

A dialectic of aural and objective correlatives

Soun ys noight but eyr ybroke^a

The eagle to Chaucer in *The House of Fame*

The likening of a poem to a monument or to some sort of object is as old at least as Horace's *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*.^b Nevertheless, a certain fixation upon the analogy between a poem and an object is characteristic of the present English-speaking world. Here a great deal of criticism feeds on this analogy, which is featured not only in titles such as Cleanth Brooks's *The Well Wrought Urn* or William K. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon*^c but also in the substructure of much of our most active critical thinking and writing. In his 'Science and Poetry', I. A. Richards deals with a poem as the 'skeleton' of a 'body of experience', as a 'structure' by which the 'impulses' making up the experience are 'adjusted' to one another. In their highly influential *Theory of Literature*, René Wellek and Austin Warren answer their own capital question regarding the mode of existence of the literary work by explaining it as a 'structure' of norms or 'stratified system' of norms. T. S. Eliot's great critical essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent',^d underwrites the poem as a 'monument', and treats of tradition with no discernible explicit attention to the radically acoustic quality of the dialogue between man and man in which all verbal expression has its being. Accordance with tradition is for Mr Eliot a matter not of harmony or counterpoint, but of objects which fit in with one another. The creative process is envisioned as outside the world of voice, in terms of chemicals (objects) 'working' on one another. Despite his own recent disavowal, Mr Eliot's 'objective correlative'^e is deservedly famous, for it provides

^a 'Sound is nothing but broken air.'

^b I have completed a monument more lasting than brass.'

^c See pp. 291-304 and 333-58.

^d See pp. 71-7 above.

^e In his 1919 essay on Hamlet, T. S. Eliot declared: 'The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative", in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.' The term 'objective correlative' passed

support for a whole state of mind fixed on a world of space and surfaces. It is noteworthy that by the time of *The Confidential Clerk*, the symbol for artistic performance is even more committed to the visual and tactile. Sir Claude Mulhammer, the unsuccessful artist—poet in the larger sense—is presented as a spoiled potter.

This tactile and visualist bias is shared by poets themselves when they speak of their own achievement. Archibald MacLeish, always a sensitive register of contemporary critical and literary trends, in his *Ars Poetica* compares a poem to a whole series of nonvocal, visually and tactually apprehended 'objects':

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

This has, of course, a certain validity. It suggests earlier Imagist preoccupations with poetry which is 'hard' and 'clear'—made up, that is, of images (with a bias towards visual images) rather than of words. It likewise suggests still earlier Platonic and Aristotelian theories of poetry such as the 'kodachrome theory' espoused by Sir Philip Sidney (poetry makes the grass greener and the roses redder). But it is a far cry from Sidney's and others' notion of a poem as a speaking picture.

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Many of the critics just cited as preoccupied with objects, structures, skeletons, and stratified systems have pressed the point that poetry belongs primarily to the world of voice and sound, but in doing so have based their explanations perhaps too innocently on spatial analogies. To consider the work of literature in its primary oral and aural existence, we must enter more profoundly into this world of sound as such, the I-thou world where, through the mysterious interior resonance which sound best of all provides, persons commune with persons, reaching one another's interiors in a way in which one can never reach the interior of an 'object'. Here, instead of reducing words to objects, runes, or even icons, we take them simply as what they are even more basically, as utterances, that is to say, as cries. All verbalization, including all literature, is radically a cry, a sound emitted from the interior of a person, a modification of one's exhalation of breath which retains the intimate connection with life which we find in breath itself, and which registers in the etymology of the word 'spirit', that is, breath. 'Whoever loses his breath loses also his speech', and, we might add, his life as well. The cry which strikes our ear, even the into the common currency of critical discussion, and was no doubt in Eliot's mind when he alluded late in life to 'a few notorious phrases [of his own] which have had a truly embarrassing success in the world' (*The Frontiers of Criticism*, 1957).

