicians from Palestrina to Edward Elgar nor of the great painters from Giotto to Burne-Jones was a savage and ignoramus, even if he were hung all over with gold medals for school classics.

In reviewing the current status of English, Shaw's warning might be borne in mind. The teacher is not so much disciplinarian as he is *inter* disciplinarian. Shaw may be characterized as an interdisciplinarian. He wrote music criticism that is dramatic and drama criticism that contains music. He was an authority and expert in every area that required unqualified omniscience. His prose style is developed out of rhythmic structures approaching the state of music, although he insisted that "effectiveness of assertion is the alpha and omega of style."<sup>2</sup>

He once wrote :

With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare when I measure my mind against his. The intensity of my impatience with him occasionally reaches such a pitch, that it would positively be a relief to me to dig him up and throw stones at him, knowing as I do how incapable he and his worshippers are of understanding any less obvious form of indignity.<sup>3</sup>

The statement is rich in literary allusion. Analysis of its implications requires a grasp of literary history and the history of Shakespeare criticism. Disembodied of these associations, it contains a series of visual and sonar elements that ally it with painting and music and could distract attention from content. Shaw insisted that his plays were best understood if they were regarded as grand opera, especially Mozart and Verdi, and that his set speeches are in reality operatic arias.<sup>4</sup> If *Man and Superman* is Shaw's "Don Juan play," as he claims in the prefatory "Epistle Dedicatory" ( 3,485 ) it is *a fortiori* his Don Giovanni opera. The "Don Juan in Hell" sequence, Act III, opens where Mozart's opera ends and, as Frederick P. W. McDowell has shown, the act is the play in microcosm.<sup>5</sup> There are pregnant allusions to Mozart's music and to Mozart himself and the characters indulge in singing him. Above all, the dialogue evolves in musical progression, with repetition, variation and modulation among its salient features.

The Devil descants with Juan upon the *motif* of Man's endemic destructiveness in a crescendo of ideas and images to excerpt from which interrupts the logical as well as the musical line :

.....I tell you that in the arts of life man invents nothing ; but in the arts of death he out-does Nature herself, and produces by chemistry and machinery all the slaughter of plague, pestilence, and famine ..... I could give you a thousand instances ; but they all come to the same thing : the power that governs the earth is not the power of Life but of Death ; and the inner need that has nerved Life to the effort of organizing itself into the human being is not the need for higher life but for a more efficient engine of destruction. The plague, the famine, the earthquake, the tempest were too spasmodic in their action ; the tiger and crocodile were too easily satiated and not cruel enough : something more constantly, more ruthlessly, more ingeniously destructive was needed ; and that something was Man, the inventor of the

rack, the stake, the gallows, the electric chair ; of sword and gun and poison gas : above all, of justice, duty, patriotism, and all the other isms by which even those who are clever enough to be humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all the destroyers. ( 3,619-621 )

Shaw insisted that his work is entirely a development of ideas. However, his music is pervasive and quite “unfailing,” as he says of Shakespeare.<sup>6</sup> Saint Joan retracts her recantation in images that are at once alliterative and evocative :

But to shut me from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers ; to chain my feet so that I can never again ride with the soldiers nor climb the hills ; ..... all this is worse than the furnace in the Bible ..... if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the lark in the sunshine, the young lambs crying through the healthy frost ... ( 2,291-292 )

Shakespeare’s Polonius anticipated the 20th century academic dilemma when he took Hamlet’s Rorschach inkblot test :

*Hamlet.* Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in shape of a Camel ?

*Polonius.* By th’ mass and, ’tis, like a camel indeed.

*Hamlet.* Me thinks it is like a weasel.

*Polonius.* It is back’d like a weasel.

*Hamlet.* Or like a whale.

*Polonius.* Very like a whale. ( III.ii. 376-382)<sup>7</sup>

To specialize or not to specialize is our ultimate question.

Polonius is the prototype of the teacher as decoder-translator in every walk of life. He is expert in all matters that turn upon human thought and human action : political science ( II. ii. 153-154 ), philosophy ( II. iii. 58-80 ), psychology ( II. ii. 86-105 ), human relations ( I. iii. 88-135 ; II. i. 1-69 ), art. He knows when a speech is too long and when an image is effective ( II. ii. 88-135 ). At home he is in *loco magistralis* ( II. i. 73-116 ) and stage director ( III. i. 43-48 ). In his spare time he is an actor and accounted a good one, and the part he plays is in character : he did enact Julius Caesar the tyrant i’ the university ( III. ii. 97-103 ). As literary critic, he is too sophisticated to settle for easy definitions. The versatility of the actors who come to Elsinore are striking to Polonius, partially perhaps because they project his own fancied versatility.