animal cry, is consequently a sign of an interior condition, indeed of that special interior focus or pitch of being which we call life, an invasion of all the atmosphere which surrounds a being by that being's interior state, and in the case of man, it is an invasion of his own interior self-consciousness. Not that man's interior through this invasion entirely exteriorizes itself, loses its interiority. Quite the contrary, it keeps this interiority and self-possession in the cry and advertises to all that is outside and around it that this interior is here, and, refusing to renounce itself, is manifesting itself. Precisely because he does not renounce his own interior self, the cry of the wounded, suffering man invades his surroundings and makes its terrible demands on those persons who hear it. For this invasion, under one aspect a raid or sally into others' interiors, is also a strangely magnetic action, which involves not so much one's going out to others as one's drawing other interiors into the ambit of one's being. The voice of the agonizing man, we say, 'captivates' others' attention, their very selves, 'involving' them, as we have recently learned to put it, by pulling them into his own interior and forcing them to share the state which exists there.

There is, indeed, no way for a cry completely to exteriorize itself. A mark made by our hand will remain when we are gone. But when the interior—even the physical, corporeal interior, as well as the spiritual interior of consciousness—from which a cry is emitted ceases to function as an interior, the cry itself has perished. To apprehend what a person has produced in space—a bit of writing, a picture—is not at all to be sure that he is alive. To hear his voice (provided it is not reproduced from a frozen spatial design on a phonograph disc or tape) is to be sure.

'Soun ys noight but eyr ybroken', says the loquacious and pedantic eagle who soars through Chaucer's dream in *The House of Fame*. The frightened, airborne Chaucer had not only his heart in his mouth as he heard this, but his tongue in his cheek as he reported it. He sensed that this simple reduction of sound to 'broken' air and thus to spatial components was psychologically unreal, much too facile. Today we have the same awareness as Chaucer, set in a more complex context. We know that we can study sound in measurable wave lengths, on graphs, and on oscillographs, calibrating it in a thousand different ways. But we also know that this spatial reduction of sound, which externalizes it completely and enables us to handle it scientifically and with impeccable accuracy, has one supreme disadvantage. Through such study we know everything—except sound itself. To find what the sound is, we must make it really exist: we must hear it. As soon as we hear it, all its mysterious quality—the thing which makes it really different from a measurement or a graph—asserts itself once more. And this is precisely what makes it sound.

In its ineluctable interiority, related to this irreducible and elusive and interior economy of the sound world, all verbal expression, and in particular all true literature, remains forever something mysterious. Like the self or person, the word refuses to submit completely to any of those norms of clarity or explicitness (which means 'unfoldedness') such as we derive through considering knowledge and communication by analogy with sight. It refuses to be completely exposed (as a surface) or explicated (unfolded) or explained (laid out flat) or

defined (marked with boundary lines) or to be entirely clear (separated from its ground or background) and distinct (pricked out).

What I am trying to say here is not properly conveyed by stating simply that utterance, and in particular the true literary work, has 'depth'. For depth is a concept which can be resolved, ultimately if circuitously, in terms of surfaces. Interiority cannot be. For I mean by interiority here precisely the opposite of surface, that which does not have surface at all, and can never have.

Language retains this interiority because it, and the concepts which are born with it, remain always the medium wherein persons discover and renew their discovery that they are persons, that is, discover and renew their own proper interiority and selves. Persons who do not (in one way or another) learn to talk remain imbeciles, unable to enter fully into themselves. The pitch of utterance which bears towards the interior of the speaker—and by the same token towards the interior of the hearer, who repeats in his own interior the words of the speaker and thereby understands them—can never be done away with, despite the fact that the same utterance must always have some reference, at least oblique, to exterior reality as well. Because of this double reference of language, to person and to object, 'I do not understand you' can be tantamount to 'I do not understand the things you are trying to say'.

But if all language faces some towards the interior, and the interior of both speaker and hearer, of all the forms of language literature has in a sense most interiority because, more than other forms of expression, it exists within the medium of words themselves and does not seek escape from this medium. In some sense, most, if not all, other forms of expression do ambition such escape. Typically, scientific expression does. It hedges words about with definitions and restrictions of all sorts in order to keep them to a certain extent from leading their own uninhibited life in the mysterious interior world of communication between persons wherein they came into being. It drives towards complete explanation. It bends words to extrinsic ends at the expense of intrinsic in the sense that it tries to keep their reference to 'objective' reality under a kind of surface control. Science relies heavily on diagrams or on diagram-type concepts. And, in so far as it is quasi-scientific, so does my present discussion here.

And yet science works its designs on language here with only partial success, for two reasons. First, the scientific policing of terminology is itself a linguistic activity, not a technique of object-manipulation, and hence itself exhibits a certain mysterious interiority. At any moment in its development, even science, not to mention philosophy, is only arrested dialogue.

Secondly, as its source for its own proper terms science can avail itself only of a stock of words or morphemes which have come into being in a curiously nonscientific way. Science must establish itself within an already going language grown into being through nonscientifically controlled etymologies. Thus scientific conceptualization and expression is tempered everywhere with nonscientific relicts, and always will be. In the last analysis, all science must in some fashion be perpetuated by explanation in nonscientific terms, for otherwise no one could be inducted from the world of ordinary human speech into the world of scientific meanings but would have to be born into this latter world.

This is to say that, basically, science can invent no entirely new words, only new combinations of those words or morphemes which it has inherited from history, that is, from the interior world in which person has communed with person over the eons in the age-old dialogue which is central to the story of mankind and which is carried on in the curious interiority of the world of sound. Still, because this world in which it operates is interior and hence mysterious and unexplained, science and philosophy itself must seek in some way to exteriorize it. For this is the business of science and, in a somewhat different way, of philosophy, to explain, to 'open up' or to 'open out', to explicate and unfold the mysteries, that they may remain mysteries no longer—to some extent, for in part they will always so remain.

Although it is not to be equated with science, criticism is in some degree explanation, and has something of this same scientific bent. Unless it is to be itself a poem, criticism of a poem must involve some elucidation. Its ultimate object may be to introduce the reader more fully into the mystery which is the poem, but its technique will be to some extent to 'clear up' certain things.

It should be owned that criticism, more than science, does acquiesce somewhat explicitly to the mysteriousness of language. A look at its very meaning, supported by its own complex etymology, makes this fact clear. For criticism means radically judgment, which in turn means not explaining or diagramming but *saying* yes or no. The critic, as a *sayer* of yes or no, is a denizen of the sound-world. The notion of judgment, the action of the saying yes or no, simply cannot be reduced in terms of spatial analogy. Thus the fact that criticism or judgment, which is a notion certainly applicable in one way or another in all sciences, attaches itself most conspicuously to operations on literature—or to works of art, which, as will be seen, are in their own way 'words', too—bears stubborn witness to the fact that literature moves certainly in the realm of the word. More than that, it bears witness to the fact that literature (and art) exists in a particular relationship to the interior of man, to that 'selfless self' of self, most strange, most still', as Gerard Manley Hopkins describes it, which lies forever folded in its own mysterious decision expressed by the word—'fast furl'd, and all foredrawn to No or Yes'.

Such considerations or perspectives must, I believe, temper our critical ambitions to reduce the work of literature—most typically the poem—to some sort of object. For, although, as Eliot justly maintains in his essay mentioned earlier, works of literature are 'not the expression of personality but an escape from personality', and in this are unlike ordinary dialogue, they are nevertheless not quite an escape to an object, a thing adequately conceivable, even analogously, in terms of surfaces and visual or tactile perceptions. Works of literature consist in words, and, as we have suggested, words themselves retain in themselves, ineluctably something of the interiority of their birth within that interior which is a person. As cries, they go 'out', but they are not extensions of, or projections of interiority. In this sense Camus's and Sartre's view of man as an interior

exteriorizing itself is quite inadequate to the totality of the human situation. We are more accurate if we keep our metaphors closer to the world of sound and think of speech and of works of literature as 'amplifications' or, better, as intensifications of an interior. All words projected from a speaker remain, as has been seen, somehow interior to him, being an invitation to another person, another interior, to share the speaker's interior, an invitation to enter in, not to regard from the outside. The Hegelian master-slave dialectic manifests a brilliant partial insight, but it does not cover the whole of the person-to-person relationship revealed by voice considered as voice.