As he perceives them, they are :

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, (tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral,) scene indivisible, or poem unlimited ; Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light, for the law of writ and the liberty : these are the only men. (II. ii. 396-402)

But Polonius may be only a parodic instance of the hero of the play in a different set of situations ; for Hamlet's dexterity extends to composing poems (II. ii. 116-122), writing plays (II. ii. 535-544), directing and producing them (III. ii. 1-4<sup>b</sup>), acting on and off stage, and above all to teaching by parabolic example (III. ii. 345-372 ; IV.ii ; IV, iii. 16-37). Contemplating a skull in a graveyard, the student of Wittenberg can trace in imagination the noble dust of Alexander till 'a find' it stopping a bung-hole. History, metaphysics, logic, philosophy drama and art combine with personality in that emblematic scene, set to the incidental accompaniment of the gravedigger's didactic song about the inevitability of death and Hamlet's own "imperious Caesar dead and turned to clay" melody, to pronounce upon the most fundamental and ultimate things : the lesson of life and death and "to what base uses we may return" (V.i.57-203).

Shakespeare's works are themselves interdisciplinary, in the sense that they contain an extraordinary measure of functional imagery that is highly sensual as well as associative on aural and visual levels.<sup>8</sup> We are continuously bombarded by scene and sound, situation and music, that are inclusive and simultaneous and conjure a high sense of personal involvement. There is adolescent isolation and parental misconduct in Hamlet where the young prince is dressed in black and speaks in striking alliteratives and is haunted by his father's ghost of the past whose music words admonish murder and revenge :

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined lock to part,  
And each particular hair to stand an end,  
Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list :  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

... ..

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. (I. v. 9-25)

There is parental tyranny in *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and paternal folly in *King Lear*. We are privy to actions that are accompanied by word music, often by off-stage sound effects and on-stage song ; and together what we see and what we hear combine architectonically to further action and to point theme.


A recent article in the *New York Times* expressed alarm over the direction education is taking. In interviews with the administrators of the Universities of Princeton, Pennsylvania and Dartmouth the consensus emerged that information was accumulating at so rapid a pace that "facts" were getting in the way of true knowledge and that "... the greatest need is ... for breadth of education ... true interdisciplinary linkages are essential ... [ and ] Interesting ideas spring up at the boundaries between disciplines where people can work on the same thing from different points of views.<sup>9</sup> Specialization is attenuating our capacity for intellectual discovery and eroding the education process. Perhaps not enough is known to determine the extent to which there is any causal relationship between this and declining enrollments, particularly in the liberal arts. What is certain is that the phenomenon has taken root and all but precludes abatement. And who knows to what base uses we may return !

But there is cause for celebration. It is equally evident that we live in a highly visual and performance conscious time. The television image dominates our lives, modifies our habits and conditions our view of the world, bringing us the visual/plastic arts, music, dance, in quantities far in excess of our capacities to absorb. And the fare is "comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" in the Polonius vein. What is disconcerting is that the plethora of cultural vitality has

rendered the classroom superannuated. Perhaps the influx has come on too strongly and too suddenly and within too unmanageable and impressive proportions. As a consequence of which we have not quite gotten around to adapting what's there to pedagogic needs, to the cause of learning, to the pragmatic necessity of bringing into school from the external world forms and habits for emulation and use.

If there is something learning cannot ignore, it is that knowledge and experience are inextricably entwined. Education, like Art, is underwritten by experience; and it is difficult to argue with experience. Unless we grant that basically "there is 'something there' to be understood," in the absence of that trust, we confront the vacuum which knowledge as well as nature abhors. On the other hand, with the assurance of trust (so long as there is 'something there'), there is the external world to translate into our own symbolic terms. In this sense, translation is understanding and also its *sine qua non*. There can be no meaning unless there is a set "of relations in which 'this' can stand for 'that'."<sup>10</sup> The classroom is the symbol of the process of absorption and accretion and apperception that occur in the external world. It is that place where an integrated mode of substitute experience and an elaboration of feelings and perceptions are developed. The classroom is at once the place for symbolic acting out of the process of living and preparation for living as well as the model *par excellence* for imparting and providing the basis for interpreting experience. This is the essential function of Art. The creative process is a way of reaching back to life, establishing order out of the chaos of experience. A work of art is a translation of experience into a structure which we call a symbol, as in the case of a word, which is not merely an articulated sound but the significant form which a feeling or idea about an experience has taken.<sup>11</sup> We say *ancestor* when we wish to convey the idea of a walking (Latin *cess* : walk) before (Latin : *ante* : before).<sup>12</sup> An *arrival* harks back to the primitive necessity, which is also modern, of living on the banks of rivers (Latin : *riva* and *ripa*) where those who come to (Latin *ad* : towards) where we are *arrive* and could compete for river rights (*riparian*), making themselves *rivals*. The universal cross-cultural translation of the experience mother and father into phonetic structure *mama* and *papa*, or some other similar or reversed form, such as *abba* and *ema*, is an even more fundamental case in point. Until *ma* and *pa* lose their pure diacriticality, they are mere combinations of vocalic /a/ and primal interchangeable voiceless labial stops /p/ and /b/ in the primal utterance /pa/ and /ba/