In so far as all works of art are in some measure utterances, expressions emanating from the human psyche, they, too, partake of this interiority. Even the works of pottery in *The Confidential Clerk*, to resume Sir Claude's musings, in this sense consist in words, resonant with human life, for Sir Claude goes on to identify his experience of pottery as a mode of communication between persons:

But when I am alone, and look at one thing long enough,
I sometimes have that sense of identification
With the maker of which I spoke—an agonizing ecstasy
Which makes life bearable . . .

IV

The piece of pottery serves to join the often otherwise unknown artist and observer—uniting those into whom the word enters, or who enter into it. But if a piece of pottery or any other object of art can be said to consist in a word or words, works of literature can be said to do so even more. They consist not only in words, they consist of words. For this reason they remain most mysterious among all works of art—more mysterious, even, than music, which, divorced from words, is pure voice, but voice with a human point of reference missing.

It is a commonplace that Aristotle once observed that music is the most 'imitative' of arts. This implies that, in so far as art is imitation, music is the most consummate art—a paradoxical notion if our idea of imitation is formed chiefly by reference, even analogous reference, to the world of sight and space. For what construct existing outside itself does a work of Beethoven or Bartok 'imitate'? However, Aristotle's remark need not be interpreted in terms of such constructs. It seems to contain in germ an idea which can be developed in another way, although from Aristotle's point in intellectual history this development could not yet be explicitly realized, especially since he appears to have conceived of music regularly in conjunction with voice. The idea is this: Among the arts, music enjoys a kind of primacy in so far as the sound world has a primacy over the space world in artistic creation because all art must always in some fashion be more voice than 'object'. Pure music, that is, melodic or harmonic sound without words, although it is defective in not being a human voice, still has a certain primacy even over the human voice because of its existence totally within sound. Music is sound exploited as pure sound, symbolizing directly no 'object' at all. Music suggests what voice might do in the way of pure communication of intention to interior, of person to person, of knowledge to

knowledge, and love to love, if only voice did not find itself involved also in representing objects and hence involved in the tangle of explanation in which the human voice operates and which is half its excuse for being.

But by the same token, because music is not directly involved with the opacity of objects—except in so far as it is assimilable to an object itself, and this it is only at the very minimum, being pure sound, 'nought but *eyr ybrokent*'—music manages to shirk half of the twofold responsibility of the human voice, which in giving utterance to the human word looks inward and outward simultaneously. In its purer forms music, while it is not inward in the sense of being purely subjective, nevertheless is inward in that, while it speaks, it says nothing—that is, *nothing*. Pure music shrugs off all effort at representation, it is pure presentation. But because of this calculated irresponsibility, to which it owes its bewitching beauty, music bears within itself the germ of its own disintegration. Unconcerned about symbolizing an object despite the fact that it is a demizen of the sound world, the realm of voice, and that it capitalizes on this situation, music utters a 'word' which actually falls short of being a voice. For the human voice, interior though it be, achieves its inward perfection only by bearing outward too. In being a voice about nothing outside, music amplifies only a fictional interior. In being about no object, in the last analysis it also is the voice of no person. For this reason, the more music becomes pure music, the more it risks being identified with mathematics, as the history of the arts in antiquity and the Middle Ages shows, and thus being viewed not really as sound at all. By carrying the artistic process to one of its extremes, music thus reveals the impossible tensions under which all art works and which all art must strive ceaselessly to resolve with never the hope of complete success. These tensions manifest themselves most spectacularly in the realm of sound, for all art, as voice or word, exists with special reference to this realm.

If it is desirable that criticism go beyond its admittedly healthy interest in the art 'object' or the 'objective correlative' by giving more explicit attention to the oral-aural commitments of all art, and particularly of literature, one can suggest that the perspectives open to the phenomenological and existential outlooks ought at this point to be exploited to a greater extent by American and British critics. Now is the time to infuse into criticism awareness such as those of Louis Lavelle, Martin Buber, and Gabriel Marcel, which make it feasible to deal to a greater extent with language as sound, with correlatives which are not merely 'objective', or, for that matter, merely 'subjective' either, but which transcend this objective-subjective classification (itself a derivative from an unreflective visualist notion of reality). We need the Kierkegaardian sense of dialectic, as well as an awareness of the existential implications of dialogue—that is, of all expression viewed for what it basically is, an exchange between an 'I' and a 'thou'—such as registers variously in the works of post-Hegelianists like Jaspers or Camus. (In [Camus's] *The Fall*, only one person's speech is recorded, but the direct partner to the dialogue becomes the 'I' who is the reader, and the

person speaking; it is to be noted, is a judge—one who decides, says yes or no—who is a penitent judge, aware that he is one himself made to be judged.) If it is not too much to expect that these typical Continental developments take root in our still basically Anglo-Saxon critical soil, certain problems of criticism, hitherto highly intractable, can be dealt with much more satisfactorily.

There is first of all the problem of the 'boundaries' of a literary work. Any criticism which insists that each work be regarded as a whole, somewhat in the sense in which an object is felt to be a whole, and that the value of any items in the work depends on the interior organization of the work, will feel the work as having definite boundaries. It will be disconcerting to find, for example, in the influential textbook, *Understanding Poetry*, of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, where works do have definite boundaries, the admission that 'it is sometimes said that a poet's work is really one long poem of which the individual poems are but parts'. Messrs Brooks and Warren do not undertake to refute this view. But it is a puzzling view if we wish with Brooks and Warren to take each poem individually as a discrete object existing in its own right, a unique 'well wrought urn'—unless we are willing to recall that the well wrought urn, too, as a 'word', is like the individual poem, a moment in an age-old conversation in which what goes on within the artist's psyche and registers in his work echoes the whole evolution of the cosmos. From this latter point of view the single poem is discrete somewhat in the abstract way in which a moment in a dialogue is discrete—only somewhat more than nonpoetic moments in a dialogue, at least in that it provides a unit for pause and meditation. It communicates a unique something which cannot be quite laid hold of outside the poem. But, while standing by itself more than a riposte in a conversation might do, this something does not stand entirely by itself. Each literary work marks a definite advance over what has gone before and is big with promise for the future, and this precisely because it is not a mere object, but something said, a 'word', a moment in an age-old exchange of talk. Thinking and speaking of a literary work as a moment in a dialogue engenders an awareness of its 'open' or unbounded historical potential, and of its unlikeness to a discrete 'object'. It appears as something like a Sartrean *pour-soi* as well as an *en-soi*.^a

A second area or problem of criticism which can be dealt with in terms of oral and aural performance is that of the literary genre. Just as a poem or other work of art as word resists complete framing as an 'object' thought of as clearly and distinctly outlined in space, so it resists complete framing in terms of types and genres. For these represent an attempt to define, to delimit, to mark off, and in this way conceal a visualist approach to knowledge, feeling, and communication which is—I must repeat—a necessary and inevitable approach for purposes of explanation, but which can never be entirely satisfactory in the case of works which are, again, not objects but moments in a dialogue. Awareness of this state of affairs enables us to explain in some sort an annoying fact that we all know, namely, that, in a very real sense, among all the diverse works of a writer as, for example, Jonathan Swift (to take one who used a great variety of

^aIn Sartre's ontology, consciousness is Being-for-itself (*pour-soi*) and objective appearance is Being-in-itself (*en-soi*).

genres), whether these be lyric poems or prose travel fiction or literary hoaxes of the Bickerstaff sort or satirical pamphlets or sermons—in all these diverse works, there is a certain unity greater than that found in the genres to which these various works belong. The basis for this unity is that they are all the utterances, the word, of one man.