or /a/ with bilabial /m/ in /ma/.<sup>13</sup> By extension, the creative process translates the experience of the suckling whose capacity to vocalize is limited to repeated sequences of syllables such as *ba, ba, ba* and *pa, pa, pa* into *baby* (cf. Indian *papoose*) and the vocal activity into *babble* which is later transmuted into *Babel*, the tower of linguistic confusion and Hebrew Gate of God, and *Babylon*, Greek Gate of Tears. On deeper psychoanalytical levels, phonemic preferential development may be charted on the basis of emotional values.<sup>14</sup> Because these values are associated with mother and father in infantile experience, their essences linger in later adult forms. *Ma* develops a progeny which includes Latin *mater*, hence *material*, *matter*, *matron*, *maternal*, *matriculate*, *matriarch*, *matrix*; Greek *meter*, *Demeter*, *metropolis*; Romance *madre*; Germanic *modor*; and the multiplicity of forms that derive therefrom. *Pa* produces Latin and Greek *pater*, *paternal*, *patriotic* and *patronymic*; Spanish, Portuguese and Italian *padre*; and such diverse familiar forms as *patron*, *expatriate*, *patriarch*; *papa* for Pope, whence *papacy* and other variations. These forms are attenuations of the primal experience-substitute *mama* and *papa* whose ghosts possess their structurality. They are mirror reflections of the artistic process and signify the human propensity to harness reality for transmission by way of symbols. Language is an index of the need to create metaphor, to express one thing in terms of another. The translation of reality into form is at the base of the process we call learning and of the activity we call teaching.

Joining /a/ to /b/ is the source from which *alpha beta* derives. The effort inherent in making the connection *ab* is the image of initial translation from a *this* into a *that* to communicate something about *this*. Curiously, Greek *alpha* means *ox* associated with food → eating → ploughing → survival and *beta* is associated with *shelter* → security from the wilds → companionship → survival. *Alphabet* symbolizes the two basic ingredients of survival: food and shelter. Uppercased, they are Alpha joined to Beta which were originally derivative developments of the scratches forming √ which is inverted ∆ and attempts to body forth the *picture* of oxen yoked together<sup>15</sup> at the horns (∨) and , the crude stab at representing the two-story house that became shelter that became home. Joining /a/ to /b/ is analogous to the linkage of ∨ (horns) and — (yoke). The juxtaposition and the pre-eminent place AB occupies is interesting. In *OE* the form *writan* signifies *scratch* or *carve* (in Swedish *rita* still means *draw*), thus betraying linkages among the graphic arts. Words are not only representational



and reproductive ; they contribute new existences to the stock of existences in nature.<sup>16</sup> Creativity at once implies and illustrates the problem of translation and transformation. The pictological approach to the problem does not seek to authenticate but to *re-create*. Creativity is so interconnected with the reality of the outside world and yet so dependent upon its own symbolization of the outside world that we use language mimetically as well as ideationally : so that Greek echoic *barbaroi*, simulating the stammering of unintelligible non-Greeks, evolved into Latin *barbarus*, whence *barbarous*, *barbarity*, *barbaric*, *barbarian* and, by aesthetic elaboration, Bela Bartok's *allegro barbaro* composed out of ethnomusicological folk elements. The perception of unintelligible speech patterns produces abstract concepts far removed from their original source through the mirror of language. Linguistic forms create new experiences and other new linguistic forms. Hence *barbarize*, and even *barbara* ( Latin feminine form ) ultimately becomes *Barbara*, the personification of innocence. According to *OED*, the mnemonics of the three a's indicate a universal proposition and symbolize the quintessence of syllogistic reasoning.