Thirdly, explicit attention to the mysterious oral-aural nature of the work of literature enables us to account more fully for the function of the critic—and even for the fact that criticism is constantly worrying over the function of the critic. For, once we recognize explicitly the fact that all poetry and all literature is, from one point of view, a moment in a dialogue, the role of the critic becomes both clearer and more complicated. If the art 'object' which is 'made' of words were really that—an 'object'—alone, one could talk about it without becoming involved in it in the way in which, despite everything, the critic is constantly becoming involved. However, since it is not simply an object, but also something that someone (a historical person, speaking in a certain place at a certain historical time and after certain historical literary events) utters after and because others have uttered something else, and since the work of the critic is also something that someone utters after and because others have uttered something else (this something else being both the work of art and its antecedents, as well as other criticism), the lines of literature and of criticism are necessarily interwoven. They are interwoven as words are interwoven, each belonging to a certain moment in the totality of activity emanating from human life—in history. Seen this way, criticism is perhaps somewhat less the poor relation of literature than it is sometimes made out to be. It is part of the total dialogue in which all literature exists.

The art 'object', literary or other, precisely in so far as it is an 'object', invites being treated with words. For, in spite of everything, words are more intelligible, more alive, and in this sense more real than what we perceive in space, even analogously. We use words to process, understand, and assimilate spatial conceptions. We learn from sight, but we think in words, mental and vocal. We explain diagrams in words. The art 'object', in so far as it is an object with at least an oblique spatial reference and not a word, has somehow divorced itself from the flow of conversation and understanding in which human life moves. It must be returned to this flow, related somehow to the continuum of actuality, that is to say, to what concrete, existent persons are actually saying and thinking. Undertaking to talk about the art object, the critic undertakes to effect this relationship or reintegration. But in doing so, he must somehow violate the work of art in its effort to subsist alone. For by talking about it he advertises the fact that it does not really and wholly and entirely exist alone.

Moreover, the critic is likely to violate the work of art in another and opposite way. For, in so far as he does more than merely initiate into the experience of a given work of art, help create a climate of empathy—and few if any critical works can pretend to do merely this—in so far, that is, as he seeks not merely to induce the reader into the experience but also to 'elucidate', to 'explicate', to 'clarify' the work of art, the critic is actually taking the work in quite the opposite way, not as an object to be reintegrated in the mysterious world of

words, but as a mysterious 'word' which must be made tractable by explanation of at least a quasi-scientific, objective sort. One does not elucidate or clarify a work of art in so far as it is an object, but rather in so far as it is a word. For we do not elucidate or explicate an object—a quartz crystal, for example, or a fish. We elucidate or explicate words or remarks (which may, indeed, be 'about' objects). But if to 'elucidate' or 'explicate' a poem or a painting is thus to regard it as a word, it is at the same time to ambition moving it in some sort out of the world of resonance and voice into space. For in so far as one aims to 'elucidate', to 'explicate', to 'clarify', one aims to process one's knowledge through considering it by analogy with a space-and-light world of vision, not a world of sound. Concepts of this sort—elucidate, explicate, clarify—are all based on this visualist analogy.