Thus language begets language. Our dealing with reality is oblique since all commerce with outside world is conducted through *symbols* ( throwing together ) and *symbolization* ( conceptualization of the throwing together process ). And for all that, contacts with reality are dependent upon and limited by the symbols that derive from those contacts. Mind leaves behind but is inextricably tied to /m/ and /a/, initially associated with suckling (*lang* = tongue) but is invariably conditioned by it. The progressive development from *ma* to *mama* to *mamma* ( Latin : breast ) forms the fabric out of which emerges *mammal* and the later abstract concept *mammalian* and *mamillation*.<sup>17</sup> The concept is an evolving movement *away from* initial experience and towards the more and more shadowy realm of transumption where meaning is less tangible because more expansive and therefore more *expressive*. The myth of *Oedipus* captures the primordial reality of human blindness and misplaced arrogance. Both Sophocles' drama and the tradition on which it is founded are expanded metaphors of the process of human discovery of self. The drama emphasizes, through a retrospective unravelling of carefully contrived significant instances, the working out of the idea that life is lived forwards but understood backwards. Oedipus' name is charactonym that contains the destiny of man which is Greek *Oida* to know, combined with *pou* : foot, and the details of his story are the architectonic devices by which the reality he

represents, the inability to see farther than the foot, is transmuted into art and shaped in accordance with the aesthetic principles of parsimony. Oedipus is not a person ; he is a *persona*. He is a symbol, not a man : and not man only, but Man. Like his blindness to the most elementary things, the *fiction* surrounding his solution of the riddle of life in adolescence, in the form of answering the Sphinx, images forth the *facts* of life but is not equated with those facts. Moreover, Oedipus' story is not entirely his own and does not end with him. He will have children who will suffer on his account, as he suffers on his father's account. Greek *Laios* is awkward, for which Latin *sinister* (left-handed) is the equivalent. "The Oedipus tragedy is the outcome of the fate of the left-handed father."<sup>18</sup> Oedipus' destiny is also the child's destiny, which rests in the fact of ancestral inheritance and the fate of parental abandonment. Man is born into a hostile and mysterious environment where the resolution of the puzzle of existence reveals the arcane conflict in the relationship between parent and child and inherent universal congenital blindness.

Myth (Greek *muthos* : word as well as plot), like language, is autochthonous and economical. It is also anthropomorphic and conceals an unconscious grammar of experience, representative but also *expressive*. Therein lies a difficulty : under examination, the mythico-transformation process is a signed confession of imperfection and a recognition of inadequacy. The creation of symbolic forms is an effort to overcome and to control the limitation of dependency upon reality and to place reality in a teleological perspective. Creativity is hence a conversion of an endemic weakness into a communicative strength. This parenthetically may not be a weakness that animals share with man. The animal is part of reality and is identified with raw experience. Humanization is a process of removal from experience and separation by way of concept and ideas, in the manner in which the child is in egocentered obliviousness of externality, which is to say, of where environment begins and individuality ends. As the child incorporates the concept of self, he becomes detached from reality by immersion in symbols. Humanization defines and delineates the difference between *is* and *in terms of* : merely being *versus* the awareness of being, like Bernard Shaw's superman whose contemplative energies constitute the distinction between man and animal, and specifically the contemplation of life itself.

What made this brain of mine, do you think ? Not the need to move my limbs ; for a rat with half my brains moves as well as I. Not merely the need

to do, but the need to know what I do, lest in my blind efforts to live I should be slaying myself. (3,618)

That “rat” is a reverberating echo of Lear’s rejection of the notion that his daughter, Cordelia, is in death less than the lowest of animals. The monumental pieta with which *King Lear* ends proves that life is not cheap as beast’s. And yet the question persists,

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,  
And thou no breath at all? Thou’lt come no more,  
Never, never, never, never, never. (V.iii. 306-308)

in the midst of pentameter music, divided among expressive monosyllabic feet and iambs, and the doleful finality in the falling trochees of the monotonous repetitive “never”. Cordelia will come no more. Life is a matter of *coming* and thus death *means* coming no more. She is *gone* forever.

The more ways we have of expressing a reality, the more potent the conceptualization of that reality. Metaphor is not only a means of expression; it is the expression of a means of knowing. Intellection arrives with the awareness of the thatness about this and the thisness about that. The use of metaphor enables us to remove ourselves from gross reality and to reflect upon it while re-creating it. To this extent, language is itself an item of experience. There could be a high positive correlation between multiple ways of knowing and reinforcement of knowledge. Picasso’s *Baboon and Young* (Museum of Modern Art, New York) is a this which is a that. The metallic structure does not pretend to be a real baboon holding its young but an ambiguously suggestive anthropomorphic sculptural representation. Like Michael Angelo’s Florentine *Pieta* (Florence Cathedral, Italy) it is not more symbolic than *mama* and *baby*, only more complex because more remote from origin, as the *Guernica* of Picasso (Museum of Modern Art, New York) is more complex than Spanish and Italian *Guerra* and French *Guerre* (war) because it is not the real horror of war but an image of that horror.