Thus, between Scylla and Charybdis, the critic is caught in the dialectic of object and word in which the work of art has its being. He can take the work as an object and attempt in some sort to verbalize it—or if it is a piece of literature already, to verbalize it still more—or he can take it as a word and attempt to objectify it, to exploit its likeness to 'things'. Generally he does partly the one and partly the other. In either case he advertises its limitations—or, we might say, the limitations of all human perception and intellectual activity, or for that matter, of all finitude, or finiteness. For in this universe of ours all objects are in some sense words, and all our words invite manoeuvring as objects. Like the poet himself the critic can encode the object in words or decode the word into a quasi object. He cannot do both at once. To gain ground in one sector is to relinquish it in another. And yet the overall loss is never so great as the gain. For the critic can overcome the impasse in which he finds himself at least to the extent that he realizes that it is an impasse. The mind cannot get outside its limitations absolutely. But it can get outside them to this extent: it can recognize its limitations as limitations. Combined with an awareness that indelmitable progress in both empathic criticism and explicatory criticism is possible, we must cultivate an awareness of the limitations within which both types of criticism must ineluctably operate and we must develop techniques of talking about these limitations.

Finally a more explicit recognition of the oral-aural world in which literary works, and in their own way other works of art, have their being makes it possible to deal more directly with the all-important problem of history and artistic tradition. Philosophies or world views which consider all human knowledge, wittingly or unwittingly, by analogy with sight-knowledge (abetted more or less by tactile perception of spatial relations) to the exclusion of sound-knowledge, have no place for history, and are helpless to deal with evolution, cosmic, organic, or intellectual. For history they tend to substitute cyclicism. It is a commonplace that the early Hebrew-Christian tradition, which has been the great well-spring of mankind's genuine historical awareness, as the late Erich Auerbach has so masterfully shown in the first chapter of his book, *Mimesis*,^a is a heritage rooted in an oral-aural notion of knowledge, not in the more visualist Hellenic notion.

^a See above, pp. 315-32.

The growth in the reflexivity of human thought and in explicit and deliberate attention to the individual, unique in his interiority, which, despite many spectacular and disheartening setbacks, is the dominant pattern in the intellectual history of man over the ages, is another manifestation, at a higher level or pitch, of this same interiorizing economy which marks, so it seems, cosmic developments taken in their larger phases. It is this increase in interiority which makes history possible and which governs artistic tradition. Only when man's kind has become pretty thoroughly reflexive, not only individually but socially on a large scale, does history as a subject take form and begin to dominate in a specific way man's outlook on the world. At this same stage, art and literature become intensely conscious of their past, not as outside the artist and his works but as in them, and the age-old dialectic is intensified between tradition, claiming more and more attention as historical lore deepens, and the individual, courted with growing fervour as philosophies of personalism come into being.

So far, no way of philosophizing about history has arisen to compete with that which sees the movements of history as analogous to those of dialogue—communicating with another. In the primacy of this analogue for the handling of history, a late-comer in the evolution of the cosmos, the interiorizing momentum which seems to dominate large-scale developments asserts a kind of ultimate claim. If literary history is to be more than a sheer enumeration of before and afters, more than, quite literally, a surface treatment proceeding by likening works of art to discrete objects apprehended by sight rather than, in a mysterious way, to persons themselves (for voice is an intensification of person), it will have to avail itself of this notion of dialogue more explicitly, although not quite in the Hegelian, much less in the Marxian way—for Hegel's dialectic is, too little vocal in preoccupation, deflecting attention from the word as word, to a visualist analogue of the word, the *idea*, the that-which-is-seen, reflected in an equally visualist (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) reduction of dialogue itself.

If it is difficult to consider literature under a definitive aural aspect, and if any such consideration must necessarily involve visualist references, and if analogies (as this present discussion, and this very sentence, certainly does), nevertheless it should be less difficult in this age than it has been in the past. It should even come rather naturally to us in an age dominated by figures such as Proust, whose work seeks to perpetuate in the hollows of the mind all the reverberations of the past; Joyce, whose work seeks to condense all the past, present, and future into the fathomless, echoing interior of one night's monologue; Faulkner, whose North Mississippi county resounds with the voices of four or five continents; and Pound, who presents in the *Cantos* an attempt at something like 'pure' poetry which nevertheless consists in an echo and amplification of snatches of conversation salvaged from all over this world's history—snatches, that is, of what registered in the interiors of men and women, since these interiors began that communication with one another within which we still live our conscious lives.