Elaboration and interpretation, not authenticity and loyalty to source, are the true progenitors of the cause of Art. From this perspective, Art is not only concept but *fact*, in the sense of Greek *tithenai*: deed, and Latin *fectum*: done or made: *factitive* as well as *fectitious*, in the best sense of the word. *Poesis* is Greek for creativity and *poem* is something made or shaped. The OE equivalent for poet is *scop* whose preterite is *scieppan*, related to *scieppena*, shaper, God. *Makar*

is old Scot for poet.<sup>19</sup> The aesthetic solution is not only to make but to *make over, in terms of* color, sound, action, from Latin *fingere* : fiction, to mold. The genesis of the *Mother with Child* of Kathe Kollwitz ( Private Collection ) or *Brot* ( Philadelphia Museum of Aart ) or of Rubens' *The Consequences of War* ( The Prado, Madrid ) is a life situation. The solution of the artistic problem lies in the painter's color box, the poet's ink bottle, the actor's interpretative and mimetic presences.<sup>20</sup> Intellection moves away from exact correspondences and towards suggestive ones. It is not at home with *equations* but with *equivalences*, with virtual experiences, not with actual ones. In painting and music, virtual space and virtual time replace actual space and actual time.<sup>21</sup> Their allusive qualities are the shorthand that forges the links in the chain we call tradition and convention and demonstrates the significant commonplace that art copies, not so much nature, but art itself. *Guernica* is joined in idea and structure to *The Consequences of War* by the same principle of allusion that connects Masaccio's *The Expulsion from Paradise* ( Branacci Chapel, Sta, Maria del Carmine, Florence ) and Rodin's *Sorrow* ( The Art Institute of Chicago ), or the *Dies Irae* motif from the Requiem Mass and the *Totentanz*, for Piano and Orchestra, of Franz Liszt, the *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14, of Hector Berlioz and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43 ; or *dies* and *deus* ; *chorus*, choreography and Terpsichore ; *papyrus* and paper ; *folio* and foliage. Similarly Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, study for 23 Solo Strings, evokes the elegiac qualities of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in E, Op. 55, "Eroica," of the funereal second movement of which its dirge-like tone, allusive quotations and trochaic descents are reminiscent and through which it makes its mournful politico-philosophical point. No doubt there is some reason why the mistrust of appearance plays a major part in Shakespeare. The concept which is also an image recurs like an *idée fixe* within and across the plays.<sup>22</sup> In his development as an artist, history is turned into comedy as well as incorporated by it, as tragedy succeeds comedy and comprehends it. His most fully developed comic character, Falstaff, appears in his greatest chronicle, *1 and 2 Henry IV*, and dominates the action, allowing for the inference that not much separates history from comedy. Comedy is a commentary upon history, the way Gadshill and the Boar's Head Tavern are a commentary upon the Wars of the Roses. King and Fool in counterpoint : that is the substance of the gigantic mural that is Shakespeare's conception of History. Its plot is the writing of sorrow on the bosom of the earth and the death of both king ( *Richard II.* III. ii. 145-177 ) and commoner

(1 *Henry IV.* IV. i. 128-130) and the massacre of innocents who do not die well in battle (*Henry V.* IV. i. 134-146). Their analogues are *The Triumph of Death* by Bruegel (The Prado, Madrid), Guido Reni's *Massacre of the Innocents* (Museum of Bologna), Altdorfer's *Battle of Alexander* (The Pinakothek, Munich).

*History*, whose etymology reveals the element of narrative, conceals the *story* of human folly which Shakespeare's *Chronicles* reveal, amidst loud guffaws, martial verbal music and off-stage musical sound effects, spectacle, wisdom from fools not wise enough to know they are wise, like Fluellen (*Henry V.* IV. i. 64-80), whose examination of the wars of Pompey the Great discovers no "pibble babble." A detail on the sweeping canvas on which civil war is painted in *3 Henry VI* contains these directions : *Alarum, Enter a Son that hath kill'd his Father, at one door, (dragging in the dead body)* (II.v.). Another detail (*ibid*) reveals a *Father that hath kill'd his Son, at another door, bearing of his son*. The music that accompanies these frames is solemn and sad and King Henry sits literally and symbolically alone on a hill impotently observing the melancholy scene, as though he were sitting at a play, and contemplating his solitary detachment in an aria composed in a minor key :

O god ! methinks it were a happy life  
To be no better than a homely swain,  
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,  
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,  
Thereby to see the minutes how they run :  
How many makes the hour full complete,  
How many hours brings about the day,  
How many days will finish up the year,  
How many years a mortal man may live.  
When this is known, then to divide the times :  
So many hours must I tend my flock,  
So many hours must I take my rest,  
So many hours must I contemplate,  
So many hours must I sport myself,  
So many days my ewes have been with young,  
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean,  
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece :  
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,

Pass'd over to the end they were created,  
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

(II.v.21-40)

King Henry's reaction is both objective and idiosyncratic. "What is in this world but grief and woe" (II.v.20), he sighs, before he is struck by the dismal spectacle of the total anonymity of war and joins in the triadic antiphonal that follows the dreadful pair of peripeteias.

*Son.* How will my mother for a father's death  
Take on with me, and ne'er be satisfied !

*Father.* How will my wife for slaughter of my son  
Shed seas of tears, and ne'er be satisfied !

*King Henry.* How will the country for these woeful chances  
Misthink the King, and not be satisfied !

*Son.* Was ever son so ru'd a father's death ?

*Father.* Was ever father so bemoan'd his son ?

*King Henry.* Was ever king so griev'd for subjects' woe ?

(II.v.103-111)

War is blind and callous and causes irremediable tragedy that, in Art, reaches our comprehension by way of form. The artist arranges his materials into syntactic frames of reference which are not separable from their semantic markings and with which we identify on both objective and subjective planes. The symbol he creates is understood when the idea it represents is understood. The effective symbol is one that, heuristically approached, forms a purposive nexus with 'something there' to be understood which has been transformed teleologically into an equivalent or an aesthetic substitute.<sup>2 3</sup> One of the lessons Shakespeare teaches is that both Art and knowledge are various, but not at variance. A Shakespeare play functions on a multiplicity of levels at once (alarums and excursions and sennets are the incidental music that accompanies the frames that make up the Histories), each level moving purposively in the same direction as all the others, until seam blurs into seam and the totality is organic. How can we tell the dancer from the dance ? To Shakespearize experience is to appreciate the reconciliation of its unity and diversity and to personalize it, the way Shakespeare personalized Holinshed and Saxo Grammaticus and his other sources and translated them *in terms of* the character of his time.

The 20th century is given to theatricalism and to acoustic and visual display and personality. If all the world's a stage (*As You Like It*. II.vii. 139), so is all the world of learning a stage. As the theatre is the world in microcosm, the school is reality miniaturized and metabolized into qualities that bear no direct relation or resemblance to their source. Henry VI's hill recalls royal position and the perspective concomitant with it, like the dark in *Hamlet* which is an embodied imminence of perplexity and evil. The scene is not only visual but existential and referential. Accordingly, teaching English involves the translation of concrete experience into models which are themselves the origination of dramatic frames of reference at the centre of which is the personality of the teacher. This is a point upon which too great emphasis cannot be bestowed, since it is by means of a person that both the experience and its refinement are filtered. This is the cause for celebration mentioned earlier. The reality of the outside world is now confirming the dramatic characteristics that traditionally inhere in teaching, so that to keep up with the world in order to reflect it is simultaneously to remain *sui generis*. The function of the teacher is to absorb and shape his material in his own image the way the artist or actor does, to become the thing he teaches, and to be the irreducible symbol of it. He is the embodiment of an idea as well as a character in its dramatic working out in the interchange between play and audience.<sup>24</sup> It is through this dialectic interchange that learning happens and is perpetuated. For the English teacher, this circumstance is especially congenial. *English* is eclectic and more inquisitive than final. The word itself is an index to a confusion of forms. Hence there isn't the danger of thinking too precisely on the event. Like Richard III's Buckingham, the English teacher "can counterfeit the deep tragedian,/Speak and look back, and pry on every side" (III.v.5-6), and in himself present the world as "comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral".

The teacher-learner transaction is prescribed and circumscribed by a communicative situation which contains the essential elements of drama, with the teacher-as-embodiment as focal point and the class as active participant/spectator/audience in the theatre of learning. *Drama* is the Greek symbol substitute for the experience of psychological action that is also conflict. The English classroom is a theatre where the teacher creates the situation in which ideas collide in the manner of the *agon* of ancient ritual metaphorically attenuated. The concept of *protagonist* versus *antagonist* arises from these origins and forms

the warp and woof of the Platonic-Hegelian dialectic constituted of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*.<sup>25</sup> In Piagetian terms, the dramatico-dialectic function is the equilibration of cognitive structures which forms the basis of thought development. Equilibration of cognitive structures occurs when conflicting information is assimilated into existing schemata, after various intellectual evaluations.<sup>26</sup> The inference may be drawn that oppositions are thus resolved which thereby produce new conceptualizations and configurations, as in a fugue. Contrapuntal arrangements by their nature undergo a series of explorations, combinations and transformations en route towards tentatively conclusive cadences,<sup>27</sup> like the progressively developmental steps we detect in the dialectic of Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* in B, Op. 133 for Quartet, and the Finale of Mozart's Symphony No. 41 in C, K. 551, "Jupiter." The teaching-learning polyphony is not a matter of passive reception or even the pouring in of a perception of things. It is rather, and essentially, a *developing* of perceptions out of the process of creation. In this sense, the teacher constitutes a mimetic teleological principle, his salient purpose being the imitation of and transference to the artifice of his stage the multifarious forces of position, opposition and provisional reconciliation in the world and in Art that produce the advancement of learning. In performing his artistic function of mimesis, he takes full advantage of the cunning of the scene to provoke thinking and make connections and provide the continuous reinforcement of stimuli that grows out of the chemical totality of subject, approach and interaction. No relevance attaches to whether his habits of mind are old or new. They will be new to those who have not been previously exposed. Dufay and Brunelleschi are new to those who have not appreciated Dufay and Brunelleschi before. Physical science does not claim essential novelty so much as "new ways of regarding old phenomena," in any case, along with the formulation and articulation of everyday experience already tacitly encapsulated in everyday language. Fire and burn, shortest distance and straight line, are common associations.<sup>28</sup> The deep structures of linguistics are only underlying meaning; and intervallic tensions are a way of talking about rhythmic structures in music, their direction and distance; and every traveller knows without the benefit of physics that the horizon shifts. Similarly there is nothing extraordinary about iambs and trochees and dactyls, and amphibrachs and anapests, and other prosodic forms, when we come to appreciate them as labels for everyday experience in the external world. We say today and pāpouse; baby and tick tōck



without recognizing the musical differentiation. Bărbăra and súdděny are obviously distinct from tōmorrōw and mătérnăl as the last line of William Butler Yeats's "A Deep-Sworn Vow"

Súdděny // I meet your face

is distinct from the first line of John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" :

My heart aches, // and ă drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

and as meaningful architectonically as musically.

The transition from semantics to the pure syntactic structures of music produces the opening trochaic cries of Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* ballet : / U // / U and the combination of trochees and dactyls in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in d, Op. 125, "Choral" :

The image displays a musical score for the 'Choral' movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. It features two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is marked with various rhythmic notations, including vertical lines and horizontal bars, which correspond to the trochaic and dactylic patterns mentioned in the text. The notation is complex, with many notes and rests, and the rhythmic patterns are clearly visible as horizontal lines with vertical ticks above and below the notes.

Stripped down to their syntactic bones, these are like the mouthings of Hamlet's exhortation to the players (III.ii.1-14) and we had as lief the towncrier spoke our lines. In context, however, they are significantly bound up with meaning. The exposition of the Beethoven Symphony No. 9 is a questing and a probing that recurs throughout the four movements of the symphony in a series of metamorphoses, key arrangements and rhythmic patterns, repetitions and contrasts, to an agitated, violent final resolution, after the transposition and evolution into the verbal/choral context of Schiller's "Ode to Joy" and the coda that opens with a progressively rapid succession of trochees :



Something similar occurs in *King Lear* of parallels and contrasts, beginning with the balance between Albany and Cornwall (I.i.1-6). Lear is the dupe of Goneril and Regan (I.i.) and appearance condemns Cordelia ; Gloucester is the dupe of Edmund (II.i) and appearance condemns Edgar. Lear (II.iv) is thrust out of doors ; Gloucester (III. vii) is thrust out of doors. In a lower register, the sycophantic Oswald and the honest Kent (II.ii) reflect the disharmony in Lear's divided Britain. Lear and Gloucester are headed in the same direction and both are blind. The storm develops out of distant thunder (II.iv.287) that gathers momentum in a rising crescendo :

*Storme still. Enter Lear, and Foole,* <sup>29</sup> in a striking visual counterpoint :

*Lear.* Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage, blow !

Your cataracts and hurricanoes, spout

Till you have drench'd our steeples, (drown'd) the cocks !

You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,

Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,

Sing my white head ! and thou, all-shaking thunder,

Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world !

Crack nature's moulds, all germaines spill at once

That makes ingratful man ! (III.ii.1-9)

The storm reflects the tempest in Lear's mind ( III. iv. 12 ) and subsides in gradual decrescendoes ( III. iv ). George Kernodle has pointed out the symphonic nature of *King Lear*, including the staccato use of *need* and the undoing of the button that makes human life superior to animality, and G. Wilson Knight refers to Lear's final lines in his struggle at the end, as coming after the harsh unmusic of madness,"<sup>30</sup> when the dead Cordelia may be returning to life :

Dó yõu sée thís ? // Look òn hér ! // Look // hě́r líps,

Look thére, // look thèrè ! ( V. iii. 311-312 )

The turbulent irregularity of the first line and the spondaic exclamatory finality of the second combine to form an acoustic and visual equivalent of the broken king's hopeful and wild imagining. Rudolph Stamm has observed the coincidence of aural expression and visual gesture in the scene in *Titus Andronicus* ( III. ii. 11-45 ) where Titus beats his breast in anguish with the one hand left him to the meaning of the diacritical stresses in the appropriately "defective" sounds :

Then thus I thump it down.

His mangled handless daughter Lavinia is to him a "map of woe" that can communicate only through "martyr'd signs." The irregularly accented line

Whēn thy poor héart // beats with outrageōus beating.

( III. ii. 13 )

evokes sound and picture of the irregular heartbeat,<sup>31</sup> with the opening unstress followed by monosyllabic hammerings, given greater emphasis by the caesura they create, and concludes with the choriambic

beats with ōtra

composed of trochee and iambus in juxtaposition and the feminine ending that complicates the final iambus completing the line with an amphibrach,

gēous beating

It is the way Shakespeare works, like a musician who is also a painter : by variation and analogy, filtering life through its myriad of prisms where sound and picture go together *pari passu* and exploit each other for meaning. The Jamesian system of concave and convex mirrors applies here as well, and William Empson's theory of the double plot and complex imagistic structures, since levels confirm as well as extend perspective.<sup>32</sup> If the Ninth Symphony is composed of music that is also verbal, *King Lear* and *Titus Andronicus* are composed of words that are also music. The repetitions and developing cumulativeness of layer upon layer of meaning in the recurring motif of *nothing* in *King Lear* is analogous to the use of the *leitmotif* in Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner and Mahler, which presents us with another area for exploration.

Those explosive energies beneath the surface of artistic structure are stimuli to intellectual involvement in the English class. In *1 Henry IV* the contrast between Hotspur's concept of "honour" ( I. iii. 201-209 ) and Falstaff's ( V. i. 134-141 )

lies the downfall of aristocracy and the rise of bourgeois ideals. "Honour" is a developmental theme in the Henry IV plays, as it is in *Julius Caesar* where ( III. ii ) the "noble Brutus" ( 77-78 ) turned butcher "is an honorable man" (83) and "sure he is an honorable man" (99) whom Mark Anthony "fears" he will "wrong" (12 ) for being a traitor and a villain (153-155).

Art is transumptive. That could be the reason why subtilization is so intrinsic a part of its mode. Art necessitates a view similar to that of Kafka's Gregor :<sup>33</sup> fragmented, the way an insect perceives — in the manner of a mosaic. The metaphorical expansion which Art by nature allows for the conclusion that a deciding factor in the appreciation of a play, for example, is the recognition of its diversified nature and the advisability of an approach that regards the fragmentation as the parts of which hermeneutic totalities emerge. In this respect, every play or poem or symphony is metonymic as well as synecdochic, since metaphor involves structure and expresses one thing in terms of another.

The theory of *interdiscipline* is unfriendly to positions that hold knowledge to be divisible and therefore incompatible. In *interdiscipline* there are no incompatibles, only insensitivity to applicabilities, and perhaps self-consciousness. The raw material of all knowledge is symbolic message.<sup>34</sup> Communication is the life-long process of the sending and decoding of messages. They may be visual or auditory or tactile, intellectual or emotional. Perhaps they are all of these at once and separable only for analysis and appreciation, for these are the resultants of transumption. But they are symbiotic as well as symbolic and form the basis of what we call painting and sculpture and architecture as well as music, philosophy, science, religion and all the energies and systems of thought and action by which we live. *Interdiscipline* posits that all knowledge is amenable to translation into messages that form linkages with other messages. Even the facts we take for granted come to us by way of symbolic messages. For the Milky Way — astronomy ; for Timbuktu — geography ; for history — Elizabeth I.

A system which imitates a system which copies life also imitates life : *qui facit per alium facit per se*. We exist in a spacetime continuum where there is concatenation rather than organization and where the medium of communication is not nature but artifice. The details of experience, like events in time, do not become meaningful except when they are made *expressive* through the compression of the symbolization process. Hitler might have been perceptive and much human misery prevented had he recognized the analogy of the eggman in "Humpty

